TEACHER

Anne Sullivan Macy

A TRIBUTE BY THE FOSTER-CHILD OF HER MIND

HELEN KELLER

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By Helen Keller

TEACHER: ANNE SULLIVAN MACY
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OPTIMISM (AN ESSAY)
OUT OF THE DARK
MIDSTREAM: MY LATER LIFE
MY RELIGION
THE SONG OF THE STONE WALL
THE STORY OF MY LIFE
THE WORLD I LIVE IN

TEACHER

Anne Sullivan Macy

Helen Keller

This it the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one.

G. B. SHAW

Introduction by Nella Braddy Henney*

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[* Transcriber note: Introduction as been removed due to copyright considerations.]

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TEACHER

I

One afternoon in November 1946, Polly Thomson and I found ourselves on the Acropolis in front of the hotel where we were spending a few days. We had flown to Athens from Naples in a U.S. military plane for the purpose of investigating the plight of the war-stricken blind of southern Greece. We had already visited the war-blinded in England and France and Italy and we were heartsick and tired, but we could not bear to leave without seeing the Parthenon. So we slipped away alone.

It was a long difficult climb up roughhewn steps and over stones that almost gave way underfoot, but before we began the ascent we had searched among the ruins until we came upon a fallen pillar which I felt from one end to the other so that I might imagine to some extent how the columns rose into the sky, and when finally we reached the top the tangible splendor of the Parthenon was actually revealed to me. The smoothness of its pillars which the elements and time had not spoiled were symbolic to me of unpredictable forces in earth and heaven yet to be fathomed.

On that height overlooking Athens it thrilled me inexpressibly to touch the sublime triumphs of Greek architects and engineers, and I felt the serene atmosphere in which Pallas Athene had moved and men were visited by gods who rewarded them for their heroic deeds or chastised them for their crimes. Teacher, as I always called Anne Sullivan Macy, was with me, though unseen, and the Greek myths and poems which she had repeated to me as a child assumed a living reality. The games in which she and I took the part of Greek and barbarian came back to me with all their vigor. My imagination was kindled anew by the power of Zeus with his thunderbolts and Hermes with the magic sandal-wings on his feet. Through fancy's eye I saw Poseidon shaking his trident over the sea and Persephone borne screaming by Pluto to his dark kingdom. The tales Teacher had told me about the siege and the burning of Troy swept through my mind as if they were a warning of some undreamed calamity.

Polly and I turned to the view from the Acropolis—the hill up which Demosthenes ran daily with a pebble in his mouth to correct his stammering, the agora where the men of Athens had listened to the counsels of Pericles,

and to which fleet-footed messengers had brought the news of victory from Marathon. There Euripides, unafraid, had lifted up his voice in compassion for the human race and denunciation of slavery. There Socrates had taught Athenian youth, and Plato had bequeathed a philosophy that still quickens the eyes and ears of those who will see and hear.

The climb up the Acropolis symbolized the difficulties Teacher and I had overcome together and I was spiritually strengthened to ascend a metaphorical Acropolis in my work for the blind. As we had gone from one camp of the life-wrecked blind to another, a mountain of suffering had been laid upon me. I knew that to bring them back to self-help and usefulness would require years of unremitting endeavour. I felt the uniqueness of the tragedy that confronted me, but the thought of Teacher's perseverance spurred me on.

Only about a hundred and fifty years before had the blind of Europe been rescued from despair. Naturally they treasured the few advantages they had gained on the hard trail back to a human life—schools, devoted teachers, Braille books slowly accumulated out of small means. Then with lacerating suddenness World War II had snatched them away. A great many of the blind had lost their homes and families. Their hard-won schools and workshops had been destroyed or looted by the Nazis. Their Braille slates had been melted down for ammunition and their literature burned for fuel and the agencies that had provided employment for capable adult blind were no longer functioning. Suffering and privation were everywhere, but in their complicated insecurity the blind needed education more than others because it was only through special instruction that they could be taught to support themselves. I realized that though the American people were splendidly generous to the unfortunates of the world, even for them it would be an appalling task to repair the damaged schools in Europe and build new ones, to supply expensive Braille printing presses, educational apparatus and equipment to give the blind—civilian and military—a goal towards which to shape their frustrated lives. These problems were hammering against my mind when we stopped in Rome to wait for a plane to carry us back to England.

We were at the Excelsior Hotel when we received a cable that our house at Arcan Ridge in Connecticut had been terribly damaged by fire—a frame house, all wood. We feared the worst and Polly and I fell into each other's arms stunned. It seemed incredible that everything had gone from us in a moment—the home where we and Herbert, our faithful man Friday, had thought to spend the rest of our days—Polly's and my irreplaceable

treasures from Japan and tokens of our friends' affection, my library with all its books and papers, the letters I had cherished from Mother, Teacher, and indeed from people all over the world. With anguish I thought of the "Teacher" manuscript, three-fourths written, on which I had worked in spare moments during twenty years. I said to Polly that the loss of that manuscript seemed to me like mutilation. Just as I said that, a fire leaped up in me, not to burn down and blacken, but to illumine my mind and point it to a purpose. Stung by the thought of little blind children who were also mutilated, I added, "I will be stoical. This loss is not like parting with Teacher which, as it were, broke my life-habitation."

"Yes," responded Polly, "we will be stoical. We are in the midst of work for others. Many have put their trust in us, and we must not fail them."

"Besides," I said, "we have wonderful friends and some means, which millions upon millions do not have."

"How true!" flashed Polly's courage-kindled fingers. "That is a challenge. We will carry on."

Herbert was in Paris. We had brought him with us to Europe, wishing that he have a real holiday—the first since he had come to us twelve years before. He had gone to visit friends in Holland, and was now waiting for us. When we rejoined him, he confirmed our fears. The house at Arcan Ridge had been burned to the ground. He shed tears as he exclaimed, "I wish I had stayed at home! Teacher said she would trust you both to me. I wish I had stayed at home!" He continued depressed in spite of all we could say to cheer him. But from the moment I grasped the fullness of our disaster, I experienced life triumphant over the narrowness of my bodily existence—mighty life, seeing and hearing life, the creation of the spirit. This inner life surged and expanded within me and I marveled at the security I felt in my spiritual home, even though Polly and I had no material habitation that we could call our own.

Despite the difficulties clamoring on my mind's verge for a solution, I kept thinking of all the fires I had recently lived through in imagination. There was the holocaust of flame-throwing air raids in invaded, countries where men and women and children too—seeing and half blind—fought through hell to ward off destruction. There was the "smoke of death" as millions of Jews were turned with agony to ashes in the gas chambers of Nazism—better called Baalism. And my heart bled as I recalled the blazing up in ruins of the paper-fragile houses of Tokyo during World War II. Oh, the vividness with which my small conflagration underlined others' woes,

immured amid the horrors of slaughter and rapine! Inextinguishable indignation burned within me, and I resolved to combat in every way possible the malignant impulses lurking around man, the flying serpents of complacency and cruel philosophy that denies liberty, universal brotherhood, personality and happiness.

My thoughts raced on from physical burning to the fire of disaster I had witnessed when I visited wounded servicemen in the army and navy hospitals of America and Europe—mutilation, injuries that refused to heal, paraplegia, despair from being suddenly blinded or deafened, the isolation wards, the fear of lifelong banishment from society because of this or that disfigurement, nameless ills not spoken aloud but none the less mandatory to attack if man's mind is to be kept sane and clean! In the dusky gleam of those memories I determined more than ever to keep my eyes towards the beacons of good will that seek to rescue and exalt human life.

Another "sweet use" of the adversity which had befallen me was that I could speak without presumption of the common losses which dislocate so many lives, both great and small, human and animal. And always the thought warmed me that I still had Polly and Herbert, safe and sound.

When we returned to Westport on December 20 we were installed in a house loaned to us by Mr. G. A. Pfeiffer, Uncle Gus, a true friend whose loving-kindness had been a light upon our path since before Teacher's death. On Christmas morning Polly and Herbert and I walked over the grave of our precious home—a deep, black hole where seven years of work, adventure, and comfort had been lived, and each one had rejoiced in the happiness of the others. There we stood spellbound by that ultimate blank. I seemed to be walking through flames as in the Middle Ages an accused person was required to do when his innocence was tested. Only Herbert's room and a bit of the garage were left.

It had been a grief to Teacher and me to leave our house in Wrentham, but at least we had taken our books and our goods with us, and their sweet companionableness helped us to readjust ourselves to unfamiliar surroundings among strangers. But here was privation indeed. Gone were the books which had fed my mind since my early womanhood, some of which I had carried with me in my travels, and others which I treasured as gifts from Mother, Teacher, and my foster father, John Hitz. Gone were the Bible whose raised dots had grown dim under my fingers, Shakespeare, the glory of whose universal genius, next to the Bible, had filled the habitation of my mind since childhood, and all the harmonious notes from the poets throughout the ages which had echoed and re-echoed in my silence. Since

then I have been blessed with new copies of some of those books, but, oh, the aching void I shall always experience thinking of the letters throbbing with affection or luminous with spiritual instruction that were swept away past recall! And oh, the wrench at our hearts with which Polly and I clutched each other's hands as we saw in the ashes imaginatively the cherished memorials of Teacher and the treasures we had gathered during our travels! In that intolerable moment I felt a Hand laid upon my soul healing it, and I grew strong with the faith

. . . to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever Lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own!

