The Joys of Being a Woman and Other Papers

Winifred Margaretta Kirkland

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FOREWORD. The Ego in the Essay

We are each launched in life with an elfin shipmate— set jogging upon earth beside a fairy comrade. When our ears are clear, he pipes magic music; when our feet are free he pleads with us to follow him on witching paths. We cannot often hear, we cannot often follow, but when we do, we know him for what he is; when we sail or run or fly with him, we know him for the gladdest fellow with whom life ever paired us, a companion rarely glimpsed, but glorious, for he is our own true Self. Poets and dreamers have sometimes snared him in a sonnet, but for the most part, for his waggishness and his wanderings, he demands, not the strait−jacketing of poetry, but the flexible garment of prose. It is the shifting subtleties of the essay that have ever best expressed him.

One man there was in that peopled past, where friendship's best doors fly open at our knock, who knew how to catch his elusive Ego and keep it glad even on ways that led through sordid counting−house and sadder madhouse; and who knew also, better than any one since has ever known, how to envisage and investure that exquisite Self of his, sweet, quaint sprite that it was, in an essay. Ever since that time those of us who love essays say, of one possessing special grace, it is like Elia's, meaning not that it imitates Lamb's style, the inimitable, but that it reveals, as only the essay can do, personality.

Of all literary forms the personal essay appears the most artless, a little boat that sails us into pleasant havens, without any sound of machinery and without any chart or compass. To read is as if we overheard some one chatting with that little merry−heart, his own particular Ego. We do not stop to think what childlike simplicities any grown−up must attain before he can hear that fairy divinity, his own Self, speak at all, for the only true tongue in which the Self speaks is joy. Only childlike feet can follow the feet of fairies. The self−annalist whose essays warm our hearts with friendship, must be one who sips the wine of mirth when all alone with his own Self. Not many such are born, and fewer of them write essays. The essay is no easy thing. The true mood and the true manner of it are rare. It is as difficult to write an essay on purpose as it is to be a person on purpose, a teasing game and unsatisfactory.

Yet the difficulties of essay−writing are offset by the delights: for there is nothing so compelling to expression as chuckle, and that is what the true essay is, sheer chuckle; it is what we felt and saw that time the elfin Ego floated in on a sun−mote, and showed us, laughing, how all our life is gilded with fun. Then off we fly to write it, with the spell still upon us! The poising of a word on the tip of our pen until the very most genial sunbeam of all shall touch it, the weaving the thread of a golden thought in and out through all the quips and nonsense, the wrapping a whole life experience in the hollow shaft of some light−barbed phrase! The best quality of the humorous essay is that the reader shall smile, not laugh, and, moreover, that he shall remember no one passage at which he smiles: it is far better that he should feel that he has touched a personality tipped with mirth. Ariel never laughed. The fun that makes the soul expand must have in it the lift of wings and the glimpsing fantasy of flight.

More than any other of the shapes prose takes, the essay should give the reader a sense of good−fellowship. Probably the writer who as an actual man is shyest, gives this comradeship best. The shy man sheds forth his personality most opulently in print, and preferably, as certain wise editors have perceived, in anonymous print. One is sensitive to having an everyday friend see one's soul in public, because the everyday friend knows too well the everyday self, to which the elusive essay−self is too often a stranger.

That skittish elfin Ego, so alien to the humdrum man or woman who bears our mortal name, if he only came to visit us oftener, stayed with us longer, what essays we might write! A snatch of song, a tinkle of laughter, a flutter of wings, if he would only linger until I could clearly see what he is, this Ego of mine, who tells such happy secrets! Poor babykin, poor fairykin—that Ego sent forth with us to make blithe the voyage, we cannot go a−dancing with him out to fairy fields, because our feet are heavy with Other People's clogs and fetters, we cannot hear when he would whisper at our ear gentle philosophies—our own Self's and no one's else, because of the grave grubby Book−people who thunder at us from our shelves. Sometimes I catch him casting a waggish twinkle at me over the very shoulder of my blackest worry, rainbow wings and head that is devil−may−care trying to get at me from behind her sable−stoled form. Even in the thought of death I catch his cherub chuckle, "Could a grave hold me?" For is not death also a bugbear of Other People, not at all of my own Self's making?

Gay little voyager! He seems, when he visits me, to be the prince of the kingdom of fun. He does not stay long, but long enough sometimes for me to write an essay. But whence he comes, or whither he goes, or what he is, whether demonic or divine, I only know that he is mine.

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I. The Joys of Being a Woman

Some years ago there appeared in the "Atlantic" an essay entitled "The joys of Being a Negro." With a purpose analogous to that of the author, I am moved to declare the real delights of the apparently downtrodden, and in the face of a bulky literature expressive of pathos and protest, to confess frankly the joys of being a woman. It is a

feminist argument accepted as axiomatic that every woman would be a man if she could be, while no man would be a woman if he could help it. Every woman knows this is not fact but falsehood, yet knows also that it is one of those falsehoods on which depends the stability of the universe. The idea that every woman is desirous of becoming a man is as comforting to every male as its larger corollary is alarming, namely, that women as a mass have resolved to become men. The former notion expresses man's view of femininity, and is flattering; the latter expresses his view of feminism, and is fearsome. Man's panic, indeed, before the hosts he thinks he sees advancing, has lately become so acute that there is danger of his paralysis. Now his paralysis would defeat not only the purposes of feminism, but also the sole purpose of woman's conduct toward man from Eve's time to ours, a course of which feminism is only a modern and consistent example.

It is for man's reassurance that I shall endeavor gradually to unfold this age−old purpose, showing that while the privileges which through slow evolution we have amassed are so enjoyable as to preclude our envying any man his dusty difficulties, still our attitude toward these our toys is that of a friend of mine a woman aged four. Left unprotected in her hands for entertainment, a male coeval was heard to burst into cries of rage. Her parents, rushing to his rescue, found their daughter surrounded by all the playthings, which she loftily withheld from her visitor's hand. Rebuke produced the virtuous response, "I am only trying to teach Bobby to be unselfish."

The austere moral intention of my little friend was her direct heritage from her mother Eve, whose much maligning would be regrettable if this very maligning were not the primary purpose of the artful allegory: Adam and all his sons had to believe that they amounted to more than Eve, as the primary condition of their amounting to anything. Eve, in her campaign for Adam's education, was the first woman to perceive his need for complacency, and so, from Eden to eternity, she undertook to immolate her reputation for his sake. Eve, I repeat, was the first woman to perceive Adam's fundamental need, but she was not the last.

The romance of Adam and Eve was written by so subtle a psychologist that I feel sure the novelist must have been a woman. Her deathless allegory of Eden contains the whole situation of the sexes: it shows the superiority of woman, while seeming, for his own good, to show the superiority of man. As it must have required a woman to write the parable, so perhaps it requires a woman to expound it.

I pass over the initial fact that the representation of Eve as the last in an ascending order of creation, plainly signifies that she is to be considered the most nearly, if not the absolutely, perfect, of created things. The first thing of real importance in the narrative is the purpose of Eve's creation, to fill a need, Adam's. "It was not good that the man should be alone." The whole universe was not enough for Adam without Eve. It neither satisfied nor stimulated him. He was mopish, dumpish, unconscionably lazy. If he had been merely lonely, why would it not have been enough to create another Adam? Because the object was not simple addition, whereby another Adam would merely have meant two Adams, both mopish, dumpish, unconscionably lazy; the object was multiplication by stimulation, whereby, by combining Eve with Adam, Adam, as all subsequent history shows, was raised to the nth power.

Intimately analyzed, the details of the temptation redound entirely to Eve's credit. Woman rather than man is selected as the one more open to argument, more capable of initiative, the one bolder to act, as well as braver to accept the consequences of action. The sixth verse of the third chapter cuts away forever all claim for masculine originality, and ascribes initiative in the three departments of human endeavor to woman. For no one knows how long, Adam had been bumping into that tree without once seeing that it was: (a) "good for food"; this symbolizes the awakening of the practical instincts, the availing one's self of one's physical surroundings, the germ, clearly, of all commercial activity, in which sphere man has always been judged the more active; (b) "the tree was pleasant to look upon"; here it is Eve, not Adam, who perceives the aesthetic aspect; if man has been adjudged the more eminent in art, plainly he did not even see that a thing was beautiful until woman told him so; (c) "a tree to be desired to make one wise"; Adam had no desire to be wise until Eve stimulated it, whereas her own desire for knowledge was so passionate that she was ready to die to attain it. We all know how Eve's motives have been impugned, for when a man is ready to die for knowledge, he is called scientific, but when a woman is ready to die

for knowledge, she is called inquisitive. The Eden narrative concludes with the penalty, "He shall rule over thee, that is, the price Eve must pay for Adam's seeming superiority is her own seeming inferiority. The risk and the responsibility and the recompense for man's growing pains, woman has always taken in inscrutable silence, wise to see that she would defeat her own ends if she explained.

"And what was my reward when they had won— Freedom that I had bought with torturing bonds? —They stormed through centuries brandishing their deeds, Boasting their gross and transient mastery To girls, who listened with indulgent ears And laughing hearts—Lord, they were ever blind— Women have they known, but never Woman." The methods and the motives of Eve toward Adam have been the methods and the motives of woman with man ever since. Eve's purposes, summarized, are fourfold: first, she must educate Adam; second, she must conceal his education from him, as the only practical way of developing in man the self−esteem necessary to keep him in his sex; third, Eve must never bore Adam, to keep him going she must always keep him guessing; and fourth, Eve must not bore herself; this last view of the temptation is perhaps the truest, namely, that Eve herself was so bored by the inertness of Adam and the ennui of Eden that she had to give him the apple to see what he and she would do afterwards.

The imperishable philosophy of the third chapter of Genesis clearly establishes the primary joy of being a woman, the joy of conscious superiority. That it is the most profound joy known to human nature will be readily attested by any man who has felt his own sense of superiority shaking in its shoes as he has viewed the recent much−advertised achievements of women. How could any man help envying a woman a self−approval so absolute that it can afford to let man seem superior at her expense? Woman's conviction of advantage supports her in using her prerogatives first as if they were deficiencies, and then in employing them to offset man's deficiencies. Man is a timorous, self−distrustful creature, who would never have discovered his powers if not stimulated by woman's weakness. Probably prehistoric woman voluntarily gave up her own muscle in order that man might develop his by serving her. It is only recently that we have dared to be as athletic as we might, and the effort is still tentative enough to be relinquished if we notice any resulting deterioration, muscular or moral, in men. Women, conscious how they hold men's welfare in their hands, simply do not dare to discover how strong they might be if they tried, because they have so far used their physical weakness not only as a means of arousing men's good activities, but also as a means of turning to nobler directions their bad ones. Men are naturally acquisitive, impelled to work for gain and gold, gain and more gain, gold and more gold. Unable to deter them from this impulse, we turn it to an unselfish end, that is, we let men support us, preserving for their sakes the fiction that we are too frail to support ourselves. If they had neither child nor wife, men would still be rolling up wealth, but it is very much better for their characters that they should suppose they are working for their families rather than for themselves. We might be Amazons, but for men's own sakes we refrain from what would be for ourselves a selfish indulgence in vigor. Man is not only naturally acquisitive but is naturally ostentatious of his acquisitions. Having bled for his baubles, he wishes to put them on and strut in them. Again we step in and redirect his impulse; we put on his baubles and strut for him. We let him think that our delicate physique is better fitted for jewels and silk than his sturdier frame, and that our complex service to the Society which must be established to show off his jewels and silk, is really a lighter task than his simple slavery to an office desk. How reluctantly men have delegated to women dress and all its concomitant luxury may readily be proved by an examination of historic portraits—behold Raleigh in all his ruffles!—and by the tendency to top−hat and tin−can decoration exhibited by the male savage. The passionate attention given by our own household males to those few articles of apparel in which we have thought it safe to allow them individual choice, unregulated by requirements of uniform, articles such as socks or cravats, must prove even to men themselves how much safer it is that their clothes−craze should be vicariously expressed, that women should do their dressing for them.

Not only for the moral advantages gained by men in supporting us do women preserve the fallacy of physical feebleness, but also for the spiritual exaltation men may enjoy by protecting us and rescuing us from perils. For this purpose it is quite unnecessary that the man should think the peril real, but it is absolutely necessary that he should think the woman thinks it real. It does a man more good to save a woman from a mouse than from a tiger, as contributing more to the sense of superiority so necessary to him. The truth is that women are not really afraid

of anything, but they perceive how much splendid incentive would be lost to the world if they did not pretend to be. For example, if women were actually afraid of serpents, would the Tempter have chosen that form just when he wished to be most ingratiating? But think how many heroes would be unmade if women should let men know that they are perfectly capable of killing their own snakes. The universality of the mouse fear roves its prehistoric origin, showing how consistently and successfully women have been educating men in heroism; in earliest times it probably required a whole dinotherium ramping at the cave−mouth to induce primitive man to draw weapon in his mate's defense, but now to evoke the quintessence of chivalry, all a woman has to do is to hop on a chair at sight of a mouse.

Woman's motive for suppressing her intellectual powers is exactly the same as her motive for not developing her physical powers. She is ready to enjoy and to employ her own genius in secret for the sake of the free and open growth of man's. She has wrought so conscientiously to this end that it is probable that the average man's belief in woman's mental inferiority is even stronger than his belief in her physical inferiority, for well woman has perceived the peril to man of his ever discovering the truth of her intellectual endowment. Man's energy cannot survive the strain of thinking his brain inferior, or even equal, to a woman's. This fact is the reason why women so long renounced all educational advantages; that at last their minds were too much for them, and that they were driven by pure ebullience of suppressed genius to invade the university, will more and more be seen by women to have been a regrettable mistake. There is much current newspaper discussion of the failure of the men's colleges to−day to educate the young male, his utter obduracy before stimulus is despairingly compared with the effect of college upon the youth of past generations. I fear that the reason is simple to seek: men's colleges have deteriorated exactly in the ratio that women's colleges have improved. The course for women and women's colleges is therefore clear.

Our history shows that we have, with only occasional lapses into genius, nobly sustained the requirements of our unselfishness. On rare occasions our ability has been so irresistible, and our honesty so irrepressible, that in an unguarded moment we have tossed off a Queen Elizabeth, a Rosa Bonheur, a Madame Curie, a Joan of Arc, a Hetty Green; but for the most part we have preserved a glorious mediocrity that allows man to believe himself dominant in administration, art, science, war, and finance. The women who have so far forgotten themselves as almost to betray woman's genius to the world, are fortunately for the moral purpose of the sex, exceptional, and the average woman makes a very creditable concealment of intellect. I am hopeful that as women grow in wisdom, their outbreaks of ability will be more and more controlled and sporadic, and man's paralysis before them be correspondingly infrequent, so that at some future day, we may see woman again relinquish all educational privileges, and become wisely illiterate for man's sake.

Our own intellectual advantages are as much greater than man's as they are more secret. No woman would put up with the clumsiness and crudity of a man's brain, knowing so well the superexcellence of her own, in the delicacy of its machinery, the subtle science required in its employment, the absorbing interest of the material on which it is employed, and the noble purpose to which it is solely devoted.

As to our mental mechanism, it is so much finer than man's that, out of pure pity for his clogging equipment, we let him think logic and reason better means of traveling from premise to conclusion than the air flights we encourage him to scorn as woman's intuition. Nothing is more painful to a woman than an argument with a man, because he journeys from given fact to deduced truth by pack−mule, and she by aeroplane. When he finds her at the destination, he is so irritated by the swiftness of her passage that he accuses her of not having followed the right direction, and demands as proof that she describe the weeds by the roadside, which he has amply studied,—he calls this study his reasoning process. Of course no woman stops to botanize when the object is to get there. No man ever wants to be a woman? No man ever longs to exchange his ass for our airship? No man ever envies us the nimbleness by which we can elude logic and get at truth?

Our mental operations are keyed to the very sublimation of delicacy and rapidity, and they need to be, considering the subtleties of the skill with which we must employ them. Eve left it to us to educate Adam without his knowing

it, and to keep him endlessly entertained. To educate, to amuse, and forever, calls for such exquisite manipulation of our own minds, calls for such individual initiative, such originality, as to provide woman with an aspiration that makes man's creative concern with such gross matters as art or letters, science or government, seem puerile and pitiable. What skill do the tasks of man, so stupidly tangible and public, evoke? How stimulating to be a woman! How dull to amble along like a man, with only logic to carry you, and only success to attain!

Poor man is to be pitied not only for the crudity of his mental machinery and the creaking clumsiness of its movement, but for the dullness of the material in which he must work. The truth is that there would be no sex to do the unskilled labor of the world, if women ever once let men be tempted by their superior employments. The surest way of keeping man to his hod−carrying is to let him think that woman spends all her secret hours sobbing for bricks and mortar. As a child must respect his toys if he is to be happy, so a man must respect the material he works in, and thus women foster his pride in making books, pictures, machines, states, philosophies, while women—make him! The subject to which we devote all our heads is man himself.

Mine to protect, to nurture, to impel;

My lord and lover, yes, but first my child.

Man remains Man, but Woman is the Mother,

There is no mystery she dare not read;

No fearful fruit can grow, but she must taste;

No secret knowledge can be held from her;

For she must learn all things that she may teach."

Our material, human, living, plastic, is immeasurably more marvelous than man's cold stone, cold laws, cold print. Unlike man's, therefore, our work can never be finished, can not be qualified and made finite by any standard of perfection. It is more fun to make a Plato than to make his philosophy, and at the same time to be skillful enough to con ceal our creatorship, knowing that the condition of producing another and greater Plato is to let him have the inflation of supposing he produced himself. Now unless woman's efforts through all the ages to instill into man the self−satisfaction necessary to his success have gone for naught—which I cannot from observation believe—man could hardly help envying woman the splendor and the scope of the subject to which her intelligence is directed, to wit, himself.

The ultimate purpose of woman's education of man transcends the grosser aims to which man's intellect is devoted. Woman wants man to be good, so that he may be happy. He was not happy in Eden, and so she drove him out of it. Woman's education of man she has for the most part succeeded in hiding from him, but the object of that education, man's happiness, has been so permeating that even man himself has perceived it. Man thinks he can manufacture his own career, his own money, his own clothes, and his own food, but no man thinks he can make his own happiness. Every man thinks either that some actual woman makes or unmakes his joy, or that some potential woman could make it. For a woman, love's young dream is of making some man happy; for a man, love's young dream is of letting some woman make him happy. These views plainly argue that in relation to the supply of gladness, woman is the almoner, man the beggar. Since every one would rather be a giver than a getter, it seems impossible that no man ever wants to be a woman, in order to experience the most indisputable of her joys, the joy of dispensing joy.

Reasons, however, why men should want to be women are more numerous and more cogent than it would be safe to let men know, so I am cannily concealing many. Among the few it may not be impolitic to divulge, is one that

of course any man who reads has seen for himself. While we shall continue conscientiously devoted to our pedagogical duties, we have pretty well determined Adam's limitations, and need only apply to him a pretty well established curriculum, whereas we ourselves remain an undeveloped mystery that more and more attracts our imagination. Looking far into the future one may see man finished and fossilized, when woman is still at the stage of eohippus as

"On five toes he scampered Over Tertiary rocks." Even now women, looking far out to space, sometimes echo the glee of little cohippus:—

"I am going to be a horse! And on my middle finger nails To run my earthly course! I 'm going to have a flowing tail! I 'm going to have a mane! I 'm going to stand fourteen hands high On the psychozoic plain!"

Now if any man, clearly perceiving his own possibilities, must envy woman the joy of having him for an experiment, how could the same man, if he should as clearly perceive woman's greater possibilities, help envying woman the joy of having herself for experiment?

With this paragraph I have plumply arrived at feminism, and at the object of all my revelations, namely, to reassure men by stating that women do not intend to take themselves up as a serious experiment for ten thousand years or so; we shall not feel free to do so until we have taught Bobby to be unselfish enough to let us; he is not yet strong enough to try his own wings, much less strong enough to let us try ours. To allay man's fears, it may be well to elucidate some aspects of our actions.

While there may be a little of eohippus exaltation in feminism, it is so little as to be negligible; our main purpose is still our age−old business of teaching by indirection. There are recurrent occasions when Adam grows sluggish in his Eden, and women have to contrive new spurs both for his action and his appreciation. As whips to make a lethargic Adam move where he should move, Eve is brandishing two threats, one her economic independence, the other, her use of the ballot. Adam thinks she really means to have both. Now our threatening to march from The Home and invade business, and by that action to let business invade The Home, is very simply explained. Once again our purpose is unselfish: it gives Adam false notions of economic justice to form a habit of not paying for services rendered, so Eve conquers her shyness and pretends that she will leave The Home if he does not pay her some scanty shillings to stay in it. Even the dullest man has now become convinced that women can earn money, so that we hope that in time even the most penurious husband will perceive the wisdom of giving his wife an allowance, and that 's all we 've been after; and yet we have to make all this fuss to get it. If Adam were only a little easier to move, he would save us and himself a great deal of pushing. Our suffrage agitation is as simple as our economic one. We mean only to wake you to the use of the ballot in your hands, when we ask you to give it to our hands. Already we have aroused you to two facts: if politics is too soiled a spot for your women to enter, then it is too soiled a spot for our men to enter, and therefore it is high time you did a little scrubbing; and also that if you refuse to enlarge the suffrage to admit desirable women, it is high time to consent to restrict it so as not to admit undesirable men. Again this is all we have been after, but again we have had to make a great deal of noise in order to wake you up.

But feminism to the male mind suggests not only commercial and professional and political careers for women, but something less tangible and more terrible, the advent of a bugaboo called the New Woman, who shall devastate The Home and happiness. It is a strong argument for our superiority that there is nothing that frightens a man so much as a woman's threatening to become like him. Yet the time has come for frightening him, and we are doing it conscientiously, for, to confess truth, there is nothing that frightens a woman so much as becoming like a man. However, for his soul's sake, she can manage to assume the externals of man's conduct, but not even for his soul's sake, much less her own, would she ever adopt his mental or spiritual equipment. Adam has such a tendency to ennui that the only way to keep him really comfortable is every now and then to make him a little uncomfortable. He was so well off in Eden, and consequently so dour and dumpish, that Eve had no choice whatever but to remove him from The Home entirely in order to save his character. We are hoping that we women

of the present shall not be driven to such an extremity; for we know what her exile meant for Eve! We are busily fostering man's fear of losing The Home, as the best way of making him appreciate it, and so of preserving it for him, and for ourselves.

As with The Home, so with the woman called New. She never was, she never will be, but to present her to man's future seems the only way of making man satisfied with the woman of the past. We have had to stir men to appreciate us as women, by showing them how easily we could be men if we would. The creator granted to Adam's loneliness an Eve, not another Adam, and should we at this late day fail the purpose of our making, and cease to be women? We have changed our manners and conversation a little, for the better success of our scare, but the woman who sits chuckling while she tends man's hearth and him, is still as old−fashioned as Eve, and as new.

Men, who always take themselves as seriously as children, have been easy enough to frighten by means of a feminism that seems to take itself seriously. A really penetrating man might guess that when women seem to be so much in earnest, they must be up to something quite different from their seeming, and he might safely divine that, however novel woman's purposes may appear to be, they will always be explicable in the light of her oldest purpose—man's improvement. Now man's improvement is a heavy task, and when nature entrusted it to woman, she gave her a compensating advantage. To become a genuine feminist, a woman would have to forego her most enviable possession—her sense of humor. Man can laugh, of course, noisily enough; but what man possesses the gift and the grace of seeing himself as a joke? Men who must do the work of the world are better off without humor, because they can thus more easily keep their eyes on the road, just as a horse needs blinders; but woman, who directs the work of man, needs to have her eyes everywhere at once. By another figure, such rudimentary humor as man does have is merely an external armor against circumstance; but woman's humor is permeating, her armor is all through her system, as if her sinews were wrought of steel and sunbeams. A man never wishes to be a woman? Is it not an argument for the joys of being a woman, that no man seems to have had such fun in being a man that it has occurred to him to write an essay on the subject?

II. A Man in the House

There persists much of the harem in every well−regulated home. In every house arranged to make a real man really happy, that man remains always a visitor, welcomed, honored, but perpetually a guest. He steps in from the great outside for rest and refreshment, but he never belongs. For him the click and hum of the harem machinery stops, giving way to love and laughter, but there is always feminine relief when the master departs and the household hum goes on again. The anomaly lies in the fact that in theory all the machinery exists but for the master's comfort; but in practice, it is much easier to arrange for his comfort when he is not there. A house without a man is savorless, yet a man in a house is incarnate interruption. No matter how closely he incarcerates himself, or how silently, a woman always feels him there. He may hide beyond five doors and two flights of stairs, but his presence somehow leaks through, and unconsciously dominates every domestic detail. He does not mean to, the woman does not mean him to; it is merely the nature of him. Keep a man at home during the working hours of the day, and there is a blight on that house, not obvious, but subtle, touching the mood and the manner of maidservant and manservant, cat, dog, and mistress, and affecting even the behavior of inanimate objects, so that there is a constraint about the sewing−machine, a palsy on the vacuum−cleaner, and a gaucherie in the stove−lids. Over the whole household spreads a feeling of the unnatural, and a resulting sense of ineffectuality. Let the man go out, and with the closing of the front door, the wheels grow brisk again, and smooth. To enjoy a home worth enjoying, a man should be in it as briefly as possible.

By nature man belongs to the hunt in the open, and woman to the fire indoors, and just here lies one of the best reasons for being a woman rather than a man, because a woman can get along without a man's out−of−doors much better than a man can get along without a woman's indoors, which proves woman of the two the better bachelor, as being more self−contained and self−contented. Every real man when abroad on the hunt is always

dreaming of a hearth and a hob and a wife, whereas no real woman, if she has the hearth and the hob, is longing for man's hunting spear or quarry. If she is indeed a real woman she is very likely longing to give a man the comfort of the fire, provided he will not stay too long at a stretch, but get out long enough to give her time to brush up his hearth and rinse his teapot satisfactorily to herself.

A man's home−coming is not an end in itself, its objective is the woman; but a woman's home−making exists both for the man and for itself. A woman needs to be alone with her house because she talks to it, and in a tongue really more natural than her talk with her husband, which is always better for having a little the company flavor, as in the seraglio. The most devoted wives are often those frankest in their abhorrence of a man in the house. It is because they do not like to keep their hearts working at high pressure too long at a time; they prefer the healthy relief of a glorious day of sorting or shopping between the master's breakfast and his dinner.

It is a rare menage that is not incommoded by having its males lunch at home. It is much better when a woman may watch their dear coat−tails round the corner for the day, with an equal exaltation in their freedom for the fray and her own. A woman whose males have their places of business neither on the great waters nor in the great streets, but in their own house, is of all women the most perpetually pitied by other women, and the most pathetically patient. She never looks quite like other women, this doctor's, minister's, professor's, writer's wife. Her eyes have a harassed patience, and her lips a protesting sweetness, for she does not belong to her house, and so she does not belong to herself. When a man's business−making and a woman's home−making live under the same roof, they never go along in parallel independence: always the man's overlaps, invades. Kitchen and nursery are hushed before the needs of office and study, and the professional telephone call postpones the orders to the butcher. The home suffers, but the husband suffers more, for he is no longer a guest in his own house, with all a guest's prerogatives; he now belongs there, and must take the consequences.

Fortunately the professional men−about−the−house are in small minority, and so are their housekeepers, but all women have sometimes to experience the upheaval incident on a man's vacation at home; whether father's, or husband's, or college brother's, or son's, the effect is always the same: the house stands on its head, and for two days it kicks up its heels and enjoys it, but after two−weeks, two months, that is, on the removal of the exciting stimulus, it sinks to coma for the rest of the season. The different professions differ in their treatment of a holiday, except that all men at home on a vacation act like fish on land or cats in water, and expect their womenfolk either to help them pant, or help them swim. They seem to go out a great deal,—at least they are always clamoring to have their garments prepared for sorties, social or piscatorial,—and yet they always seem to be under heel. Some men on a home holiday tinker all day long, others bring with them a great many books which they never read, and the result in both cases is that housekeeping becomes a prolonged picking up. All men at home on a vacation eat a great deal more than other men, or than at other times; but with the sole exception of the anomalous academic, who is always concerned for his gastronomy, they will eat anything and enjoy it,—and say so. A man at home for his holidays is always vociferously appreciative. His happiness is almost enough to repay a woman for the noise he makes, and the mess; yet statistics would show that during any man's home vacation the women of the house lose just about as many pounds as the man gains. But what are women for, or homes? After all, you can have a house without a man in it if you are quite sure you want to, but you cannot have a home without one. You cannot make a home out of women alone, or men alone; you have to mix them. Still every woman must admit, and every man with as much sense as a woman, that it 's very hard to make a home for any man if he is always in it. Every honest front door must confess that it is glad to see its master go forth in the morning; but this is only because it is so much gladder to see him come back at night.

III. Old−Clothes Sensations

People whom penury has never compelled in infancy or adolescence to wear other people's clothes have missed a valuable lesson in social sympathy. In our journey from the period when we first strutted thoughtlessly in our Cousin Charles's castoff coat on to the time when we resented its misfit, and thence to that latest and best day

when we could bestow our own discarded jacket on poor little Cousin Billy, we have successively experienced all the gradations of soul between pauper and philanthropist. Most of us are fortunate enough to put away other people's clothes when we put away the rest of childhood's indignities; but our early experiences should make us thoughtful of those who have no such luck, who seem ordained from birth to be all the world's poor relations. In gift−clothes there is something peculiarly heart−searching both for giver and recipient.

This delicacy inherent in the present of castoff suit or frock is due perhaps to the subtle clinging of the giver's self to the serge or silk. It is a strong man who feels that he is himself in another man's old coat. If an individuality is fine enough to be worth retaining, it is likely to be fine enough to disappear utterly beneath the weight of another man's shoulders upon one's own. Most of us would rather have our creeds chosen for us than our clothes. Most of us would rather select our own tatters than have another's cast−off splendors thrust upon us. It is no light achievement, the living up to and into other people's clothes. Clothes acquire so much personality from their first wearer,—adjust themselves to the swell of the chest, the quirk of the elbow, the hitch in the hip−joint,—that the first wearer always wears them, no matter how many times they may be given away. He is always felt to be inside, so that the second wearer's ego is constantly bruised by the pressure resulting from two gentlemen occupying the same waistcoat.

Middle children are to be pitied for being condemned to be constantly made over out of the luckier eldest's outgrown raiment. How can Tommy be sure he is Tommy, when he is always walking around in Johnny's shoes? Or Polly, grown to girlhood, ever find her own heart, when all her life it has beaten under Anna's pinafore? The evil is still worse when the garments come from outside the family, for one may readily accept from blood−kin bounty which, bestowed by a stranger, would arouse a corroding resentment. This is because one can always revenge one's self on one's relatives for an abasement of gratitude by means of self−respecting kicks and pinches. A growing soul may safely wear his big brother's ulster, but no one else's; for there are germs in other people's clothes,—the big bad yellow bacilli of covetousness. People give you their old clothes because they have new ones, and this fact is hard to forgive.

There may, of course, exist mitigating circumstances that often serve to solace or remove this basic resentment. To receive gown or hat or boots direct from the donor is degrading, but in proportion as they come to us through a lengthening chain of transferring hands the indignity fades out, the previous wearer's personality becomes less insistent; until, when identification is an impossibility, we may even take pleasure in conjecturing who may have previously occupied our pockets, may even feel the pull of real friendliness toward the unknown heart that beat beneath the warm woolen bosom presented to us.

Further, the potential bitterness of the recipient is dependent on the stage of his racial development and the color of his skin. The Ethiopian prefers old clothes to new. The black cook would rather have her mistress's cast−off frock than a new one, and the cook is therein canny. She trusts the correctness of the costume that her lady has chosen for herself, but distrusts the selection the lady might make for her maid. On assuming the white woman's clothes, the black woman feels that she succeeds also to the white woman's dignity. The duskier race stands at the same point of evolution with the child who falls upon the box of cast−off finery and who straightway struts about therein without thought of his own discarded independence.