Slowly we walked around, and Polly noticed the beautiful pin oak which we called "Teacher's tree" because it imaged her ideal of delicate grace, and seemed a form of light. It had been dreadfully burned on one side and we doubted whether it could outlive the bitter cold and the winter blasts, but the following spring its branches burst forth in feathery green, and it has continued to rise and expand until its grateful coolness tempers the summer heat.

Some days later Polly and I had a long talk with our beloved friend and literary counselor, Nella Braddy Henney, the author of *Anne Sullivan Macy*. As we sat together, we felt that our sorrow was duplicated in her tender heart, the "comfortable dew of Heaven" dropped, from her words confirming me in my refusal to grieve. She said as the Greeks did, "Yield thou not to adversity, but pass on the more bravely." She rejoiced that Polly and Herbert were spared to pilot my life-ship over the waters ahead of me, and she reminded me that I would continue my work free from old responsibilities and unwelcome decisions. I told her that, strangely enough, a voice had been silenced which for years persistently warned me that we would return to find our home in ruins. Why it disturbed me so often I could not guess, especially as I had brushed it aside with unconcern.

Among others things I talked to Nella about the books I had lost—the Bible; the works of Swedenborg copied by Mr. Hitz during and after my college studies and which had gone with me from one home to another; the chubby small volumes of *Alice in Wonderland* I had received as a birthday gift from Carl Arensberg, a brilliant student at Harvard; an old, old *Prometheus Unbound* in which I had marked numerous passages; John B. Tabb's *Poems* bound in red which my sister Mildred had transcribed; and countless other treasures I valued beyond price. But as I spoke, I perceived

the shaping fire of Teacher's spirit, and in that perspective I gained a fresh appreciation of how the sparkle of her personality and the shadows of her blindness, partial at first, then almost total, had been part and parcel of my life for fifty years. Nella said to me, "When you rewrite the biography of Teacher, she will appear to you as a sacred fire—not consuming but warming, cherishing and enlightening." Touched by this confidence in me from one whose understanding, vivid story of Teacher has gone to many hearts, I fervently hope that I may convey to my readers some gleams from the opal fires in the nature of a woman with a heart for glorious living and an eye for the "beauty beyond dream."

II

It was a bright, clear spark from Teacher's soul that beat back the sooty flames of thwarted desire and temper in little Helen's no-world. That spark was the word "water." Compassion in the old sense does not describe the springs of Teacher's motives. Her disbelief in nature as an unfailing friend of humanity lay back of her efforts to liberate Helen—"Phantom" I prefer to call the little being governed only by animal impulses, and not often those of a docile beast. Teacher's fight against her own blindness began in her childhood, and the partial restoration of her sight while she was in school at Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston had not ended her struggle to maintain her ascendancy over nature. That struggle lasted as long as her earth-life.

Secretly or openly she always resented what seemed to her the purposeless evils that had marred her sight and laid waste the health, sanity, and happiness of millions throughout the world. How ruthless then was her assault upon the blindness, deafness, and muteness that bound her little pupil in a triple dungeon of thwarted instincts. Boldly she resolved to put herself in the place of nature and topple it from its aimless supremacy over Helen by substituting love and inventive thought for the unconscious cruelty of the child's fate.

This is a period in Teacher's life which distresses me to remember. Naturally I wish that after the intoxicating tide of delight that swept over her when the operations made it possible for her to read with her eyes, she might have found a child responsive to her sympathetic touch. But, alas! Phantom had no sense of "natural" bonds with humanity. All the sweetness of childhood created by friendly voices and the light of smiling faces was dormant in her. She did not understand obedience or appreciate kindness. I remember her as plump, strong, reckless, and unafraid. She refused to be led, and had to be carried by force upstairs when she received her first lesson. Another time her table manners required correction. Phantom was in the habit of picking food out of her own plate and the plates of others with her fingers. Annie Sullivan would not put up with such behavior, and a fight followed during which the family left the room. Phantom acted like a

demon, kicking, screaming, pinching her would-be deliverer and almost throwing her out of her chair, but Annie succeeded in compelling her to eat with a spoon and keep her hands out of the plate. Then Phantom threw her napkin on the floor, and after an hour's battle Annie made her pick it up and fold it. One morning Phantom would not sit down to learn words which meant nothing to her, and kicked over the table. When Annie put the table back in its place and insisted on continuing the lesson, Phantom's fist flew like lightning and knocked out two of Annie's teeth.

A sorrier situation never confronted a young woman on fire with a noble purpose. Phantom's parents were apt to interfere whenever attempts were made to discipline her. For this reason Annie won their consent to get her away to a quiet place, and, at their suggestion, took the child to a vine-covered annex near the homestead, Ivy Green. The furniture was changed so that Phantom would not recognize it—my smell memory too is different—and it was agreed that the family would come to them every day, without letting Helen know of their visits. From Teacher's later testimony I know that the two were, so to speak, caged in the annex, and I marvel that Annie dared to stay alone with such a menace to her personal safety.

Already I have referred to several fights between Annie and Phantom, not because I have any coherent or detailed remembrance of them, but because they indicate the grueling nature of the work Teacher had undertaken. In *The Story of My Life*, which I wrote with the carelessness of a happy, positive young girl, I failed to stress sufficiently the obstacles and hardships which confronted Teacher—and there are other defects in the book which my mature sense of her sacrifice will not permit to go uncorrected.

In my memory of the annex I am conscious of a Phantom lost in what seemed to her new surroundings. I perceive sudden jerks, pulls, and blows not dealt by Annie but by Phantom herself trying to escape restraining arms. How like a wild colt she was, plunging and kicking! Certainly it was a sturdy Phantom who belabored her supposed enemy. There comes back to me a scuffle round and round an object that my touch recollections represent as a bed, and a firm gesture of Annie to make her lie down or get up and dress.

Phantom had no sense of time, and it was years before she learned of the many exhausting hours which Annie spent trying to bring her under control without breaking her spirit. Even that was only partly accomplished when the two went home. Then Phantom grew angry over Annie's repeated attempts to impress upon her the difference between "water" and "mug."

Tactually I recall quick footsteps in the room, a hand—my mother's—seizing Phantom and dragging her away for a sound spanking. After that Phantom began to improve, but still she lacked the normal child's love of praise. She was not aware that she had been punished because she did not distinguish between right and wrong. Her body was growing, but her mind was chained in darkness as the spirit of fire within the flint. But at last, on April 5, 1887, almost exactly a month after her arrival in Tuscumbia, Annie reached Phantom's consciousness with the word "water." This happened at the well-house. Phantom had a mug in her hand and while she held it under the spout Annie pumped water into it, and as it gushed over the hand that held the mug she kept spelling w-a-t-e-r into the other hand. Suddenly Phantom understood the meaning of the word, and her mind began to flutter tiny wings of flame. Caught up in the first joy she had felt since her illness, she reached out eagerly to Annie's ever-ready hand, begging for new words to identify whatever objects she touched. Spark after spark of meaning flew through her mind until her heart was warmed and affection was born. From the well-house there walked two enraptured beings calling each other "Helen" and "Teacher." Surely such moments of delight contain a fuller life than an eternity of darkness.

Exceedingly I regret that in *The Story of My Life* I was careless in what I wrote about the progress Helen made in language and in learning to speak. The narrative was so telescoped that it seemed to ordinary readers as if Helen in a single moment had "grasped the whole mystery of language." What misunderstandings I must have created by my artless account of what I am sure a critical, mature person would have presented with a proper sense of perspective.

Since my development as a human being was Teacher's lifework, perhaps I had better, at the risk of repetition, dwell on little Helen as she really was after losing her sight and hearing at the age of nineteen months. With appalling suddenness she moved from light to darkness and became a phantom. The wind ceased to have a voice for her, silence swooped upon her mind and lay over all the space which she traversed. Mental drought seized her being. Her few words wilted. The sunlight that had kept her running with a sense of direction was extinct. Her eyes that had fed upon smiles received naught but unchanging blankness. Spring could not capture her with its violets or fruit blossoms, summer passed unheeded with its fruits, and she knew not that autumn brought its wealth of harvest. The birds in her heart ceased to sing because she could not echo back their joy. Her body was fair, but oh, the distressful absence of real childhood that was a desolation to her parents—the unresponsiveness of tone and look in place of the smile that

used to gladden everyone, the seeming death of all that had promised speech, play, and spirit! Helplessly the family witnessed the baffled intelligence as Phantom's hands stretched out to feel the shapes which she could reach but which meant nothing to her.

Phantom did not seek a solution for her chaos because she knew not what it was. Nor did she seek death because she had no conception of it. All she touched was a blur without wonder or anticipation, curiosity or conscience. If she stood in a crowd, she got no idea of collective humanity. Nothing was part of anything, and there blazed up in her frequent, fierce anger which I remember not by the emotion but by a tactual memory of the kick or blow she dealt to the object of that anger. In the same way I remember tears rolling down her cheeks but not the grief. There were no words for that emotion or any other, and consequently they did not register. She did not know "shadow" because she had no idea of "substance." For her there was no beauty, no symmetry, no proportion. It was all want, undirected want—the seed of all the wants of mankind that find their fulfillment in such a multitude of concrete ways. It was not until after the episode at the well-house that Phantom felt an impulse towards something definite—learning the names of objects she desired or touched. Even then it was only a rudimentary impulse.

What happened at the well-house was that the nothingness vanished, but Phantom was not yet in a real world. She associated words correctly with objects she touched, such as "pump," "ground," "baby," "Teacher," and she gave herself up to the joy of release from inability to express her physical wants. She was drawn to Teacher, not by any sense of obligation, but by the natural impulse of receiving from her finger-motion what her word-hunger craved, just as the infant reaches out to his mother's breast for his milk. She only thought the words she had learned and remembered them when she needed to use them. She did not reflect or try to describe anything to herself. But the first words which she understood were like the first effects of the warm beams that start the melting of winter snow, flake by flake, a patch here and another there. After she had learned many nouns, there came the adjectives, and the melting was more rapid. Finally Teacher dropped in the verbs, one by one, sometimes in groups, but for Helen there was no connection between the words, no imagination or shape or composition. Only gradually did she begin to ask questions of the simplest kind. She had not conceived such things as "what," "where," "how," and "why," and other word-pegs and hooks on which we hang our phrases, but as she acquired them and framed halting questions, the answers from Teacher's hand banished her isolation. Teacher talked to Helen all the time after that, and

oh, how things changed from fragmentary gropings beneath that communicable hand-to-hand magic! It must have required Teacher's utmost ingenuity to guess what incoherent bits of thought were striving in the child's mind for expression. It must have wearied her eyes to read Helen's fast-flying fingers as the child became more and more inquisitive, trying to gain in months a vocabulary that she should have started five years before. Yet, with the scanty, elementary information Helen could understand every object she touched was transformed. Earth, air, and water were quickened by Teacher's creative hand, and Phantom disappeared as life tumbled upon Helen full of meaning—mother and father, baby Mildred, Cousin Leila and her small girls, the Negro children who had for years borne her wild ways and tried to create play for her, and were loving to her always. That flood of delight in restored companionship was the real wonder of those early days and not Helen's miscalled "phenomenal" progress in capturing language as a fully formed instrument.

One of Annie Sullivan's first procedures was to teach Helen how to play. She bestowed a faculty-shaping element without which either study or skillful work is hardly possible. Helen had not laughed since she became deaf. When she had learned obedience and some patience, Teacher came into the room one day laughing merrily, throwing out breezes of glee. She put the child's hand on her bright face spelling "laugh," then gently tickled her into a burst of mirth that gladdened the hearts of the family. She did it again and again, after which she guided Helen through the motions of romping—swinging, tumbling, jumping, hopping, skipping, and so forth, suiting her spelled word to each act. In a few days Helen was another child, "splashing radiant joy," and oh, the marvelous frolics she and Annie had! The overflowing, bursting gladness, the exultation beyond utterance, the animation of new discoveries that wrapped Helen like light! Romping with Helen, Teacher herself felt transported to the country of "Faery" where the gift of constructive play that she had not known in her own childhood was conferred upon her. Thus by all kinds of movements, exercises, and games Helen was stimulated to ask the names of those different actions and pursue knowledge through the ever-springing flames of Teacher's finger-spelling. And the witchery of that spelling was unforgettable. Teacher's fingers positively twinkled in Helen's hand while they played hide-and-seek or bounced balls or gamboled with kittens and puppies.

Teacher kept some pigeons in a cage in her room so that when they were let out and she chased them, Helen might feel the air from their wings and know about the flight of birds and conceive the glory of wings. When the pigeons got over their shyness, they would light on Helen's head and

shoulders, and she learned how to feed them and understand their billing and cooing, their pecks and flutterings, and that is why birds, though unseen, have always remained as much a part of her world as flowers and stones.

In Helen's rabbit hutch were adorable ruby-eyed white rabbits. Teacher had never seen rabbits before and their ever twitching noses were a constant delight to her, but the way they masticated their food seemed wrong and one day she tried to make one chew differently; my mother and father laughed till they cried. That was one instance among many of Teacher's misinformation in zoology and other subjects—after all, she had had only six years of schooling—but together she and Helen found out exciting details about wild rabbits from what they saw in the tame ones; and thus the joyous word game was renewed day by day until Helen had "heard" in her fingers the neigh of Prince, the saddle horse, the mooing of the cows, the squeal of baby pigs, and the lusty challenge of Chanticleer. Helen could not sing or crow, but, as Teacher used to say, her face shone with a radiance which even that caused by her acquisition of speech did not equal.

What I have written is rambling, but it is like Browning's star that showed him a ray of red, then of blue. Even so the morning star of Helen's reawakened childhood reveals itself to me.

Yes, Teacher literally bestowed her vitality, her imagination, all the knowledge she could gather from books about animals, plants, and minerals and all that was bright and childlike in herself on that restless, insatiate "wishbone" of a pupil. Helen was blissfully absorbed in living while Teacher remembered that she must fulfill her vow—to erase the blank in the child's life with the eyes and ears of intelligence, resourcefulness, and association—to make love, invention, and literature restore in a measure the faculties of which unseeing, unheeding, unfeeling nature had robbed a helpless small human being. That is the way Teacher really felt, as I found out long afterwards. Whenever Helen got herself twisted in her nouns, verbs, and prepositions and by gesture showed what she could not say, Teacher supplied one or two significant words or a helpful sentence which gave new wings to the child's individuality. As Helen grew a little older, Teacher could elicit her laughter with Mother Goose rhymes or excite her with simple but exquisite bits of verse. The process was the same as the normal way of learning to read—every word was not explained to Helen, she was left free to puzzle out the meaning for herself. Although Helen was not conscious of the magnitude of the heritage that was being restored to her, her ecstatic reaction to poetry has survived to thrill me.

What sweet-breathing Presence
Out-perfumes the thyme?
What voices enrapture
The night's balmy prime?

That is how Helen felt while reading poetry with Teacher.

Teacher's lithe fingers were part of the charm, wantoning as it were in the flowing, musical rhythms, now and then clasping Helen's with the utmost sense of joy or pain that touch can embody. Gradually Teacher's readings with Helen grew longer and more frequent, and the new words which the child learned served her as sparks from which she formed questions, and was thus led on to other words.

Books spelled to her, and others which she read herself, multiplied her vocabulary. The acquisition of speech speeded up her mental processes and helped to complete her as a being with coherent thoughts and increased powers of reasoning. But in *The Story of My Life*, as I have already said, I did not properly analyze the child's state before she was taught, or the successive phases by which she learned language, or the naturalness of Teacher's method. Also, I omitted details vital to appreciation of Annie Sullivan's many-sided task in creating a deaf-blind human being as normal as was possible under the circumstances.

III

For instance, Teacher used to say how awkward and clumsy little Helen was. It was weeks before she could break the child's habit of pushing aside lamps or other objects into which she bumped. Without damping Helen's joy in perpetual motion, Teacher showed her how to handle everything gently—a canary, a kitten's fur, a rose on its stem with a chain of dew drops hanging from its leaves, her year-old sister Mildred in the swing. The importance of a delicate touch was shown by the death of a baby pigeon which, it grieves me to remember, Helen overfed. And Teacher caught Helen heartlessly poking a captured grasshopper around in a box without air, trying to make it "sing." (Really she thought it could not feel, as she discerned no soft parts.) There is no counting the fragile bits of life that would have been injured or frightened by the child's roughness if it had not been for Annie Sullivan's watchfulness.

Besides training Helen to sit and stand properly and walk with some grace, Teacher had all the cares that most parents have to make their children wash behind their ears, comb and brush their hair, and put on clean clothes. That took a long time, as Helen had no idea of posture and disliked being continually "set to rights." She was an incorrigible imp. It took all Teacher's persuasion to stop Helen's pinching her grandmother whom she disliked. Force was wasted on a child of Helen's temperament, and Annie bore with her for a year or two. But the obstinacy of the imp reached a stage when something had to be done to save her from the habits that make children repulsive. Helen kept biting her nails and one day there descended upon her a human whirlwind who boxed her ears and tied her hands behind her back, thus shutting off all means of communication. It was only when her hands were tied that Helen's desire to express her thoughts became strong enough to enable her to fight her Apollyon. And she did not suffer as much as Annie who paced up and down the room, unable to read or interest herself in anything else.

This reminds me how Helen sinned in another way by spelling constantly to herself with her fingers, even after she had learned to speak with her mouth. All Teacher's reproaches and entreaties, all her eloquence in

holding up examples of other children were in vain, but about that time I read that habits, good or bad, are like a cable, made strand by strand until it becomes so strong it cannot be broken. I determined to stop spelling to myself before it became a habit I could not break, and so I asked her to tie my fingers up in paper. She did it, but she was sorrowful at the thought of my deprivation. In fact, she cried. For many hours, day and night, I ached to form the words that kept me in touch with others, but the experiment succeeded except that even now, in moments of excitement or when I wake from sleep, I occasionally catch myself spelling with my fingers.