I may be perceived to write from the point of view of one clothed in childhood out of the missionary box. Those first old clothes received were donned with gloating and glory; but later, in my teens,—that period so strangely composed for all of us out of spiritual shabbiness and spiritual splendor,— sensations toward the cast−off became uneasy, uncomfortable, at last unbearable. The sprouting personality resisted the impact of that other personality who had first worn my garments. I wanted raiment all my own, dully at first, then fiercely. No one who has passed from a previous condition of servitude to the dignity of his own earnings will ever forget the pride of his first self−bought clothes. At last one is one's self and belongs not to another man's coat, or another woman's gown. It is a period of expansion, of pride: when one's clothes are altogether one's own, one's pauper days are done. But it is best for sympathy not to forget them, not only for the sake of the pauper, but for the sake of the

plutocrat we are on the verge of becoming; for our sensations in regard to old clothes are about to enter a new phase; we are about to undergo the ordeal of being ourselves the donors of our own old clothes.

It was not alone for the new coat's intrinsic sake that we desired it; we coveted still more the experience of giving it away when we were done with it. There is no more soul−warming sensation than that of giving away something that you no longer want. The pain of a recipient's feelings on receiving a thing which you can afford to give away, but which he himself cannot afford to buy, is exactly balanced by your pride in presenting him with something that you can't use.

The best way to get rid of the pauper spirit is to pauperize some one else. This is cynical philanthropy, but veracious psychology. It follows that the best way to restore a pauper's self−respect is to present him with some old clothes to give to some one still poorer; for clothes are, above all gifts, a supreme test of character. It was the custom of epics to represent the king as bestowing upon his guest−friends gifts of clothes, but they were never old clothes. If you could picture some Homeric monarch in the act of giving away his worn−out raiment, in that moment you would see his kingliness dwindle.

The man who can receive another man's old clothes without thereby losing his self−respect is fit to be a prince among paupers, but the man who can give another man his old clothes without wounding that man's self−respect is fit to be the king of all philanthropists.

IV. Luggage and the Lady

I write as one pursued through life by the malevolence of inanimate objects. My singular subjection to things was never brought so painfully home to me as during four months in Europe. Of course, my soul had been to Europe a great many times, but my body never, and now I was taking it, as well as certain scrip and scrippage for its journey. I chained up my soul and held it under lock and key while I took counsel with certain seductive guidebooks. These paternal manuals left no detail untouched, until there was no fear left for me of cabs or custom−houses, of money−tables or time−tables. It was all as simple as bread and milk. One thing all my guides inveighed against, a superfluity of baggage; with them I utterly agreed. A trunk was an expensive luxury on foreign railways: there stood ready always an army of porters to escort one's handbags. A lady could travel gayly with a single change of raiment; after a day's dust and soil, merely the transformation of a blouse, and behold a toilet fit for any table d'hote. Moreover, so remarkable were foreign laundry facilities that on tumbling to bed all you had to do was to summon an obliging maid, deliver, sleep, and on the morrow morn, behold yourself all crisply washed and ironed. As to the expense of a trunk and the battalions of porters, the guidebooks were correct; as to the rest, they lied. The single blouse theory is all very well if you don't wear out or tear out by the way; and as to the laundry fallacy, do I not still see myself roaming the streets of Antwerp searching vainly for one single blanchisserie? My conclusion is that one needs clothes and a right mind about as much on one side of the Atlantic as on the other.

But I had not reached this conclusion when I bought my baggage, therefore I limited myself to two hand−pieces. For the first of these I had not far to search. It was that frail, slim, dapper thing, a straw suitcase. It was very light, just how light I was afterwards to discover, but before embarkation I regarded it with joy; it seemed to me suitable and genteel, with its sober gray sides and trim leather corners. With it I was satisfied, whereas from the first I felt misgiving about my second article of impedimenta. There was nothing genteel or ladylike about this, that was certain, but perhaps I am not the first traveler who has yielded to the mendacious promises of a telescope. It looks as if it would so obligingly yield to the need either of condensation or expansion. You may inflate or contract at will, and it's all the same to the telescope. My telescope was peculiarly unbeautiful. Its material was a shiny substance looking like linoleum, called wood fiber, and having a bright burnt−orange color. Its corners were strengthened with sheet iron, lacquered black. You have seen the same in use by rural drummers, but rarely in a female hand. I don't know why I bought it. It is part of my quarrel with inanimate objects that they always exert

an hypnotic influence upon me in the shop, and always excite loathing so soon as they arrive at my home. In this instance it was both the saleswoman and the purchase that excited the hypnotism. She was of that florid, expansive, pompadoured type that always reduces my mind to feebleness. Moreover, she jumped up and down on my prospective telescope, bouncing before my eyes in all her bigness. Now, in my sober senses I do know that one's primary motive in purchasing a handbag is not that one may dance upon it; but at that moment, as I watched her pirouetting as if on a springboard, I felt that no piece of luggage was anything worth unless you could jump upon it. I bought.

Almost at once that tawny bedemoned box began its career of naughtiness. The first thing it did on shipboard was to disappear. It stopped just long enough to be entered in the agent's book, and then it leaped down into the hold and hid. I searched; the purser searched; so did six several stewards and stewardesses. The stewards searched the staterooms; I searched the passages; together we searched the hold, penetrating even the steerage to see if the missing article were congregating with the motley collection down there. We were four days out when, in a passage repeatedly searched, on a ledge near a porthole, behold my tawny telescope leering at me! My steward was genuinely superstitious over it. So was I.

It was during my first travels on land that I discovered that a capacity for being jumped upon, far from being a recommendation in a piece of luggage, is distinctly a detraction. I did a great deal of jumping during three weeks in Scotland. I am sure I shall have sympathizers when I declare my difficulties in packing a telescope. In the first place, it is very hard, when both ends are lying on the floor, supine and gaping, to distinguish which is top and which is bottom. It is only after sad repacking that you discover that while top will sometimes go over bottom, bottom will never go over top. Having ascertained which is bottom, you begin to pack. You soon are even with the edge; but in a telescope this is nothing. You continue to pack, up, up into the air, a tremulous mountain of garments upon which at length you gingerly place top. Firmly seating yourself at one end, you grasp the straps that girdle the other, and bravely you seek to buckle them. Result, while that end of the telescope on which you are sitting undoubtedly settles under your weight, from the gaping mouth which you are attempting to muzzle there is belched forth an array of petticoats, blouses, collars, postcards. You dismount, reopen, replace scattered articles, and reseat yourself on the opposite end. Result, the end which sank under you before now pops wide, and spouts forth a stream of Baedekers red as collops. Again you repack all, replace top. Starting from across the room, with a running high jump, you aim to land on the very middle of the thing. Result, the top goes down, it is true, but from all edges there dips a fringe of garments. In the privacy of your room, with the assistance of Heaven and the chambermaid and the Boots, you may sometimes contrive to shut a telescope; but I once had to open and restrap mine, sole and unaided, in the waiting room of a station. It happened that I had placed my ticket to London in the toe of one shoe, placed the shoe in the bottom of the straw suitcase, locked this, placed the key in the toe of the other shoe, and placed that in the bottom of my telescope. Why did I do this? Simply because I had just visited Melrose Abbey. I frequently suffer from a tendency of my costume to disruption in moments of stress. At times of great muscular exertion and mental excitement my hat tends to take an inebriate lunge, each several hairpin stands on end, my collar rises rowdyish from its moorings, impeccable glove fingers gape wantonly. All these circumstances attended the closing of my telescope on that occasion. It was immediately after that I decided upon the necessity of a third piece of baggage.

I bought it in Edinburgh, on Princes Street, the wonderful street where you vainly seek to apply yourself to mundane shopping with Edinburgh Castle ever filling your vision, standing over there on its craggy hill, all misty with legend, while a hundred memories of Mary Queen of Scots come whispering at your ear as you soberly endeavor to buy gloves. If my previous impedimenta had been outrageously American, my third handbag was Scotch, every inch of him. He was gentlemanly and distinguished, frank and accommodating. I have never seen anything like him over here,—shiny black sides of oilcloth, bound by leather strips, plentifully studded with tacks, but otherwise strictly unornamented. But his chief charm was the way he opened, the whole top flapping easily apart at will, and afterwards the two sides closing over all as easily as if his only desire were to please. In capacity he was unlimited; you could pour into him, on and on, and always he closed upon his contents smilingly, without protest.

For a brief space, as I trickled down through England from cathedral to cathedral, my Scotch companion was my chiefest comfort, the mere sight of his black, rising−sunshiny face cheering me as it looked down upon me from the luggage rack of a third−class carriage. More and more I came to impose upon the generosity of his interior, until one day my confidence in his Scotch integrity was rudely shattered; for I discovered that the reason he could hold so much was that he had quietly kicked out his bottom! He continued to accompany me, it is true, but thrust from his high gentlemanly estate, resembling now rather those bleary, dilapidated Glasgow porters that greet one's arriving vessel, his frail form, like theirs, begirt and bandaged in order to support the few light belongings I now dared to entrust to his feebleness.

Meanwhile, the strength of my yellow telescope continued unabated, but so did also its averseness to accommodating my possessions, which daily, all unwittingly and unwillingly, increased. My dapper suitcase had suffered by the way, its neat sides were bruised and staved in, one leather corner was missing, another stood up like an attentive ear. It still smiled, "brave in ragged luck," but its own America would not have known it. It now appeared that England, and as it happened, rural Devon, must contribute another article to my retinue.

Now, ever since I had touched Great Britain, my unaccustomed eye had been fascinated by a piece of luggage quite new to me. I mean that most British thing, the tin trunk. We have nothing like it in luggage, but we have copied it exactly in cake boxes; the only difference is that the English original has a bulge top and a lock and key. In character my British baggage was much better natured than my American telescope, but in color it was much the same, orange tawny; it had grown very easy for me to spot my belongings in the miscellany of the luggage van.

These representatives of the American, Scotch, and English nations followed in my wake from Southampton to St. Malo, and perhaps their company need never have been increased on the continent if in Brittany I had not bought a pair of sabots, life size. Nothing so unaccommodating as sabots! Seemingly each was big enough to sleep in, but if I attempted to pack the inside of one, behold, it would hold nothing at all; it was built to hold a foot, and if it could n't have a foot, it would have nothing. In true peasant insolence, each sabot demanded a whole handbag to itself, and, once in, refused to accommodate its substantial bulk to the needs of any of my other possessions. In much difficulty I managed to get across France, but once in Paris, especially in view of certain aristocratic purchases that absolutely refused to consort with wooden shoes, the need of still a fifth handpiece was evident.

Paris luggage, like a Paris lady, is built to show a pleasing exterior. Diversion rather than utility is its motive. My Paris handbag still preserves its suggestion of perpetual picnic. It looks as if it were always just off for a Sunday in the Bois. It is a woven wicker thing, exactly like an American lunch−basket, vastly magnified. The handle must be grasped from the top, and is not the handy side appendage of all American grips. I never look at it without seeing within dozens upon dozens of boiled eggs and sandwiches. As a matter of fact, it has never held anything of the sort; rather it carried my new Parisian costume safely from Paris to New York.

By dint of fast and furious touring through Belgium I managed not to acquire anything more to pack or to be packed, but in Holland once again I fell. I was within a few days of sailing when I visited Alkmaar. There a tall polyglot young Dutchman showed me through a most delicious cheese factory. Innocent and round, ruby or orange, smiled those cheeses down at me from their long shelves. My guide gave me to eat. Thus it was that the last thing I bought on the other side was cheeses! Oh, he assured me, they were perfectly well behaved; even had they so desired they could not get out of their strong cases; no more innocent gift to be taken home to appreciative friends. That Dutchman understood American credulity better than he did the American language. Those cheeses did not stay in their cases. They came out and performed in all ways after the manner of cheeses. Now throughout my trip, whatever inconveniences I might suffer by reason of possessions acquired, I could never make up my mind to abandon any. Having bought them, I did not desert my cheeses, but it became increasingly apparent that they would have to travel in a home of their own, together with such of my goods as would not be corrupted by evil communications. I purchased my last bit of luggage in Rotterdam. It was a gray canvas bag, in shape like a

dachshund without the appendages. It was capable of as much lateral expansion as a Marken fisherman. It received and held the cheeses, but frankly, so that their contour was clear to the eye. To all appearances I was taking home a bushel of turnips out of brave little Holland.

I embarked at Rotterdam, and for ten days sank into that state of coma to which ocean travel stimulates me. It was not till we had touched the Hoboken dock that I became once more acutely alert. I had donned my Paris traveling dress, had walked through the great shed until I found my letter X, and then turned about to wait with the rest for the arrival of my luggage. Then for the first time realization overwhelmed me. I was waiting for my bags, my bags; those six disreputable traveling companions would here and now seek me out and claim my society, right here in America, with V and W to right of me, Y and Z to left, my haughty steamer acquaintance, looking on! Over on the other side one is not known by one's baggage, but here one is! I had faced many a white continental porter with nonchalance, but with which one of my motley collection in my hand could I face the black Pullman porter of my own country? I cowered with shame, so slowly they arrived, each several one of the six, tediously threading its way to X, never losing itself, never losing me, always hunting me down! The joy of home−coming was turned to gall. I saw V and W, Y and Z, turn away their faces. To my eyes each several hand−piece looked more bizarre than the last. Which one should I select to accompany me on an American railroad? Which of the motley crew would least endanger the respectability of a lady traveling alone in an American car? Through the crowd my Parisian lunch−basket came mincing up to me, still ready for perpetual picnic. Silly chit! I would n't travel with her. My Rotterdam purchase, bulging and redolent with cheeses, came waddling up, respectable perhaps, but with it I should have been as conspicuous as with one of the Marken imps in copious trousers that it so much resembled. My former pride of Scotch travel was now so fallen away that he looked as if he were in the last stages of his native whiskey, and as if his physique would hardly have supported the weight of a hairpin. No help to be had in him! My American suitcase, in May so trig and debonair, had been punched and pounded out of all semblance to anything belonging either to America or a suitcase. My British cakebox had suffered likewise, and in its decrepitude supported the loss of a lock, and appeared to my horrified eyes carefully roped with clothesline by a friendly steward. Even though I promptly sat down upon it, spreading my Paris skirt wide, I could not conceal that yellow cake−box from the fashionable steamer folk that swarmed about me. Suitcase and tin trunk both had lost all distinction of nation; they both belonged now to the international species, tramp. There remained to me only my evil genius, the orange−tawny telescope. Foreign labels had but scantily subdued the natural aggressiveness of his demeanor. He was possible—perhaps. Then I considered how he had flouted me, scorned me, spilled out at me, jeered at me in my helplessness. I pictured opening and shutting him in the berth of a sleeping car; then quietly, inconspicuously, and virulently, I kicked him.

I fastened the last strap the customs officers had loosened. Just one moment I hesitated, regarding my rakish European retinue, then I fell upon the waiting baggage−agent. "Check them all," I cried, "all!" Free as a bird, as a gypsy, as an American, I traveled from New York to Chicago, a lady luggage−less.

V. Detached Thoughts on Boarding

Boarding is a puzzling and provocative subject for any student of human nature. Some clue to its psychology is revealed by the fact that even Adam and Eve got tired of it. Eden itself could not keep them from wanting their own menage. One can conjecture the course of their growing ennui and irritation as the suspicion dawned upon them that in Paradise they were not getting all the comforts of home. Having nothing to do but board, they probably conversed a great deal about their food, when the celestial ministrants were out of earshot, and eventually decided that they could have run the table a great deal better themselves. Then, too, they had no privacy, they were absolutely at the mercy of any archangel who might choose to drop in on them. Possibly, also, Eve felt that Eden was no sort of place for bringing up children. They might be spoiled by the attentions of other boarders, elephant or ape, fish or fowl, any one of a perfectly indiscriminate menagerie, while she herself, as a mother, might be subjected to constant advice from angels who did not know one thing more about human babies than she did herself. After Eve had thought over these matters for some time, and whispered them all to Adam,

she did what many another boarder has done since; she up and precipitated a crisis.

The case of Adam and Eve is sufficiently typical to afford some light upon the puzzling effects of boarding, but not quite enough illumination to satisfy the psychologist. He is teased by the conviction that there is more in this matter than he can get at. Without an ultimate analysis of causes it may still be of interest to examine some results to the human spirit of both the selling and the buying of house−room, and to offer some tentative explanation of the curious phenomena that for many of us are too familiar for attention.

We all recognize as a distinct human type the woman who keeps boarders. One writes woman rather than man, not that in strict accuracy one could say that men never keep boarders; when men do engage in the business, however, they do so by wholesale, never by retail, while it is precisely the increased personal intimacy of the retail relation that occasions the peculiar blight incurred by the proprietor of a boarding−house, but escaped by the proprietor of a hotel. There is an expression familiar to our tongues, distressing in its figurative suggestion, which is frequently descriptive of the class under discussion, "decayed gentlewoman." No one knows whether a gentlewoman takes boarders because she has decayed or whether she decays because she takes them. Of course, not all women who take boarders are decrepit either in soul or body,—some of them are very buxom indeed; and, equally, not all are refined,—some of them are refreshingly vulgar; still, as a whole, the attributes inherent in the term "decayed gentlewoman" so generally characterize the profession that in whatever country one travels one is received by ladies so consciously redolent of better days as to shame a boarder for not having had better days himself. However adroitly they conceal their emotions, women who entertain paying guests generally have toward their occupation a feeling of perpetual apology or of perpetual resentment. Sometimes the apology element predominates, and then a blundering boarder had better be mindful of the sensitive toes of his hostess; sometimes the resentment is uppermost, and then the boarder had better be mindful for his own toes. There is no reason why these facts should characterize so worthy a business, and there are conspicuous exceptions in which both the woman and the domicile remain invincibly warm−hearted and welcoming, but the rule still holds that only the rarest of women can invite the public into her home and not herself suffer from the exposure, only the rarest of women can as the mistress of a boarding−house still be perfectly herself.

Having boarders, however, is not so demoralizing as being a boarder. The chronic boarder is an easily recognizable type, fat, fussy, futile, and usually feminine. This caustic characterization does not apply to women who go out by the day to any form of scrubbing, as doctors, lawyers, or what−not, professional women too busy for carping; it is the woman who has no profession except boarding that suffers its utmost injury. To give primary attention to the manner in which one is, fed and lodged has the same effect as any other reversion to an animal attitude. The faces of women who do nothing but keep house are always harassed; the faces of women who do nothing but board are always vacuous. Men−boarders in a house are generally preferred to women; a he−boarder is more to be desired than a she−boarder because there is less of him underfoot. On the other hand, since a man can always beat a woman on her own ground whenever he thinks it worth while, a man who gives his undivided attention to his boarding can in fume and fuss out−boarder any woman.

The insidious influence of boarding upon the spirit is most evident when we watch it operate upon a child. We all know the type of youngster that even the very best of boarding−houses is prone to produce. He is noisy, aggressive, self−conscious, and yet to sympathetic penetration profoundly pathetic. He knows that all his little life is overheard, that every room knows when he is scolded or spanked or entreated. A grown−up learns how to conceal his soul from even boarding−house scrutiny, but a child has no refuge except in slamming doors and thundering on the stairs and jumping into the secrets of those who have trespassed upon his own.

The effect of boarding upon our own soul may best be seen by contrasting our reactions to our geography, according as we wake in the morning to find ourselves at home, in a friend's home, or in a boarding−house. At home our attitude toward the ensuing day is one of absolute sincerity,—we expect to be our best self or our worst, for frankness is the chief comfort of kinship; if, on the other hand, we open our eyes in somebody's guest chamber, we marshal our forces to insure our good behavior, we owe it to our host to put out best foot foremost;

but if we wake in a boarding−house? There our morning resolve reduces itself to the single sordid intention to get our money's worth. This latent hostility is ignominious and unworthy, but it is true. Yet we all know that any hostelry is richer in Samaritan opportunities than the road to Jericho.

The detriment due to boarding does not confine itself to animate beings, but extends to the inanimate. In a boarding−house even the chairs look protesting and sat upon. The curtains seem exhausted by enforced welcome. The overworked kitchen has not enough pride left to keep its savors to itself. The piano has clattered until it has forgotten it was ever meant for music. The doom of dejection falls upon a boarding−house both without and within, so that one always regrets its entrance into a street cozy with homes. Its windows stare forth so blankly that the homes grow uncomfortable and move away. There is a blur over the face−walls of a boarding−place obliterating the individuality to which every house has a right.

This very absence of personality gives the boarding−house a certain personality of its own. The effort to analyze this character has made the boarding−house a favorite background with story−writers. Balzac, in "Pere Goriot," caught and reproduced its very soul as well as the soul of the homeless home−lover that it harbored. The frequency of the hall bedroom and the long table in magazine stories to−day suggests the wistful familiarity with both of writer and reader. The juxtaposition of types in a group bound together by no more congenial tie than the brute need of food and shelter has always opened a fascinating field to the romancer from Chaucer's day to ours.

The mere mention of Chaucer's name is eloquent with contrast, for surely the Tabard was no bleak spot, but warm and tingling with hospitality. Yet even Chaucer's blithe company had a sharp eye and a gossipy tongue ready for each other's foibles, and if they had remained together too long, it would have taken more than mine host to keep them in order, but fortunately they had their picnic and parted. Another week or two and even the Canterbury pilgrims might have degen erated into boarders, and dear knows what metamorphosis mine host the merry, might have undergone.

To place Balzac's boarding−house and Chaucer's Tabard side by side is to produce a pregnant contrast. Yet if the primary purpose of both is akin, why the world of difference connoted by the word "boarding−house" and the world{sic} "inn"? Inn suggests comfort, coziness, congenial conversation, but, alas, it also suggests a dear departed day. The only inns left are survivors from dead decades, and they themselves have no descendants. "Mine ease in mine inn" is a phrase from the past.

It is interesting to examine the difference in meaning of the three types of hostelry—hotel, boarding−house, and inn. The hotel does not try to be something it is not. It neither offers nor expects anything personal. Its purpose is to make money out of the visitor, as his purpose is to get comfort out of it. A hotel is not a home, and it does not pretend to be. Now a boarding−house is pathetic because it is always trying to be a home when it is not. It is we, the boarders, who are responsible for its being the wistful anomaly that it is, for at one moment we demand of it the indifference of a hotel and the next the coziness of a home, and at all moments we ask of it that which money cannot buy—hospitality.

The little word inn stands apart from those other two, hotel and boarding−house, and its charm lies as much in its literary aroma as its actuality. We visit inns oftener in books than in life, but in both they have the same characteristics. The tiniest inn is always big enough for personality. The innkeeper is a person, the guest is a person, the cook, the boots, the hostler, they are all real persons. There is time for flavoring food with conversation. The chairs are friendly and inviting. The hearth leaps warm with welcome. But note well, one sometimes lives at a hotel, one often lives at a boarding−house, but one never lives at an inn, one merely stops. The reason why the welcome and the speeding of an inn can be so warm and genuine is that host and guest never have too much of each other. Both can present their best foot for three days when a stretch of three weeks would strain its tendons. In an inn food never seems skimped, the financial aspect never seems prominent, because the guest never stays long enough to discover sordid secrets, nor long enough to have his own private affairs invaded. Company manners, the outward and visible sign of hospitality's inward and spiritual grace, can prevail in an inn,

for the simple reason that no matter how often one returns, exactly as often one departs.

It is clearly easier to enumerate the effects of boarding upon human nature than to ascertain the psychological causes underlying them. One ventures to hazard a few random reasons, all interrelated and all growing out of the fact that we are still cave−dwellers at heart. The cave household feared and hated the stranger; and with good cause. They eyed him askance, exactly as the other boarders in a house eye the recent comer. The newest boarder never coalesces with the group until the advent of another still newer, when he is tentatively admitted to ranks needing union against the latest intruder. This survival of prehistoric manners may be observed and experienced in any boarding−house.

The hostility of older occupants toward the stranger is exactly matched by his suspicion of them, hostile suspicion always, no matter how obsequiously concealed. When a cave−dweller penetrated the seclusion of another cave, he was wary, on the defensive, and this attitude made him critical of the inmates, of course, and therefore, for them, a person to fear. We are still afraid of the stranger, of his eye that may see, and his tongue that may tell, our secrets. Boarding hurts us because we suffer continual abrasion of our reserve. In a boarding−house, family life has to go on in whispers; strangers are in our midst looking and listening, and even if they are friendly their attention is irksome: Eve got tired of having even the angels around all the time.

The human soul demands retirement, but is often unwilling to pay the price. Homemaking is to be had only by house−keeping. In order to live by ourselves we have to take care of ourselves, and the effort to evade this issue drives us to the boarding−house. The home−keeping instinct is, however, as active in us as in our cave−dwelling ancestors, only they knew better than to try to suppress it. They knew they wanted seclusion, and so they rolled a rock to the cave−mouth, and possessed their souls in privacy. It is our doom to inherit from them a desire for our own front door, in order that we may not have to sue for entrance at some one else's door, and also that we may never have to open ours except when we do so in free and voluntary welcome. Boarding is often necessary, but it goes contrary to impulses as ineradicable in us as nest−making in a bird. Even the feminists, when they inveigh against family life, will be found riot free from prehistoric impulses toward privacy. They do not advocate caravansary existence, but rather the group system, in all its cave−dweller isolation; only the group must be based on congeniality, not on mere arbitrary and accidental kinship.

The joy of slamming our own front door upon the world is only equaled by the joy of flinging that door wide to the world when we wish to. Of all commodities hospitality should be free from money−taint. The trouble with boarding is that it attempts to buy and sell a welcome. Everything is cheapened the moment we can pay a price for it. The instant we lay our dollars on the counter, we have the right to criticize our purchase. A buyer does not have to say thank you with his lips nor yet with his heart, and this is why a certain uncouthness is to be incurred in any purely commercial relation. Hospitality is essentially not sordid, but spiritual: a host is gracious with the generosity that offers what money cannot buy, a guest is gracious with the gratitude that accepts what money cannot pay for. Boarding is an anomalous and enforced relation between people who offer and accept house−room, and only those can escape its blight who have the power always to elevate the commercial to the plane of the human and the friendly. Luckily, among this small but noble company are many persons that board and many that take boarders. The existence of this minority does not alter the fact that for most of us boarding is a demoralizing occupation. The reason lies deep: hospitality, given or received, is too sacred for barter.

VI. The Lady Alone at Night

I am a lady, and a coward. The two facts have no relation to each other, but both are necessary to a comprehension of my sentiments about to be delivered. Soberly revolving the universe in my mind, I find only one thing of which I am sure I am not afraid, and that is—dying. I mean merest dying, for I am as fearsome as any of being tossed in air, disjecta membra, by an automobile; of furnishing lingering sweetness to an epicurean tiger; of being played with, and pawed and tweaked by disease, cat−and−mouse−like; it is only the actual slipping by

the portal of which I am not afraid. With this sole exception, I am afraid of everything: firecrackers, reptiles, drunken cooks, dogs, tunnels, trolleys, and caterpillars. About ghosts I am a little uncertain; experience leads me to conjecture that ghosts are usually your own fault: that is, they are a little like rattlesnakes; if you don't intrude, neither will they. But that circumstance which is to me the very quintes sence of terror is Night and A Man. I speak hypothetically—it has never happened.

Strange what a difference mere plurality of a noun and mere presence or absence of an article make to my mind. Now Men, Man, and A Man stand for most diverse conceptions. Man,—I think of Mr. Alexander Pope, and of a creature of watery intellect, whose vitality is something between that of a frog and a jumping−jack, and who is diddled puppet−wise by an equally anaemic deity. Man is humanity dehumanized, but Men are about the most human thing there is. Men are the big people, clean−scrubbed spiritually and physically, who come to see you and take you about, and look after the universe, and keep it in a good humor; who, when you are making a fool of yourself, laugh at you in a genial, masculine fashion. In a thin, tentative, feminine way, you try to imitate, and the effort, however quavering, somehow makes you feet better. Men, of your own family or out of it, sometimes put you on trains, and take care of you—sometimes. Thus Men.

But A Man— ugh! I saw him first in a nightmare when I was six. He wore a black Prince Albert, and on his head three high hats jammed down one on top of the other. He stood on the cone of a hill, black as a coal against the red light of fires in the rear. >From under his three hats he grinned at me, and on that black hill, against that lurid sky, he danced and danced and danced. He frightens me still. It is since then that Night and A Man have been my crown of terrors. A Man lurks in every darkened doorway, stretches an arm from every tree trunk, pursues me,—pat, pat, pat,—and fades into the common light of lamp and fire only when I am safely under my own roof−tree. Even in the daytime, A Man never deserts me: he haunts the solitary country lanes, lush and lovely with spring; he pops out upon me from mountain woods; on the stretches of beach he lurks just around the point. He is always there; at least, I suppose he is, for I never am—alone.

By day, A Man is a leering horror, but at night he becomes, like that figure in my dream, pure devil. I am a suburbanite, and as I said before, a lady, a laboring lady. This is why I find myself not infrequently alone at night. The alarm set a−quiver when I descend from the social, bright−lit, suburban car and plunge forth into the dark is something that custom cannot stale. Yet sometimes the spell of the night is as a buckler against fear, making me wonder if solitude is really terror, genuine solitude, solitude belonging to me, and not to A Man. I remember one early winter evening, white with a recent snowfall; there had been an ice storm, and our trees were all incased, each tiniest twig, and the full moon rode low: I forgot A Man, in every nerve I was glad to be alone, but hark, a step in the distance, and earth again!

It is worth some study, the sensation of that approaching step, that emerging shadow,—bifurcated or petticoated, two feet or four? I am never afraid of two men: neither actually nor, grammatically can A Man be two. Joseph and the Babes in the Wood for precedent, dissension steps in between violence and its victim so soon as the aggressive party is multiplied by even two. And as for a group of men, whatever their caste or condition, however socially uncouth, by mere virtue of numbers they become a protection rather than a peril; by mere aggregate of protective instinct, A Man sufficiently multiplied equals Men (supra).

In addition to these distinctions in regard to the number of your potential aggressor, there are also distinctions geographic and geometric. I appeal to any lady of my sex and condition, whether there is not the greatest possible difference in amount of peril to be inferred between the man who is walking in front of you on a lonely street, and the man who is walking behind. If a man paces on soberly and regularly some few discreet rods ahead, straightway he is enhaloed with succor and salvation,—you are safe, you need only to call him in your need, and he will save. But should he go more slowly, fall behind, then in the very instant of passing you this same protecting saint becomes decanonized, and worse. There is nothing so suspicious as this dropping behind. True, you preserve a bold back, walk no faster,—note, sir, my valiancy, my unconcern,—but still your knee crooks for flight, and your vocal cords contract for that scream you wonder if you could ever really utter. A corresponding

transformation in moral intention, blackguard and chevalier, is possible for the man in your rear. On a recent evening I was hurrying home along the solitary street—steps behind! Flying, pursuing steps! Nearer, nearer! Upon me, and my heart sickened and stopped beating! But past me, fleeting on and on, disappearing, oh, too swiftly! For as he left me so quickly again to solitude, I could hardly resist an impulse to gather up my skirts and scamper after, after my retreating protector. I think he made his train.

I have been at some pains to prove the sec ond of my introductory assertions. The reason I have not tried to prove the first is explained by the difference between the essay and polite society. In polite society, one is under the obligation of confessing one's virtues, not blatantly, but none the less persistently, wearily,—one's dogging old virtues, as if it were not enough of a bore to live with them in private without having to be seen with them in public. In the essay one may have the exquisite pleasure of confessing one's vices. In society I must be a lady; in the essay I may be, as here and now, a coward.

VII. In Sickness and in Health

I have been sick, but not utterly,—a tooth. I am in the convalescent's mood of confidence and confession; therefore, I write in haste, for in health I am buoyant and amiable, and not fluently penitent; indeed, there is little then to be penitent about. For a week I have been very unpleasant, and the circumstance leads to remarks on the moral disintegration attendant upon indisposition. I speak of petty disorders, for illnesses of dramatic magnitude, a run of typhoid for instance, sometimes tend to spiritual upbuilding,—at least, it is so demonstrated in fiction. Doubtless the pawing of the white horse in the dooryard has a soothing effect upon the patient's nerves, but illnesses in which one has not the comfort of composing one's epitaph are not composing to the soul. The lesser ailments make appalling holes in our integrity: myself last week threw a teaspoon at my most immediate forbear. Ferocious, but it was the elemental ferocity of suffering. It is a fact, belonging rather to the science of psychology than of medicine, that small sicknesses hurt more than big ones. I appeal to all connoisseurs in invalidism whether a tooth, an ear, an ankle, are not more direct in their methods of torture than pneumonia, smallpox, or appendicitis. Believing this, I have always had much sympathy for the vilified hero of a certain novelette of my acquaintance; in this romance, the husband has a tooth; the wife, a heart,—a literal heart, mechanical, physiological. Everybody knows which suffered more, and yet because the gentleman got a little crusty over a most outrageous molar, how joyously the author trounced him through page after page! I am hot with indignation. There ought to be a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Creations. Manufacturers of heroes and heroines should not be allowed to flay and burn and quarter so wantonly as they do; a humane reading public should take from them the prerogative of so unnatural a parenthood.

This one man should have been forgiven; he had a toothache, and non−fatal illnesses may make monsters of the meekest of us; but fortunately, the illness being temporary, so is the monster. Only the recollection is humiliating; I am recovered, but I shudder at the legion so recently cast out of me. Sickness sets free all the processes of atavism, and whirls us back into savagery at a breathless rate. The first bit of baggage we leave behind us on this rapid return journey is family affection. Last week my kin stood about my couch day and night with poultices and sympathy in their hands. I took the poultices and tossed back evil words out of my mouth. I looked upon my relatives with frankest loathing. Why? Their insulting forbearance, their aggressive meekness, their poor−sufferer−here−is−my−other−cheek attitude stirred the foundations of my bile. Their serene patience provoked my utmost effort to destroy it, and I was impotent; their invulnerability was an affront to my powers of invention. My own possibilities of vituperation were only less surprising to me than the endurance of the abused. And all the time that I listened to my own reviling tongue, my self−respect was ebbing from me most uncomfortably,—and it was all their fault.

A concomitant loss in this dissolving of our civilization is that of the sense of humor. Being so recently returned from barbarism and its beyond, I can confidently assert that the ape and the savage, while they may be laughable, do not laugh. In the sickroom of the not very sick, the brightest witticisms seem only studied banalities. There is

no comedy in the incidents of ministration; it is all unrelieved tragedy. Yet it is not the humorous, but the humor that is lacking, for frequently the situations are appreciated at recovery, and furnish us amusement at intervals for a lifetime. I doubt whether this suspension of the processes of humor could be established in the case of serious illness, admitting of disastrous outcome. There are soldiers a−plenty who have jested at their wounds, and instances enough on record where a timely jest or a merry incident has saved the day. I cite one such situation. A husband lay at death's door, and the door was ajar. It was midnight, and the wife watched. Suddenly the patient seemed to be sinking, slipping from her. She put the hartshorn bottle to his nostrils, but he could smell nothing. Both were terrified as they realized the import of this. Then the wife glancing down discovered that the bottle contained witch−hazel. The man laughed—and lived.

In serious illness there is perhaps sometimes a positive stimulus to the comic sensibilities; there is such a thing as dying game, or the fight for life may be worth some bravado. But imagine feeling gamy with tonsillitis or a felon on your finger; there is absolutely no histri onic appeal. If your sickness has no spice of fatality, you might just as well give up; you won't see the light of humor again until you recover.

No love in our heart, no humor in our head, there is another evil of savagery thrust upon us by illness. It is the sudden acquisition of personality by inanimate objects. What possibilities of abusive conduct lurk within the four walls of a room yesterday, in health, perfectly inoffensive! What malevolence in the wall−paper! Such a sneaking, underhand, leering pattern for curtains with any pretensions to respectability! How tipsy the books look, crowding and pushing themselves askew for very perversity! No amount of chastisement will make the pillows conduct themselves comfortably. There is something about the billows of that malicious counterpane that makes me think of the oozy, oily, shiny unpleasantness of the ocean when the sailboat is becalmed. I am as much at the mercy of my furniture as any Fiji before his fetish.

Thus sickness reduces us to cave−dwellers or gorillas rampant, by perhaps just a day of pain no greater in compass than one's little finger−nail,— soulful, strenuous, high−stepping beings though we are! Sad enough to think about; yet on the other hand, of all insupportables, the people whom sickness makes saints are the most contemptible. I know men and ladies, in health normal, human, unworthy, likable,— but give them so much as a cold in the head, and at once their smile smacks of Heaven, and their eyes are uplift with the watery mysticism of those about to be canonized. When a small boy I know voluntarily allows his younger sister a canter on his rocking−horse, his nurse immediately applies red flannel and turpentine; generosity with him is a sure presage of sore throat. I have seen great strapping lads, full of sin, reduced to sudden and spurious sainthood by a black eye. There is no more unfeeling conduct than patient suffering,—− there is nothing more alarming to an anxious family than a course of virtuous endurance obstinately persisted in. So long as you rage and are unseemly your kinsfolk will never pipe their eye, but docility under the minor physical afflictions makes a stubbed toe as much a matter of apprehension as angina pectoris. This being good when sick is a bid for unmerited martyrdom. These gentle sufferers are likely to employ the emaciated voice of those who ail, knowing well that the bellow of rebellion is much too reassuring. I am glad I am not as one of these; sick, I throw things. Thus all mankind and all woman and child kind, too, are divided, though unevenly, into those who are better in sickness and those who are worse. The marriage service on examination will be found to be a very canny document, and its compilers nowhere showed greater shrewdness than in just that little phrase which insures conjugal devotion in sickness and in health. For of some, sickness makes Mr. Hydes, and of others, Dr. Jekylls, and in the matter of spouses, how in the world can the contracting parties foresee, demon or angel, which will develop, or, having developed, which will be better company?

VIII. A Educational Fantasy

When I look back upon a half−century of wasted life, I find that there are no years that accuse me of neglected opportunity more poignantly than those between five and twelve. If only I had had the foresight then to apply myself with earnestness to the tasks set before me! If only now I possessed, those priceless stores of knowledge

that I feel sure must then have been pumped into me! That I must have received abundant elementary instruction I feel confident, although I do not in the least remember receiving it. My purely academic activities at this period remain wrapped in obscurity, while other memories are lively enough. I distinctly recall the scientific invention displayed in our efforts, to produce new shades and colors in the soapy water with which we cleaned our slates. It was I who discovered that the yolk of an egg well beaten made a more satisfactory admixture than butter, even though both are equally yellow to begin with. I remember how one may by judicious spooning out with a pin, extract the inner riches of a chocolate drop without visible disturbance of the outer crust. Despite my scholastic indifference, I can have been no sluggard, without spirit, for of my fifty coevals there was not one who could tag me in the open except Percy Dent alone, and that only (but in my wisdom I never let him discover the fact) when I would let him; well do I recollect with what eclat, with what flutter of petticoats and pinafore, I could execute a pas seul at hop−scotch. These attainments, the thrill of which still warms me, prove me not without ambition;—

"Not for such hopes and fears, Annulling youth's brief years, Do I remonstrate," but for "Those obstinate questionings Of sense and outward things,"— such as the multiplication table, and the capital of Arizona, and the difference between an adjective and an adverb,—questionings so obstinate that I am convinced that not even at ten years old did I know the answers; hinc illae lacrimae.

To some extent it is possible to go back and piece out the stitches dropped in the course of an education; only, one is not allowed to go back so far as I desire. Roughly speaking, I should say that life does not allow one to relearn what one has failed to learn before sixteen, whereas it is the knowledge belonging to eight years, and ten and twelve, after which I hunger and thirst. I wish some one would open a school for able−minded but ignorant grown−ups. Believe me, enough of us could be found to attend, enough of us glad to jump down from our college chairs, to leave out laboratories with their clutter of advanced research, our counting−houses with their problems, and gladly go to school, gladly learn once and forever how much nine times thirteen is, and build Vesuvius past and present out of clay, and follow out of doors some charming young lady who would tell us exactly what the birds and the wild waves are saying.

But I stipulate at the outset that I will have no offensive superiority in my instructors. If I am to learn as a child I will be treated as a child. I will have no one caviling at me, for instance, because I do not know when Washington was born. I never did know when Washington was born, but I desire now to amend this my iniquity of ignorance, and I am even minded, if only my teachers will be patient, to plod on from the Revolution to the Civil War, and to learn the succession of bat tles thereof, and which side won them. I wish my instructors to understand that my humility of spirit needs no augmenting on their part. I wish them to be as sweetly patient and cheerily maternal as they would be to my daughter's daughter. I wish my teachers to administer boundary lines but mildly, and to give me their minimum doses of mental arithmetic; for in mathematics and geography my mind is willing but weak. I think I could promise that patience in my instructors would have a reward in a proficiency of pupil such as they could never hope to win from the iniquitous immature, on whose preoccupied minds and thankless hearts they squander such devotion.

What a joyous picture it is, as I conjure it up, this going to school again! What happiness to slip out of our grown−up households, and go forth into the morning, with bookstrap and luncheon in hand, to meet by the way our harried and over−busy acquaintance, men and women, some whiteheaded in ignorance, perhaps, all skipping and dancing along to the same glad place. Gleeful, we enter a sunny room with geraniums on the windowsill, bright maps on the wall, and a beautiful young lady at the desk. We are no longer hard and hardened children: our hearts as well as our intellects are softened by the debility of age, and we appreciate the graciousness of our instructor with the rose in her belt, the milk of human kindness in her eye, and the carefully preserved smile upon her lips. It is with responsive smiles of gratitude that we feel arithmetic and history and geography trickling into our craniums from the cranium of our teacher. Then, when she feels that, still willing, we are perhaps grown weary with well−doing, she gives a signal, and with one accord we raise our cracked voices in ecstatic, yet instructive song, in which perhaps we are poetically informed of some new fact about the firefly, or the green grass, or perhaps our own gastronomy, or in glittering phrase we unweave the rainbow into the colors of the

spectrum. Or, to forestall the ennui resulting from our too earnest effort, our instructor bids us stretch our cramped, rheumatic limbs, and with graceful contortions of her lithe young body, directs us as we prance stiffly through a calisthenic exercise.

But it is not on these diversions that my fancy lingers most fondly, but on those more solid parts of our education. How happy I should be, for example, if I could only add, both in my head and on paper! How many bewildered and distrustful moments would thus be eliminated from my existence! And if to a proficiency in addition I superadded an adeptness in subtraction, then perhaps on some proud day might my opinion of the bulk of my bank account approximate more nearly the opinion of the cashier. And if my rudimentary bump of mathematics were carefully manipulated according to the newest system of educational massage, I might even progress as far as percentage. I might learn how to be richer if I could once understand the allurements of compound interest. So much depends on the attitude of mind that I wonder whether, if I approached fractions in a spirit of friendliness rather than of enmity to the knife, they would reward me by allowing me an entrance into their intricacies, so that I could with impunity buy things on the bias, or estimate the reduction by the dozen of merchandise that tags a half−cent to its price when purchased singly. There are, besides, other valuable facts to be gleaned from the study of arithmetic, the possession of which would be matter for gloating. How proudly I should proclaim to some ignorant companion of a country stroll the number of feet in a mile! I should be happy to know under all circumstances the number of ounces in a pound, grocer's or apothecary's: how exalted I should be if I knew the exact amount of a scruple, that being a fact of which I am sure most of my friends are ignorant. An exhaustive knowledge of weights and measures would not only entitle one to distinction among one's acquaintance, but would open up many new avenues of interest in one's daily life.

History is another of the subjects for which I hanker; not history as it is administered to me now, spiced for the mature palate, with philosophy and evolution, the ebb and flow of tendencies, but history for the infant mind, the bread and milk of history, as it were. I have sometimes thought that historic research would be easier for me if sometimes I knew what men did before I was forced to understand why they did it; and a simple statement of what the actual fact is under consideration would clarify for me much of the historian's discussion of cause and effect. I have a distinct conception of the development of the great and glorious English people, but even such knowledge would be materially strengthened if I were able instantly to sort out all the Henrys and Edwards and stow them away in their proper cubbyholes among the embarrassment of decades. As to my own respected fatherland, I have discussed intelligently the growth of the spoils system, skipping from presidential term to presidential term with all a grown−up's airy superiority; but ask me by whom and when and why North Carolina was colonized, or just what Captain John Smith was about when Pocahontas intercepted the executioner, and you have me. I want to study history at last fairly and squarely, out of a dapper little textbook that I can stow away handily in my brain, with fine fair outlines at beginning and end of it, and all important events made salient by heavy type, and a brisk brushing together of one's information by a resume after each chapter. Such a primer would greatly assist me in my study of the metaphysics of history.

Yet perhaps I do but hanker after impossibilities; perhaps this school I so happily image forth would refuse to teach me what I want to know. Possibly such information belongs only to the period of my negligent infancy. Perhaps my charming young teacher, exuding the wit and wisdom of the newest normal school, would refuse to stand and deliver the knowledge I long for. If I desired the facts of the French and Indian War, I might merely be set to building wigwams and drawing braves in war−paint with colored crayons on the blackboard. Perhaps after all there is nobody left who knows how to teach the things I have forgotten. For example, do they now acknowledge in the primary curriculum that fair, old−fashioned study called penmanship? I yearn to be put once more into a copybook. I long to set forth once more wise saws in round v's and unquestioned e's and i's. My fingers long since became callous and conscienceless to distinguish t from l, b from p, and I wish somebody would reform the rascally old digits. It would be a great relief to my friends and myself if I could only become legible in my old age.

One branch of knowledge little emphasized in my youth, however, I could be sure of receiving at the hands of my fair instructress of to−day,—I refer to that varied information known as "nature−study." I am greatly deficient in nature−study. I own to an unanalytical habit of mind as regards out−of−doors. So long as the wild flowers make a glory at my feet, I have never cared much to shred them into pistil and corolla and stamen. So long as the small fowls make me melody, I have never cared to know the color of their pin−feathers. But I would fain amend all this and die knowing something. I picture our band of eager grown−ups pouring over the countryside in the wake of our animated and instruc tive conductor,—peering into the grass to lay bare the soul in the sod, blinking our old eyes to discover the bird in his coverts, cocking our dull ears to classify the notes of his song. I see us disporting ourselves over the landscape, busily seeking some curious knowledge, and then scampering back to our teacher with treasure trove of leaf or flower or pebble or captured insect. Sweetly she commends our application, and explains the exact nature of our find. We swell with knowledge momentarily, and return to more prosaic tasks elate, having hung its proper label on blade and bush, bird and bough. What a satisfaction it would be, after having lived with nature for a lifetime in awesome ignorance, to feel that one had at last assailed her and ascertained her secrets!

As a young child, I must have been singularly limited in mental scope; I cannot otherwise explain my well−remembered aversion to geography. Those parti−colored maps streaked with inky rivers, and bordered by the wiggling lines of the Gulf Stream, filled me with loathing. The revolving globe, and that oft−repeated image which likens the earth to an orange flattened at the poles, seemed to me almost sickening. How bitterly do I repent my obstinacy! Besides, there is not one trace left now of my former aversion. In fact, geography appeals to me to−day as if it were a brand−new branch of study, so well did I succeed in not learning it as a child. I have tried ever since reaching maturity to make up my geographical deficiencies, but with small success. Often do I find myself relegated to the dunce−seat in the minds of the company present. Despite my constant effort, there are certain countries that always elude my grasp, notably Burma and New Zealand, and there is always for me an airy insubstantiality about the entire continent of South America. Within my own beloved country, certain rivers have a way of turning up in unexpected States when I supposed that they had long comfortably emptied themselves into the ocean; and there are some cities which always flit with agility to and fro across the map.

I wonder if my early antagonism to geography might perhaps have been due to a shrewd sense of its uselessness to me at that stage of my existence. Stay−at−home as I was, why trouble myself with strange lands until necessary? Yet I was lacking in foresight, and should be grateful now if only I had packed away some information against the day I should need it, whereas nowadays I find traveling without any knowledge of geog raphy stimulating but inconvenient. This observation leads me to a broader one on the topsy−turvy nature of our present educational sequence: those studies most astute and useless we put in the college curriculum, and those most immediate and practical to the college graduate about to grapple with life, we relegate to the elementary school, where the children neither desire nor need to master them. I would suggest a turning about. Let the college youth and maid who will suffer from a lack of practical arithmetic learn to add a column accurately; let the irresponsible infant sport with trigonometry and conic sections. These subjects unlearned or forgotten, one could still go through life unfretted by the loss. So with other subjects forever lost to us because entrusted to the intelligence of careless infancy. I would teach geography and handwriting in the senior year at college, and put philosophy in the primary school. So would the young collegian go forth upon life well equipped, and not come to fifty years burdened with regrets for knowledge lost forever,—as I. I have kept afloat in higher mathematics, I have delved into the mines of science, I have trod air with many a prancing philosopher,—therefore who so well fitted as I to appreciate at last the peace of having a foundation!

IX. My Clothes

In the dear, naughty memoirs of Madame de Brillaye, not inaptly named by the author the "Journal of a Wicked Old Woman," you remember that scene in the pleasaunce at Chateau Vernot, where the turf was like fairy velvet and the trees were tortured into all manner of shapes unarboreal,—she liked to have her trees dressed, she

said,—"There is something indecent in great naked branches sprawling the good God knows where." The little old lady is sitting with her great, old−ivory cane across her knees; she rolls it back and forth with her little old−ivory hands, while she scolds Aimee—as always. Aimee has just come through that brisk little encounter of hers with de Brontignac, and seems to have allowed her raiment to look a little battle−worn. "Go dress yourself, baby," cries Madame Great−Aunt. "Will you let your very laces whimper? Into your rose velvet brocade, and your chin will be jerked up as if by a string. Gowns have healed more hearts than they 've ever broken: the second, men's; the first, women's. Now you think you have a soul; when you are my age, you will know that women are not souls, but dresses. I look back; my history is the history of my gowns: undressed, I do not exist; my clothes are myself." (A few lines above I used the word remember," but merely for the sake of an effective start−off. Madame and her memoirs do not exist outside of this paragraph. I am not the first to perpetrate a spurious quotation; I am merely the first to confess it. To proceed.) It is not the first time that the little old de Brillaye has set me thinking. Is she true in this passage, or merely epigrammatic? If my history is the history of my clothes, let me so study it out, formulate, as it were, the meditations of the pupa upon its successive integumenta. Yet the figure is infelicitous. In fact, the chrysalis image is not over−pretty as regards this side of eternity: pupa suggests the pulpy tenantry of the chestnut; this worminess may be liturgical, but it is unpleasant, is opposed to that sociability with one's self which makes life entertaining; there is nothing chat−worthy in a worm. Be it granted me to regard these accidental rags of lawn or wool or silk I find adherent, these hardly less transitory hands and feet, this hardly more durable incasing occipital, not as a worm incarcerate, but with the detachment and uplift of the incipient butterfly.

Why not my philosophy of my clothes, the pronoun italicized, meaning not Teufelsdrockh's, but my own, both the clothes and the philosophy? Let me here and now make some effort toward system and definition, toward order out of chaos, in that long chapter in a woman's story, my lady's wardrobe. How far have these successive wrappings around, and prankings out of diverse colors and tissues that are to my fellow passengers labels of my lone pilgrim soul, stating of what age, sex, nation, education, and caste I may be,— how far have these clothes of mine served for triumph or undoing in my spiritual history, the life−history of this "celestial amphibian," myself?

The clothes of babyhood first. It is a strong−minded adult who does not grow sentimental in regarding the garments of his infancy, those caps and bibs and socks reminding us of the wabbling heads, the aching gums, the simian feet, of the days when we, for all our present arrogance of maturity, were the sport of colic and nutritive experiment.

How explain the repugnance of the newly born to clothing, the birth−wail that pleads for the sincerity of the nude, protests against the cloakings of convention? Strange paradox that the first emotion of the baby soul should be bitterness against all those contrivances of decency, those hemstitched linens and embroidered flannels, through which the mother heart eased its brooding love. The little pink, squirming creature, fresh out of eternity, cannot be too quickly incased in the wrappings of finite human care. That is why we are so long in seeing ourselves as we really are; all the clothes and the conventions were ready for us; before we had a glimpse at ourselves we were popped into them; it is a merciful long while before we are old enough to undress sufficiently to discover, away inside, the little shy soul−thing, the naked ego, with its eerie eyes.

Thus it is that when I first find myself in those early, misty recesses I see myself all dressed, dressed for company inspection; I am a little girl wearing a crispness of brown curl and a crispness of white muslin; I wear white stockings and Burt's shoes.—I recognize also, quite in the same way, as enveloping facts, without which I may not present myself unclothed to my fellows, that I have a peppery, passionate temper, and an imagination,—that is what seeing people in void air and talking to them is called. Thus clad and ticketed, I go pattering along the pilgrimage.

How little clothes mattered then! All spun about with fairy films and the witchery of talking trees and singing winds, I did not remember my clothes. But at times clothes broke in abruptly on my unconsciousness. I well remember a certain mitten. It was a brown mitten on my left hand. My mother and I were walking down a flight of stone steps. I slipped; my mother caught my hand, retained, not it, but the mitten, and I bumped unimpeded to

the bottom. My baby resentment against that mitten endured long. It was a surprise, a disappointment, this treachery of the accepted; so my clothes were not to be trusted; it was well to keep half an eye on them. The mitten episode marks a step in my spiritual adjustment; my clothes might at any moment go back on me. It is a lesson I have not yet found it safe to unlearn.

In those days there was a pleasant interest attached to the Burt's shoes,—not when new and shiny, but later, when they had become well worn. Some unexpected morning I would espy a peering bit of white stocking looking out from the blackness of the leather toe. The hole being not yet so large or so alarming as the cobbler's charges, a piece of black silk was adjusted over the stocking, the foot deftly slipped into the shoe, a dash of blacking applied to the whole, and behold only mother and I knew the difference.

Penury as such was not yet known to me. The consciousness of shabbiness had not yet frayed the elbows of my soul. The device was merely interesting, beguiling the tedium of the sanctuary, and affording meditation on the ingenuity of mothers.

Here succeeded several years of tranquillity in my relations to my garments, until, at the age of six, I found myself—infelix!—removed to a town possessing a bleak climate and many woolen manufactories. It was the custom of the house mothers to buy flannel by the piece direct from the factory, red flannel, hot, thick, felled like a Laplander, and the invention of Lucifer. Out of this flannel was cut a garment, a continuous, all−embracing garment, of neuter gender, in which every child in that town might have been observed flaming Mephistophelian−like after the morning bath. A pattern was given to our mother.

The hair shirt—I laugh when I read! By definition the hair shirt must have possessed geographical limits of attack, but my flannels left no pore untickled, untortured; they heated the flesh until scarlet fever paled into a mere pleasantry; and they soured the milk of amiability within me forever. The rotation of the seasons reduced itself to terms of red flannel. In the autumn, when the happy fowls and foliage alike moulted, shed the superfluous, when bracing October set the body in a glow, I alone of living things must be done up in flannel! And more,—did you ever try to draw on your stocking smoothly over a red flannel tumor at the ankle, and then attempt to button over the whole the shoe that fitted snugly enough over nothing at all? Did you ever tear off shoe and stocking, and, dancing red−legged and barefooted, cry out in frenzy that you would eschew breakfast and school, aliment and enlightenment, but never, never, never again would you wear footgear? Thus autumn. And spring, that season of vernal bourgeoning, was the time when I, too, like any other seedkin, slipped free of all stuffy incasings, and could sprout and spring in air and sun, clad in blessed, blessed muslin. I shall never forget the corroding bitterness induced by flannels. At times they absolutely reduced me to fisticuffs with my religion, so that filial piety, the ordaining of the seasons, and the very catechism itself, hung in the balance of the conflict. I believe I can hardly over−estimate the spiritual detriment done me by my flannels.

One incident of this, my first decade, I recall with mingled respect and envy:—

"It is not now as it hath been of yore."

"Choose," commanded my mother, "will you have a new dress this winter or `St. Nicholas' for next year?" I was stung at the implication that for such as me there could have been a doubt of the choice. "St. Nicholas," of course! A magazine doth not wax old as doth a garment, and besides, is not reading more than raiment? Alas for the high intellectuality of eight years old! If the choice lay now between the dress and the book, would I hug the volume and walk among my fellows gladly shabby? I would not.

About at this same period we were visited by a family of strange little girls. There were three of them; they stayed three days, they changed their dresses three times a day, and they never wore the same dress twice. We regarded them as we might have regarded the fauna of Mars,—they were an utterly new thing. It was wonder at first, then pity, then wonder again, for we found that they liked it! Being little human animals even as we, they would rather

be tricked out in fresh frocks than play tag! What were we going to wear that evening, they asked. Why, how in the world should we know? Something clean, of course. Our visitors' bits of frocks were embroidered, beribboned, bevelveted in a manner simply incomprehensible. What in the world happened when they got dirty? That visit filled me with prophetic misgivings; some day I should have to wear stuff goods. In a vision I saw the great gulf that separates the grown−up who cannot be put through the wash−tub from the child who can. Horror of the unwashable! "Shades of the prison−house,"—Oh, no!

Just here the retrospect reaches the place where the road turned; I do not say, forked, for it was not a question of alternatives; I was a woman−child, and I had to keep on in the only way. Hitherto my clothes had been as much or as little myself as the down of the chick, or the fur of the rabbit. Providence and my parents had provided my apparel without the faintest solicitude on my part, leaving me free to attend to my body and soul. This could not long endure. It is the era of Mother Hubbards that bridges together the old time and the new. The Mother Hubbard was so noteworthy, so startling, in fact, after the trimness to which we were accustomed, this

"Robe ungirt from clasp to hem." It swayed with a truly Hellenic undulation like the pictures in the mythology. I first admired, then coveted, then teased my mother into making me one. It was finished just after dinner, and though it was yet early for dressing, I put it on, and turned out upon the street, which, to my disappointment, was empty of children. There I strutted, and swelled, and waited for the others to come and see, and was exalted, not recognizing the first shackles of my slavery. Now, first, I become acquainted with Fashion; now, first, I regard other people's clothes as the most important factor in the production of my own. Too truly it is the close of the first chapter, the end of innocence, the end of joy, the end of sexlessness. I am irrevocably a woman: imitation and emulation are henceforth the distinguishing motives of my costume. Now, first, I look in the glass to see my frock, and then I look a little higher to see that face and that mop of curls I wear, and I wonder what colors best suit them. I look at the eyes, too, and at the secrets they tell me, and I wonder what external clothes and conduct are most becoming to those eyes and to that inner meshed personality they reveal. What is becoming! The word is epitome of all that the grown−up is and the child is not.

The period of my teens was the period when my wardrobe was continually in abeyance upon the higher claims of my education. It was not possible simultaneously to beautify my brain and my body. I acquiesced in the circumstance, for the most part, with occasional fits of passionate revolt, and more or less constant misanthropy. I blush to recall that at one time the light which was in me turned to darkness for a year or more, and all on account of my clothes. I found myself at a great city school, I a shy little country waif, most curiously clad. I looked at the clothes of my compeers, and I locked my lips and my heart against all converse with my fellows, and I walked to the top of my classes in a desolation of spirit that was tragic. I would have exchanged my monthly reports with those of my most addle−pated classmate if I could have had her clothes. Never since have I approached the intellectual achievement of fourteen; but the shabbiness of my motives was greater than that of my costume. The effect was not wholly evil, but I here confess that I never should have learned Latin rules if I had been prettily dressed. I wanted to show those stylish misses that there was no backwoods brain under my backwoods hat—that was all! I attributed to others a snobbishness wholly my own, and for that once clothes came perilously near costing me all human joy in human friendship. If my wardrobe had never bettered, I might now be a female Diogenes,— and incidentally have furnished meteoric display for a dozen universities. My clothes improved; I am not friendless, but dull and illiterate, and all through the shaping destiny of dress.

This paragraph in my history yields me this much of philosophy as regards the influence of clothes on the social relations. My dress, so long as it be not conspicuous for disorder, disruption, or display, has much less effect on others than on myself. But as for myself, since I am a woman, and it is ordained of fate that I be forever subdued to what I wear, I shall never, except when I believe myself suitably dressed, be able to look my fellow creature in the eye with the level gaze of conscious equality which alone gains friendship. No woman was ever so proud as not to cringe in an ugly hat. No woman is ever so happy as not to be made unhappy by her clothes. Let the dress reformers prattle to the breezes,—there is no exaltation like that of knowing one's costume stylish, becoming, and, if possible, expensive. Only by recognizing our limitations may we women successfully cope with them; one's

own respect is surest guarantee of other people's; for women self−respect is soonest secured by clothes: therefore, O women, dress!

I have digressed from the contemplation of my girlhood, but I have not exhausted that time, for I have not touched upon second−hand clothes or long dresses. As a girl I was perpetually made over. I came to regard fresh material as something almost sacrilegious. Of all gift−horses, clothes are the most difficult not to criticize, and especially old clothes. My prosperous cousins did not possess my complexion, my tastes, or my figure, and yet I inevitably succeeded to their clothes, so that I came to watch their expenditures with morbid interest, and if they asked for my advice, the strings of my sincerity were severely strained by "a lively sense of favors yet to come." In such circumstances it is well to have in the family one who is mother, dressmaker, and genius, all in one, for only such a combination of inspiration and devo tion could have kept my head up in those days when I was always second−hand.

To be honest, am I anything else now? What else is it to be fashionable? With brain or scissors every woman is snipping and clipping and cutting over other people's clothes to fit her figure; real clothes or clothes existent only in the fashion papers or her dressmaker's brain, but what is the difference? Every woman wears what somebody else has worn. What woman would wear a dress she had not first seen on another woman? Old clothes, making over, copying, copying, copying,—dear me, how second−hand we women are!

The years from sixteen to twenty are those years in a woman's life when dress becomes an ecstasy—as never afterwards. We always look in the glass when we put on our hats, but at sixteen we look at the face, not the hat. It is not such a bad face to look at, at sixteen, with its eyes and lips of wonder. For some few years Heaven lets dress be a sheer delight, not the mere sordid comfort and decency of childhood, or the studied concealment of imperfections of maturity, but a revelation of the new self of which we are neither unconscious nor ashamed. It is but the working of natural laws; in the spring do not the very trees prank themselves out in a vain glory of blossoms, do they not prink and preen in the mirroring water, arranging their leafy tresses, and bedecking themselves for the masculine regard of sunbeams and breezes? So girls, and many a one quite as unconsciously. The sap stirs and the leaf sprouts, and the stirring of the sap is a thrilling of new joy, and the leaf is a new and beautiful thing. What is it, what am I becoming? Look in the glass and see. That is womanhood burning in my eyes, on my cheeks,—Oh, yes, sir, you may look, too, if you wish. When my skirts have grown all the way down, and my braids all the way up, then there will be coronation robes ready, and a kingdom, and a king. Now I am only a schoolgirl, but it is all coming, coming, coming! Do you wonder that she counts each inch on her skirt in an agony of impatience, that she arranges her hair high on her head at night before her mirror? Schoolgirl nonsense, and something else. Then one day it is the hour at last,—it is the first long dress, cut to show the regal throat, trained like a queen's. The hair is piled up diadem−wise. The princess is ready. The color comes and goes, the slipper taps the floor—"I am all dressed for you. I am waiting. Come, Prince, hurry, hurry!" But, O little Princess, it is not at all like what you think, really; so soon your long skirts will have ceased to tickle your toes with delight, and your coroneted tresses will seem to have grown that way. The Prince will have come, and you will have got used to him, or he will not have come, and you will have forgotten that you ever expected him; the clothes of womanhood will no longer be a rapture, but an obligation and a habit. You will find yourself wearing a personality restricted by that thing you have somehow acquired, called a style of your own, and restricted also by the style of all the other women in the world, so that you will find yourself wearing those dresses only, and saying those words only, that both yourself and others expect of you; it will not seem a very wonderful thing to be a woman, after all. But remember, Miss or Madam Princess, that you must still go on dressing, dressing, dressing to the end.

What mockery to prate of the equality of the sexes when one sex possesses the freedom of uniform, and the other is the slave of ever−varying costume! Think of the great portion of a lifetime we women are condemned to spend merely on keeping our sleeves in style! Talk of our playing with scholarship or politics when we are all our days panting disheveled after scampering Dame Fashion, who, all our broken−winded lives, is just a little ahead! Yet dress−reform is the first article in our creed of antipathies, and I, for one, am last of ladies to declare myself a

heretic. I am not ungrateful for the gift of sex and species. Suppose I were a fowl of the air, what condemnation of hodden gray, and soul unexpressed either by vocal throat or personality of plumage! Among things furred or feathered it is the male who dresses and the lady who wears uniform; that it is otherwise with human beings is due, I suppose, to some freakish bit of chivalry on the part of the autocrat Evolution, the ring−master who puts the entire menagerie through their tricks. No, I would not be a fowl; let me not repine; let me at this business of dressing, pluckily.