To return to Teacher in the first two years of her work with me. There were days when Helen would not give enough attention to the lesson or observe things and movements with enough care. She loved to wear rings, and Teacher would take them away from her and stand her in a corner until she felt that her pupil had endured sufficient punishment. As soon as Helen had gained enough words to distinguish between right and wrong, and committed a misdeed, Annie put her to bed like any naughty child. Laziness, carelessness, untidiness, procrastination were other bugbears in Helen's character that Teacher met with ingenuity, humor, and lightning sarcasm. Self-justification was another fault that Annie combated until Helen's adolescence, and which still sneaks upon me at times. I mention all this only that others may have a just idea of the trials and tribulations Teacher went through on my account.

I think that at that time Teacher felt like the roots toiling in the dark and cold to build up the delicate tissues of flowers, and it is a loving recollection to me that she used to declare that this period of her life was the one most filled with delight and satisfaction. She had found a center from which her personality could radiate as "light and might communicable." Poor, half blind, solitary in her ideals and thoughts, she directed her spirit towards other teachers who had broken through the darkness of ignorance, barbarism, and limitation. She felt that she lived side by side with them in their detachment from their time and their achievement of intellectual liberation for others, and drawing inspiration from their self-denying lives, she grew strong.

She was never the "schoolmarm" portrayed in some of the articles I have read. She was a lively young woman whose imagination was kindled by her accomplishments with little Helen to unique dreams of molding a deaf-blind creature to the full life of a useful, normal human being. Afire with these dreams, her words would slide through the child's hand like tiny meteors and create shining furrows of initiative. To this day I cannot "command the

uses of my soul" or stir my mind to action without the memory of the quasi-electric touch of Teacher's fingers upon my palm. Sickened by the unthinking adulation bestowed upon me, I rejoice in the appreciation of those who have perceived Annie Sullivan's inventive endeavor to retrieve a life from triple disaster and give it form and comeliness. No slight task this! It was no chance that freed Helen's mind but a prophet's vision and the gift of a born teacher quickening the brain with inner fire. Humbly I hope in this book to invest our joint struggles and triumphs not with the commonplace of miracles but with the dignity of human events ordained by God and brought to pass by His divine love.

Despite her damaged sight, the senses which the eye and ear represent remained alert and open. Annie's pure English and her love of beauty were perhaps the chief factors in her work with Helen. Her passion for excellence in literature, in character, and in conversation prevailed over her meager education, her feeling of social inequality, her pecuniary difficulties, and the undertow of her powerful temperament. Who shall measure her resistance to all the circumstances that piled up against her from her childhood until her blindness became total, rendering her dependent upon others? She must have pushed aside enormous obstacles in herself and those around her. While making herself an eye and ear to supply normal language and knowledge to a starved mind, she submitted to the imperious needs of her pupil's individuality. With erratic earthly tendencies in her personality, she was yet unlike the women whom Amiel admires but criticizes because they "want to do good in their own way." She wanted good for its own sake, the kind that was most fruitful in her pupil's life. All the more profoundly am I touched by her faith and constancy that reclaimed me, another Eurydice, from the Plutonian shades of dark silence. She could easily have distinguished herself in another field, and I still wonder why she stayed with me for half a century.

Naturally little Helen was aware of Teacher only as a loving guiding person with an enchanting gift of imparting knowledge. Annie never cast the shadow of her years in the almshouse at Tewksbury upon the joyous mind of a child growing up in normal surroundings. She kept that dark secret until she was sixty-four and I was fifty. But she talked freely to me as a child about the village of Feeding Hills, Massachusetts, where she was born, and about her little brother Jimmie over whose death she had grieved so passionately. My eager questions about her family led her on to spell stories about her sister Mary and other girls she had known and tales of the little people of Ireland that her father had told her. Thus another exquisite bond of sympathy was woven between the lonely woman and her pupil.

Annie did not allow any complaint of her loneliness to escape from her, but as I look back upon those early years, I am struck by the confidence with which she moved among the fires of creation that bring normal personalities out of unpromising materials. She was exploring an area which aroused in her all the instincts of selfless desire, adventure, and aspiration to great accomplishment. There had been no one else on record who regarded a deaf-blind creature (I use the word literally, a *creature* of circumstances) as capable of attaining normality to more than a small degree, and behold, there was Annie Sullivan soaring on the fiery wings of that dream! How she conceived it and why she persevered all her life towards the goal she called "perfection" I do not know, but from bits of talk I caught on her fingers I know that in her mind there were lovely visions, now radiant, now dimmed through disappointment, of "an angel child," "a maiden fair and full of grace," "a young woman pleading the cause of the unfortunate with a natural voice," and other images whose nonrealization makes tears start to my eyes. As I have often touched fruit blossoms fluttering lacelike on a tree, so the exquisiteness of Annie's generous ambitions for my self-fulfillment comes back to charm and awe me. Imaginatively she peeped into every cradle, expecting to discover a splendid new version of humanity. Surely there was a spiritual affinity between her and "A. E.," whose poems I frequently saw in her hands. They both climbed by dream stairways to beauty, purity, and delight which no unfriendly environment could take from them. Fervently I pray and believe that "the fugitive beauty" she so passionately pursued abides with her forever. I think that from this ideal of excellence flowed her love of physical beauty.

Annie Sullivan was born for refined surroundings, fastidious living, artistic and intellectual self-expression. She was proud of work as embodying the dignity of man and could not bear to see it ill done. Any ugliness in human beings or in places afflicted her, deformity repelled her, although her compassionate heart was ready to minister to its victims. Degrading poverty in every form pained her eyes, and I have known her to lie awake all night brooding on it and searching means for its abolition. She was so sensitive to comely faces, splendor in landscapes, and beauty in art that sometimes she actually shed tears. It wounded her to have a handsome vase or a daintily carved statuette broken, just as if it were alive, and she was as angry as Madame Curie was when any of her apprentices dirtied a table during an experiment in the laboratory. Among my early memories is Annie's visit to a shop in Boston where she was so captivated by a handsome velvet fur-lined cape that she fell for it and spent her slender salary on it. I was with her—a willing accomplice. She wore the cape all the

way back to the Perkins Institution where we were staying at the time, and I smile to remember how roundly we were scolded for that girlish extravagance, prompted by Teacher's craving for beauty and her pride in using the money she had earned.

This is a digression to show some lights and shadows of the temperament that was the driving force behind Teacher's work. Except for her intense love of excellence she could hardly have stuck at her task during dull periods of her life in an out-of-the-way village. At times she would grow impatient and spell to me how stupid everything seemed to her. The long word which I quote delighted the child: "Nothing happens day after day, and life is as *monotonous* as the song of the whippoorwill." But Teacher's stubborn resolve aided her in conveying to her work the beauty of her dreams and the gleams of loveliness she saw daily. That was part of the secret by which she created a joyous childhood that I hold fondly in remembrance.

Before Teacher came to me she had strained her newly captured vision by poring over Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe's reports on his work with Laura Bridgman so as to prepare herself for the little understood task of rescuing a soul from the dark silence. Even then she was able to read only a little while at a time, with long pauses for enforced rest. Now, amid the ever multiplying details of her work she abused her eyes unmercifully, but it was a long time before young Helen had any idea what a tax it was upon Annie's sight to read to her. Sometimes Helen found her in bed suffering from nausea and headache, but Teacher did not mention her eyes. As soon as the pain eased, Annie would renew her finger-spelling, telling Helen Greek myths and suggesting ways in which the two could impersonate each person. When she recovered, she and Helen would start a game in which they played Persephone and Pluto or the Argonauts, Perseus and Ariadne, or Boadicea and her Roman captors.

Helen was nine years old when Annie first mentioned the seriousness of her eye ailment and said that she must leave for a while to see her oculist in Boston. Even then Helen did not understand what she meant. She thought the eyes would soon be well again. She did not realize that Annie should have been giving them unceasing care and did not know that Annie had thrown all precaution to the winds.

When the trouble recommenced Helen kept asking, "What makes your eyes ache so?"

"Oh, different things," Annie would answer. "The sun on the red soil is not good for them" or "I spent too much time writing yesterday."

But it was not long before Helen caught her with a book close to her face in a way different from other people, and inquired, "Teacher, why do you read with the book almost touching your eyes and move your head from side to side?"

Then Teacher confessed how imperfect her sight was. "Don't worry, Helen," she said. "I'm happy because I can read and see enough to enjoy the colors of sky, earth, and water and find my way about everywhere." She added, "I can see best in the morning when the light is very strong." Helen understood then that what Teacher needed most was to rest, rest, and rest her eyes, and she determined that she would let her get her nose into a book only mornings, then drag her away to walk or play a game. But once Helen discovered Annie reading in the afternoon and tugged at her arm indignantly. She wanted to knock the book out of her hand but was afraid she might hit something with it. "I cannot see an inch ahead," Teacher admitted, and Helen made her lie down until suppertime.