Women are nobler than men; it is because we are purified in the fires of more severe temptation. Man does not encounter the demoralizing influence of the dressmaker, that creature with mouth of pins and suave words. To what degrading subterfuge are we not reduced to get our own way with the dressmaker, seeing with what delight and dexterity she lifts her spurning foot against our desires! Do we presume to know what we want to wear?—alternately she sporteth and scorneth—and yet we lift not against her her proper scissors. She practices dark arts; she runs an hypnotic finger along the seam, and the wrinkle is no more seen—until the dress comes home. Lies are about her head. Her promises are vanity, and her bills elastic as a fluted flounce. Counter−mendacity alone can move her; the gown must be sent home, for we attend a wedding in twenty minutes; even now the caterer "hath paced into the hall"; or we leave for California in an hour, and even now our sleeper paws the track. By the ways of unrighteousness alone may we be clothed, and yet so signal is female virtue that after centuries of dressmakers we are still unscathed in our integrity, and are still the churchgoers of the species.

There is something stirring to contemplate in woman's devotion to dress,—to see how we lay down health and comfort, and clamber up and frizzle for a lifetime on the altar of the aesthetic. That is what our dressing is to us, an art and an aspiration. If our sex doffed its radiance, and did on "blacks," what loss to popular culture! What of the universal hunger for color and form if so many curiosities of craft, so many animated works of art no longer whisked about the streets of the world? For another reason, also, we are preoccupied of our costume,—our invincible frankness; for we would have our clothes the expression of our souls. With what fondness we cling to the frock that suits us! Such a bundle of subtleties is woman that words are too gross—a black coat and trousers an insincerity for the hundred shades of shifting color and form that we are inside. Though it take half our life, let us be true to our clothes, our clothes to us; let the dress be the lady, and the lady a symphony of soul and silk.

Verily, "my soul on its lone way" has traveled far from the days of babyhood, kicking against all wrappings, to the days of womanhood, when personality exists not, separate from frocks and hats and gloves and shoes, and both the inner layer of individuality and the outer layer of costume have become cosy and comfortable, so that by no means do I wish to lay them aside.

What next? Some day I shall be given into the hands of those who

"fashion the birth−robes for them Who are just born, being dead." Shall I be again enfolded in garments all ready for me, of skyey tissues and opalescent tints? Shall I squirm and struggle again, and again be slowly subdued to the clothing and conventions of another world?

Or when I pop up the lid of this upholstered bone−box, my body, shall my soul be then and there set free,—escaped, volatile, elemental, as wind or moonshine, having cast from it—one by one as a garment—age, sex, race, creed, and culture? But what if in this off−shedding I strip from me my personality, myself? This involuted wrapping in which I am duly done up and ticketed and passed about among my acquaintance,—what if to rend this were to leave me in the shivering nakedness of the impersonal?

X. The Tendency to Testify

People and periods sometimes think strange things about themselves. I am constantly astounded by the contrast between my view of my friend and his view of himself. Tact is the bridge that spans the chasm between a man's

opinion of himself and his neighbor's opinion of him. In truth each opinion suffers from the lie of the label. There is nothing so volatile as human personality, yet it has a passion for ranging itself in bottles on a shelf, each with its little gummy ticket. If the peril of the pigeon−hole is great for the individual, it is even greater for a whole period, which is but the aggregate of personalities, each of them only a breath, a vapor, the shaping of a cloud.

One of the largest, loudest labels with which we placard the present age is its irreligion. Because we don't build cathedrals? But let any one of us look about into the hearts of say twenty of his immediate friends: are there no churches building there? As for me, I am quite dinned by their hammers, and often, when I want to steal into some one's soul, for a little quiet communion, I am incommoded by the obtrusive scaffolding. No religion? Never so many religions, and from that very fact, never so genuine. Obviously, if you make a religion yourself, it's your business to believe it. There is an analogy between clothes and creeds: you wear with a different air those your father has bought for you and those you have earned for yourself.

I do not find people indifferent to religion, I find them profoundly responsible for it; my friends stand each at the door of a temple exacting tribute, although there is not one who would not be horrified by the blatancy of the metaphor. They do not call themselves religious, but they do call to me to come in. The trouble perhaps is with my listening ear. I was born with it, and without my will, or knowledge, it has become an inconveniently obvious appendage. It takes a great deal of time to have a listening ear. It has heard so many creeds of late that I must perforce counter−label this irreligious age devout. I am not inventing the list, and I do not believe the variety among my acquaintance exceptional,—Neo−Hellenic, Neo−Hebrew, Catholic, Christian Scientist, Episcopal, high, hot, and holy, Episcopal, low, hot, and holy, Swe denborgian, Baptist, Presbyterian, and, latest, a sect that scorns a name, but that I would call Destinarian. Miss Sinclair is of this communion, for, in "The Three Brontes," does she not call upon Destiny to account for every mystery of those three strange lives? The religion of the Destinarian consists in not having one, yet not one of my friends pronounces so reverently the name of deity as my friend of this no−faith murmurs the word, Destiny. "It is ordained, she says of some circumstance, and says it with awe, the humility before omniscience with which the Hebrew prophets spoke his name Jah.

There they stand, my twenty men and women, beckoning me to the doors of their temples; and yes, of course, I go in; it saves argument. I go into each and each friend is so busy pointing out the architecture that no one ever notices when I slip out, out into the open. When one stops to think of it, it is curiously old−fashioned and orthodox, the open, whether it is sea or sun. The planets are conspicuously conservative, but the morning stars still sing together.

Now, not one of my friends here listed is that good old−fashioned work of God, a shouting Methodist, and yet, in effect, there is not one of them who is not exactly this. As a child, I attended camp−meetings, I heard people testify. The tendency to testify is older than camp−meetings, and it will outlast them. Today, though long grown−up, I find my friends still shouting their experiences, I find myself still the shy and wondering congregation. As in the word "camp−meeting" there is military reminiscence, so the "professor" is lineal descendant of miles gloriosus, his survivor in the church militant. A puzzling number of people still like to exhibit their scars; a larger number like to exhibit the particular philosophic armor by which they—by implication—win in the battle of life still ever merrily waging. But he who shows a scar deserves another, and no sword ever equally fitted two hands.

It is the implication that I resent in all testifying,—super−sensitive doubtless. I do not want to be converted. I grow shy and secret when I suspect my friend of wanting to remodel me to the pattern of his creed. The most perilous thing in friendship is to let a friend know that we want to reform him. The very essence of friendship is in the lines,—

"Take me as you find me, quick, If you find me good!" and in a recent dedication to one who was "Guide, philosopher, but friend." In all testi fying, there is an implied "Copy me," which our own skittish ego resents. We all incorporate in ourselves our friends' virtues, but only those of which they are most unconscious; whereas

people are always conscious of their battles; they always want to talk about them; and yet how many different ways there are of winning the same battle. If I admire your bravery, I may copy the creed that created it, but you need not hold up that creed for my inspection, for it is you yourself who are under my inspection. You are your sole argument, you need no testifying.

I have been much talked to of late, and much talked at. I have seen the fanatic spark in eyes that would have been aghast to know its presence there. Once upon a time there was only one church, and excommunication from that was a simple and straightforward matter; it can hardly be an irreligious age when one can feel, in listening to the testimony from the score of temples one's friends have built, that one is in danger of being excommunicated from all twenty. But better excommunication than that, entering and accepting, I, too, might feel called upon to testify.

I, too, could testify,—I, a mere sunworshiper. I could point out the vaulted sky of my private chapel, most ancient and most orthodox. I could repeat for you the liturgies the wind has made, much the same that it chanted for Moses on Sinai; for are any of your creeds so new, my friends? I could point out to you altar−lights genial and tolerant, the taper−flames of stars. There was once One long ago who went to the mountain for prayer, for there is nothing new about the temple of out−of−doors; but if I, its worshiper, do not carry forth some peace from its great silence, some joy from its godly mirth, then would not even my infinite temple shrink to the size of words, if I should testify?

XI. Letters and Letter−Writers

It is a popular fallacy that letter−writing is a bygone art. Arguments for this opinion point to the array of picture−cards expressing every sentiment known to experience, and saving, by the neatness and dispatch of their machine−made couplets, all the fumbling effort we used to expend in saying thank you to a hostess, bon voyage to a friend, or even in offering sympathy to one bereaved. The night−message also seems to indicate a sorry substitution for the formality of the post. The truth is that the picture−card, by doing the work of the duty letter, clears the way for the real letter, so spontaneous that it can't help being written; while the night−message contributes to epistolary art a terseness and vigor that should not be undervalued. While we continue to look back at the voluminous eighteenth century and to regret the decay of letter−writing, we are every one of us every week receiving from a dozen different correspondents letters vibrant with personality, vivid, readable, inviting preservation. Far from not writing letters, people never wrote more letters than they do to−day, nor better ones; if ours are not so long as the letters of the past, they are far livelier. Both in theory and in fact the present time is peculiarly fitted to be epistolary.

If each one of us will examine that packet of letters we are loath to destroy because they have made us see pictures or think thoughts or chuckle with appreciation, we shall pause to ponder how diverse in character are the authors. One missive, guiltless of grammar, is racy with backwoods wisdom; another shows the rapier wit and apt allusiveness of the Hellenist; another is as crisp and keen as the typewriter that clicked it forth; still another peals with freshman skylarking. It is not at first easy to perceive underlying all the variety the essential characteristics which belong alike to all these correspondents and which differentiate that happily constituted being, the born letter−writer; man or woman, young or old, educated or illiterate, certain qualities he must inalienably possess.

The letter−writer is always an observant person. He has the pictorial eye and the pictorial pen. The view framed by his window sash must never grow stale for him, across it the clouds must always roll as if across a painter's canvas, and its commonplace roof−line must keep always its quaintness and its quirks. Of the groups of people that crowd his day, he must see each as if staged for a play, he must perceive the color of hair and the cut of clothes and the connotation of attitudes as vividly as if he were always seated before a rising curtain. This freshness of vision varies in different people. It is always found in every good letter, but of the writers, some require the stimulus of an unusual scene; while they have not the power to see or to paint the pictures of Dulltown Center, they can portray Tokio or Archangel till it glows on the wall before the reader's eye; others, more really

gifted, see drama everywhere, even if they have never been twenty miles from their own farm and forest. Whether our correspondent is stay−at−home or traveler, he must so combine his gift of observation with his gift of representation that his angle of vision is unique. We have all of us received narratives of travel that were colorless as guide−books and narratives of a village sewing society that were palpitant with portraiture. The true letter−writer makes us feel not only that we have been present at a scene but that we have been present with him.

The genuine epistolary endowment shows qualities in pleasant poise. A letter should be personal, but not over−personal. A self−analyst may cover many pages of notepaper, but we read him only under protest, and drop him promptly into the waste−basket. We enjoy the record of personal observation just so long as it is balanced by detachment. We like to see our friend moving across the scene he describes, but we don't want to see him bulking large in his own landscape. In a well−penned letter the people written about stand forth as vividly as does the author. It is this power of amused detachment that makes all true letter−writers true humorists as well.

To write letters it is not enough to be observant, objective, humorous: one must have the impulse to express the observation and the fun. This impulse is, of course, the literary will to write, but there is a sharp distinction between the litterateur and the letter−writer. The latter does not merely wish to write, he wishes to write to somebody. He is not lyric, for it is not enough for him to burst into song unheard; he is not a diarist, for it is not enough for him to talk to himself; he is not a genius, for it is not enough for him to talk to a vast, formless creature called the Public. A letter−writer is one who finds life so entertaining that he must talk about it to a friend. Never a self−sufficient person, he is as genial as he is shy; it would therefore no more occur to him to pour himself out upon paper that nobody was to read than to pour himself into print that everybody was to read. He has the literary impulse without the literary ambition. He must be sure of his auditor before his pen will move, and yet when it once begins to gambol, it carries him off and away, after the manner of all pens, until the friendly listener becomes idealized from homely reality into very quintessence of sympathy.

The individual auditor is not only the first requisite for the letter−writer, but the determining influence that gives to letters themselves the qualities which distinguish them from other forms of literature. Letters stand halfway between the formlessness of conversation and the formality of essay or fiction. A letter to a friend has this advantage over a chat with him, that you can choose the impression you wish to make and make it without interference from the interlocutor's telepathy, or interruption through his rejoinders. Conversation gives and takes, but a letter only gives, and gives exactly what it wishes, no more. In a letter one employs words, weaving them happily to one's will, but it is a mistake to suppose that conversation is much con cerned with words. It is a far more shifting and subtle thing than that, for mere speech is constantly supplemented or corrected or contradicted by the twinkle in our eyes, the tautness or tremor in our voice, the twisting of our lips. The attention of the listener is diverted by watching all these manifestations. While it has all the camaraderie of chat, the letter, in the clarity and singleness of its impression, is distinctly different from talk.

The epistolary form differs as much from the memoir as it does from conversation. The diarist is a self−important person, talking to himself and to the future, and conscious of his effect upon both. If he is great enough, that effect is worth making, and we read his account of himself and his times with the reverence we accord to history. We do not read, however, with the pleasant personal warmth with which we peruse a letter, for we know the diarist is not speaking as comrade to comrade. We know and he knows that he is speaking to posterity.

The letter has the advantage of not belonging at all to conscious or commercialized literature. It is not written to be seen of men, nor yet to be sold to them. It is literature intimate, unintentional, overheard. In so much as it is personal expression, plus detachment but minus self−importance, and also in so much as it endeavors to adapt itself sympathetically to another person's interest and point of view, the letter strikes through the merely individual and touches deep and universal feeling, thus in all its humbleness fulfilling the ancient dictum for art. The letter−writer, scribbling himself forth merely to please himself and his friend, is not constrained by servility to the public taste; his medium allows him ease, fluidity, and a happy inconsequence, vital artistic qualities impossible to literature written to meet the market.

Its spontaneity gives the letter scope for its particular achievements. Being written by friend to friend, it is free from both shyness and stiffness: it may laugh or cry, be sagacious or absurd, in full confidence of being understood. It rings true in its directness and intimacy, and yet never descends to the morbidness that sometimes stains the revelations of the journal. The letter is intimate, but at bottom decorous. In a letter one wears one's old clothes in comfort, but one does not undress as in a diary. The presence of a friend to whom one may open one's heart is both invitation and wholesome restraint.

The letter as literature is particularly adapted to description made piquant by personal perception of lights and shades. The letter is especially fitted for quick portraiture, for flashing forth a face in an adjective, for touching off a character in the quirk of a phrase. Incidents also stand out by their very compression. Brevity is the soul of a letter, which is not saying that a letter may not be long. A letter can afford to be long, it can never afford to be diffuse. In the nature of things a good letter never flags because it is written by one possessing intensified vision and a vibrant pen. Such a person knows enough to stop before he is tired. The description, incident, comment of a letter are forced to a concentration that gives them an advantage over more formal and expansive writing. People who are interesting enough to wish to write letters, people who are interested enough to wish to read them, must by necessity of character have much else to occupy their time beside their correspondence. The value of epistolary writing lies in the fact that it is not a grave concern, but an inviting side issue. Letters, like friendship, lose their charm when one makes a business of them.

It is the greatest mistake to think that our hurried age is alien to the composition of letters. Haste is the best thing that can happen to a letter; it enforces compression. Actually our own time is peculiarly adapted to produce letters. Its very hurry is inimical to sustained writing. Thinking people may put themselves into letters when they have no time to put themselves into books. Not only the rapidity of the present but its intensity stimulates letter−writing. Even the most commonplace people are quickened to observation and to thought at a time when tragedies are being unrolled before the dullest of us, and when every day is fateful with pity and fear for even the most obscure. Personal reaction to the portents of the present is not to be escaped, for never in history was there so much to see and to feel.

As never before was there so much to see, so never before was there such an impulse to say something about it; but the immensity of our time prevents our speaking in any finished and final form. Our day is too vast for comment. All that we can record is our daily impressions; and how much more readily these fall into letter shape than into treatise or play or novel or poem! These four forms necessitate structure, analysis, synthesis; they presuppose penetration into the significance back of events. The letter is free from all these requirements, and therefore is better fitted to express our times than, for example, the poem, which to−day, false to its old high calling, deliberately avoids all divination, all guesses at the ultimate and the infinite.

The letter, always humble, informal, inconsequent, need not strain to recount any but an individual reaction and interpretation. It aspires to no universal wisdom, and by its very modesty and sincerity may perhaps for the future furnish the truest historical record obtainable of a period too terrible to understand itself.

One would naturally expect letters to be produced in an age which, bewildered as it is, is singularly articulate in regard to all its puzzles and its pain. Ease of expression was never so general as now. More people are able to say what they have to say than ever before, and more people are able to say it, too, with facility and with force. The newspapers are crowded by letters tingling with penetration, often memorable in phrasing, written by men and women in every class and place. The level of intelligence and of expression was never so high. People are writing not only to the press but to each other better letters than ever before. Impressions are so intense that they compel utterance. One proof of the prevalence and popularity of letter−writing to−day is in the many books and articles that are the chance discoveries of the mail box. For such revelations, such unintentional literature, every editor is on the alert. The history of our time is being everywhere written to−day in the best letters that were ever penned; but for one such collection discovered, how many are fated to be fugitive always and unpreserved?

XII. The Tyranny of Talent

We come into life handicapped by many a tyranny, but by none heavier than the insolence of that particular ability packed into our still imperfect cranium. Although one may observe in rare individuals the exhibition of a fine independence that from infancy to age consistently refuses to develop the dominance of some obvious talent, for the most part we yield to the conventional views that defy such despotism, and to our own delight in that little toy, success, which the autocrat dangles before our eyes. The only people never disillusioned are the unsuccessful. Every time we succeed we take a tuck in a dream. Of all domains, the most desirable is the kingdom of dreams, and the only people who never lose it, who, rather, reinherit it from day to day, are the people who consistently and conscientiously fail.

There are, however, only an enviable few of us who are not able to do some one thing well. It does not need, of course, to be anything notable. We need not be the fools of fame, in order to taste all the depths of success. We may merely be able to tie up parcels with neatness and dispatch,—rest assured we shall be enforced to tie up everybody's parcels until we totter into our graves. Most households can boast a member with an ability to find things; the demands upon the time and the resourcefulness of such a professional finder prevent her ever finding peace (a finder is, of course, always feminine). One could multiply indefinitely examples from immediate experience that prove the argument for inefficiency.

The tyranny of talent has beset our path with many little proverbs that bark at our lagging heels. "Nothing succeeds like success" has hounded many a man to a desolate eminence. "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well" is a maxim that we allow to control our activities as thoroughly as we refuse to allow it to convince our intelligence: for obviously whatever is worth doing is not worth doing well; on the one hand the statement may authorize a wasteful and indiscriminate energy; and, far worse, it is manifestly false, because everything that gives you joy is worth doing, and ten to one the thing that gives you most joy in the doing, is the thing that you do very ill indeed. Superficially considered, success appears to be a consequence of self−expression necessarily gratifying; intimately experienced, success is found to be a consequence of self−repression most painful. The trouble is that one never knows in time. Often one goes gambolling into success unwittingly as a young animal, only to have one's first joyous neigh, or bray, of achievement cut short by feeling sudden hands bind one to a treadmill—the treadmill that impels one to grind out similar achievements, tramp−tramp−tramp, all the rest of one's life. The worst is that no one ever suspects the excellently efficient middle−aged nag of still sniffing a larking canter through the mad spring meadows of the unattempted. Our best friends suppose the treadmill contents us. Yet we are always cherishing our own little dreams of a medium of expression better suited to our individuality than that skill with which nature has endowed us. Browning acknowledges the phenomenon in "One Word More," in noting the dissatisfaction of the artist with his proper medium:—

"Does he paint? He fain would write a poem,— Does he write? He fain would paint a picture, Put to proof art alien to the artist's, Once and only once, and for one only, So to be the man and leave the artist, Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow." The psychological experience described is more fundamental than its application in the poem merely to love and a lady.

The harshness of a controlling talent is severe in restricting us not alone to what we can do well, but to what we can do best. If we paint, we must not only not write a poem, but we must not attempt a picture different from our best; if we write, we must continue to write in the type and the tone of our first successful experiment. The chef may long to be an astronomer, but not only must he stick to his flesh−pots, but if, in the gusto of some early egg−beating, he has stumbled upon the omelet superlative, he must continue to furnish the world with omelets, no matter if eggs become for him an utter banality, and no matter how his fancy be seething with voluptuous dishes of air−drawn cabbage, or super−sheep.

The world is too much against us if we try to lay down the burdens the task−master Talent has imposed. The

successful man belongs to the public: he no longer belongs to himself. Talent, tried and proved and acclaimed, is too strong for us; we continue its savorless round, against all our inward protest. We are its slaves, and through the amiability ineradicable in most bosoms, the slaves also of our admiring kinsfolk and friends and public; most of all, perhaps, the slaves of our own self−doubt, for possibly after all they are right, possibly we are justly the chattels of Talent, and not of that whispered self of the air, taunting, teasing us, "What you have done is sordid, is savorless! Come with me to attempt the unexplored!" This desire denied is both acknowledgment that all our lordly labeled triumphs may have had a false acclaim, and is also a protest against all mundane and mortal valuations. Our unshackled ego, scorning things done that took the eye and had the price, seems to have the truer voice. Is not art itself the assurance that we are no petty slaves of efficiency, but heirs of a serene domain where the unaccomplished is forever the only thing worth accomplishing?

XIII. The Woman Who Writes

I often wonder how other women write. Workers in art material are chary of revealing processes that might save other workers wasted effort and vain experiment, or, better yet, provoke challenge still more conducive to success. I venture to believe that any woman's literary product is a matter of constant, and often desperate, compromise between writing and living; and some examination into the wherefore of this fact may throw light on the nature of writing processes, if not also on the nature of woman processes. Since there are scant data for analyzing the methods of other women writers, I give only my own, the experiment and experience of a woman who has chosen to earn a living as a literary free lance.

Such conclusions must necessarily be personal and practical, pretending to no theories except those made by immediate need. Driven to earn to−day's bread and butter, I really have no time to study the superiority of prehistoric woman in the struggle for existence. Nor can I give undivided attention to the achievements of my sex as promised by the feminist millennium, when my 9 A.M. problem is to write a story that shall please some editor, presumably male. I do not know whether or not woman's intellect is the equal of man's; I know only that mine is not.

While observation teaches me that every woman worker may gain by adopting to a certain degree the methods of men, the feminist promise of an eventual equal productiveness is to me a promise barren, if true. So far as I can see, individual men and women have, alike, just so much vitality. If women devote this vitality to doing what men do, they will have just so much less to devote to being what women are. As a writer I aspire to write a book; as a woman I shall forever prefer to be a person rather than a book.

In an examination into the psychology and methods of the woman writer, two things should be clearly kept in mind. The first is that of all professions open to both sexes, writing should furnish the most reliable conclusions in regard to the relative accomplishment of men and women; for from Sappho's day to ours a woman has been as free to write as a man. Life is the only university in which a writer can be trained, and that univer sity has always been strictly coeducational. Neither have there ever been any restrictions, commercial or social, to bar a woman's way to the literary career. It follows that any restrictions that exist must be imposed, not from without, but from within, must be due to the nature of the creature, physical, mental, and spiritual.

The second fact not to be forgotten is that of all the professions practiced by women writing is the one most intimately affected by a woman's personal life and philosophy. It is far easier to detach yourself from your own dailyness for the purposes of music, painting, or science, than to separate yourself from the book you are writing, which is necessarily self−expressive. Consequently a woman's literary productiveness is far more precariously dependent upon her peace of mind than any other form of professional activity. There are too many mute Miltons, too easily silenced, among my sex; but on the other hand—a fact equally due to the feminine fusion of living and writing—history has shown, perhaps will always show, that woman's most valid intellectual achievement is in literature.

As a writer−worker, I have found no way of getting even with my limitations except by frankly shouldering them. The body my soul bears upon its back is a heavier burden to carry than a man's, and I find I cannot accomplish the pilgrimage if I give up my own little jog−trot for a man's stride. All that happens is that I lose my breath, and break my back, and have to lie down by the roadside to be mended. But when I do keep my own small pace, I have time and strength to pick a few fence−row flowers, too fine and frail and joyous for any striding man to notice.

I turn sharply from my own figures of speech to Mr. W. L. George's airier fancies, to the most vital facts of feminine existence brushed so lightly by the masculine intelligence that it can say, " in passing, that we do not attach undue importance to woman's physical disabilities. . . . I suspect that this is largely remediable, for I am not convinced that it is woman's peculiar physical conditions that occasionally warp her intellect: it is equally possible that a warped intellect produces unsatisfactory physical conditions. Therefore if, as I firmly believe that we can, we develop this intellect, profound changes may with time appear in these physical conditions."

My own warped intellect, belonging to a woman who must write stories for a living, points out that, if it has taken aeons of differentiation under the guidance of Dame Nature to accomplish my own personal physical disabilities, I can hardly afford to wait for aeons of differentiation under the guidance of Mr. George to accomplish my own personal physical freedom.

Looking at things as they are, I find my body constantly pushing upon my work; but it is possible to treat a body with a certain humorous detachment. It is possible to say to yourself, this is a headache that you have, don't do it the honor of letting it become a heartache, your own or—far more fateful peril—your heroine's. It is quite practicable for a woman to live apart from her body even when it hurts, quite practicable to give it sane and necessary attention, while keeping the soul separate from it, exactly as if she were ministering to some tired baby; this course is one of the only two solutions I have ever discovered of the problem of preserving a worker's spirit in a woman's body. The other solution lies in the frank concession to certain physical incapacities as the price one pays for certain psychological capacities.

A woman's talent both for being a woman and for being a writer is measured by the force and the accuracy of her intuitions. My intuitions in regard to the people about me, when duly transformed into story−stuff, have a definite market value. If I did not possess them, I could not conceive, make, or sell a single manuscript. Supersensitive impressions necessitate the supersensitive channels by which a woman's outer world connects with her inner one. If I will have woman's intuitions, I must have my woman's nervous system. So long as I think telepathy the best of sport, I must consent to give house−room to its delicate machinery, even to the extent of keeping cool when that machinery gets out of order and buzzes with neuritis or neuralgia or insomnia. The additional fact is only superficially paradoxical, that when the woman worker takes the disorder of her nervous machinery thus philosophically, it is much less likely to have any disorder.

The fallibility of a woman's body seems beyond disputing. If a man does dispute it, it is because he never had one; if a woman disputes it, well, personally, if I can't be as strong as a man I should like to be as honest as one! The fallibility of a woman's intellect is a little more open to argument, but only a little. I keep to my primary assumption that I am not trying to see further than my nose, or to voice any observations but my own. Among the men and women of history and among those of my vicinity, I cannot see that woman's brain is the equal of man's in originality, in concentration, or in power of sustained effort. As a worker, I find that I can write for only a few hours and no more: beyond that limit stands disaster for the woman, and, far more perilous, disaster for the writing. In regard to my brain as in regard to my body, the primary condition of doing my work at all lies in recognizing the truth that I can't do so much work, or do it so well, as a man.

In all matters that can be weighed or measured, a man's endowment is superior to a woman's; but, on the other hand, a woman's endowment consists in the quality and the quantity of an imponderable something that cannot be weighed or measured. The chief difficulty about analyzing a woman's brain is that it is so hard to separate her

brain from the rest of the woman, whereas men are put together in plainly discernible pieces—body, mind, and soul.

The perfection of a woman's intellect depends upon the perfection of its fusion with her personality. A woman amounts to most intellectually when she amounts to still more personally. She cannot move in pieces like a man, or like an earthworm. It needs the whole woman, acting harmoniously, to write. A man can retire into his brain and make a book, and a good one, leaving all the rest of his personality in confusion; but a woman must put her whole house in order before she can go off upstairs into her intellect and write. It follows that a woman's artistic achievement is for her a harder job than a man's achievement is for him, which would make the other fact—namely, that the woman's book when written is never so great as the man's—seem additionally cruel, if we could not discern that the best of women writers have, in attaining that best, reached not one result but two: impelled to clean all her spirit's house before she can feel happy to write in it, a woman writer achieves both a home that people like to visit and a book that people like to read. Is it not true of all the greatest women authors that we think of them as women before we think of them as authors?

Of fiction−makers in our own tongue the greatest man is Shakespeare and the greatest woman is Jane Austen. In personal revelation both were signally reserved, the woman the more so, seeing that she did not even burst into the hieroglyphics of a sonnet sequence; but of the two our first thought of the woman is "dear Jane," and of the man, "dear Rosalind"—or Beatrice or Mercutio. A man, possessing a separable intellect and an imagination so original that it can sometimes create what he personally is little capable of experiencing, may sometimes write one thing and be another; but not so a woman. On the other hand, has any woman ever attained such greatness that, at the mention of her name, we think of the books she wrote before we think of the woman she was?

It is true that professional women who direct their toil on the conviction that a woman's brain is of the same quality as a man's sometimes produce work that approximates a man's in quantity. But sober observation of such women does not make me want to be one. I see them too often paying the penalty of being lopped and warped. Again I cannot see that, while such women attain their Ph.D.'s and M.D.'s and LL.D.'s, they ever attain the highest rank in literature. Imaginative writing seems to demand inexorably that a woman writer be inexorably a woman. On the other hand, I have reached as a brain−worker the conclusion that, while my head is different in substance from a man's, I get most work out of it when I copy a man's mental methods. My brain is a vague and volatile mass, shot through with fancies, whimseys, with flashes of intuitive and illuminative wisdom, and it is a task surpassingly difficult to hold all this volatility, this versatility, to the rigors of artistic expression, to the stern architectonics of fiction. To the degree that a woman shall succeed in imposing upon the matter of her intellect the method of a man's intellect, to that degree shall her work show the sanity and serenity of universal, and sexless, art.

To impose upon a woman's intellect a man's discipline and detachment is excellent in theory; it is staggering in practice. Convention and his own will make a man's time his own. A woman's genius is for personality, or achievement within herself; a man's is for work, or achievement outside of himself. Now it takes time to be a person, and it takes other people. A real woman's life is meshed in other people's from dawn to dark. These strands of other lives are to her so vital and precious that for no book's sake will she ever break them, yet for any book's sake she must disentangle them. A woman writer's life is a constant compromise, due to the fact that if she does not live with her fellows, she will not have anything to write, and that if she does not withdraw from them, she will not have time to write anything. I do not know how other writing women manage their time. I know that to attain four hours a day at my desk means that I must be revoltingly stern with myself, my family, and my friends. One pays a price for retirement, but one need not pay too heavily. A solution lies in retaining those relations that mean real humanity, while cutting off those that mean only society: I do not play bridge, but I do play with children.

Of course, it always seems plausible to solve the problem of time to one's self by running off to some strange place, but this never works very well. The reason is that such isolation is sure to prove evanescent, so that you

have to keep packing your trunk and moving on to new exile, because human tendrils are so strong and stealthy that they push their way through the thickest walls you can build, and twine themselves, wherever you hide, about the fingers that want to write. In order to write a love−story of your own invention, you run away from some friend's too insistent love−story at home, and the first thing you know you are deep in the love−affairs of your poor little chambermaid. You escape home worries only to have some stranger's troubles batter down your hotel door. You might as well stay at home and put up with the truth, that if you care enough about people to wish to write of them, you will care enough for people to wish to live with them, abroad no less than at home. Besides, boarding is bleak and blighting. If I were a boarding woman, presently I should feel too chilly to wish to write; my fancies and my fingers would be too numb for expression. I need a home with its big warm peace and its little warm frictions before I can feel cozy enough to want to chat with a pen.

There is a somewhat different alternative to home existence; I have heard of communities duly arranged for the requirements of writers, where they enjoy a kind of clublike privacy and security from interruption. But are not such communities confined to the near−great? Are real writers any more than real persons attracted by such an abnormal existence? Writers who shun life and people are exactly the sort that life and people shun. Personally, I run away from an author whenever I hear one coming. Of the really great ones, I am desperately afraid, and of the not−so−great ones, far more so.

Writer communities imply too much of the placard. I wish I might never have to dangle my profession on a label. I am always embarrassed when I am forced blatantly to expose it—for example, to the frank questions of the doctor's secretary, or of a customs official.

"Profession?" they ask, and I cringe before the admission, "I am a writer." I don't feel ladylike when I say the words. On such occasions I would give my entire remuneration for an "Atlantic" essay to be able to say, "I am a laundress."

Personally, I am only too glad to forget that I am a Grub−Streeter, if only other people would forget. No matter how obscurely one has ever appeared in print, one pays the penalty of the pinnacle ever after. Surely one is no more responsible for the tendency of one's talents than for the color of one's hair. I write because I have found it my best way of making a living,—and also because I can't help it; therefore why cannot people accept me as simply as if I were a dressmaker? I should be embittered by the curious attitude of people toward the literary calling, if it were not as funny as it is puzzling. Once, at a tea, an imposing matron hurtled from the front door to my corner, crying out, "Can you talk as you write? If so, please do!" I was dumb with discomfort for the rest of the afternoon. The subject of attitude toward the writer is worthy of digression and topical analysis, for there is a difference among friends, family, and general acquaintance. Now, it is not often that I wish to talk as I write, but the occasions when I do, while rare, are painful and urgent. It is precisely on these occasions that my friends fail me. Essays are a long while in being born, and while they are in process I would give much for some one with whom to talk them over. It is not after a thing is published that a writer needs appreciation: it is before, and especially before it is written. For twenty friends who will loyally enjoy anything I write, I cannot count three who will listen when I talk. Yet the ideas are exactly the same whether uttered by pen or tongue. No friend is so valuable as one ready to attend and sympathize during the incubation and parturition of an idea. And yet the majority, knowing too well the author's temperamental uncertainties, are perhaps to be forgiven their preference to wait until the editorial christening. So much bigger to most minds is print than person. A writer's best friends are prone to treat her with the affectionate inattention they would give to a Blind Tom. Yet I would rather my friends never listened to me, than that they always did; it is much cozier to be considered an idiot than an oracle.

If friends are prone to take the writing more seriously than they take the writer, her family, on the contrary, share her throes too intimately to take their poor sufferer lightly. Few authors experience the popular fallacy of a doting family audience. A shuddering apprehension of the potential effect upon editor and reader makes kinfolk intensely critical. The agonies to which any sympathetic household is subjected when one member of it is writing a book are such as to make them question whether any book is worth the price of its creation. A writer's family

also lives in the constant, but usually groundless, fear of being written up. There is both humor and pathos when dear Granny retires into a corner with some foible she knows you admired in infancy. Relatives are always a trifle uneasy in the presence of the chiel amang us takin' notes. I doubt if any success quite compensates for the discomfort of being blood−kin to a writer. True, a family can sometimes be discovered passing the book or magazine around among the neighbors, but they don't wish you to catch them with it in their own hands. Friends and family are alike in their complexity of attitude, being insistent that other people shall admire you, but afraid of making you conceited if they admire you themselves. The danger of conceit can be safely entrusted to editors and reviewers, not to mention the disillusion that sickens any author on comparing the finished book with the fancied one.

But if a writer is comfortably without honor among her intimates, she is more than honored by the attention accorded by chance acquaintance. The attitude of the average person toward print as print is enigmatic. Not all people place the pen on a pedestal, but all regard the penman as somehow different. I once essayed retirement at a little village hotel. I was promptly established in a room made sacred by the previous occupancy of another lady author. Her name I had never before heard, although I heard it daily during my sojourn. Her sole producible work was a railroad advertisement of some remote garden−spot in California, but it had been enough to confer a halo, as well as to win more substantial reward, for I afterwards found out that, solely for the literary aroma she diffused, the lady had been allowed to remain two years without paying a cent of board. Unfortunately I did not discover the fact until I had paid my own board for two months. The incident disproves the charge that the United States has no popular respect for the fine arts.

Print is prone to induce curious revelations from strangers. You write, perhaps, a story that tries to be true to simple human emotions, and the next thing you know, somebody in Idaho is writing you all about his wife or baby. It is touching, but quaint. I have come to be a little suspicious of letters from strangers that purport to be simple letters of appreciation. I used to be very much flattered by them until my brief notes of thanks drew forth such unexpected replies. It appeared that the writers of the letters were writers of other works as well; they were sending these to me forthwith; would I kindly read and comment? My experience is, I gather, not unique. A writer−friend, whose published poetry is marked by peculiar sanity, has received from more than one unknown source effusions so bizarre that they can emanate from nothing but a madhouse.

It is easy to silence by silence these unseen acquaintance, but others nearer by demand tact. Among these are people who tell me stories they want me to tell. They never can understand why I don't use the material. As a matter of fact, raw romance striking enough to impress the lay mind is much too striking for a writer's employment. Truth that is stranger than fiction is what every story−teller must avoid if he is to write stories true enough to be read.

What I more and more discover is that nine tenths of the people one meets want to write, that seven tenths of them have at some time tried, and that not more than one tenth of them perceive why they have failed. Since they think the impulse to write more distinctive than its accomplishment, and since they feel that they have the impulse in all its glory, they regard with a half−contemptuous envy the person who actually does write. They regard creation as purely inspirational, and look askance at a worker who goes to her desk every morning like a machine. For all I know, they are right. A good many people think that the only reason they are not writers is that they never tried to be. Others think they would have written if they had only been taught how, if they had had the opportunity of certain courses in college. Still others think there must be some charmed approach to an editor's attention. Who introduced me, they frankly ask. When people talk like this it requires some self−control to repress my conviction that any person who could have written would have written, and my knowledge that the only introduction I ever had to any editor was made by my own manuscripts.

Friends, family, and general acquaintance have, I find, one impulse in common, the desire always to hound down the autobiographic. They read, beam brightly, look up at me, and say, "Oh, here is Aunt Sarah's chicken−pen!" Actually it is an old well I once saw in Brittany. "Oh, here is the story of old Mr. Gresham at his grandnephew's

funeral. Don't you remember I showed you Elsie's letter about it?" I never saw the letter, never heard of old Mr. Gresham, and the chapter in question describes the antics of a four−year−old at his father's wedding.

"Here is Saidie Lippincott to the life!"

I gasp, "Who is Saidie Lippincott?"

"Don't you remember you met her at Rose Earle's tea when you visited me four years ago?"

There is no possession people are so unwilling to let one have as an imagination. In private, friends will tear a book to shreds to discover some portrait they can recognize; and in the case of authors famous enough to be dead, critics rake the ground wherever they have trod in an effort to prove that the folk of their fancy were drawn from the earth rather than the air. There seems no means of convincing a reader that in a writer's head are constantly a thousand faces he has never seen or heard of, all subtle with story, all begging for a book, and all so real that they often make his daily waking seem a dream.

There is no denying that there is autobiography in all fiction, but the relation of the two is not so superficial as the mere introduction of facts and of characters from one's daily life. The actual relation of experience and its expression is deep and intricate, and, especially for the woman writer, pervasive. As one must adjust one's work to a feminine body, to a feminine brain, and to distinctly feminine social relations, so one must take into account as still more determinative a woman's spiritual characteristics. However potent the impulse to write, the impulse to live is deeper. I have dwelt on the negative side of this problem, the uselessness of fleeing to strange places to escape other people's burdens; but it is impossible to over−emphasize the positive side, the difficulties of staying at home with the burdens that Providence has provided. However intense the joys and sorrows of the people the woman creates, the joys and sorrows of the people she loves will be still more intense. It needs both poise and vitality to be equal to the demands both of fancy and of fact. The mere external tangle of hours and seasons that any human relations necessitate is nothing compared with the spiritual tangle of one's sympathies. The instinct to soothe and succor and the instinct to think and write meet in a daily, an hourly, variance. Heart and head are equally insistent in their demands, and equally vengeful if unsatisfied. Books cry to be written, and people cry to be loved, and to whichever one I turn a deaf ear, I am presently paying the penalty of a great unrest and discontent. To preserve the balance of attention between the needs of her head and the needs of her heart is the biggest problem any woman writer faces. I have discovered no ultimate solution; it is rather a matter of small daily solutions, in which at one time we sacrifice the friend to the book, and at another the book to the friend.

Yet in any crucial choice a real woman chooses living rather than literature. My brain itself approves this yielding of intellect to emotions for the very simple reason that, if I don't thus yield, the emotions denied will avenge themselves on the brain, and the book I write will be unnatural because I myself am unnatural.

Once I thought it impossible to write when people about me were in distress: I proposed to myself to wait until things should settle down. I perceived that things never do settle down; that for women who have human affections, there will always be somebody somewhere to worry about. It is rather inspiring to be a woman, because it is so difficult. With the winds blowing from every direction at once, one must somehow steer a course that will reveal alike to the reader who knows one's book and to the friend who knows one's heart, a halcyon serenity.

A relative detachment from her own living is as necessary for a woman writer as an absolute detachment is stultifying. Since for a woman expression is fused with experience, clean hands and a pure heart are for her the fundamental demands of art, and this fact means that she must be constantly scouring off her sense of humor with spiritual sapolio before she can effectively handle a pen. Be sure her philosophy will find her out in her book far more clearly than in a man's.

The natural fusion of a woman's brain with her emotions, resisted, leads to intellectual weakness; accepted, leads to intellectual strength. In the history of literature George Sand is the great example of a woman who won success by the masculine solution of detachment from experience, and Jane Austen, the great example of a woman who won success by the feminine solution of identification with her own dailyness.

I am inclined to think the latter by far the greater artist, just as I am inclined to think that in literature rather than in any other form of mental activity will always be found woman's highest intellectual achievement, for the simple reason that woman's genius consists in personality, and for the expression of personality words are the only adequate medium. Jane Austen's example is the great encouragement for the woman who wishes to write without ceasing to be a simple everyday woman. Jane Austen was capable of a detachment that enabled her to write books that give no hint of the thunder of the Napoleonic wars even when she had two brothers on fighting ships. She was capable of an identification with her surroundings that enabled her to write novels of universal humanity and eternal artistry and to keep right on being everybody's aunt at the same time. She was sane and humorous in her novels because she was sane and humorous out of them. She achieved fame because she had first achieved personality. Still, her fame is only a thin frail fire set beside the effulgence of a dozen men of her time.

Yet I would rather have been Jane Austen than Shelley or Wordsworth or Keats. It is perfectly just that men's books should be greater than women's, because men are willing to pay the price. Not to write "Macbeth" would I willingly give up an afternoon's romp with a baby. As a woman I reckon my spirit's capital, not in terms of accomplishment, but in terms of my own joy, and a baby brings me more joy than a book.

Men ought to write better than women because they care more; in a way women who write have the more impersonal outside−of−themselves impulsion, because inside of themselves they don't care. I acknowledge the urge of writing and I am willing up to a certain point to pay by means of a vigorous mental discipline and a certain self−saving from useless self−spending, but I don't pretend that writing satisfies me. Something descends upon me and says, "Write," and shakes me like a helpless kitten until I do write; but it's a relief when the shaking is over, and I am left to the merrier business of merely being myself. In other words, I am a writer because I can't help it, but I am a woman because I choose to be.

XIV. Picnic Pictures

Her white house is the same, with a difference. It was always a house fitted to the person like a garment, a friendly house with peace in the corners, a house warm with sun or firelight; yet I think we always used the house merely as a starting−place for picnics, for running away into the out−of−doors with a well−stocked basket. We are at best only reformed dryads, my friend and I, and I am not even reformed. I think perhaps that it was in like manner that we used our two selves, merely as a starting−point for picnics, for the leap into the infinite, the challenging of space and time, the tossing of stars like play−balls from one to the other, always with the joy of the word shaping on the tongue to the gleam in a friend's eye. We are lovers of words, I and she. True we also had talk in the library, dusked with books, dead men's spirits packed shoulder to shoulder on the shelves. There was brave firelight in the library, and quiet candles, and there was also Xerxes. The great gray Persian curled on one corner of the big desk. Even asleep he dominated the home in his sole masculinity. Yet to me he was sexless and sphinxlike except when he forsook his Oriental calm for strange gambols in the white moonlight, a bounding gray shape of a tiger grace. Sometimes Xerxes rose and stretched as if our conversation bored him, sometimes his great purring drowned out the Occidental flippancy of our chat. He was more king than cat, and he always made me a little uncomfortable, that Xerxes. To−day he is not dead but deposed. His place on the desk is usurped by a sturdy box of cigars.

However happily we might talk in the library we always knew we were better without a roof, for in the blood of the born picnicker there is something that must always be running, dancing, flying. Out−of−doors, there were the little brooks to chuckle at us if talk delved too deep, and the pine−tops to fill all pauses with quiet music. We were

the better picnickers because we lived for the most part in life's schoolroom. We counted our picnic days and sorted them into due order of excellence, some better, some not quite so merry, yet all very good. But lately I had begun to wonder about the picnics, for the difference in the white, hill−girdled house is a husband. When our friends marry we always wonder about the picnics, for sorrow is always a third comrade to hold two friends' hands the tighter, and to keep their feet more closely in step; it is happiness that may sever and un−self people.

This, our first married picnic, dawned as brisk and bright as any. The master is not with us. He departs each morning for a mysterious place called "The Works." That is something I have always noticed in husbands, that tendency to go forth to "The Works." Somehow no matter how hard women may toil for their daily bread, they never seem to belong to "The Works" of the world. The white house bustles with picnic preparations. It has to bustle when Jennie is in it. Jennie? Well, Jennie might be called the steam−engine at the middle of the merry−go−round. Some day I think the world will grow wise enough to stop talking about the servant question, and begin to study the philosophy that is still often to be found going about wrapped in a maid's cap and apron. Jennie, a little person quick of foot, bounces up and down like a merry ball, and cries to the blue May morning while she butters sandwiches, "Picnic time has come again! Picnic time has come again!" Yet I never heard of Jennie's going on a picnic; do people ever know, I wonder, how much of other people's unselfishness must go to the making of anybody's Eden?

The hall rocks to the bouncings and barkings of Mac, for he, too, feels picnic in the air. Mac is a newcomer, so is Peggy, the mare, ready tied beneath a tree to carry us over the hills and far away. When Adam came to this Eden, he brought his animals with him, a method much better than the Scriptural one, for it must have been a strain on any honeymoon, that influx of indiscriminate elephant and dinosaur, cormorant and anteater, and what not. The animals here were carefully chosen, Mac, the shaggy, clumsy, warm−hearted Airedale, and Peggy, high−bred as a lady of the old South, having all such a lady's charm and grace and fundamental loyalty touched with just the dash of deviltry considered meet to spice the masculine palate. It is with the clatter of Mac's ecstatic barking as he plunges before Peggy's light hoofs that we go driving forth toward the blue, hillswept horizon.

There is a tentative venturesomeness about my friend's driving, for horsemanship with her is a recent accomplishment, and a proud one, to the zest of which Peggy contributes with a pricking of ears and a graceful dip to the side of the road before every motor−car. Mac trots briskly in front or behind, or to the side. His path through life is one of friendly detours. He will never accomplish any great deeds in dogdom. He is one of the simple souls unconscious of their magnetism. There is not an animal by the roadside that does n't come ambling up to his genial little nose. Even a herd of Jersey cows lopes clumsily across the pasture to chat with him at the bars, and no dog, big or little, fails to wish Mac good−morning.

It is the kind of morning for good wishes both for dogs and men. Knotted old farmers, seeing our picnic faces and picnic basket, grin and twinkle, sharing the May sunshine. The hills are a dim blue against a sky still softer. Boulder−strewn pastures, more brown than green, are starred with bluets. Far off there, below a shaggy stretch of pines, is a field so golden with dandelions that it quivers as if held by midsummer beat.

We don't know where we are going; that is always the charm of our picnics, to follow the will of the road. It carries us past a sawmill in the wood. Its stridency and the tang of fresh sawdust strike sharp across the air fragrant with fern. Then the road is off again across the open, cleaving farms with their broad greening fields. The meadowlarks ring out their calls to us. The bobolinks dart and dive and sing. I turn to my companion in sudden question: "Now that you are married to a woodsman, do you know anything more about birds?"

"Oh, no," she answers easily, "we know only the nice birds"; thus reassuring me that in her company I need fear, no more than of old, to meet any but the best bird society, robins and blackbirds and orioles and the other long−established families, and reassuring me also as to my fear that the one left behind at "The Works" might prove to be one of these bugaboo birdmen, of all beings the most subtly superior. In fact, it is very difficult to extract good conversation from any kind of human encyclopedia, ornithological or other.

Everywhere the cherry trees and pear are snowed over with white, but the apple blossoms are unopened, turning to a deep rose amid the pale−green leaves. The orchards are nearly human in their individuality, whether they form a little battalion of old men, sturdy and gnarled and steadfast, or a band of little budding baby trees toddling up a hill. There are no great waters in this countryside, but many little glinting brooks, pattering downhill beside our wheels, then meandering through meadows beneath their bushy willows. We are minded to follow a brook and let it lead us to perfect picnic. It leads us, of course, up a hill and up, away from all farms, all valleys, into a deep woods road, hushed and strange, and at last beckons us aside from the road itself, with a twinkle of white birch stems, and the swirl of wild water, white and amber.

It takes a long time to tie and blanket Peggy while I sit dreaming in the dappled shade beside the musical rush of water, haunted by my friend's own song that once set all this woodland madness to elfin rhythms. But my mood is interrupted by the thumping down of the stout picnic basket. She is smilingly tolerant of my dryad whimseys, but for herself, nowadays, she wishes to unpack that basket and get settled. It is for me also, perhaps, to be smilingly tolerant of the other dryad turned domestic; for me, brook water still has power to turn me dizzy and to make my heart stop beating.

It is the same basket we used to carry, but, like the house, it has a difference. There is a great object concealed in ebony leather, and it is called the "wap−eradicator." The term is profoundly masculine, for a "wap" is some evil−eyed foreigner who might disturb our picnic privacy, and his eradicator is a pistol. There is also a marvelous jackknife which I pause in unpacking to examine. It again is no lady's toy, seeing that it has not only all the blades a lady might require, but in addition a screwdriver and a corkscrew, a tack−puller and a can−opener. There is stout enamel ware in the basket, too, whereas we always used to carry china, feminine and fragile. Food, much of that,—but then we always did take food, for I have noticed that poets need a deal of victualing. In fact, roast beef is about the best thing you can do for anybody's imagination. One packet I myself put in for old sake's sake, despite her laughter, a yellow envelope packed with her typed poetry. "We'll never look at it," she said, and she generally knows. She pulls forth now some scribbled tablets, skeleton stories of my own, "Your little deedles," she designates them in genial contempt, and plants the cream jar upon them.

Presently she is off to gather fagots for the fire, admonishing my absentmindedness, "Don't let Mac eat the food before we do." I note how much handier she has grown in all wood−lore. To−day the fire needs no coaxing, also it's a much smaller fire than we used to build. We used to have a scorching splutter for a wee bit of coffee. This fire goes briskly and to the point, showering us now and then with cinders, yet on the whole well−behaved. In other days we toasted our bacon on forked sticks, but there's a fine frying−pan now, with rings to thrust a rod into, tightening it with twigs. Bacon and eggs sizzle merrily, and the coffee−kettle boils its cover off. We sit smut−cheeked and zestful, and exhibit a great capacity for sandwiches. There is much complacency in our manners. Her coffee, she remarks, "has seven kinds of sticks in it, but is perfectly potable." The fire, that low, leaping ruddiness against a gray boulder, is the best fire she "ever personally conducted." As for me, there is plenty of chuckle in me, too, but I am thinking, when shall we begin to talk, for was that not what we always went to the woods for? Somehow, what with building fires, and brewing and frying, with eating and drinking, and giving Mac and Peggy to eat and drink, there has not been time for talking. That will come later, when we have packed away the sandwiches we could not eat, and given Mac his drink from our emptied coffee−pail, and Peggy her two lumps of sugar. Then surely at last we shall talk, about poems and stories, and all things writ able, and all things livable. Sometimes I think she guesses what I am waiting for and regards me with a twinkle, while she moves about light−footed, setting away our clutter.

But afterwards she is sleepy, lying stretched in flickering shadow on the brown pine needles; and I, the picnic place has caught me again into its spell. Nowhere does spring come stepping so delicately as in New England. In other places there is more riot and revelry in the carnival of bursting blossoms and leaf. In New England spring has the face of a girl nun. There are white violets in our woods and white birch stems. The very light has a quality soft and rare. The sky is the Quaker ladies' own color. Across the swirling water that leaps down the rock path, the face of a hill rises high into the sky. It is all gray boulder and brown, with a film of pale green over all, touched

here and there by the dreamy white of the shadbush. Nearer by, great boulders at the waterside below us are moss−covered, and across them the dappled shade of little leaves goes flickering. The beautiful tree shapes are unhidden, gray stems twining with brown. There is a satin sheen in the rod of light that lines each trunk−shaft turned to the sun. Just now, sailing from nowhere, across the green−veiled gray of the hill opposite, there fluttered a white butterfly.

After a long time I touch the envelope packed with poetry, and move it tentatively toward my friend's hand. She shoves it quietly aside. Drowsy though she is, she has an eye open to watch Peggy's glossy brown head tossing down there in an amber−lit wood space, and to see that Mac does not wake from his nap, where he lies only half visible against the russet leaves he has chosen to match his coat. Nowadays any soaring talk may be interrupted by a hearty "Whoa, Peggy!" or a "Down, Mac!" It is no poor punctuation, no unworthy anchorage, for people whose feet have often ached from treading the tree−tops.

She has tossed aside her poetry, but will listen to my stories. I am eager to tell her about all the new people in my brain. She brushes the cobwebs from their heads and from mine with all her old acumen, knowing, in all the spacious sanities of the married woman, that I need to write, while I, I know, too, that she need not. If we did not, each of us, understand, could there be any more picnics? But the pauses grow longer, filled with the voices of the water and the wood. The air is warm and drowsy, and at last she is fast asleep, held close to the brown earth, and I, the other one, sit straight, my back to a stout pine, while my thoughts go wandering, gazing in at Eden, at all Edens. Everybody's path skirts so many Edens, of the women friends married, and the men friends married. Passing pilgrim−wise, one garners a walletful of reflections. Looking at my friend lying there asleep on brown pine needles, I know, as every woman must know, that she will never again need me in the old way, and, as every woman must be, I am far too glad to be sorry. The question for each of us, man or woman, outside the fence, is, Will he, will she, still come out sometimes into life's great open and picnic with me? That all depends, does it not? on the newcomer. If he, if she, is a petty person, there are no more picnics. If a man, moving in to possess all sky, all sea, every crack and cranny of the universe, still holds most sacred there that path of a woman's past which she walked, alone, to come to him, he will leave untouched all the little sunny picnic places, for any man big enough to deserve all a woman's past would be far too big to desire it; is not just that the secret of how to have picnics though married?

And still my thoughts go wandering, passing now from the "wap−eradicator" to all that lies back of it, of our need for it. How fundamentally different the way in which we must both regard that great black pistol lying between us! To her it is a new toy, something she has recently learned to shoot, and deeper, truer, it is the symbol of a husband's protection, while I see beyond it that great fevered army of the unemployed, those who work and want, whose presence makes a weapon necessary. In some way I cannot analyze, I know that I am vaguely glad that I am on their side of the fence; in both my work and play too far away from them, perhaps, and too forgetful, still on their side of the ramparts of Eden, in that strange great world where no one ever is satisfied.

That packet of poetry tossed to earth, to which no new poem has been added for many a month,—will she ever write again, and shall I be glad or sorry, I who know myself how a woman's writing is made? Yet hers is vital poetry, earth−warm and limpid as the song of the meadowlark. Curious how it is men who have best put women into words, men who have made the best bedtime lullabies for children; women have been much too happy to talk about it. Yet a happy woman with the gift of song, if she remembered,—if she could set to music the purring of her kettle on the hob, the lilt of her sewing−machine,—how the sunny words might twinkle on harder, stranger paths! But if happy people remembered, could they then be happy? Oh, dear me, why must I be always asking questions? The wind is blowing, and against that big frowning boulder a buttercup is bobbing in the sun: how many times a day one is glad one does not have to be God, but only has to know Him there, behind this sun−and−shadow curtain we name Life!

But my friend is awake, measuring the time of the master's home−going and ours. She is up, and running down to the waterside. I see her there, slender and tall, light−poised on a stone. Beyond her the opposite hillside looms

high, green and gray. Above her ruddy head a shadbush bends itself, russet and white like her own woods−dress. As I look she tosses the water from her cup, and it falls in a great arc of sun−spray against the dusk of the woods.

The home−going is as glad as the going forth, but quieter, with long shadows across the grass. We pass pools where tall trees stand with their feet in the water in the gold light of late afternoon, and all the motionless brown water is bordered bright with marsh−marigolds. We stop at a watering−trough, and I must get out to undo Peggy's check−rein, and to keep a hand on Mac's collar so that he will not tumble head foremost over the high rail. I hand up a cup to the driver seated, and we drink thirstily, all four of us.

One farm has been happy with a spring paint−brush since our morning passing. Every flower−pot, box, tripod, and that curiously frequent flower−receptacle, the iron boiler, cut in lengthwise section, has been coated with dashing vermilion. Spring had got into their bones on that farm.

Mac lags from time to time, and we have to stop to lug and heave him into the wagon, where he lies across our feet, a panting, restless lap−robe of warm Airedale. Now a curious social phenomenon occurs. The very dogs, which in the morning had nosed Mac in friendliest fashion, come forth and bark and howl at him in his present eminence. It is the old, old story of the proletariat protesting against the plutocrat.

The green spring country is seamed by old stone walls. I do not know why an old stone wall has power to touch my pulses strangely, to set stirring dreams long prisoned. It is some forgotten child association, I suppose, the feeling that an old stone wall gives me, exactly akin, by the way, to that of an old covered bridge, with its magic of mystery−shod hoofs at midnight. Peggy's hoofs are swift, going home, and the road, although the same, seems twice as short as before. At one point we vary it, cutting across country through a wood of pines. Beneath the pines the earth is all brown unflecked by any sun, and the light is clear amber, except that at the far edge of the grove there are bright gold gleams through the distant tree stems. Above our heads the color is not brown; it is that strange deep gray−blue that makes mysterious the heart of a pine tree where the branches meet the trunk. We have not talked very much to−day, she and I, but here no one could speak any words. These seem the stillest woods in all the world. We draw rein. Suddenly from out uttermost silence there rings the chime of a thrush.

But Peggy stamps and chafes, and Mac is panting. Were the animals urgent just like this, I wonder, when Adam and Eve longed to listen to some archangel's voice?

It is Peggy's will that we get home. The master is there before us, and at the barn. That is another thing I have noticed about husbands, when they are not at "The Works," they are likely to be at the barn, if there is one. Jennie is flying about, singing to her feet to keep them lively while she makes us a dinner. Even when that meal comes I find I am still dreaming, for I was not, ready to come home. Afterward in the clear May twilight we move forth to doorstep and lawn, It is Peggy's hour for evening cropping. The master leads her about. Every turn of her head, every lift of her foot, is a movement of grace. In the gathering twilight, soft and misty, Peggy seems some beautiful horse stepping delicately out of elfland. Mac is tugging at the other end of her tether rope, and the master is somehow strung between them.

The level meadows flow away before us. The deepening blue of the sky softly puts out the sunset. Suddenly, as at some signal, the frogs begin to pipe from the meadow pool. My friend crosses the dusky lawn to join those others. She moves at Peggy's head in her dim white dress. One star comes out.

Across their heads I see, hardly discernible, the spires of the city, and its red earth−lights, and somehow, although I know all its fever, all its pain, I hear the far crying of its spirit to my spirit, cry of innermost comradeship, the call of Home. I rise now from my seat on the doorstep, signal of good−night. She comes flying to my side; of all the words she might say, she chooses that best one, "It was our very nicest picnic."

XV. The Farm Feminine

There are in my summer neighborhood three gentlemen farmers who are women. There is an implied distinction in the implied definition. The three I have under observation are quite different from those women farmers who have shouldered their husbands' acres when forced to do so by widowhood or other marital disability. This difference, among others that readily occur, is primarily the same as that between all actual and amateur farming, the difference between those who grow up out of the soil and know its tricks, and those who come to the soil from another plane, and don't suspect it of having any tricks. At any rate, the lady farmers of our neighborhood farm because they want to, not because they have to; otherwise, perhaps, they would not be in our neighborhood at all, although it is one of the loveliest in all the land.

Somewhere between the lush luxuriance of the South and the beautiful austerity of New England lies Pennsylvania. This countryside is rich in mellow old farms, far retired from railways. There are low, rolling hills and woodsy back roads. Houses are set far up grassy lanes, lined with trees. Doorways back and front are deep in shade. Barns are big and white, and spread broad wings over plentiful harvesting. Houses are white, too, of stucco or of stone, old, kindly, solidly built. To these shady bricked porches, where the roses clamber against gray−white walls, Washington's colonials might have come clattering up. Small wonder that women desiring farms should desire just this deep−verdured beauty, and no less wonder that the farms, many good miles from market, should be so abundantly for sale that any lady, eager to surround herself with fields and fowls, may readily choose her own particular frame and setting.

The three have chosen, each according to her heart's requirements. Lady One is the lady of the flowers, and she is the youngest. Her throat is round and white, nor beneath the droop of her great garden hat is it too much exposed to the sun. She wears gloves, white ones and unique among garden gloves because they fit. Her shoes, her kerchief, are always freshly white, and her muslin dress of soft shade, lavender or blue, or sprigged and flounced. She might have stepped forth from fancy's gallery where we all keep pictures hanging of gardens and of grandmothers. She herself may be dreaming of just such a portrait−picture. But don't think that she is a drone because she is perhaps a dreamer. There are no such flowers in thirty miles, and flowers mean tireless toil; they take more good soil−sweat than a whole field of potatoes.

She chose her farm to fit her, it had run sadly seedy, but she retouched all its fading picturesqueness. The house is pillared, frame, low, and white. Small grilled windows wink with garret mysteries above the high porch roof, and all is deep in shade and set far back beyond low terraces with mossy flower urns and steps of cracked flags. There are trim green globes of box trees before the front door, and to the left is her garden of flowers set within a labyrinthine box hedge. Everywhere are roses, roses,— starry little yellow blossoms, red, pink, white, roses whose very names are fragrant: Flower of Fairfield, Perle de Jardin, Baltimore Belle, Soleil d'Or, Crimson Globe, Killarney.

This lady's eyes are brown and too deep to fathom because she is still too young to be fearless. Her voice, her words, are sweet and friendly, but her eyes do not see you, they see only roses, and in roses, perhaps, those deeper mysteries all women see in all growing things; her gloved hand can touch a rose as if it were a little live face.

Quite different, Lady Two and her farm. Here all is bustle and clack. Chickens, pigs, turkeys, kittens, ducks, puppies, calves occur so frequently that every day is a birthday. You could not associate Lady One with the farmyard; you could not associate Lady Two with anything else. True, her house has a front doorway every whit as picturesque as Lady One's,—a square porch where the lilies−of−the−valley push up through ancient bricks, and a great pine bears fruit of stars every evening,—but Lady Two is not there to see, for she is putting her chickens to bed. It is out on the great back porch with its pump and its grapevine lattice, on this porch and on the slope to the big barns below, that things happen. There is no rose garden. Lady Two has flowers, it is true, in hearty democratic confusion and profusion; she loves them, too, but without subtlety, watering them and her tomato

plants alike with the same splashing hand. Her vegetable garden is the garden of her heart. She is a woman radiant with a hoe.

Lady Two is tall and spare, tanned and cheery. Somewhere she has a family, comfortable and conventional, but somehow she has managed to slip off to a farm, away from them and all social claims, and thus at forty she remains a hearty, rosy boy, with quick hands, quick feet, and brown eyes full of zest. The farm keeps her a little breathless; she is on the jump all day, from the first imperative call of hungry chicks to the small−hour barkings of Gyp. It is nothing to hurry forth from slumber with lantern and comforting words to still her dog. If she should find that Gyp had been barking at some prowling evil−doer, she would not think first of her own nerves, but of Gyp's.

Lady Two cares not for costume, choosing merely the nearest and the handiest before she hurries forth to her farm. Her hands are marked by sun and serviceability; could you succor a sick horse in gloves! In mud−streaked denim, hatted and booted like a man, she stalks the boggy pasture to recapture the black turkey−hen, an errant lady, who, in some atavistic dream, prefers to brood on an empty nest in the swamp, exhibiting a truly feminine propensity to combine a pleasing wildness with a perilous wetness.