It was not until years later that Helen understood that Annie was overtaxing her sight to obtain information on subjects connected with pedagogy, to gain self-improvement, and only occasionally for entertainment. Teacher almost quenched her vision to read her way to the treasures she sought. And it was not simply knowledge she wanted, but choice English for herself and Helen and the thousand little graces and amenities which betoken true culture and refinement. In a sense she and Helen were children growing up together, but Annie blushed over the gaps in her education while Helen danced her way through her lessons and poured herself out in play.

As I recall how Teacher gave her sight in unnumbered ways to benefit me, I think of her eyes as "dainty Ariels," spirits too delicate to act out her exacting, incessant commands, and often tormented through no fault of their own. They were unequal—one saw more than the other, and they could not focus properly. Yet, though hard-driven and abused, they tried to be faithful in "doing their spiriting gently." Burning with an anguish of desire for repose, they held interviews with the light that she might capture hours of glory outdoors, or they strained over the printed page to let in light upon her spirit on the depths of the human heart or on the flowers of poesy that keep

> *Their fragrant tissues and their heavenly hues*
> *Fresh-bathed forever in eternal dews.*

The child Helen did not dwell long on such experiences, but as she reached maturity, the tragedy of Teacher's eyes weighed more heavily upon her, and the crudest part was the silence imposed by the consciousness of her impotence to relieve it.

However, Teacher's cheerful, high-spirited attitude towards life enabled her to maintain a saving balance between her work and despair. Although her temper was far from serene, and her impetuosity was likely to burst forth at the first sign of dullness in Helen or anyone else, she was yet capable of keeping her mind quiet and clear in considering minute but necessary details and to make due allowance for slowness in Helen's progress. It has come over me since then that Teacher would have preferred to be alone for a longer period so that she might prepare her pupil better to meet the kindly but often ill-judged caprices of the public.

For instance, there was the matter of pencil-writing. At first Helen got much fun out of shaping the letters in the grooves of the writing board specially devised for the blind, but after some months she contracted a profound dislike for it because so many autographs and letters had been asked from her for friends and relatives. The result was that her hand was tired, and little calluses had formed on her thumb because of the stiff, tight grip in which she held the pencil. It amuses me now to recall that writing as a lion in her path—and I am rather sorry for her too. It was pathetic and funny how Teacher placed her at the table and suggested that she "think" while she practiced. The child's mind pulled itself like an oyster into its shell and refused to shoot out spontaneous thoughts or questions, and I am ashamed to think what inanities she committed on paper.

One day when Helen was left to practice in a room where fresh-cooked coconut cakes were spread out on a bureau to dry while Teacher and mother were busy with preparations for her birthday on the morrow, her heart grew black with rebellion. The cakes tempted her beyond the top of her bent and after devouring two or three of them, the mood passed and she went back to practicing. But as people kept coaxing her to write for them she at last lost her self-control, cried, and sulked. "You ungrateful little wretch," Teacher pounded into her hand; "those people have been kind to you and I am ashamed of you," but secretly she was on Helen's side and soon reduced that invasion of privacy to an occasional request. Later she said that she regretted that she had made me spend so much time with the writing board, and after I learned to type I gave it up altogether.

To stimulate Helen's flow of thought, Annie encouraged her to learn such poems as Longfellow's "Hiawatha," parts of "Evangeline" and

Bryant's "To a Water-fowl." Helen loved to think that the twin-born Sisters, Verse and Music, would dissolve the obstacles in her path to perfect articulation, and Teacher also cherished that hope. Teacher hungered and thirsted to discover a means by which she could impart natural speech to her pupil as she did natural language on the fingers. Her feeling was one which Helen long afterwards found words to express for both: "Without a language of some sort one is not a human being; without speech one is not a complete human being." Annie's deep sense of the importance of speech in the education of the deaf was intuitive, and Helen's eagerness to speak drove them both on irresistibly. After her first eleven lessons in oral speech with Miss Sarah Fuller in Boston, Annie took up her new task with characteristic single-hearted devotion, but she trod this path with fear and trembling, a feeling different from the confidence that had buoyed her up in her first finger-language experiments with me—and the tragic fact is that she and Miss Fuller blundered at the beginning by not developing my vocal organs first and then going on to articulation. Striving to speak at all intelligently was what gave me an awareness of the universal struggle against limitation, which pursues me to this day. Yet, even though Helen's speech was labored and not pleasant to hear, she bubbled over with delight in being able to utter words. Her semi-captive thoughts no longer tugged at the chain that her own hand-spelling imposed. This chain broke as words and the ideas they represent came faster and faster, and her tongue learned to keep pace with them. She was overjoyed that her family and a few close friends could understand her. All these signs of fuller life enchanted Teacher, and she used to say that she would willingly give up all the beauty of this world and the next to create normal speech in Helen. "Oh no, Teacher, you must not!" cried the child, but Teacher could not curb her longing for perfection. By nature she was a conceiver, a trail-breaker, a pilgrim of life's wholeness. So day by day, month after month, year in and year out, she labored to provide me with a diction and a voice sufficient for my service to the blind.

I shall not go into the details because I have already covered the ground in my other books. I only want to say that it was not until Mr. Charles White, a distinguished teacher of singing at the Boston Conservatory of Music, gave me speech lessons during three summers, out of the goodness of his heart, that Teacher and I realized our initial mistake—we had tried to build up speech without voice production!

It stabbed Teacher to the heart to think that during my formative years she had not had the required knowledge of vocal structure or the leisure to work on my speech. Yet with unsubduable courage and the ideas she had gained from Mr. White, she continued trying to improve my diction. As she

toiled, she dreamed, and with a patience that still seems to me superhuman she put both my hands on her face so that I might get all the vibrations at once from her lips, throat, and pharynx. Together we repeated, repeated, repeated words or sentences until I became less stiff and self-conscious, and so the process went on until the year of her last illness. And as always her poor eyes performed their weary task, to see that I shaped my lips correctly, moved my jaws as easily as possible, and wore a natural expression. There is nothing I have lived through on earth sadder than to have lagged so far behind her desire as teacher and artist in one. But to be able to speak ever so imperfectly and be understood by some of my friends has multiplied my powers of service, and I owe this priceless gift to Annie Sullivan.

IV

With the acquisition of speech I moved from the baby phase of my mental growth to my identity as a separate, conscious, and, to a degree, self-determining ego. I was still gay and in some ways indolent and careless. Teacher found herself confronted by a will in me which she would not break, but she strove to guide it to higher levels. She did not impose any course upon me. Since I had ceased to break things, she allowed full freedom for my romps and tomboy pranks in familiar surroundings. But, although she had faith in the free will of the young, she did not overestimate their ability to shift for themselves. When I began to talk about independence, she saw that I did not realize how circumstances had set me apart from others. For the time being she said, "Oh, how wonderful it will be if you can accomplish complete liberty, as the Thirteen Colonies did," but little by little she stated the facts about my physical dependence on others. "I have had hearing and some sight to work with," she said, "but even so, owing to my bad eyes, I need constant help. Better look out when you grow up and not lose your way in the labyrinth of life. Follow the Ariadne's thread you have been telling me about—look carefully at whatever powers you have and make the most of them. Remember, no matter what happens, that the real independence you can attain is in your spirit and mind."

"I can read, and I will devour every book I can lay my hands on," I declared.

"That is a splendid way to be independent," she answered, "but it is not enough. If you grow up a bookworm, what use will you be in the world? Let us see what you can do to give others pleasure with the books you have. Learn Longfellow's poems, 'The Children's Hour' and 'The Light of Stars,' and keep repeating them aloud until people understand you."

Then Teacher furnished a happy example—the story of Walter Scott's bright little friend, about my own age, who recited in a clear, spirited voice his poems or parts of them and brought delight to many people. I learned a large number of poems of all sorts, some dainty, some lofty, and others humorous, and uncounted times Teacher and I experimented to make their charm bloom in my diction. I once knew most of "Evangeline" by heart, and

Teacher, enchanted, urged me to commit to memory all the best passages I could find in stories and other poems. “Don’t just read stories, but rather seek the golden talisman by which you may become like the limping but sweet-voiced, light-filled daughters of Zeus whom the Greeks called Prayers. Who knows? You may win listeners and hold them spellbound with the glory of the thoughts you recite,” she pleaded. I tried, tried, and tried, but oh, the temptation of forbidden fruits for a young bookworm! Outside my daily lessons and routine speech practice I often failed to visit the Muses. Instead I read *The Last Days of Pompeii*—with a bad conscience. “Caught, discovered, trapped!” Teacher would say coming upon me with anything but a classic in my lap, and I would beg for another chance. At other times I would be sitting still, breathing in the fragrance of the southern roses and box hedges which I loved more than pegging away at poetry. Disappointed and exasperated, she would spell, “For shame! You have those books full of choice words and interesting thoughts, and here you sit like a calf with not a spark of expression on your face.” Then she would not have another word for me until the next day. After that she was all smiles, saying, “Come now, let us practice the long words you like—you say them better than short ones, and I want to find out why.” I remember some of the big words in my lessons—“attitude,” “altitude,” “considerable,” and “petrified.” I recall the last word because once I frightened her unintentionally by stiffening both my throat and tongue, and she cried with her lips, “Oh, stop, Helen! You look as if you were petrified.” When we had practiced a while, Teacher would say, “See if you cannot put the tone and the interest into the poem as you just did into those long words.” Sometimes the idea worked and sometimes not. Teacher was sunny over every advance on my part, and often severe over my failures. I am afraid that the incessant ups and downs in my efforts to become another Marjorie Daw (that was the name of Walter Scott’s young friend) were more than I would stand for. Certainly it was upsetting to have Teacher watch my face and lips with such tenseness as if she feared that she might go blind any moment. It is a rapture for me to contemplate how her ideas, her Celtic fire, and her temper too, wrought for my mind “a boat of bronze and crystal” out of poetry that would speed me beyond the prison bars of sense, but it is equally a grief to recall the eyesight and energy she wasted in attempting the impossible.

If I could only weave words with the delicacy of the beautiful lace I have seen in Brittany and Ireland it would be easier to tell how another of Teacher’s dreams for me trailed in the dust. During one of our visits in Boston an artist friend, Albert H. Munsell, who had painted my portrait, said to me, “I know your joy in feeling statues. You have sensitive artist hands.

Why not try to see if you can develop a talent for sculpture?" His words excited Teacher and me with a prospect of new discoveries. (Teacher did not tell me at the time about the statue she had formed out of snow not long after the operations which restored as much sight as she would ever have, and I did not learn until years later that she had a gift for sculpture which might have been developed.) There was music to her in the thought that if I could only cultivate an extra sensitiveness in my touch, I might create beautiful and significant plastic art. She wondered if the blind with a sense of aesthetics could be taught to create sculpture of high value, and her insatiate wish to explore the possibilities concealed in every human being led her along that trail of beauty. She even pictured to herself how training in other subjects might be focused around my awareness of art and my delight in creation. We both took lessons, first in wax, then clay. At the beginning I was fascinated to see all the objects I could shape—cups and saucers, baskets, fruits, and so forth. Teacher watched hopefully and dreamed as I copied a conventional fern or a model of a bird. "Touch everything as you would a flower—lightly, tenderly; observe, observe, observe, just as you do my voice, and imitate with care in your clay modeling," she would admonish me. I wanted her to be happy, and I worked until my hands were exhausted. She read me biographies of sculptors to show their tremendous determination until they succeeded in getting what they wanted, and I tried again. But I came to grief with a big, artificial, uninteresting fern; it did not resemble the graceful ferns I had felt in the woods. Teacher insisted on my trying to copy it correctly, but alas! I did not manifest the perseverance she wanted. I preferred to read. She would not permit it, and subjected me to an ordeal of drudgery. No satisfactory results appeared, and one morning her anger flared up and she slapped my cheek with the cold wet clay. However, there was an indescribable dearness about Teacher which caused her to repent easily of her cross behavior and call herself the worst names she could think of. She came to me soon after the tempest and said, "Do forgive me Helen! I can never imagine you as deaf-blind—I love you too much for that. But I should remember that you are a human being, and I shouldn't be so ambitious as not to let you relax now and then." What can be more moving than a wise, high-strung woman begging a child's forgiveness, even as King Lear knelt to Cordelia for pardon? But those tender words do not lessen the tragedy that she could not bestow upon me the fairy gold with which she had wrought the change in herself out of a willful child like myself. Nor do I regret less acutely the failure to throw myself wholeheartedly into that glorious adventure, possibly "girt round with eyes and stars and wings." Late in life I have shaped heads which at least suggested to one or two artist friends hints of the spiritual ideals I was

following, and if I had been free then, I might have labored intensely just for Teacher's sake and for the satisfaction of accomplishing something that the deaf-blind had not attempted. It was not Teacher, but fate, or I, obstinate with the unconscious cruelty of a strong-willed child, who cast the die for my future.

V

Teacher was twenty-nine years of age and I fifteen before I could form an idea of her personality apart from her vocation as devotee of loveliness. As I grew more mature, she let loose upon me all her varied moods, and because of this I was not taken unawares by the storms of destiny.

At fifteen when I could observe her more closely, I learned that her moods changed continually. “Don’t repeat what I am going to say to you,” she would say, and I listened to her tales of weariness with women who inflicted upon her their witless little dramas and social inanities. Together we saw life in all its different aspects and were often in the society of the great, the gifted, the influential, among whom were women beautiful both in mind and body whose conversation intrigued Teacher. What irritated her most were idea-less talk and deportment and actions without grace of individuality. She excused the ill-starred poor and the untutored defective, but never those who had means to be educated and acquire refinement.

Teacher also suffered, though not long, from a melancholy which bred a wretched incapacity to respond even to the kindest approaches of her intimate friends. She would fly from them to the woods, or if she was near the water, she would conceal herself for hours under a boat on the shore. But then she would come back to her friends asking forgiveness. One time when she had erysipelas she hid from everyone, even me, for the whole day, and it was not until suppertime that mother found her lying quietly in her bed. Alas! I have met some fools who will not be enlightened about such human ills, and therefore I cannot tell the whole truth, though I say nothing that is not true. No doubt those dark moods appeared in Annie’s youth at Perkins, and they continued to harass her every once in a while until her death: and they did not help her sight. She gallantly rallied each time, and though she often fretted, she never lost the free exercise of her mental faculties or suspended them except when she slept, and that merciless taskmaster, the brain, steered her helm at its own sweet will. Awake, she analyzed her difficulty with diamond clearness, and soon was her buoyant, wholesome, teasing self again. From the multitude of letters she was obliged to compose and which I typed for her I saw how she could keep her mind on matters

requiring minute attention and build such long-range plans as those which made my college education possible.

Many years later Teacher and I visited Ireland together, and now I see her in my remembrance of the country that gave her to me—a land full of moisture and hard, gleaming rocks, washed with sunshine and tremulous with fairylike bloom and greenness, a land animated by people active, overflowing with images, combative and ironical, a touch of the fantastic about everything, all these qualities combined or eclipsing one another according to the rhythms of an amazingly changeable climate.

Teacher was not logical. Yet she was the only woman I have known intimately who could engage in the rough and tumble of argument and come off victorious. One had to beware of her impetuous rejoinders when she spoke too positively or enthusiastically in support of this or that. She was bored by the commonplace on any subject—education, politics, religion, or any other area of social intercourse. A drawn-out talk on science or philosophy was a trial to her nerves, but the art of delightful speakers like Mark Twain or Dr. Alexander Graham Bell sufficed to keep her mind on a deep theme long enough for her to feel refreshed and uplifted. She frowned upon rhetoric, yet she was sensitive to every expression of a person's higher faculties.

I tried not to argue with her—and I seldom succeeded—for I knew that she would have me nonplused and speechless, especially when her imagination was on fire or she was angry. Her comments flew out spontaneously, highly colored and pithy, leaving me "dazzled, delighted, and dumbfounded all at the same time." She did not talk as a poet except when she described to me breath-taking natural beauties, but secretly she jotted down bits of verse as they occurred to her. Most of these were burned in the fire that consumed our first house at Arcan Ridge, but a few have survived. Here is one:

When God unhinges the gates of light,
Wild little fancies perch on the edge of the moon
Like the ghosts of birds.
The dark stream of life flows
Through time and space carelessly;
No one recognizes the light
Entering the wide eyes close to their doom.
All things move in a great sea;
Thoughts from another silence pour
Like flowers opening in the night.
They fall in space like April rain,
Colored and shaped of self
Like the pearl in the oyster-shell.

Then hands unseen dip into little pools of Heaven;
There, and there again
The hands of the mind are wet
With silver rain-drops;
With all her wonder-feelers the mind marks
The wind's changing flight,
Dropping pearls on the walls of night,
Driving the rain-drops through the dark,
The mind advancing on the world of light.

If Teacher's eyes had been normal, I am sure she would have reveled in contemplating space, the stars, and planets as a stupendous, ever changing spectacle. As it was, she preferred the universe of books—and what a pitifully small portion of it her undependable sight could absorb! Poetry and music were her allies. In her fingers words rang, rippled, danced, buzzed, and hummed. She made every word vibrant to my mind—she would not let the silence about me be *silent*. She kept in my thought the perceptive, audible, and other qualities of every object I could touch. She brought me into sensory contact with everything we could reach or feel—sunlit summer calm, the quivering of soap bubbles in the light, the songs of birds, the fury of storms, the noises of insects, the murmur of trees, voices loved or disliked, familiar fireside vibrations, the rustling of silk, the creaking of a door, and the blood pulsing in my veins.

Here is another of her fragments:

Hands, understanding hands,
Hands that caress like delicate green leaves,
Hands, eager hands—
Hands that gather knowledge from great books, Braille books—
Hands that fill empty space with livable things,
Hands so quiet, folded on a book—
Hands forgetful of words they have read all night,
Hands asleep on the open page,
Strong hands that sow and reap thought,
Hands tremulous and ecstatic listening to music,
Hands keeping the rhythm of song and dance.