To Lady Two her farm means primarily fowls. Down the slope below the kitchen porch they are housed with all modern improvements, in brooders and colony house, and all manner of coops. Ducks waddle, geese strut, guinea fowl go trip−trip on feet too tiny. At feeding−time Lady Two is the center of a feathered mass, cackling, peeping, gobbling, quacking, creaking like rusty hinges as guinea fowl do. She might be a mother with a great group of happy, boisterous youngsters. Sometimes she stoops to pick up and inspect some tiny hurt chick. She croons to it with brooding tenderness. Babies, she calls the tiny things, and babies they are to her, all the little newly−borns of her farm, whether a pinky piglet, a calf that gambols awkwardly, a little turkey that must not get its feet wet, a colt unsteady on stilt−legs, a beady−eyed yellow duckling, a plunging puppy lost among its own four legs,—babies all.

Not for roses, not for chicks, that grow, both, beneath a fostering hand, did Lady Three choose her farm. Roses and chicks she has both in plenty, and tends them with her own hands, adequately and happily, but without absorption. She has outlived the need for absorption, so that the twinkle in her gray eyes is imperishable. She has also outlived the need for varied costume. Hers has the detachment and independence of uniform, always straight−cut, gray serge with a straight−cut linen collar, and small crimson tie. Her dress has all a man's superiority to his exterior, but her choice of a farm reveals nothing masculine in her spirit. Her great farmhouse is built of brown stones set irregularly in clear−seamed white. There are big twin chimneys at right and left. There is a white tablet beneath the eaves bearing a date of Penn's time, but only the shell of the house is old, within all is remade to a mistress's liking. If in all women the root of all impulse is to be always making something that shall tangibly shape to the impress of each woman's separate self, then Lady Three chose neither flowers nor fowls, she chose to create for herself a home. Much−traveled herself, she found her farm far from beaten paths, lost down a grassy lane where a brown brook clatters and chuckles from out a hushed woodland. A business woman, so−called, executive, successful, as any man, she chose, ten years ago, at fifty, her far−off farm. Her lawns are clear of litter as was her desk in her counting−room. Her house is heated, watered, furnished in neatest and completest comfort. Many electrical devices, and her own ruddy health make her quite independent of kitchen itinerants not like the mistress inured to loneliness. Having read much, seen much, done much, known much, in her fifty years, she chose to spend the rest with herself, in her home, a home where every chair, book, rug, picture speaks individuality, some quick quaint taste, some humorous little philosophy. It is a house warm with welcome, but genially self−sufficient. Of the three, this lady, wise and gray, is the only one who really sees you, and listens; the other two see only farm. Lady Three is not afraid to live alone with the stars out−of−doors, or alone indoors with her hearth fire. You can't be afraid of the lonely wind when you have long ago ceased to be afraid of yourself.

Thus my three lady farmers; and now that question, Does their farming pay? All lady farming depends entirely on the quality of its male assistance. You cannot farm without a man; it has been tried. Help is an ever−present trouble, but the Lady of the Roses has not found this out, because she is still too young and too pretty. Whenever she steps far from her roses, it is to look at her sky rather than her soil. Unwitting she has power to turn that brute species, Hired Man, into a very knight of chivalry, jealous to guard every blade of wheat that springs for her. Busily binding, cutting, watering her roses, she never even sees her servitors; but they see her, in all those frail fripperies of hers, while in the summer evening they linger, blue−overalled and bounden, just beyond her low hedge, to hear the sound of her voice in its sweet, absent responses. Her men know she does not see them, but perhaps they think some day she will perceive what tall corn she has, what sleek cattle. Does her farming, therefore, pay? Yes, a little, which is as much as can be said for most farming.

Quite different is the case with Lady Two. She has her hired men and her hired boys, big and little, and they all keep very busy, watching her, and they keep still busier demanding that she watch them. She is a cheery, desirable comrade for any toil, their "Miss Katie," diminutive, both affectionate and superior, showing small awe for their tall boy mistress, in whose brisk capability they have, however, pride. They constantly call her to see them do it, whatever it is she desires. "Miss Katie," "Miss Katie," resounds from garden and furrow and hencoop. They cannot detach a setting hen, or churn the butter without her oversight, loudly bellowed for. They are children demanding that their mother shall watch their prowess at play. She wonders why her farm does not pay; it is because of that expensive little name of hers, because of her "Miss Katie."

Lady Three,—does her farm give her dollar for dollar? Precisely that, and that is all she asks of it. Her oversight is brief, adequate. Men have always worked well for her, they always will. She has the quiet mistress−mastery that every man recognizes; moreover, she has a bank account that every man respects.

No, on the whole, lady farming does not pay, if you reckon success not by desires, but by dollars. From that point of view, only those women farm successfully who have at least once or twice in their lives possessed a husband and assimilated his manner of dealing with crops and with animals. Farming quafarming, that is essentially man's work, but farming qua joy, that's a woman's discovery. A man farmer is never fused with his farm, because a man is not built to share earth's parturition. In some way or other a woman must be always creating, always bringing forth. If she is not a house−mother, then she must be slipping, sliding, something of herself into her roses, her baby chicks, her home. To be joyous, she must be putting forth shoots, blossoms, must be pushing down her roots. To be glad, she must feel herself part of this great springing, growing universe. That woman who has chosen herself a farm has done so that she may feel her head warmed by the life−giving sun and her feet firm in the fertile earth.

If success lies in having what you want, then my three farmer friends have attained it. But sometimes I look at them and wonder, Is it what once they wanted? The Lady of the Roses, I am sure she has a story; I am not sure she will not some day have another; surely there are things her hands might touch fairer even than roses. Lady Two has no story, and is too hearty and happy to note the fact, but when I see her lift in a strong brown grasp a yellow duckling, I remember there are heads even more golden and downy. Lady Three, cozily ensconced in her snug old farmhouse, looks back into her homeless past, forward into her unhoused future, fearless in the knowledge that whithersoever she goes she carries with her a serene personality that will always be shaping its whereabouts to fit it, but her eyes are bright with philosophies that might have sent forth sons and daughters to splendid living. Like my three friends who have found quiet in the morning call of the sun, in the coming of the rain on a thirsting flower−bed, on all the big little concerns of a farmyard, I must lean back on the good green peace of the universe—a universe which must have some stout principle of growth spiritual beneath its seeming waste of mortal energies, in order that I may not question why it is that the farm feminine is not, as it might have been, the farm masculine, the farm infantine.

XVI. A Little girl and Her Grandmother

I am always sorry for children who have never known what it is to have a grandmother and a grandfather and an old mountain farm to visit, far away from everywhere. A little girl I once knew had all three. Her grandmother was the dearest grandmother I have ever seen. She was tall and stout, with a broad, comfortable lap, and her hands, as they stroked the little girl's head on her shoulder, were smooth and soft. The grandmother's eyes were blue and full of mischief and fun and love. When she laughed she shook all over so that nobody looking at her could help laughing too; even the little girl, who was naturally serious. The grandmother's checks were a soft pink, and her hair was black, faintly silvered. She wore it parted plain on week−days, but on Sundays it was crimped. On Sundays, too, she wore her black grenadine, but on other days her dress was blue gingham with a long white apron.

The grandmother lived on a farm so steep that it seemed always to be sliding down the mountain into the valley below. At the back of the house were a few acres of cleared space, and then beyond this the stretches of mountain woods. From these woods you could hear the call of the whip−poor−wills in the evenings, and there were wildcats and bears there, too, perhaps, and rattlesnakes surely. The farm had been a wild sort of place until the grandmother took hold of it and tamed it. She had them build a line of white fence palings between the house and the grass−grown mountain road. She would have the porch trimmed with clematis, and they had to build her a grape arbor, too, and swing a hammock under it. Above the whitewashed fence a row of sunflowers nodded, and within was a line of sweet−peas. In front of the house were two long flower−beds, bordered with mignonette. In one was heliotrope, in the other flowering red geraniums. There were other flower−beds, too, wherever the grandmother could find a place for them, and in one was a tall plant of lemon verbena. The grandmother was always plucking a leaf of this and crushing it, and then clapping her fragrant hand over the little girl's nose. Such fun they had with the flowers, snipping and weeding and watering, their two gossipy sunbonnets close together! Whatever the grandmother was doing, the little girl was always at her heels, except when she was tagging after her grandfather.

All through her childhood the little girl used to make long visits at the farm. She was a queer little girl, not at all happy. Her grandmother said she was "high−strung," but her mother and the little girl herself called it just plain "naughty." At any rate, she was always losing her temper, and then crying for hours over the sin of it. She worried over everything that happened by day, and she was afraid of everything that might happen by night, and was always flying from her bed in terror of the dark. At last, when the little girl's cheeks would grow so thin, and her eyes so big and anxious that her mother was at her wits' end what to do with her, she would say to the father: "We must send Margie down to mother."

Now the little girl's father, who was a minister, had very little money, and the grandmother had less, but somehow they would do without things and do without things until they got the little girl safely off to the old farm, where she grew so brown and fat and jolly that her mother hardly knew her.

The first of these visits was when Margie was so little that she would have been a baby if there had n't been another baby at home. She remembers only one happening of that visit—riding high on the hay wagon, she and her grandmother, while her grandfather drove the mules. Margie thinks now that perhaps her grandmother did not enjoy that ride, for hay is hot and prickly, but whatever the little girl wanted to do, that the grandmother did. Another incident of that first visit her grandmother used to tell the little girl afterwards. The little girl always wanted to help her grandfather in all his work, and often she was much in the way. Sometimes when there was hoeing that must be done, the grandfather would try to slip away unnoticed; then that tease of a grandmother would point out to the little girl how the grandfather's overalls were just disappearing around the corner of the house, and the little girl would snatch up her sunbonnet and her fire shovel, and run after, crying: "Wait for me, grandpa!" Then she would stand in the furrow right in front of him and pound away with her shovel, so hot and earnest that the grandfather had nothing to do but stand and laugh at her, and down in the doorway the

grandmother, watching them, laughed, too, because she was teasing the grandfather and pleasing the little girl. Another visit came the summer when Margie was seven. Her father was going to Convocation, and so could take her with him and drop her off at the grandmother's station. Margie wore a big sailor hat and a brand−new sailor suit. She was so excited all the way that she did not talk at all, and would not touch her lunch. At last, peering out of the window, she saw the old spring wagon and her grandfather holding the reins and her grandmother waiting on the platform. Her grandmother lifted her up in her arms, doll and satchel and lunch−box and all, and carried her over to the wagon: at home Margie was much too old to be lifted and carried. Seated between her grandparents, while her grandmother held her hat and the mountain wind blew through her curls and her trunk bumped along at the back, all Margie's worries fell away from her—she forgot she was a sinful child, she ceased to think that the babies were doomed to drown in the river, that her mother would be stricken by dread disease and die, that her father would be run over in crossing the railroad track; and as for springing from her bed in fear, that night and all the rest she slept so soundly that she never woke at all.

Arrived at the farmhouse, the grandmother would open Margie's trunk and take out all the little garments and think them the prettiest ever seen, because the little girl's mother had made them every stitch. From the little dresses the grandmother would select the very oldest, and then lock all the others away again. Down at the village store she would buy some coarse brown and white stockings, costing ten cents a pair. From a corner behind the sewing−machine she would bring out the sunbonnet she had stitched for Margie in the winter. It was blue check and had pasteboard slats that came out when it was washed. Thus equipped, the little girl might run free of the farm. She helped to feed the calves and the chickens and the pigs; she wiped the dishes for Minnie, the little Dutch maid, in order that Minnie might be sooner ready to play in the haymow with her in the long sultry afternoons through which the locusts shrilled; she went huckleberrying with her grandfather, pushing far into the mountain woods, always treading warily because of the rattlers, and coming home with a face smirched with purple under the sunbonnet; she took long drives with her grandfather along strange, still mountain roads. With him, too, she tried milking: the cow−bells tinkled through the dusk of the long shed, and the air was fragrant with the hay and the steaming milk−pails, and the little girl tried with all her might, but usually she only succeeded in sending a fine stream into her grandfather's eye. On indoor days Margie would draw her little red rocker up beside her grandmother's knee and listen to stories. The stories were all about mysterious and unknown relatives, Cousin Letty This and Uncle Josiah That and Aunt Tirzah Something Else. Much of it the little girl did not understand at all, yet somehow she liked listening to stories, snuggled against her grandmother's knee, better than anything else in the long, blithe days, and the little girl felt sleepy very early here on the farm—she that was such a sleepless midget at home.

After supper, while the light was still clear, her grandmother would undress her and put on her nightgown: then, when her hair was combed and her teeth brushed and her prayers said, she would wrap the little girl in the gray blanket shawl, and carry her out to the big rocking−chair on the front porch. There the grandmother would croon old songs while the little girl's head drowsed against her shoulder, and the summer twilight stole upon them. Sometimes the call of a whip−poor−will would sound out from the woods, or the roosting turkeys in the apple trees across the road would rustle and flap their wings, and sometimes the white moon would come gliding up the sky, seen dreamily through the clematis bloom.

As the little girl grew older she could not go to the farm so often, partly because she took a full−fare ticket now, and partly because her mother needed her at home but always, when she did go, she and her grandmother had the same old good times together, and Margie was still happier there on the old mountain farm than anywhere else in the world. She seemed to love her grandmother better now that she was old enough to think about her more. The grandmother had some funny ways. For one thing she would never sit in a straight chair at table, but always in a rocker. She would eat a little, and then sit back and rock a little, and sometimes, since meals at the farm were leisurely and chatty, she would fall asleep while she rocked, but she would never admit that she had napped a minute, not she. Try as you might, you could never get the grandmother a present that she would keep. She loved dainty things, but the prettier the gift, the more she would fall to thinking how much it would please some one else, and so presently away it went. If the giver chanced to find her out, she would hang her head and look much

ashamed of herself, but all the time her eyes would be roguish. All the family teased her and she teased them. She would have walked miles for the sake of a good joke on any one of them, but her fun was always tender. One dearly loved joke she played every year. In October, when the mountains were wonderful in the blue autumn weather and the tang of burning leaves was in the air, a little family of Margie's cousins used to come out from their town house to the old farm for chestnuts. For days before they came the grandmother and Minnie would gather every chestnut and put away the treasure in a big bag. On the morning of the children's coming, the grandmother was always to be found scattering the hoarded chestnuts in great handfuls everywhere. Later in the day, when the children were shouting over the windfall, she would shake a threatening finger at the grandfather and Minnie if they dared to chuckle.

After a while the little girl was quite grown up and had gone to college, where she had acquired a bad habit of studying herself sick. Once again her mother in desperation sent her to her grandmother. At the station the grandparents had the spring wagon waiting with a cot bed; they laid the little girl on it and walked alongside up the mountain. That morning the grandmother and Minnie had been over all that mile of mountain road and had picked off every stone, so that the little girl might feel no jarring. Margie thought that the back of her head would never stop aching, but her grandmother nursed her and fed her and rubbed her, and wrapped her up warm and put her out in the sunshine; she told her that she must forget what the doctors had said, and that the mountain air would cure her, and so after a while it did.

But there came a last visit. They found that for two years the grandmother had been ill with a terrible disease, but she had kept it a secret as long as she could. They sent her little girl to her for the last time. The grandmother would always stop moaning when Margie came near, and sometimes she would rouse herself enough to sit up and tell her stories. She, liked to lie in the hammock and have Margie swing her gently, and she would often send her down to the ferny spring for a fresh drink of water. She liked to take it from the old cocoanut drinking−cup, and almost always as she handed this back to Margie she would say, "Have you ever tasted such good water as this?" and always she was pleased when Margie answered, "No." One day Margie had to go away to her teaching. Her grandmother got up from her couch and walked to the front door to bid her good−bye. They said very little, and they did not cry at all, only as Margie looked back from the turn of the road at the little farmhouse and the valley and the circling mountains, at all the place she loved best in all the world, she knew that she should never wish to see it again.

So the little girl's visits to her grandmother came to an end, like a beautiful book read through. But though it is never the same as the first time, one may read a book over again. The little girl has been grown up for a long time, but sometimes when she is tired and worried and frightened she turns back the pages of her memory. She is sitting on her grandmother's lap on the porch in the summer twilight. Her grandmother is singing to her, and the great moon is rising behind the clematis.

XVII. The Wayfaring Woman

Just when, for the first time, I was fearing lest some day the wizard−light might fade from my hilltops, because I had climbed them so often; lest some day people's eyelids might cease to be doors flashing upon mystery, because I had seen so many secrets; and lest, sadder still, I might wake up some morning and find that my comrade−soul had forgotten to pipe me on to the new adventure of the new morning,—just when I was fearing these things, I bought a pair of rubber boots!

They are real boots, real as all masculine things are real. They have straps, a new thing to me in footgear. They are deep and cavernous, so that I sink to the knee, and in them I am armored like a man, but yet a woman. Whimsical symbol, perhaps, my newbought rubber boots, of adjustment to a man's free−hearted adventuring. If I am to tramp alone, let me be valiantly shod like a man, though a woman at heart, for is not all the world mine for the walking it? Who knows what new fun may be abroad for me now, in my rubber boots? I was made for life's

out−of−doors. I am a woman who wishes to walk this earth in all weathers, and indeed I have walked it in many, plucking by my homely hillpaths thoughts that are wayside flowers along a subtler way.

I have gazed at my circling hills in many changing lights. I have seen them on a moon−flooded summer evening lie shoulder to shoulder asleep about the broad valley pastures, while the tree−shadows wavered black against white farmhouses, asleep, too; and nothing made any noise except the brook beneath my wayside bridge, and that, a merry brown human brook by day, went singing in the moon an elfin chant it had forgotten that it knew. I have seen my hills deepest blue at the skyline, and below all ablaze, beneath the racing white clouds of October, when more than at any other time the winding roads bewitch my feet, and every blackberry thicket and slope and fence−row is flaunting its banners in my eyes; yet I cannot stop to gaze, for the air is of so keen a blueness; I must walk, run, fly, because of the urgency of October in my toes.

But in the spring one's step slackens, and one stops to loiter and look at the green willows that twist with the wavering course of the swift muddy river; at the rosy mist on the maple−boughs, at sunny blue wings that flash against bare branches. In the spring the most insistent walker must pause by an arbutus bank. Last year's leaves upon it are still rimmed with frost and snow, and one's fingers grow red, poking beneath for treasure. But what largess of arbutus our humblest wayside banks hereabouts can yield, arbutus great−petaled, deep−pink, setting free what prisoned fragrance!

I have tramped my climbing roads in winter−time, too, on those days of winter when the mercury sinks to the zero point, when the snow crunches loud beneath my heels, and the sun hangs high and cold, and the spangle glistens on crusted fields. But heretofore there have been days of winter when I have felt myself held within doors, days of slush and ooze, when the sky broods low, and the air is blind with great wet flakes; yet these were the very days when the gypsy wind came rattling the window−sash and piping of new wonders of grayness and of whiteness out there upon the hills.

I who have packed my wanderer's wallet with the gentle secrets of summer nights, of springtime hillsides, and wintry sunshine, I who have always tramped to the call of a lonely road, should I turn craven stay−at−home when life's wild weather draws my feet hillward through grim slush and sleet? Are there not new secrets waiting on the stormy hills? I am not afraid! I have put on rubber boots.

In all this countryside I am the only woman who walks. Highroads and by−paths and woodways are mine alone, for here solitude is safe and cheery for the woman who goes uncompanioned. I pass by unmolested, but not unhailed. Happily, I have reached the age when men greet me with level comrade eyes, and pass me merrily the time of day; at least the genial old codgers of our region do. The men of my home hamlet of Littleville are a bit proud of my pedestrian prowess, and if they meet me wandering far will draw rein to twinkle down and rally me: "Guess you're lost this time sure, ain't you?"

The strangers I meet rarely pass me in churlish silence. I have had a man, never before seen, bend down from his high seat, his face all one pucker of concern, while he shouted to me in a high windy voice, "Hi, there, you're losing a hat−pin!" His overspread relief as I adjusted it was but one instance of the intimacy ruling within the sweeping circle of hills that rim Littleville like a cup. We are no strangers here, we comrades of the road.

Yet in my walking I must often pay the penalty of being unique, of being an anomaly in country conventions. They are kind, our rural men−folk, but I think the kindest, passing me, make a swift comparison between me and their kitchen−keeping women. In this inarticulate comparison there is a boyish flash of sympathy that I should find the out−of−doors the same jolly thing men do; but more, there is distrust of one who obviously enjoys the zest of her own feet as much as their wives enjoy jogging through life beside a comfortable husband behind a comfortable horse. Possibly the thoughts of rural men−folk are not so different from the thoughts of all other men−folk when they pass the woman who walks.

Whatever the mental comment attached to the gaze, the eyes that meet mine are quite as often astounded as amused. If this is evident even when I trudge in flooding sunshine, astonishment becomes irrepressible when I am seen abroad in snow and sleet. "By gosh! pretty hard walking you got, ain't you?"

Foot−fast in slush, I pipe back, "But I like it. I have on rubber boots!"

Such the accost from vehicles not facing in my direction; but when a horse that goes my way is drawn up, and I decline the proffered seat; knee−deep in slush, refuse to get in! then the driver's face expresses such commiseration as I never expected to feel applied to my inoffensive person. Plainly I see that it is not my drabbled skirts he is sorry for, it is my addled wits. Walking country roads in ill weather has taught me exactly how a lunatic must feel. It is said that the crazy have a certain look in the eye; of experience I can affirm that so also have those who gaze upon the crazy.

For the passing instant, as I meet that profound pity in mild, masculine orbs, I do doubt my own sanity, and wonder if perhaps this glorious freedom of the wild, wet weather is quite the sensible thing it seemed when I set out; for it is the look in other people's eyes that gives us our own spiritual orientation. Lunacy is a purely relative term. There are places where women may walk and hardly be glanced at for so doing, just as, perhaps, within his own cage−walls, the Bedlamite may seem to himself a normal human being. Also, perhaps, the lunatics, like me, have their silent chuckle; knowing, like me, that they have their inward fun, although the numskull sane can't see it. I hope so, for I would fain think some sunny thought of the poor brainsick folk.

It is not given to my friends of the highway, sensible men creatures on wheels, any more than to their wives, snug at home in dry domestic shoes, to know the joy of my walk through the swift, wet snowflakes. On and up I go, never meaning to go home by the same way I have come. What lover of the road ever does that?

The clinging snow has enfolded all things. Every tree stands with white, shrouded branches. The berry thickets are softly furred with white. The dusky gray aisles of the roadside woods die to blackness in the near distance. The little brooks go tinkling beneath a thatch of snow bristling with high grass blades. There is almost no color. Even the bronze of oak leaves is veiled by white mist. The world is all white and gray, and in the distance faintly blue. The fast−falling snow blurs all familiar outlines strangely, so that I hardly believe those dreamy roofs down there belong to humdrum Littleville.

There is strange, muffled silence. I am half afraid of the woods; they have grown unearthly, so that I start at the eerie thud of the snow that drops from the branches. Gray−white, silent mystery,—and I should never have known or seen it, had I not laughed at life's wild weather, and trudged forth to it in rubber boots, all alone.

Yet, whatever the shy comradeship of wayside groves, of busy secret streams and homely fields, always the human aspect of the road engages the woman who tramps with joy at the heart. In summer and winter, as I go, I pass the brown milk−wagons, plodding, monotonous, starting forth from all the circling farms and converging to the milk station. The drivers have always dull or far−away faces, for it is always the same road, the same rattling cans at their backs, the same shaggy, jogging flanks before them.

Almost always, somewhere on my journey, I meet the rural mail−man. The bobbing yellow dome of his narrow wagon is always easily descried in the distance. The mail−man knows my tramp−habits well, and the smile from his little blinking pane never fails me. Another familiar vehicle is the school carryall, which nowadays picks up all the human contents of one of our district schools and carries them down to Littleville for instruction. The school wagon is driven by a jovial grandsire, and it is always crowded to overflowing with small, merry people who hail me. I rarely meet any folk on foot, although occasionally a leggined huntsman slips noiselessly across the road from one grove to another, while a hound sniffs to right and left of his path.

The farm−homes for the walker by the way have each the spell of some new story. There beside that wind−rocked cupola is some curious mechanism. For what purpose? To lift water to a roof−tank? To catch the lightning? To send afloat an airship? Crude, clumsy, aspirant, a farm−boy's dream!

I pass by a porch that abuts close upon the road. A door flings open and a man and a woman come out, too temper−tossed to heed me. The woman's face is set in impotent hate, the man's mouth is wried with cursing; and the faces are not young, nor the graven bitterness a mere passing blight. Man and wife! Yet they loved once, I suppose, and went driving gayly back from the parson's, his arm about her ribboned waist, and posies flaunting in her hat and in her checks—once!

It is given to us who trudge by in the road beyond the doors to pity often, but to envy rarely. It is in the nature of things that we cannot envy, for those things we might covet are precisely those that come spilling out of door and window to bless us, so that presently we are bowing our heads and saying our bit of a grace for them, as being also ours. Gentle old world, so constituted that a home can lock its door, if it will, upon its sorrow, but can never hide its joy! I pass another ragged farmhouse, and here the children in their homemade little duds are trooping in from school. Again an open doorway, and in it a mother wiping red hands upon her apron. The closing door shuts off sharply the shrill voices that tell of the day's events; but I have seen and heard, and therefore I, too, possess.

At still another window−pane there is a bobbing baby−face. Such a crowing, chuckling joy as is a year−old baby! What home could ever hide him under a bushel? Strange mystery, that gives, withholds, inscrutably, the heart's desire of all of us, and yet ordains for us who trudge a snow−cold path, that there shall be, even until we grow gray of soul and feeble−footed, forever along our way, until the end, always behind the panes we pass, the bobbing baby−faces! Other women's babies? Does it make so much difference whose they are, so long as they are sweet?

Another happiness it is ordained no woman shall keep unto herself. The peace of a woman's mouth when a good man loves her, that is another of the things nothing can conceal, for sorrow may be leaden and secret at the heart, but joy will always out and abroad. That is one of the things we know, we wayfaring women.

Walks end with the dipping of the day. The winter dusk steals very early over all the snowy whiteness. I have to peer to see Littleville's clustered roofs down there in the river−valley. Before I turn to wade back down the drifted hill−road to the ruddy little home that lends me harborage for the night, I stand still to look about me, through the whirling flakes. See all around me hills I have not yet climbed! Think of the untried roads that lead to them! What secret wizardry of new woods, what elfin tinkle of new brooks, what new farm−doors, glimpsing upon human mystery! Hills and the road for me, on and on! Just around the turn what wonders wait, shall ever wait, for my rubber boots and me!

XVIII. The Road That Talked

I had walked that way a score of times and never seen that road, yet it must have seen me and singled me out, or else it would never have peeped about from its ambush of berry thicket and swamp and said, "Come." I was sturdily plodding the broad state road, for there is a state road everywhere, white and useful, belonging to everybody,—to the lumbering brown milk−wagons, to the bouncing muddy buckboards, to the motor−cycles with their vibrant chugging, to the skimming automobiles. The state road talks business all the time, incessant talk to blur the hearing; for all good talk is half silence, and the only people who have anything to say are the people who have listened. I was lonely for some one to talk to when the little road beckoned.

The state road always chooses the riverway, always bustles along on the level; how could one ever be friends with a road that never climbed a hill? My feet were trudging the macadam, though growing more gypsyish each moment, when the flash of a red leaf on a dusty bush, the rustle of an unseen bird, and I saw the little road hailing

me, and turned. It was waiting for me, half revealed, half hidden, like a shy, would−be friend, and at first, except for certain gypsy gleams along its fence−rows, it was commonplace enough, it might have been anybody's road.

At first, too, it went along discreetly, it turned and walked parallel with the state thoroughfare, a little apart, it is true, but steadily patterning on the manners of the highway, so that if a traveler had chanced on it, he would have seen nothing unconventional. The little road went along like that, and waited for its friends, but I had faith to believe it would soon begin to climb, that climbing was what it wanted of me. Imperceptibly at first it swerved from the parallel, imperceptibly it mounted a little, so that presently, near as we still were, we could look down at the village.

Then the little road began to talk, politely, pleasantly, but in no wise pregnantly. Its language was meaningless at first, but with a lure, as comrade eyes light to yours above lip−chat that does not need to mean anything. We could go slowly, having all the morning to get acquainted. Together the road and I looked down at the town through a screen of late September leaves. The place lay in mist, partly of the late−lingering fog, partly of the fires that belong to these days when all the village rakes and burns, and the youngsters tumble and romp and shriek in piles of leaves. All outlines are blurred by a pearly haze, against which eddies the deeper blue of chimney−smoke. Beyond the town the hills are dull gray against the luminous gray of the sky, and between town and hill the river runs, a shining silver sheet, with broken, deep−toned reflections near the bank. Looking eastward through the flickering leaves, I watch the sun steadily shining through, shredding the mist with fires of opal, in gleams of blue and orange and amethyst. Down at the village they see none of this, they know only that the fog lifts, while stubble−gardens, and lawns, and house−fronts all turn brown and bare and commonplace beneath the relentless sun. It is for me to see the opal fires lick up the mist; such cheery little wonders of the road are all for me.

The road keeps silence, letting me listen to the village sounds, musically fused at this brief distance; the shunting of a freight train and its raucous whistle, the ringing of hammers on new scaffolding, the shrilling of the saw−mill, the barking of dogs. All to herself, like the shy one that she is, the little road murmurs her replies, in the twittering of sparrows in fence−thickets, in the rustle of wind in bared branches, in the scratch and scud of dry leaves that race, the soft thudding of a chestnut burr.

The sun is high, and the wind is blowing, and the comrade road is waiting, genially postponing its sure self−revelation, but a−tiptoe to be off now to the woods, where we may share our fun unmolested, unsuspected. The little road is climbing now beyond mistaking. She is stepping through the woods so familiarly that you might miss her trail if you did n't follow close, for she knows there is no fun in the woods if you can't get lost, can't drop the pack of personality from your shoulder, and grow one with brushwood shadow, or arched branch. When the road said this to me, I began to listen to her for every word that she might say. But stealing ever deeper into the woodland, my path is not talking now, she is singing rather, she is dancing. Suddenly in the deeps of the wood she opens up a long green alley of fairy turf, and waits to see if I will share it with her and go scudding it like a squirrel. The white state−way never dreamed that I could fly, but the little friend−road knew. The road plays with me. Near the rut made by a lumber team, she tosses a handful of wintergreen berries like flecks of coral for me to garner, and lifts a sudden torch of scarlet oak against some wood−recess black and deep as a cave. Every time she hears the sound of wood−chopping she whisks away into still deeper shadow to be alone with me. Looking to right and left you cannot see the open; the only open is above, in the blue.

In the heart of the woods there is elfland. Trusting me, the little road dared to turn mad, she who had been so circumspect down below in the valley. Of the trees, some were still summer green and some were russet gold and some were claret crimson, so that the sifted light was strange, the light of faery. "There is no state road anywhere," said my mad little path to me, "there is nothing in all the world but wood and sky. You are a tree, a cloud, a leaf,—there is no you! Dance!" In and out through the trees she eddied and whirled, my road, glad as a scudding cloud and mad as the wind, in and out, in and out. Free winds that piped in the tree−tops, white clouds that raced the blue above us, laced branches that swayed to a dance eternal, exhaustless,—round and round we eddied, panting, the road and I, all by ourselves, alone, unguessed, in the heart of the woods. They, too, were

drunk with the madness of out−of−doors, Bacchus's maenads. Then, "Whisk!" cried the little road, we can't long keep up this sort of thing, friend−woman!" She turned sober in an instant, wild laughter dying to bubbling chuckles at itself. The tall trees broke away abruptly on stump−pocked fields, flaunting sumach by their stone walls. We had come upon a bustling little farm. My road, the wild and lonely−hearted, was transformed into a chatty neighbor, and turned in cheerily to pass the time of day at the back door. A brisk and friendly farm it was. The orchard jounced us a red apple as we passed, a white−nosed horse thrust head from the barn window and whinnied a welcome. Two shepherd dogs, one a stiffened grandsire, the other a rollicking puppy, barked a dutiful protest, then sniffed and licked genially. There was a baby carriage on the porch, a swing beneath the shaggy dooryard pine, there were geraniums at the window, and gleaming milk−pans on the back porch. Beyond the big house was a whole village of miniature houses, kennels and chicken sheds and corn−cribs, set down cozily anywhere to be handy. The big red barns were chatty with clucking hens. A sunny, sociable, commonplace farm that drew us to gossip on the back steps, to pause and rest there, the road and I. As we chatted, lingering and happy, of buttermilk and buckwheat and the cut of kitchen aprons, would any one have guessed that this little cozy domestic road, back there beyond the turn, had reeled in bacchic dance for very ecstasy of solitude?

When we were alone again, the road explained, questioning with searching friend−eyes to see if I understood, "Many selves belong to every road that must be always climbing a hill, all alone. Don't you know," laughed the little road, that there was never a dryad but longed sometimes to bind a big apron over her flickering leaf−films and slip into some crofter's cot in Tempe and slap the wheatcakes on the warm hearth−stones?

"And I have other moods as I climb, whispered the little road, as we took hands and trudged along, shuffling the leaves and playing with them, with no one to watch, sharing with each other the eternal child that chuckles inside lonely folk; the undying child within us is not startled to hear itself laugh out loud in the friendly solitude of little roads like this.

Yet, laughing, we were thoughtful, too. Maples like great torches of flame studded the wayside, and beyond them in broad fields marched the corn−shocks, a ragged brown battalion. The sky was ever burning bluer above the hill−crest. Then we left the farm fields for a wild stretch of boulder−grown pasture, and suddenly the little road said: "Look, a wayside shrine! Let us stop."

Pine trees such as survive now in only a few scattered groves formed a vaulted chapel. Beneath the trees some one had built a rude stone pile, a picnic fireplace, now for us become an altar, for to a little wildwood road all things are natural. We stood silent on that pavement of brown pine−needles beneath the arching green, supported on its blue−brown pillars of high pine trunks. Through the far tops there went singing an eternal chant. No one ever listened long to that music, all alone, who did not know that it is a hymn older than any creed, and outliving all doubt. In the amber−lit shrine, swept by clean wind and haunted by eternal music, there was beauty to empty the heart of all desire, so that, troubled, I asked, "But it was to pray that we stopped?"

"Oh," answered the pagan road, "I never pray, for what is the use of learning how to lisp?—I only praise!"

We were a long time silent beneath the pines, but we were deeper friends when we went on, for there is no bond in friendship closer than the sharing of a faith. Our feet were springing along as up we went. There were no more farms now, only at last above us the hilltop and the sky, clouds that raced across it, the sweep of great clean winds, and the call of high−winging crows.

The little road, so shy at starting, now dared to say to me this intimacy, "Do you not know my gospel,— that gladness is God? That is why I am always climbing hills. That is why I called you this morning, so that for a little while I and you might step into the sky."

XIX. My Mother's Gardeners

Of gardens "so much has been said and on the whole so well said," that I might perhaps restrain my pen from turning up that overworked soil. But yet the gardens of which I write have not been like the gardens of the published page. They have not brought forth generously either prose of lusty vegetable or poetry of spicy blossom. Although the gardens have been many, they might almost be described, so alike have they been, as if they were one, an itinerant garden that has accompanied us from one little hill village to another; for I write of the stony, arid, sterile garden−plot of a country parish.

Now, however forbidding the garden that has stretched rearward of each new domicile, my mother has always fallen upon it with a valiance of hope that neither years nor disappointment can destroy. She always thinks that things are going to grow in her gardens, and things do grow in them, too; but they are not always the things my mother has led me to expect. For her, I hope she will find the garden of her dreams in Paradise; for me, this earth will do, even this small, hill−circled scrap of it; for I am no gardener in my heart, only an observer of gardens. I own to an unregenerate enjoyment in watching my mother's vegetables misbehave, just as, surreptitiously, I can't help loving the whimsical goats of my father's rustic flock.

As I glance back over the unwritten journal of my childhood, I find the words Choir, Vestry, Garden always printed in capital letters. The Gardener was a figure as momentous in my infant horizon as was the Senior Warden. In respect to gardens my mother has never had any confidence in the assistance of her own family. There have been occasions when some son or daughter, temporarily in favor, has been allowed to hoe softly, under supervision; but as to her husband, banishment is the sole decree. In fact, my father, genuine old English, imported direct from Trollope, does not show to best advantage in a garden. In general I have observed that our country clericals are likely to be at quarrel with the soil, that arid independent old soil which will grow things in its own way, in utter despite of parsons. My father's original sin was due to the usual pastoral reluctance to let the tares and the wheat grow together unto the harvest, and it was when he mistook our infant carrots for Heaven−knows−what seed of the Enemy that the decree of banishment against him as a marauder occurred. Rather than initiate one of her own home−circle into her garden mysteries, my mother has chosen the unlikeliest outsider, and solicited advice from the most unprecedented sources, or by any methods of cajolery; she has been no stickler in regard to any man's creed or practice when it has been a question of so vital a matter as cucumbers.

My retrospect shows our gardeners stretching back to the bounds of my memory, a lean, gnarled, hoary procession. One of the earliest of them is Father Time himself, with hoe instead of scythe, and with white locks rippling down his back. Father Time's frank admission when engaged might have daunted some, but did not daunt my mother, for he confided to her at once that he could hoe but could not walk. He proved useful when carefully hauled from spot to spot, but our garden was cultivated that season in circles, of which the hoe was the radius and Father Time the center.

Another of our ancient hoe−bearers was a veteran. I do not know whether he had lost his eye on the battlefield or elsewhere, but certainly he had not exchanged it for wisdom. That is why he is the favorite of my mother's recollections. She likes her gardeners a little imbecile. They are more manageable that way. The burden of their intelligence is the more usual trouble. A simple faith united to an instant obedience is the desideratum in gardeners; usually a gardener is as obstinate as he is conservative, and this is not at all to my mother's mind. She loves to glean gardenlore from every source, but better still she loves to invent garden−lore of her own. She likes to be allowed to set out on an entirely new tack with some poor erring cabbage, and it is all she can do to hold on to her ministerial temper when she finds that her gardener has ruined the work of regeneration by some old−fashioned disciplinary notions of his own. Our ancient warrior, however, had no notions of his own, disciplinary or other, and that is why he possesses a shrine apart in our memories. He was as meek in my mother's hands as his own hoe, and he never did anything she did not wish him to do except when he died!

On a bad eminence of contrast my memory declares another figure. I do not remember whether it was an invincible audacity, or an utter despair of securing likelier assistance, that led us that year to employ our own sex ton. It is an axiom known to every ministerial household that it is unwise ever to put any member of your own flock to domestic use. A brawny Romanist, if such can be obtained, for laundry purposes, a Holy Roller for the furnace, and a Seventh−Day Baptist for the garden—these are samples of our principle of selection. I do not know just why those of our own fold are undesirable,—it is wiser perhaps that the silly sheep should not see the antic gamboling of the sober shepherd behind his own locked door, or guess what internal levities spice the discreet external conduct of his family. I do not know how it was that we fell so utterly from the grace of common sense as to employ our own sexton that summer. Apart from sectarian issues, a sexton is the most mettlesome man that grows, and not at all to be subdued to the ignoble uses of a hoe. This sexton was an agony to my father in the sanctuary, and an anguish to my mother in the garden. He went about with a chip in his mouth, and he always held it in one corner of his lips and chewed it aggressively and bitterly, and with the other corner he talked, just as bitterly. Within his own house he must have exchanged the chip for a pipe, for although I never saw him smoke, the fragrant tobacco fumes of him were spread through the house after every back−door colloquy. He talked more willingly than he worked, and that summer was a lean and sorrowful season, when the garden languished and my mother was browbeaten, unable, all because he was the sexton, to bring the man to order with the sharp nip of her words across his naughty pate.

We were more cautious next time and availed ourselves of one no less meek than a certain village ancient prominently known to be an Anarchist and a Methodist. The combination is unusual, I admit, but you may look for almost anything in a gardener. As an infant, I used to scan his person for a glimpse of the red shirt, and his lips for a spark of the incendiary eloquence, but no symptom of either ever showed. He was old and underfed and taciturn, and he gardened exactly as he wished to, without paying the tribute even of a comment to my mother's suggestions. He had such original methods of his own that, for very amazement, she gave up her own initiative for the pleasure of watching his. Once when he was seen solemnly planting stones in one earthy mound after another, he did break his icy reserve to answer her irrepressible inquiry; he believed that potatoes grew better that way, since the roots did not have to pierce the earth for themselves but could wriggle through the friendly interstices of the stones. That summer was one of cheerful surprises. This singular spirit had, I believe, a genuine sympathy for the poor toiling vegetables; I remember that he spent one afternoon in tying up his tomatoes in copies of a certain sectarian sheet he brought with him for the purpose. A sportive wind arose in the night, to die before the Sabbath morning, on which we beheld not only our rectory lawn, but the utterly Episcopal precincts of the church, bestrewn with "Glad Tidings of Zion." He was a lonely soul and dwelt apart, chiefly in a wheelbarrow. The vehicle was one of his idiosyncracies. He never appeared without it. Up and down our leafy streets would he trundle it; but yet I never saw anything in the wheelbarrow except the gardener. He appeared to push it ever before him for the sole purpose of having something to sit on when he wished, from the philosophic heights of his theological and sociological principles, to ruminate upon the evil behavior of "cabbages and kings."

As I look back over a long succession of gardeners, I see it, punctuated as it may be here and there by some salient personality, for the most part stretching a weary line of the aged and infirm of mind and body, and I wonder by what survival of the unfittest society devotes to gardening purposes only those already devoted to decrepitude. As a matter of fact, the more one becomes acquainted with the vagaries of growing things, the more one is convinced that it requires nimble wits and supple muscles to subjugate the army of iniquitous vegetables the humblest garden can produce. The more you know of the deception and ingratitude to be experienced in the vegetable world, the sadder you become. In addition to sharpened brain and taut sinews, the worker in gardens needs a heart packed with optimism. This last my mother possesses, and though garden after garden may have gone back on her, nothing can prevent her running with overtures of salvation to meet the next little grubby potato−patch life offers her. With hope indomitable my parents survey each new glebe, while I, the incredulous, secretly meditate upon the kinship in conduct of all parochial gardens, expecting only that the sheep and the potatoes will find some new way of going astray; and may Heaven forgive me that I should be diverted by their versatility of naughtiness! For example, you can never tell what you may expect from a tomato, for your tomato is a vegetable of temperament. Poetically sensitive to atmospheric environment, it fades to earth under the mildest

sun, wilts at a frost imperceptible to its more prosaic neighbors. Capricious ever, it will sometimes, in mock of its own cherished nervous system, exhibit a sturdiness out of pure perversity. One chill June morning we found our young tomato plants flat to earth, a black and hopeless ruin. We bought new ones and set them out in their stead, whereupon the old plants popped up and sprouted to wantonness,—nothing but the elemental energy of jealousy. The tomato is like to be as barren of production as the human sentimentalist, either bringing forth a green bower of leafage, or drooping to earth with the weight of crimson globes that, lifted, show a corroding hole of black rot.

In homely contrast consider the bean. The bean is the kindliest vegetable there is. From the seed up, it is well−intentioned, for the bean may be eaten through and through by worms, and yet, planted, will sprout and spring, and bring forth fruit out of the very stones.

The beet is another simple−minded, dependable member of the congregation, and even more generous in contribution to the minister's support than is the bean, for the beet yields top and bottom, root and branch. In summer the beet−top furnishes the first succulent taste of green, and afterwards the round red root of him is a defense against the lean and hungry winter months.

But for the most part vegetables are an ill−behaving lot. The cabbage inflates itself with an appearance of pompous righteousness, the longer to deceive our hopes and the more largely to conceal its heart of rot. The radish sends up generous leaves as if it meant to fulfill all the mendacious promises of the seed−catalogue, and when uprooted exhibits the pink tenuity of an angle−worm. The cucumber is at first, for all our ministrations, hesitant and coy of leaf within its box, and then suddenly bursts into a riot of leafiness whereby it does its best to conceal from our inquiring eye its swelling green cylinders. Corn, deceptive like the radish, is prone to put forth a hopeful fountain of springing green, only to ear out prematurely, and reward us with kernels blackened and corroded.

In the parochial garden the pea is one to tease us always with its might−be and might−have−been. If peas are to grow beyond "the kid's lip, the stag's antler," they require the moral support of brush, and brush is something a minister's family, aided only by a decrepit gardener, cannot always supply. Unsupported by brush, our fair peas lie along the ground, an ever−present disappointment.

Two vegetables have always haunted my mother's aspirations, in vain. I hope they grow in heaven, for it is in the nature of things that celery and asparagus should be denied to a nomadic earthly clergy, requiring, as the one does, richness of soil, and as the other, permanence. Illusory asparagus, it takes three years to grow him! Of course if some disinterested predecessor had planted him, we might in our turn eat him. But our too itinerant clergy do not give overmuch thought to their successors. Barren parochial gardens hint just a shade of jealousy about letting Apollos water.

But it is not the vegetables alone that strain my mother's sturdy optimism. All gardens are subject to invasion by marauding animals, differing in size and soul and species, all the way from the microscopic tomato−lice, past woodchuck and rabbit and playful puppy, up to the cow, ruminating our young corn−shoots beneath the white summer moon, on to my father himself, planting aberrant feet where his holden ministerial eyes behold no springing seedlings in the blackness of the soil. But our worst enemies are hens, and as it happens at present, dissenting hens, sallying forth from the barnyard fastnesses of the Baptist parsonage upon our helpless Anglican garden, plucking our young peas up out of the soil, and then later and more brazenly prying them out of the very pod! Forthwith they fall upon our lettuce−beds, scratching away with fanatic fervor, as if for all the world they meant to uproot Infant Baptism from out the land. All this is too much for my mother. On the vantage−ground of the back doorsill she stands and hurls coal out of the kitchen scuttle at the sectarian fowls,—coal and anathema, low−voiced and virulent. Hers is no mere vulgar many−mouthed abuse. There is nothing of so delicate pungency as the vituperation of a minister's wife, really challenged to try the subtleties of English and yet offend no convention of seemliness. Add to the fact of the challenge, another fact, that she is of Irish blood, and that her gallery gods are just inside the door, and it is a pity her audience should be merely the hens and I.

Thus do I ever hover at hand, softly applausive of my mother's defense of her garden, secretly appreciative of the devious ways of vegetables, witnessing—to forgive—the wanderings of my father's flock. For if all the flock were abstemious and orthodox instead of being, as some are, frankly given over to alcoholism and agnosticism and what not; and if the gardens grew, as gardens should grow, into honest, God−fearing cabbages and potatoes; if the righteous corn parted green lips from kernels firm and white as a dentist's placard, how then should the parish gardens that dot our hill−strewn countryside bring forth that fruit of laughter which consoles the dwellers in these our tiny strongholds of lonely effort?

XX. My Little Town

Vividly at times my memory restores to me the sensation of the eternal Sabbath. Beyond the stained−glass windows, the sunshine is sifted over daisied graves. Perhaps, for all one knows, the grown−up angels are letting the little ones sport over those graves at this very minute, even though it is Sunday, for there are no parishes in heaven to say no to naughtiness. My mother is held home from the sanctuary that morning. The three of us sit a−row in the front pew. Above us our father thunders forth his sermon, to which we give but scant attention, that roar in his voice being part of the programme of this one day in seven. Against my own shoulder drowses my little sister's head. On my other side, my little brother conceals his yawns by receiving them into a little brown paw, and then, as it were, softly sliding them into his pocket, as if his hand had other business there. But I, I sit erect and unwinking, for I am the minister's eldest, and the Parish is at my back. While the younger ones nodded, while the infant angels played hide−and−seek out in the graveyard sunshine, of what was I thinking? This: of the minister's daughter who had lived in that Parish before me. A great girl of five she had been when she used, having waited until her father was engrossed in his sermon, to slip from that very front pew in which I sat, to steal up into the chancel, and there, all silently but with impish grimace and antics, would she hold the horrified gaze of the Parish so fascinated that her father would at length be diverted from his eloquence, and forthwith, swooping from the pulpit all in a swirl of wrathful surplice, would bear his small daughter into the vestry room and lock her there before resuming his sermon. She was very naughty, but oh, what larks, what larks! So I thought then, and still to−day I am querying whether that little girl— inevitably though she must, under steady parochial pressure, have been subdued to a womanhood of decency and decorum—does not to−day in middle life rejoice that once upon a time, at five, she had her little fling in her father's chancel!

But we were children of no such independent pattern; and so on every Sabbath we presented to the Parish's criticism unwrig gling infant backs, little ramrods of religion, while our thoughts went flying off on impish business of their own; and, as the years flowed by, on and up to man's estate we tramped, always thrusting forward in sight of the Parish, fashionable, urban, critical, our shabby best foot, skittish though that foot might be. Holding well together, on we went, running the gantlet of many parishes, until at last we trudged us into Littleville. We supposed my little town would be a parish too, but it is not.

Cozily remote and forgotten among its blue hills, Littleville has preserved a primitive hospitality, so that, battered nomads of much clerical adventuring, we sank gratefully into its little rectory. There was perhaps a reason for our sincerity of welcome, for if we had had our parishes, so, too, had Littleville had its parsons. It belongs to that class of far−away, wee congregations whither they send old ministers outwearied, to be alone with old age and memories beside the empty, echoing churches reminiscent of the days when farmers attended service. And if among these venerable shepherds there have fallen to Littleville's lot some whose scholarly old wits had gone a bit doddering, so that they believed and preached whimsical doc trine, or could no longer trace without assistance the labyrinth of the liturgy, or others, younger, who had proved ministerial shipwrecks because they were burdened by some fatal handicap in child or wife,—if such have come to Littleville, Littleville has been very kindly. My little town has accepted its hay−crop as the rain has willed, and its ministers as the bishop has sent them. Its views on both visitations are produced in a spirit of comment rather than criticism; its conduct toward both is that of adaptation rather than argument.

For instance, there was that bachelor−rector who preferred the society of beasts to that of his parishioners in the rectory, and to that of his fellow saints in the new Jerusalem. During his incumbency a setting−hen occupied the fireplace in the spare room, and a dog sat on a chair at his celibate table, and crouched before the pulpit during service. Littleville did not protest; rather, of a weekday, the female members from time to time descended upon the unhappy man in his retirement, and with broom and mop−pail cleaned him up most thoroughly; and of a Sunday the whole body of the congregation listened unwinking while their rector's brandished fist demanded from their stolid faces eternal salvation for his Rover,— listened with those inscrutable eyes I have come to respect: for I know that while Littleville never argued with their parson the point of kennels in the skies, they will turn this theological morsel under their tongues down at the hardware store unto the third and fourth generation.

Then there was the vicar whose poor boy was scarred in a way that Littleville, sympathetic but always delightedly circumstantial, has painted upon my imagination. When, during this rectorate, rival sectarians would point to the goodly ruddiness of some Baptist or Methodist scion, the Littleville Anglicans would loyally argue that Seth Lawson over at Hyde's Crossing had a little girl who had four thumbs, and Seth was just a plain man, and no minister.

Tradition tells also of a parson who trod the mazes of the ritual so uncertainly that he was just as likely to jump backwards as forwards in the psalter. With inimitable delicacy Littleville would stand holding its prayer−books at attention, ready to jump with him, whichever way he went. However, certain women have confided to me how fearful they were, on their wedding−day, lest this retrograde movement might occur during the solemnization of matrimony. Thus it came about, I fancy, that Littleville received us with relief as well as warmth, for our theology was so simple and sound that hardly could the agnostic barber find fault with it; a family studiously normal, we showed

"Never mole, harelip, nor scar, Nor mark prodigious;"— and we proved able to conduct service with sonorous equilibrium.

Here we have been accepted and courteously entreated. Here we have not had to live up to any parochial pretensions, for my little town does not play bridge or give dinner−parties. Here in my little town we need not rise betimes to perform miracles of domestic service on the sly in order to be free to attend on the lordly city parishioner possessed of maidservants and manservants. Rather we may wear our gingham pinafores on the front porch, and pop our peas under the very nose of the senior warden, and very probably with his assistance, if he perchance slouch down beside us, blue−overalled and genial.

Littleville, always leisurely, took its time about getting acquainted with us. It hurtled us through no round of teas, it did not put us through the paces of a parish reception. Rather it came and hammered together our broken furniture, decayed by much moving, it stole in at the back door to help us when we were sick, it let us know it missed us when we went worldward, visiting. Of such as it had, it made us gifts,—a yellow pumpkin vaulting our back fence, potatoes rattling into our cellar−bins unannounced while we were still abed, golden maple syrup flowing for us at the time when tin pails gleam all up and down the street, and the sap−vats bubble and steam pungently; or perhaps the gift is the reward of the gunning season, as when a vestryman−huntsman, as we stand about the social door after church, darts aside into the coalbin and thence presents a newspaper package streaked with pink; peeped at to please his beaming eye, it exhibits a brace of skinned squirrels, which we bear cozily homeward from divine service.

There is in the mere aspect of Littleville a latent friendliness perceptible to all eyes that give more than a touring−car glance. Over our hilly streets slumbers eternal leisure. Whatever it is, Littleville always has time to talk about it. When anything happens we all go running out of our front doors to discuss it, but otherwise our streets are very still: rows of farmhouses planted side by side for sociability, while behind each stretch its acres of stony pasture and half−shorn woodland. At night, silence and darkness settle upon us early. By nine even the hotel has gone to bed, so that it would with difficulty be summoned forth in protesting pajamas if a late traveler should

clamor at the door. Of a starless night you may look forth at eight and see no glimmer of light or life all up and down the street. When we come to church of a winter evening, we carry lanterns as we plod a drifted path in high−girt skirts and generous goloshes. One's sleep is sometimes startled by a flare of light that streams from wall to wall and passes, as some mysterious late lantern−bearer goes by, leaving the night again all blackness, pierced sometimes by the crazy laughter of an owl, or beaten upon by the insistent clamor of frogs.

Those who live by Littleville's quiet streets have had time to have their little ways. For example, they still have "comp'ny" in Littleville. In other places they no longer have comp'ny, no longer sacrifice for unprotesting hours and days and weeks all domestic peace and privacy to the exigencies of an intrusive guest. Comp'ny, imminent, instant, or past, is discussed in bated whispers at back doors. Assistance and sympathy are proffered as in a run of fever. As for the comp'ny itself, it knows its privileges and never resigns its prerogatives. However efficient at home, when a−visiting, it can sit on the barnyard bars in its best store suit and without an emotion of conscience watch its host milk twenty cows, or within doors it can fold its housewifely hands upon its waistline, regard without compunction a lap for once apronless, and rock and chatter hour after hour while its hostess pants and perspires to feed it. But Littleville has one revenge: one day, it, too, can put on its best and drive off, and itself be somebody's comp'ny.

Comp'ny by definition comes from abroad, invading our peaceful citadel from some hillside farm or neighboring village; within our own bulwarks we are all too neighborly for any such alien stiffness. Our streets are cheery with greeting. Among the younger fry, "Hello " is the universal term of accost. "Hello!" some youngster yodels to me from across the street, "hello," supplemented by the frank employment of my baptismal name, sign and seal of my adoption. We are careless of the little formalities of Miss and Mr. here, just as our gentlemen are careless of their hat−raising. Why should Littleville man endanger head and health from false deference to his hearty, workaday comrade, woman? From the older men, surely, twinkle and grin are greeting enough without any up−quirking of rheumatic elbows; and as for the younger men, I have a fondness for their method of raising the right index finger to the hat−brim, with a smile that points in the same direction.

Although we are without formality, certain conventions always belong to a call. The popular hours are two and six, with the tacit exemption of Saturday evening, for then we might inconsiderately intercept the gentleman of the house en route from his steaming wash−tub in the kitchen to his ice−bound bedroom. We have our set forms of greeting and departure. A hostess must always meet a caller with a hearty, "Well, you're quite a stranger." A caller must always remain a cordial two hours, and rising to leave must invariably say, "Well, I'm making a visit, not a call"; to which the hostess responds, "Why, what's your hurry?" Conversation must hold itself subject to interruption, must be prepared to arrest itself in the midst of the most lurid recital in order that all may fly to the window if man or beast or both pass by.

As to that conversation itself, we really do not care for feverish animation. We allow ourselves long pauses while we creak our rockers, pleasantly torpid. Should our emptiness become too acute, there is always one subject that can fill it. We always have the sick. We report to each other anxiously that So−and−So is having "a poor spell," a condition that, if obstinate, will result in the poor man or woman's "doctoring," a perilous substitute for home treatment. We have our hereditary nostrums of combinations quainter than Shakespeare's cauldron, and home−made brews of herbs that sound almost Chaucerian. There is suggestion still more remote in "hemlock tea." I am not certain of its ingredients, but its effect is to produce a state of affairs known as a "hemlock sweat." A "hemlock sweat" is the last resort before sending for the doctor, and it generally brings him.

If our interest in our diseases should ever flag, we have, of course, always, our neighbors. In Littleville, gossip has become an art, in so far as it possesses the perfection of pungency without taint of malice, like the chat of an inquisitive Good Samaritan. When Littleville talks about its neighbors, I listen in reverence before a penetration I have never seen anywhere else. Littleville has not gone abroad to study human nature; it has stayed at home, and watched every flicker of its neighbor's eyelash, has marked each step taken from toddling infancy to toddling old age, has listened to every word uttered from babyhood to senility. Oh, Littleville knows its own; and knowing its

own, knows other folk too. Newcomer though I am, I should venture no pretense in the face of that slumbering twinkle in Littleville's eyes,—Littleville, sharp of tongue and genial in deeds.

This grace of Littleville charity, charity, keen−eyed yet tender, can be, I suppose, the possession of stationary people only; of people who have been babies together, have wedded and worked, been born and been buried together, whose parents and grandparents also are unforgotten, whose dead lie on white−dotted hillsides in every one's knowledge. The thought of this bond of permanence, of memories, has its wistfulness for us others. You can never be very hard on the woman, however fallen, who was once the little Sallie to share her cooky with you at recess; and, however his poor grizzled head be addled now with drink and failure, a man is still the little Joey whose bare feet trod with yours the stubble of forbidden midnight orchards.

All the world looks askance at a gypsy, and we are gypsies, we clericals; yet never gypsies more involuntary, more home−loving at heart. We are pilgrims, never dropping, as we sojourn in parish after parish, the pilgrim cloak of an affable reserve. Back to the edges of my memory, we ourselves have been always the Ministry. Sundays in that straight front pew, week−days in that well−watched rectory, always the Ministry, never ourselves. But here at last in my little town, is that straight cloak of ministerial decorum slipping from us? May we set down our scrip and staff? At last do we dare to be ourselves, neighbors with neighbors? Do we dare to be part of a place? Perhaps.

Already in brief years I have acquired a little of that admitted intimacy with a community that comes only through knowing some bit of its history for one's self and not on hearsay; for I have observed the course of several of our thrifty Littleville courtships whereby our youngsters in their later teens set themselves sturdily beneath the yoke of matrimony, promptly bringing forth a procession of babes, as promptly led to baptism. Also I have stood with the rest in our little graveyard when some old neighbor has been laid to rest. I share with the rest the memory of kind old hands grown motionless, and chirrupy old voices now stilled; so that some of these graves, turning slowly from raw soil to kindlier green, are mine, the stranger's.

Because those newer graves are mine, I may linger in more assured friendliness among the older ones, for to me these brief white−portaled streets of this other Littleville are kindly too; so that I like to go a−calling here also, letting my fancy knock at these low green mounds beneath the mat of periwinkle, above which sometimes flash the blue wings of birds or of sailing butterfly, while just beyond the fence the bobolinks go singing above the clover−fields. Country graveyards are pleasant places; at least ours has no gloom of tangled undergrowth and dank cypress shadow, for we are a house−wifely company, and we like all things well swept and shipshape, even cemeteries.

Even the tragedies the marbles tell are softened now. There are many little gravestones in our cemetery, recording little lives long ago cut short. Many of them belong to that winter I have heard about, a winter long before antitoxin or even disinfectants, when one Sunday in Littleville twenty children lay dead. It was sad then, but to−day to the tune of soaring bobolinks I must be thinking how gayly the little ones put on their winglets all together, and, a white flock, went trooping off, shepherded by angels. In a village graveyard where the dead lie so cozily close to home, in a graveyard so blue above and green below, one has to remember how many things are sadder than death.

I come back from reverie as the 'bus bell goes tinkling by, beyond the white−arched gate, and I rise to gaze to see who has come to us from the world, for the 'bus comes from the train, and the train comes from far away, where the world runs its whirligig, far from Littleville.

The 'bus connects us with life. When one arrives at home, usually at nightfall, there always is the old 'bus man at the train step, peering up and stretching out both welcoming arms to receive our packages and bags. When he has stowed all away, in he climbs rheumatically, and off we trundle, rattling and wheezing along, for driver and horses and 'bus are all in the last stages of decrepitude. The lantern hung between the shafts plays out its straight

jet of light, but within it is so dark that I cannot guess our whereabouts until we draw up at the hotel. The hotel−keeper comes out in his shirt−sleeves to receive the fat agents we have brought him, and, peering hospitably into the dark recesses, gives me welcome too. Off and on we rumble, and as we draw rein at the post−office, the postmaster, shouldering the mail−bag, spies me and extends his hearty handshake; from the newspaper office near by, where the editor is working, comes a hazarded greeting, to which I respond cheerily from my dark hole, and become forthwith one of to−morrow's items.

On and up the hill. I can just discern the white belfry against the blue−black sky. Beyond the church is the rectory, and there a lantern on the step and a ruddy door flung wide. I have drawn up, returning, to rectory doors before, but somehow in Littleville it is different; to−morrow, on Sunday, Littleville will be glad I have come back, and will say so, at church, for in Littleville Sunday is different, too.

Here there is never the Sabbath stiffness of my childhood. Here the front pew does not straighten my spine intolerably. Rather I turn half about, run a careless arm along the pew−rail, and chat huskily with my rear neighbor until church begins, and even in service I may nod encouragement to the choir if they happen to be brought to confusion in the Te Deum, or in the very sermon I may peep under some little flowered straw hat and get a delighted grin in response. When service is over I shall be a long time getting to the door, having so many hands I want to shake, for we do not call my little town, Parish; we call it home.

XXI. Genus Clericum

I was a ministerial child rather by birth than by conviction. To one born on the march there may come to be in the end a mystic home−sense in the loneliness of tents, but in the beginning the army child may perhaps have his own opinion of the rigors of camp life and prefer his morning snooze to the summons of the bivouac. Analogously, the children of the clerical class may come into existence with a leaning toward the world, the flesh, and the devil, and may long conceal, beneath an outward conformity and a due filial reticence, an infant resentment against the preoccupation of their parents with the salvation of souls.

I think I speak for many ministerial children when I say that the attitude of my infancy toward its environment was mainly one of protest, broken by passionate upheavals of partisanship. Sometimes I sympathized with little neighbors who limped shamelessly through the catechism or went out of church before the sermon, but as often I longed to shake them and thrust them, well−prodded, upon their duties.

The mere external discipline of the church militant came easily to me because I was so early inured to it. It is back of my memory, but I have ascertained that it was at the age of two and under that I learned rigidity of muscle in the sanctuary, where I sat holding immobile on the pew cushion legs too short to crook, while my fingers, in white cotton gloves, were extended in stiff separation each from each. The hat upon my head was in itself an early example of ministerial adjustment to parochial issues. Two ladies who were rivals in missionary zeal had each been moved to present me with a hat. That neither hat suited either my face or my mother's taste was, of course, mere incident. The claims both of courtesy and of equity necessitated my wearing the hats in impartial regularity, on alternate Sundays. Thus before the beginnings of memory, and through the medium of a baby's hat, did I become acquainted with the potency, in our domestic concerns, of that great public called Parish.

It must have been at about this period that I experienced one of my intermittent attacks of partisanship, desiring with my clear infant voice to rebuke the lukewarm re sponses of the congregation, and remodeling the unintelligible stretches of the Litany by the stentorian variation, "Lord have mercy upon us, miserable scissors!" The words of liturgy and hymn did not, however, long confound me. I had the concentration of many a sanctuary hour to devote to their meaning, so that by six years old even the Trinity had become a term of crystalline comprehension. By this time, also, other ministerial babykins had come toddling into the march in my rear, to share with me the soberness and separation of our calling. It was, on the whole, well disciplined, our little army

corps, although we recognized the latent twinkle in the eyes of the mother who generaled us with a clever balancing of motive between our well−being and that of the Parish. Both she and we were occasionally flabbergasted, sometimes by our public performance of private virtues, sometimes by our private performance of public ones. For example, at the home table we were always exhorted to conscientious chewing; it did not, therefore, occur to us to accelerate the process at a Sunday−School picnic. The sylvan board had long been deserted by others, but we, the Rector's children, a faithful little line, longing to be on the merry−go−round, in the swings, on the boats, still sat and dutifully chewed and chewed and chewed. I vividly recall the bewildering onslaught of our mother leading a bevy of church ladies in search of the missing. Ignominiously were we whirled off to join the sports of less seeming−famished companions.