VI

There were other circumstances during my girlhood that revealed more of Teacher's complex personality. During the winter and spring of 1897-98 we boarded with our friends Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Chamberlin in the beautiful, old-fashioned village of Wrentham, Massachusetts. We had for years had joyous visits with them at their vine-covered, rambling house, Red Farm, overlooking King Philip's Pond, but after they had taken us into their home I was fascinated by new aspects of Teacher's individuality. She used to say that those eight months were among the happiest periods of her life. It was the first time since she had been with me that she had tasted genuine liberty, and nothing could have created a sweeter gratification in me who so longed for Teacher to live her own life.

For about seven years, ever since the unfortunate episode of "The Frost King," which had caused us untold suffering, Teacher had been, as it were, held prisoner by a sense of impotence. "The Frost King" was a little story which I wrote when I was ten years old. I really thought it was "out of my own head" and sent it as a birthday gift to Mr. Anagnos, director of the Perkins Institution. He was so pleased with it that he had it published; then, to Teacher's horror and mine, we discovered that I had plagiarized it from a story in Miss Margaret Canby's book, *Birdie and His Fairy Friends*! I had evidently read it two or three years before or someone (not Teacher) had read it to me and I had forgotten all about it until it came back to me so vividly that I thought it was my own.

Miss Canby was most understanding and generous and many of our friends stood by us. Proud and sensitive in all matters concerning my happiness, Teacher tried to revive my interest in literary effort by encouraging me to write a short story of my life for *The Youth's Companion*, but I could not express myself freely, so afraid was I that I might unintentionally copy something from another and again be accused of plagiarism. Teacher was wounded by the impeachment of my honesty by those who would not recognize that all children, blind or seeing, learn to put their ideas into words by imitation and assimilation, and she was

embarrassed, as she had so often been, by the remembrance of her own imperfect education.

Hitherto she had been sure of her course in my development, but now that resource seemed to fail her. Yet she was determined that my mind should keep on growing, unhindered by fear, and she felt that the time had come for me to study under trained instructors. After the investigation of my "plagiarism" in which I faced alone a council at the Perkins Institution, I did not want to stay there. But where should I go, and to whom should Teacher turn for advice concerning the experiment in which she was pioneering?

Friends tried to distract us by planning interesting trips, like a visit to the inauguration of President Cleveland and an exciting day amid the wonders of Niagara Falls. Dr. Alexander Graham Bell went with us to the World's Fair in Chicago. Teacher was consoled by the steady flow of new words that animated me and enriched my concepts of the world, but where, oh where, was she to place me under competent dispensers of knowledge of special subjects?

In the autumn of 1893 we visited the family of Mr. William Wade at Hulton, Pennsylvania, and Teacher saw what appeared to her a favorable opening for me. A neighbor of the Wades, Mr. Irons, who was a good Latin scholar, consented to take me as a pupil. It was a pleasant experience for me to start regular lessons, and Mr. Irons's able teaching awoke the real student that Teacher hoped I would be. He also helped me in arithmetic, and I read with him from a critical point of view Tennyson's "In Memoriam" which I had in raised letters. I began to read Caesar's Gallic War, and I floated in a dream of foreign languages as my favorite subject. But we stayed only three months in Hulton, and when my lessons were suspended, Teacher again felt like a ship without a rudder. Tense, nervous, she veered and tacked about, searching a course that might suit whatever capabilities I had. My father had not been able to pay her salary for several years, but she did not mention that to me. She was one of the most impecunious persons I have known. As I learned when I grew up, it was her belief that even if one has not a cent, one should face the next day with lifted head and travel to the rainbow's end. Her desire to have me educated and equipped to be a cupbearer of good to others was stronger than any fear of monetary difficulties. Nothing could resist the mingled dignity and audacity with which she pleaded my cause. It would not surprise me to learn that an understanding friend like Dr. Bell had smoothed the financial thorns out of our way so that we could attend conventions for the deaf. Teacher's undimmed vision of me as a dweller in the world of normal humanity kept her from tolerating a deaf or blind

variety of being, but she went with me to the Wright-Humason School for the Deaf in New York City in the hope that my speech might gain wings—be so refined as to add sweetness to the words of cheer or comfort I wished to speak. But disappointment lay in ambush for us. Although my other studies were full of interest, and the great kindness with which the teachers at the school communicated higher knowledge to me remains a friendly memory, it was the noble spirit of one who had faith in Teacher and me—Mr. John Spaulding of Boston—that enabled us to weather that part of my education.

By that time I was sixteen years old and had made up my mind to go to college. With Teacher's ever-ready help I had resisted the ably and vigorously argued advice of friends who thought that I should "take things easy," pursue my Radcliffe course as a special student of English literature or some other subject, and thus prepare myself to perform a definite work. I did not feel within me the stirrings of genius or talent to justify such thorough preparation for one or two subjects, and I did not want people to tell me what I should do or not do just because I happened to be different from others. I preferred to compete with seeing and hearing girls in the acquisition of general knowledge and afterwards to map out whatever possibilities of work might show themselves in the country of my mind. As I look back upon that fateful time, I marvel at the self-restraint with which Teacher submitted to the difficulties and uncertainties of the course I adopted. She never expressed an opinion as to whether I was right or wrong. Her unfailing spirit of adventure rose to the occasion. It was a relief for her after the many disturbed days she had spent brooding on my future that I had formed the decision myself. During my years of preparation in Cambridge she could look forward to renting a house or an apartment where we could stay by ourselves with Bridget Crimmins, an Irish woman whom we loved, to keep house for us.

Teacher hoped my views about going to college on the same conditions as the other girls would be respected, and that well-meaning but meddlesome persons would let me carry out my plans unmolested, and that hostile tongues which still scattered unfair criticism along her path and suspicion upon my capabilities would be silenced. That did not happen, as I have said elsewhere in my books, and here I wish to emphasize a service Teacher rendered me which has lasted throughout my life.

Teacher believed in the blind not as a class apart but as human beings endowed with rights to education, recreation, and employment suited as nearly as possible to their tastes and abilities. That is why she resisted Mr.

Anagnos's plans to keep us both at the Perkins Institution for the Blind. Mr. Anagnos was a wonderful friend to me, and I loved him especially because he had sent Teacher as my deliverer. Perkins had offered me precious advantages in its embossed books and the loving companionship of the blind children who could spell in my hand. But Teacher was opposed to institutionalism for any handicapped child who could be taught in a normal environment, and Mr. Anagnos ceased to be interested in us when we left Perkins to go in search of other opportunities. Nor was Teacher satisfied with the Wright-Humason School for the Deaf, even though she appreciated my happiness there. That is why she took me to the Gilman preparatory school for girls in Cambridge, sure that here I would live most fully among normal people. Time has proved the wisdom of her course. But it required a powerful temperament for Teacher to protect me against interference and the zeal of strangers who wished to run my affairs. It seems incredible that after ten years of devotion to me a deliberate attempt should have been made at the Gilman school to separate us without any heed to our wishes. The break came over the length of time I was to stay at the school. At first it was planned that my course should cover five years, but as my studies progressed, the assistant principal thought it could be shortened to three. That pleased me, and Teacher was of the same opinion. She and Mr. Gilman disagreed as to how I should be "managed." From bitter experience she suspected that many people who offered to help us wanted in reality to use me for their own purposes, and, judging by events, Mr. Gilman was open to that charge.

It was a cruel ordeal for me again to see one unjustly treated whose first and last thought was to enlarge my share of beauty, knowledge, and self-fulfillment. While unkind plots were going on around her, Annie Sullivan sat beside me in the classes spelling out the instructions of each teacher and overusing her eyes to read me everything which was not in Braille and to search dictionaries in German or French for words I wanted. My apparatus for Greek writing was delayed, and she wrote out in Braille for me problems in physics and algebra and pricked out geometric figures on stiff paper, and yet there were sly dark powers which dared to try to restrain us in my first school year among normal girls! This unhappy incident has been written elsewhere, but there is a memory which will not cease to weigh upon my heart until God calls my soul home. On that terrible night, when Teacher learned that Mr. Gilman had started a movement to separate her from me, she set out on her way to our true friends, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Derby Fuller of Boston. She was overcome with despair. As she approached the Charles River an almost overmastering impulse seized her to throw herself

into the water, but it seemed to her that an angel laid a restraining hand upon her and said, “Not yet.” That strengthened her to return to Cambridge the next morning and refuse to leave except by force until she had seen my sister Mildred and me. It was a time of heartbreak, but Teacher and I won a victory by proving that in two more years I was ready to enter Radcliffe College.

Even after we left Cambridge, there was a great fuss made over my health, and I was exasperated because Teacher was cautioned not to let me work too hard. As I afterwards found out, that was an example of the struggle between good sense regarding the handicapped and the foolish sentimentalism that would spare them the necessity of working at all. When I reflect on the countless number of the crippled, the tubercular and the other victims of disease or privation who have broken trails to noble achievement, I am ashamed in my soul that pity should have been wasted on me who was both healthy and vigorous. I knew, and so did Teacher, how much I could stand. It was my own wish to study hard, and Teacher was only following where I desired to go. She could not stop my race after education which her antagonists called “a perfect grind” without depriving me of the joy that normal youth experiences in accomplishment, and the fact that she did not stop it, even under accumulated pressure, is among the innumerable reasons why I honor and bless her understanding love.