On the other hand, in public, in the Sunday School, were we early made to understand that all the law and the prophets hung upon the catechism; a pink−paper catechism, frank in its woodcuts and facile in its explanation of the mysteries of the sacraments. Since this pink catechism was a lamp unto our feet, we suggested, during a thrilling burglar epidemic, that copies be left on the thresholds of rectory bedchambers. The burglar would pause to read, and there would ensue his immediate conversion and our resultant security. The parental laughter at our expense shook the foundations of our faith.

Such a severe consistency of behavior in regard to the lessons taught in the rectory and those taught in the sanctuary is a state of mind early outgrown by any intelligent ministerial child. Such crudity of conduct was a stage in the march that we had all passed by the age of ten. By that time we had an unerring sense of what was due to the Parish and what was due to ourselves, with the result that our outward conformity was about balanced by our inward misanthropy at having to conform. We attended, muttering imprecations up to the very door, the infant missionary society that filched our Saturday afternoons, we tore up futile scraps of calico to jab them together again with accursed "over−and−over" stitches, we gazed at pictures in which splendid blanketed braves, or splendid unclothed Samoans, were seen to exchange romance for religion in the shape of conversion and white cottas. Our souls loathed patchwork and missions, but, on the other hand, how we thrilled to the righteousness of reward when the visiting missionary, male or female, became our own particular guest! The ecstasy as one flirted one's Sunday flounces before the eyes of less favored neighbors because one was walking to church, holding the hand of a genuine Arctic archdeacon! And then the Bishop's visits, when we were whisked into cubbyhole and closet out of our crowded nursery that it might be converted into a prophet's chamber! Which one of my schoolmates had ever passed the right reverend plate at supper? And the honor of the Bishop's petting afterwards! The episcopal lap, the high general's knee, is the prerogative of the captain's children only, the same that never miss church and know all their collects.

Slowly we grew accustomed to the pressure of the knapsack upon our shoulders, that weight of clerical example which did not burden our irresponsible playmates. We knew that the Minister's children were different. We did not want it to be so, but we began to see why it was so. True, we protested when our father would not pause to tell us stories or our mother stay at home from calls to play with dolls, yet in the silent thinking−places of our little hearts we began to divine the beauty of the midnight sick−watches, of the valiancy of Sunday−School labors, of the brave weariness of sewing societies, of the heaven−born patience with Parish bores. As we watched the sleeker parents of our schoolmates, there dawned in us realization of what our parents had given up, and silent shame for our jealousy of their devotion. Few children are hurt by being shoved aside a little because of an ideal. The hours when our parents played with us are still passing precious, but it is because of the other hours that there was born in us a shamefaced sense of the meaning of the banner under which we trudged.

Isolation is the chief inconvenience of hav ing an ideal in the family. We were apart from other youngsters, partly because we knew it incumbent upon us to set them an example, since, early enough and sadly enough, we had acquired self−consciousness from the frank criticism of all our conduct made by any parishioner so minded, and partly were we cut off by the vow of poverty taken by our parents. Other families may look forward to easier times; no ministerial household has any such illusions. The tiniest child of the ministry knows that after forty the father will not receive a call; the veriest baby of us knows what happens to old ministers, because so many pitiful,

decrepit old soldiers have from time to time found shelter in our tent.

Yet the ministry is the best place in the world to learn that poverty is a nut that yields good meat if you crack it boldly. Well I remember an icy rectory which had but one register in the Arctic regions of the second story. At bedtime we would gather about this register to warm our toes. Each blanketed to the ears like a little Indian, we would discourse as serenely and acutely as any schoolmen, of the nature of angels, for was not the whole realm of heaven and earth ours for the mere talking? Pinched and patched we might be, but bold to meet penury with a consciousness of princely possessions. I did not so much think well of myself for this superiority to worldly comforts as I thought scorn of those who did not have it. Very early I had a contempt for a child who could not evolve a game from a clothespin or set a pageant moving forth from a box of buttons. I had a veritable snobbishness of disdain for a youngster who had to be amused.

Necessarily one requires respect for inward resources when the only things one has ever had enough of are bread and butter and books. Every ministerial child breathes book−madness and burns for an education. When at the age of five you have known your father to go without boots for a book, and then to caper like a weanling lamb on the volume's arrival, you have acquired something more potent than a mere conscientious respect for literature; rather you have learned to regard the book−world as a place of bacchanal liberty and delight forever open to you. I do not know whether it tended toward my humanizing or against it that the dominant beings of my young imagination were Books, while those of my girl friends were Boys.

There is nothing more effective than clerical penury to teach one the cheapness of dreams. The door of fantasy stands always open for the rectory household to enter, singly or together. I think every ministerial family cherishes that one dear dream of all unwilling gypsies. They always hope somehow, somewhere, sometime, to find a house that shall be a home. Do what you may, a rectory is always house, not home. It may always belong to some one else next month. If only it were worth while to plant perennials in our flower−beds! If only it were worth while to plant friendships to bear fruit in after years! Yet this last we can never help doing as we pass from parish to parish, being at heart most human of wanderers. It must be very beautiful to belong somewhere, to have, for instance, cousinships in the neighborhood. There are never any family parties in the ministry. There are never any gentle grandsires to come forth from their kindly crypts and give guarantee of our characters to the community. On each new camping−ground we stand, a huddled family group, completely dependent on our own efforts for introduction.

These new−parish sensations tempt to generalizations, for they are so alike, in town after town. The zest of a new call wears away even in one's infancy. Perhaps the captain still expects to find his tents pitched in Arcady, but not so his family; we meet the Parish's reception acutely on our good behavior, exquisitely affable to all, but our inner motto is, "Watch out!" It is usually those parishioners who give us most effusive welcome who will be readiest to desire our godspeed. It is those who stand back and look us over who will be our firmest friends. We cannot resent their attitude because it is exactly our own. We, too, are looking them over. When we go into a new parish the first person we meet is some one who is n't there, namely, our predecessor, that thorn in the flesh of the most righteous saint and soldier. There is always a predecessor, and however dead or distant, he is always there, in the hearts of the Parish, and quite frequently he is in their homes as well. However callous, however courteous one may endeavor to be, one cannot escape a slight sensation of stiffening when parishioners want The Other One to marry or bury them. Think of the well−bred wrangle that sometimes occurs in settling the clerical rights to a corpse! In all my ministerial experience I never knew a predecessor and a successor who loved each other. Yet I speak without bitterness, for one of the proudest and pleasantest sensations of our ministry has been that of being a predecessor ourself.

To an unwilling nomad there is nothing so monotonous as change, yet the very constancy of our march engenders an amazing ease of adjustment to each new environment. In our relations to people, we clericals learn an adaptability almost pathetically perfect. We succeed in being all things to all men by never being all ourselves to any man. Our affability is the armor that protects the inner sensitive personality. Perhaps we are naturally

expansive, but we early learn the perils of frankness, so that it comes about that along our pilgrimage we are friendly, but have few friends, those few, however, the tenderest, trustiest friends in the world, those few, rare spirits of a keenness and a kindness to penetrate the steel−strong armor of ministerial reserve. Very young, we clerical sons and daughters learn to pass from millionaire to laundress with no change of manner. The reason is not far to seek; we own senior warden and washerwoman as our parishioners, equally, because warden and washerwoman, equally, feel that they own us. With equal freedom the two censure or serve, love or hate, us. Recognizing the proprietory rights of each, we realize that each may be equally our bane or our blessing. Yet our democracy goes deeper than all this. Half−hearted soldiers we may often be, but we never doubt the sincerity of our flag. We had the luck to be born into the household of the consecrated, whether we wanted to be or not; we are genuinely democratic for the same reason that the apostles were.

Perhaps there is another reason, and a wickeder one, why all men stand in our sight naked of all accidental social trappings; and that is that we know them all so well! I cannot determine how clearly the world may see into rectory windows, but certainly one sees pretty clearly from rectory windows. It is a heart−searching and heart−revealing relation, that of a parish to its parson. The completely voluntary nature of all church effort and church organization affords an exhibition of idiosyncrasies not to be found in any other association. When I think of the crimes and the crankiness sometimes committed in the name of religion, I thank Heaven that the effect of these in a ministerial household is more often amusement than cynicism. I was grown up before I realized that the ostensible purpose of a choir is to praise the Lord: in my youth I always thought of a choir solely as a means of perfecting a rector in patience.

But always there exists the other side in the parochial relation, the side not of badness, but of beauty. Personally I perceive no stronger argument against the charge of present−day irreligion than the tribute of trust paid to any sincere minister. From my childhood on I have seen it everywhere, the respect for consecration. Everywhere I have heard it, the belief in the man who believes, ring confident as the cry of the roadside beggar upon the Nazarene.

Few people think it worth while to put on pretense with a clergyman; they rarely try to make him think them better than they are; yet he generally does think so. It is frequently the alertness to protect the captain against his own unworldliness that teaches his family their sanity and sureness of insight. This very insight may, however, make them poorer−spirited than their superior officer, craven and fain to capitulate. In a parish skirmish they are likely to be divided between hot loyalty to his cause and a vain hope that he won't think it necessary to fight. I can picture the probable domestic anxiety in the house of Calchas when in pursuit of his calling he found it necessary to stand up to the king of men, Agamemnon!

Long campaigning is likely to make minis terial offspring lovers of peace, yet I believe I am not really unwilling to fight the Devil. The trouble is that we of the ministry so often fight him when he is n't there. I wish our young theologues could be taught the sound and shape of Satan. Frankly I arraign the theological seminary as a very poor military school. It sends forth a soldier who does not know so much as how to set up a tent, whose idea of the Enemy is a mediaeval bugaboo in a book, I would establish two new chairs in our seminaries, a chair of agriculture, rudimentary, perhaps, but sufficient to teach the difference between tares and wheat, which Nature, uninstructed in any isms, still ordains shall grow together unto the harvest; and a second chair, in common sense, to dispense instruction in human nature. The average theologue is deep−read in Hebrew Scripture, but ignorant of the A B C of the tongue in which is written the Bible of man's soul. Doctors may dispute the divine inspiration of the former, but who of us is infidel enough to dispute the divine inspiration of the latter? Perhaps the more reprehensible fault of the seminary is not so much deficiency in the matter of its teaching as deficiency in its maturity. No thinking person wishes to receive his spiritual guidance from an unthink ing boy. I am constantly puzzled by the ill−logic of our ministerial preparation when I reflect that the foundation of its teaching is the fact that God Himself thought it necessary to be thirty years a man with men before He was ready to teach or to preach.

Considering his inadequate equipment, so inferior in the relation of means to end to that of the social worker, the average minister of to−day does better than his preparation deserves. If he has devotion, devotion will, in the long run, counteract his blunders. People will put up with almost anything from a man so long as he's a man. There never was a time when respect for a clerical coat, as a coat, was less; there never was a time when reverence for the man within the coat, as a man, was greater. Because of this fact, we of the ministry who best know the seamy side of an ideal know also best its beauty.

I was born beneath a banner I did not choose, but like many another ministerial child, I have grown from a mere external allegiance to a real one. I think the angels of birth were a little distraught when they dropped me in the tents of the righteous, but on the whole I am reconciled. I have traveled to and fro and far, but only the rectory tent is home, there alone exists the nomad's intense family friendship which is a home's sole enduring furniture. I have wandered so far among other men and other manners and morals that sometimes our little band has seemed but a faint dot on the spaces of a universe undreamed of within the limitations of rectory walls. Wandering thus, I have questioned many things unquestioned in my childhood. Only ministerial children themselves can estimate how open they are to doubt's attacks. The very intensity of partisanship and narrowness of creed and practice in which they have been brought up are sources of danger, while, having always been nourished on the glory of the mind, they will always in their traveling gravitate to the places of intellect, only to find their little faith regarded there as one more soap−bubble to be tossed about. Accustomed at home to the old−fashioned unquestioning distinctions, the minister's son or daughter will discover that there no longer exists the old sharp fight between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, because each side recognizes far too well a kinship in weakness and wistfulness. There was a time when to take a man's faith from him was a fair game, for it was his own affair to guard a castle aggressively inviting attack. Now even infidels are too pitiful to steal another man's God. It is not so simple an adjustment as perhaps it externally appears, the return to the tiny clerical camp whence once we issued forth to our education. Perhaps I have thrilled to the trumpets of larger armies, perhaps our little troop of skirmishers seems to me a sorry one now, and perhaps, darker treachery still, the hosts of Midian do not loom so big and black to me as of old, perhaps I have even made some charming friends among the Hittites and the Jebusites, but it is astonishing how, when I am back in the old conditions, the enemy's ranks resume their old color and proportion.

When I am abroad I am no stickler for church attendance, yielding myself sometimes to the call of a "heaven−kissing hill" or to the spell of woods sacredly serene; but at home I am accustomed by contagion to look darkly askance at Sunday picknickers or lazy stay−at−homes. They should come and hear my father preach! Yet I myself feel God nearer on a hilltop than at the altar, and I own, as closest comrades and most inspiring, men and women whose souls never bow in worship anywhere. They belong to another army, that army of social betterment which is so curiously blind to its own pillar of fire. My creed is to their minds a child's lisping, they ask neither a God nor an immortality, they ask only that they may lift the burdened man upright. If we cannot worship, let us work, people say to−day, and do not dream that never before in history was there enough religion in the world to make theirs a plausible deduction.

These my friends belong to the army of non−church−goers arraigned in the little village church where I kneel to say my prayers. It is very strange, they say to me,—these soldiers of an army grown far larger now than our thinning ranks,—very strange to me that you should need a religion; and I answer it is very strange to me that you cannot hear above the blackness of your hosting, your own prophet voices choiring a midnight mass to Heaven.

There are divers ways of worship and I acknowledge that my own way, minister's daughter though I am, exemplary in externals, is not always that which would appear best in accord with my bowed head and practiced knees. There is much in your full−sized Anglican that is bigger than his Prayer Book, although I loyally hold that an inspired document of Christian common sense. Many a windy, rolling thought comes to me when I am kneeling in secret rebellion at the abase ment of the Litany, irreverent, meseemeth, to the souls cast in God's image, but who am I that I should think scorn of any words by which people climb to Heaven? Suppose I should compose prayers for my father's congregation, think how bewildered the good people in our pews would become if they should find, writ out for their repeating, the calls of birds and the voices of winds, which I know would

sing themselves into any prayer of my making.

No, in its prayers and in its practice, I find myself ever turning quietly back to the faith of my fathers, that banner of my clan. Perhaps I may think its gold tarnished with mediaevalism, its silk worn very thin, but are not all banners merely the work of men's hands? And what matter of the ensign so long as it holds skyward? I, within the ministry, may sometimes question our methods of warfare, thinking them valiant against obsolete bugaboos and oblivious of a more subtle Satan, but, doubtful how better to direct the age−old campaign, uncertain what newer weapons to endue, I would rather still be on the side of a blind and passionate ideal, for energies may sometimes be wasted, but ideals are never wasted.

Perhaps I have sometimes thought to join that other army, of man's social progress, a noble army the thunder of whose modern warfare rolls ever louder and louder through the land. But I a deserter from the thin, faint brigade that belongs to an older fashion? A deserter now, when, in our little rectory corps, I see the hands that grasp the sword growing weaker, and the hands that uphold the sword−bearer's growing frailer, and when, in eyes keen to pierce the Enemy's darkness, I read the growing peace prophetic of the battle over? Back to my place in the ranks, back beneath our tattered pennon! What better service have I craved? What braver banner? For on the ensigns of many creeds I have searched, after all, only for that one sure device which shines upon my fathers' faith. That device is a Face, even the face of the leader of all the host, and as on and on I follow the march of our ministry,—

"That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows, Or decomposes, but to recompose, Become my universe that feels and knows!"

XXII. Some Diffculties in Doing without Eternity

Have any of us noticed what a fairy−land we lost when we stopped believing in eternity? There was a glamour and a glitter about that past playground of religion which makes our present creed of science barren and chilly. If to−day we write the word Eternity in white chalk on a blackboard, and gazing at it try to recall what it used to signify, we shall find this exercise of the spirit most joyous. The word reminds us how we used to slip away from hurry to bathe in a sea of timelessness, refreshing to every taut nerve. How we exulted and expanded in the belief that eternity would give us all that we could not get in the present, for that was what eternity was for! We should never again be sick or sad or bad. In eternity we should be no longer the puny spawn of monkeys, but beings good and great and glorious as angels. Eternity was full of shining light and serried ranks of singing hosts. Majestic figures from the past walked its wondrous streets and we ourselves walked with them. There was the gleaming of a golden and immortal city, our home at last. There was even in our vision of eternity the presence of God.

Such was the fairyland of faith where once we walked confidently. It is banned now even from our fancy as irrevocably as the elf−kingdom of the nursery. No one now believes we live after we die; it is even deemed reprehensible to want to. Yet for those of us who formerly possessed eternity it is hard all at once to get used to doing without it. We agree with science that eternity should be abolished in the interests of an efficient spiritual life, and yet, without eternity, we sometimes ache with our abrupt adjustment to being merely mortal. Creeds and other comforts have a way of slipping away from us without our seeing. Time and again we can be found blindly struggling to adapt ourselves to some deficiency in our supply of beliefs without any clear conception of the nature of the hole or of our resources for either filling it or enduring it. The present age suffers all the awkwardness of being transitional. In a few decades babies will be born immune to any faith or fear in regard to the future, but meanwhile it is well to examine closely our present difficulties in passing from immortality to annihilation, and perhaps to discover a little help for hobbledehoys. A transitional period should be a little patient with itself, for it suffers both the growing−pains of stretching to the demands of the future and the rheumatic twinges of belonging to a decaying past.

The first difficulty of our adjustment has the nature of a growing−pain, being due to our still imperfect response to

the commands of science, which bewilder our dullness by apparent contradiction. When science is all the time bidding us to batter down doors, it is confusing to the mind to have science herself declare that death is the only door that opens nowhere. In every other department of research we are encouraged to the wildest flights of imagination and hypothesis. It is, therefore, increasingly difficult, as we become increasingly inured to scientific adventure, to stop short before the most provocative of all phenomena, the human spirit in its eventful cycle. Eternity seems the only thoroughly scientific explanation of soul. At a mere superficial reading each human life appears like a chapter from a serial rather than a complete volume or a fugitive page tossed on the wind. The chance−blown paragraphs reveal so much that suggests a vigorously conceived plot, powerful characterization, dramatic incident, intense emotion, rich background, that it is almost impossible not to formulate a synopsis of preceding chapters, and to conjecture the denouement following the catastrophe of death.

It is even at times hard to withstand the conviction that there must be an author. One could almost suspect him of breaking off at a crisis on purpose to make us eager for the next installment. The figure of speech may perhaps make clear to us the primary trouble of our being transitional, namely, the difficulty of being both scientific and unscientific at the same time, for our instinct to understand and explain tends to destroy our pleasure even in the torn chapter we hold in hand; it is hard to work up a proper reading enthusiasm in the face of the positive assertion by science that there will be no "continued−in−our−next."

The most cursory study of our bygone belief reveals at once other troubles for the present generation in trying too suddenly to get along without a future. We suffer from the working within us of old instincts and superstitions not to be violently uprooted— rheumatic heritage of souls in process of transformation. While our reason admits that there is no valid excuse for being immortal and that our perverse hankering after such a condition argues us self−centered and self−important, all the same there is peril in too abruptly removing the props to personal prestige promised by the mythical joys of our lost fairyland. Our anticipated survival gave us a sense of superiority to the insects, prevented our being sensitive to the silent scoffings of the roadside stones that so long outlast us. Evanescence tends also to undermine our personal affections. It hardly seems worth while to be overfond of relative or friend whom a breath of wind may snuff out like a flame. Why should beings more brittle than beetles go about loving each other as if they were gods? Morally, human frailty was often subconsciously controlled by keeping ourselves fit for the society we expected ultimately to enter, that of saints and sages and perhaps of God Himself.

The first effect of destroying all these expectations is disastrous for people who were far more dependent on them than they dreamed, for, to tell the truth, eternity in the old days had so little apparent relation to our daily conduct that the complete rejection of the concept is like that of some bodily organ whose functioning is deemed negligible until it ceases. Our suffering is no less keen because we recognize it as purely evolutional and temporary. In a few generations people will find as much inspiration in being finite as we used to find in being infinite. Meanwhile, for us who have the luck to be transitional there is perhaps a compromise.

Apart from our personal pangs, the loss of eternity has had effects, social and political, that intensify our private discomfort. Perhaps if our difficulties are clarified we may recognize how burdened we actually are, and be more willing to allow ourselves a makeshift leniency. Chief among the public phenomena directly traceable to the absence of eternity is the war. On a basis of strict mortality, war for aggrandizement becomes the only legitimate activity for person or nation. Reason shows that, since death ends all, material things are the only things worth getting, and even more clearly shows that, since human beings are as finite as mosquitoes, they are no more worthy of preservation. Germany is the most laudably logical nation in the world, but her logic has been a little uncomfortable for the nations who are more sluggish in evolution, and who still cling to their retrogressive respect for spiritual valuations and to their obsolete reverence for the human soul. Of course, if Germany had not purified herself of all taint of faith in eternity, she might conceivably have waited for permeation in peace, instead of being in such a devil of a hurry to chop a way through for her culture. Doubtless, in the course of time other nations will attain Germany's serene heights of pure reason, but at present it is necessary frankly to admit that aggression, while our brains pronounce it a most rational pastime, is still for our imaginations and sympathies one of the chief

temporary discomforts of doing without eternity.

Next to the war in importance of effect stands the high cost of living. Of course we all know that there is enough food for everybody to eat and enough money to pay for it, provided that nobody wants more food than he ought to eat, nor more money than he ought to spend. However, now that we know with absolute certainty that we die when we die, any man would be a fool if he did not try to eat as much and to spend as much as he possibly could. Food and money are the only fun the finite can have, and naturally the effort to get as much as possible of both sends prices soaring. Without penetrating too far into economic intricacies, one can connect the decline in value of the Apocalypse with the advance in value of eggs. The high cost of living is directly due to the high cost of dying; when dying costs annihilation, people have to work pretty hard to get a life's worth out of seventy years.

Of causes of distress taken in order of popular complaint, next to war and the high cost of living stands the new poetry. The relation between imagism and immortality is so obvious as to be invisible. Granted that the aim of literature is to mirror life, the imagist insistence on aspect versusinterpretation is inevitable, for plainly literature should not deal with meanings when life, being mortal, cannot have a meaning. Sensation alone is sufficiently ephemeral to be true to life, whereas a poem that attempts to express some significance beneath phenomena has a tendency to outlast its generation, and runs the risk of endurance, and of becoming, in some notable instances, even immortal, whereas such a reversion toward stability either in a poem or in a person shows each alike false to our faith in flux. Those of us, however, who cannot all at once throw off the thrall of the poor old poets of our infancy must be content to go a bit slowly, trusting that our descendants will attain complete responsiveness to the poetry of the evanescent. We perceive humbly enough how reactionary we are, but our obstreperous instinct for explanation corrupts even our literary tenets so that with senile obstinacy we sometimes wonder whether, even from its own purely aesthetic point of view, the new poetry does not miss something the older poetry possessed. Meaning, adroitly introduced into a poem, sometimes produced a pretty little art of its own, a blending of outer and inner attributes that had in itself a kind of grace. It is even more heterodox to question, in looking back, whether a poet's effort to explain was not stimulating to his imagination, making him actually see things more vividly in their external aspects by his very concentration on their inner qualities. Certainly no imagist poet, for all his preoccupation with picture, has ever produced as vivid descriptions as did Browning, a poet above all others avid for meanings.

We of to−day may as well acknowledge first as last that our feet, set in infancy to the pace of eternity, will never step lively enough for the present age. While deprecating the breathlessness of keeping up with the contemporary, the most old−fashioned of us must admire its valiancy. We are not nearly so lazy as when we used to leave some of our development to be accomplished after the temporary set−back of death. Our own muscles are a bit stiff, however, and as we conscientiously whip them to the requirements of high−speed pressure, we must comfort ourselves with the thought that our posterity will be able to fly without experiencing any of our awkwardness.

The spiritual leisure and lethargy resulting from a reliance on eternity to finish up what we could not get done on earth, obviously clogged the wheels of progress, which now can be everywhere seen whizzing along without any brakes. We open the advertising pages of any periodical, to find that speed is the dominant advantage offered with every commodity. Get−healthy−quick, get−learned−quick, get−rich−quick, are the headings under which most of our advertisements might be grouped. We are all familiar with the photographed faces of the people who will show us how to reach a maximum of attainment in a minimum of time. The gentleman with the arresting index finger leaps out at our laziness to teach us how to be successful in ten lessons. Success is a word that could not even be defined before the abolishment of eternity, with the resultant denial of all criteria but the immediate.

While haste is necessarily painful for our still imperfectly adjusted mentality in every department of life, we must allow for our being peculiarly sensitive to the changes it necessitates in the training of youth. In the old days when death graduated us into eternity, we had much more time to devote to education. There was in our early years an agreeable luxury in the pursuit of learning. We did not have to practice the rigid economy of the correspondence school or of languages by phonograph. As we look back, it seems as if minds were richer when they did not have

to be so niggardly in the luggage they took for their journey. This is but the sentimental vaporing of the senile, for in our sane moments we perceive as clearly as does the most modern pedagogue that Greek and Latin are impedimenta to retard the boy of to−day in the race set before him, and we agree with the publisher−purveyors to youth that the compendia of useful knowledge furnished by them offer the handiest possible canned nutriment for a period that has time only for acquisition, not for digestion.

As regards the study of the classics, we did not at first perceive that to annul the future involved annulling the past, and yet, practically, giving up eternity has undermined our interest in history. Conviction of mortality enjoins the conscience to concentrate on the contemporary so intensely that past events become obscure. Unless we have eternity before us we really have no time to look behind. Yet some of us have a yearning for history that used to find satisfaction in fancying that our little age fitted into a sequence of ages. It contributed to a false but agreeable complacency to gaze back into an endless past as it did to gaze forward into an endless future. Of course, abolishing eternity does not necessarily obliterate the past or explicitly forbid our going back there to visit; it merely makes to−day so important that we have no time whatever for yesterday.

In this matter of educational adjustment, as in others, a transitional period suffers enough to permit itself a little humoring of its prejudices; we should not attach too much guilt to a surreptitious enjoyment of the ancients so long as we do not corrupt the youth of our acquaintance by teaching them any of our respect for antique art. So long as we are doing our conscientious best to free our boys and girls from the cumbersomeness of a classic education, we may feel that we have done our duty, and may indulge a secret delight in the dusty shelves that reveal to us the grace that was Greece and the glory that was Rome. It is all right so long as we don't let the children know, for that bygone beauty is strangely seductive and glamorous, and contact with it might sap their energy in pursuing fortune and fame and food, which should be the sole preoccupation of people appointed to die.

Indisputably speed must be the desideratum of all activity, educational or other. Now the chief distress we older ones experience from speed is not that it leads to success, but that so often it leads nowhere. The old−fashioned custom of having a purpose in a pursuit makes it difficult for us to enjoy pure giddiness as heartily as do our younger contemporaries. Haste, first introduced as a method of extracting from the temporary what eternity used to supply, has become an end in itself, so that a great many people ask nothing else of life but to feel themselves whizzing. Since nothing is permanent except impermanence, the one thing to do is to go spinning along, cautious only to avoid bumping into a destination. As a consequence of trying to catch up in one lifetime with all the activity of eternity, we have acquired such exhilaration, such momentum of energy, that there is nothing we are so afraid of as the impact of arriving somewhere. The profession of flux as a creed necessitates the practice of flying as a habit. Yet with this very profession of faith I find I have arrived at a heresy.

Now this heresy consists of the argument plainly approved by pure logic that if the purpose of speed is to get the most out of this life because there is no other, then no movement at all is exactly as rational as too much, and we have a perfect right to select any spot of our mental landscape that suits us and sit down on it, convinced that it is just as sensible to get our money's worth out of life's little day by being stationary as by being giddy. On the principle that ephemeral beings have a right to any fun they can find is founded the advice to our age toward which this entire discussion has been directed. Baldly stated, the proposal is this: the best way of doing without eternity is to pretend we don't have to! The suggestion is frankly so absurd that any reader is permitted to smile at it as freely as does the writer. We have lost eternity and we can't bring it back by pretending it is still there. The point is that we don't want to bring it back, but we do want to discover some way of being comfortable without it. Believing that there is no eternity, but living as if there were, is not a process possible to all persons, and is therefore urged only upon those capable of so separating their reason and their imagination that the two can function independently of each other. Many people are happily thus constituted, and still more can become so if they try. There is, moreover, no real sin in the course, because we are rather true to our imaginations than false to our convictions, and, besides, we do no proselyting; we merely allow our own fancy the refreshment of revisiting our lost fairyland.

The chief obstacle to the compromise is that its absurdity is exactly balanced by its efficacy; in other words, you can't tell how good it will feel until you try it, and if you are an over−rational and over−conscientious person you will think it beneath your dignity to try it. Yet actually there is nothing that contributes so much toward a sense of well−being as pretending, for a few minutes every day,—say just before getting up in the morning and just before going to sleep at night,—that you are going to live after you die. After a few weeks of this exercise, that embarrassment we experience in the presence of nature becomes less painful, whereas, when we are too acutely conscious of mortality, we are shamed by an insensate oak, by a rock we could pound to powder for its silent sneer at our evanescence. If we make believe we are as good as they are, we can hold up our heads to the sky and the stars, and even venture to penetrate the social exclusiveness of the sky and the mountains. A man who pretends he is immortal is not so deafened by the cannon of the contemporary that he cannot hear the still, sweet voices of the little flowers. An association with the ancient aristocracy of sea and forest is good for a person, but it is almost impossible to feel at ease in this society unless we temporarily assume an equality with it in permanence.

This secret leniency toward our abandoned faith tends to enhance our joy in human comradeship as well as in that of nature. In actuality human affection is so menaced by fate as to resemble the surreptitious whispering in the schoolroom while the teacher's back is turned. When the loftiest spiritual converse may at any time be broken off by the malevolence of a molecule called a germ, some of us would rather never love anybody as the only means of getting even with being ephemeral. On the other hand, if we can manage to simulate a sense of survival, and can picture death as a mere voyage, we can enjoy comradeship up to the very last minute, and shout confident au revoirs even while the boat is pulling out to sea.

A faith in a future secretly indulged is stimulating to mentality. If we assume for a few minutes even in jest that perhaps our life's chapter has a meaning, instantly our ingenuity is off to invent other chapters past and future. Before we know it our minds are glowing as we discover some passage of grand and sustained style, or are tingling with the glorious guesswork of an entire synopsis. If we are gifted with any dramatic instinct, we are as likely as not, while we turn the pages, to find ourselves appropriating the hero's part, and bearing ourselves a bit more nobly, with a dim notion of being destined to still greater actions in the next installment. Pretending that perhaps after all our life has a meaning makes us acquit ourselves rather better than we otherwise should in the tragic episodes, and makes us enjoy the comic scenes with a twinkle kindled at imperishable fires. Even hazarded surmises about the creatorship of our life's romance sometimes give a sense of rest and relief not as yet afforded by the prevalent doctrine of pure flux.

A little self−indulgence in eternity will not only enfranchise our conversation with our contemporaries and quicken our brains to decipher the book of humanity, but will tend to keep our minds, manners, and morals in trim for association with the great and good of all ages. We used to believe the halls of the dead were thronged with noble spirits toward whose wisdom and beauty our pilgrim feet would surely sometime find the way. This hope helped us to keep ourselves in order, much as the exiled Englishman restrains himself from slumping by donning his dress−suit in the jungle solitude. Of course, when evolution from the eternal to the ephemeral is fully accomplished, nobody will need any fillip to personal prestige, but for us poor intermediates, painfully hobbledehoy, it is a secret education in noble manners to pretend to ourselves that some day we shall be called upon to meet Socrates or Buddha or Christ.

Why not have a little patience with ourselves, we poor devils who have to bear all the brunt of the transition from eternity to evanescence? If we promise not to corrupt advancing youth, if we promise not even to corrupt our own reason by any genuine faith, can't we safely play that our life's chapter is going to be continued?

For, after all, what if there should be an Author?

THE END