Speaking of strenuous effort, there was an artistic quality about Teacher that cannot be overemphasized. No matter what extra work I was doing, she never relaxed the discipline born of her love of poetry and fine English. My correspondence with all kinds of people was becoming more difficult, and the need of skill in dealing with them as individuals more urgent. If my letters or themes did not meet her standards of good taste or clearness or bring out my personality, she pointed out the defects to me, and I wrote the letters over and over again until she pronounced them not only correct but helpful and well-expressed. It was an exceptional advantage for me to study English literature with a word artist at my side who kept my style at its best against the day when I might be able to write books. But, after all, Teacher and I were conscious that we were on earth

For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

By that time I was familiar with some of her worries about publicity and exploitation and I was aware of her financial ups and downs. As I was growing into a woman, she unburdened her moods to me without fear of

being misunderstood. She could not always free herself from her nerves, or her "corporal self" as she used to say, and she did not know how to withdraw into an inward region. She could not simplify herself or restrain her ambition (I prefer to call it love of perfection) or circumscribe her dream-nurtured plans for me. She was consumed with restlessness, and moderation was beyond her power to develop. She could not submit to any fate if it meant defeat for us. She did not have what I may speak of as "a religion of blindness"—a faith which guarantees one's peace in light and darkness, just as a substance which resists both fire and water is doubly protected. She thought so greatly of her task that, but for the curbs of our affection, she would always be beating her way through circumstances and braving the harsh outer world. Every morning she would brace herself with a resolve that the day should pass happily for us both, and often as she watched the sunset, her eyes absorbing its lovely hues, her heart was filled with the sense of work well done; but sometimes a composition I wrote did not please her, or I could not solve a problem in geometry, or some other stupidity angered her—it seemed as if a thundercloud passed over me.

Considering the exceptional burdens that had been laid upon Teacher at the Gilman school I cannot be too grateful to the Chamberlins for taking us in. We went there so that I could study, not just have a good time sleighing, snowballing, and walking across the frozen lake. But conditions were ideal for me. All the members of the family spoke so distinctly that I could read their lips, and Betty, one of the older girls, could spell on her fingers. Like Mildred she was a delightful playmate, and she was also interested in books beyond her age such as Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables*. She knew how to lead me outdoors and devise clever games in which the other children could join us. Between lessons I frolicked with them, and whenever we stopped to breathe, there was a tempest of little ones begging me for the stories which filled my mind, especially "The Elf Who Set Up Housekeeping" and Oscar Wilde's story of the Prince and the Swallow. Relieved that my life was so natural, Teacher relaxed in an intelligent, affectionate atmosphere where she knew she was appreciated. She was surrounded by simplicity, pure kindness, and a wholesome rural environment. By spring she had shaken herself from a many-year load of frustrations and had regained her old spontaneity. It was touching what a bit of tact or forbearance or humor could do to smooth out her soul's wrinkles. As May approached, she felt intensely, joyously alive. She rejoiced to sense the universal life passing through her that is like communing with God. The blood climbed up her veins as the sap in the plants, and she was once more in the palace of clouds dear to her nature.

Red Farm, as I have said, was on the shore of King Philip's Pond, and for Teacher it was an ecstasy to be under the trees in soft weather and gaze at the harmony of colors in the foliage and the golden tracks which the sinking sun left on the lake. It was amazing what a variety of scenes, contours, and views was offered her by a few clumps of trees, some rocks, and the lake cupped between low hills. She was under the spell of the Celtic fairy. She could not seize distant bits of charm like flying birds unless she used opera glasses, but listening to their melody was sheer happiness to her, and she lost herself in the witchery of lake, sky, and hill. It was a tension of sight for her to learn to paddle a canoe and to row, but the intoxication of being able to enjoy other diversions besides walking possessed her, and she overplied her eyes at them, as she did with books. She was really mad with gaiety, and she gathered fresh materials from nature's inexhaustible treasury.

Mr. Chamberlin was the "Listener" on the Boston *Transcript* and all kinds of people visited Red Farm—writers, poets, painters, philosophers, and actors. In their society Teacher was lifted up like a bird in air. Their stimulating talk electrified her and multiplied her thoughts as showers do flowers. There were Mary Wilkins, Louise Guiney, and a lovely Indian girl who wrote fascinating stories about her people, the Sioux. We also met Bliss Carman, Richard Hovey, Edward Holmes, who afterwards invented the Master Compass, Louis Mora, who did splendid paintings for the Chicago World's Fair, and Frederic Lampson, the Canadian poet. Youth sparkled in Teacher as she listened to the endless subjects they discussed, and I was told that she radiated quick intelligence, wit and humor. She was delighted to exchange ideas with young men and women just starting to explore new continents of life. Poetry under the magic of nature, new friendships, and being understood by those who saw her delicacy of taste and her passion for literature combined to mold her life with an exquisite touch that she never forgot. Now and then a spirit of teasing caught them, and Teacher went off into gales of laughter that would have astonished the solemn, stately personages who had tried to crush her.

Over and over I heard people say that Annie Sullivan was a fascinating woman and that there was an irresistible sparkle in her repartee. At times, like other young women, she played clever pranks on some of the young men who flirted with her. But she was ever eager to listen to ideas, and it was a new world that opened to her when Mr. Chamberlin, or Uncle Ed as we all called him, introduced her to Walt Whitman's poetry. She had been prejudiced against Whitman by those whose prudery and unmeasured admiration of refined meters and rhymed verse prevented them from getting the true stature of that modern prophet. Teacher shared her delight with me

later when we read together in college "My Captain, O My Captain," "America" and "Drum Taps" long before *Leaves of Grass* was embossed. She had passed her thirty-first year and this was the nearest she had come to self-possession. She was fired with renewed hope. The melancholy which had oppressed her slackened its hold upon her. The future was uncertain, but her doubts concerning me were lessening, and her grasp upon life was growing firmer. Her powers and executive ability were expanding, and she ceased to treat me as a child, she did not command me any more.

Teacher also perceived much that was false in books as compared with real life. With a kind of fear she acknowledged that she had lived under a dangerous illusion—that everything worth knowing is in books and that books teach one more quickly and more completely. One day she said to me, "I change whatever theory I form about life every now and then—and that helps keep boredom at bay." She had no logic, as I have already said, and she did not realize that throwing aside one's conclusions on impulse is like pulling up seeds to see if they are sprouting—harmful. Her idea, I suppose, was that every day we drop something of ourselves. Our illusions are broken, our ideals change, friendships vanish, and everything we are familiar with slips through our fingers. We become as alien to the self that has lived as if it were not ourself. But what protected her against concepts devoid of sensation was her unquenchable love of outward beauty; and against sensations devoid of concepts, her masterful will and tenacious memory of her childhood and youth and the characters and incidents round which they centered.

In her younger years Teacher was too apt to assume an aggressive attitude in argument, whether she was talking with southerners of the old Confederate South or Yankees who did not understand the problems of the "emancipated Negroes" or ministers who wished to impose their own dogmas upon others. She was inclined to give and take offense. She could be inflexible and proud, and it was a point of honor with her to pound her arguments into those who differed from her instead of trying to win them over with tact. That happened partly because she was a truly free woman, stronger than circumstances. I do not mean strong in the sense of wishing to dominate, but she counted personality as a gift above fortune or power over others. She was not like Dr. Alexander Graham Bell who could say to an opponent, "Perhaps you are right. Let us see how far our ideas on the subject agree. I may be the one that requires enlightenment," but she was warm and generous in fanning another's least spark of independent thinking, and her big heart was quick to repent her lack of considerateness. If she was asked direct questions, she did not disguise her thoughts; she was "a porcupine of

principles," but she hated cynicism. She was still to acquire the large charity and perceptive sympathy with which she approached everyone she met. In later days even those who appeared most insignificant sometimes revealed to her unexpected treasures of goodness or a rare faculty of observation, aspirations that she knew they would realize, joys and sorrows spoken with accents that stirred up echoes in her soul. She used to say to me, "Helen, I know that most people live without knowing each other, and I know how impatient I am with commonplaces, but all the same there are dumb millions whose thoughts, if sung by a poet or interpreted by a teacher of genius, would reverberate through the world, and if your New Church faith is sincere, you will look long and searchingly at God's handwriting in their individualities."

This is my last touch to the mental picture of Teacher at Red Farm. Ever since my childhood I had loved to put my hand on her face, it was so beautifully expressive, sensitive, and alive with interest in people and things. Her eyes were always sick, although friends told me that they were not unpleasant to look at like the eyes of many with defective vision, but her face was handsome with the contours which swept down with happy grace over her whole body. An adorable, wistful sweetness imprinted its loveliness upon her mouth, and my frequent childish kisses and her eager response, remembered, warm me like sparks nurtured in the embers. Her brow was smooth as that of Pallas Athene, and the poise of her head was charming. Mother called her very handsome, and John Macy, himself a worshiper of beauty, confirmed my own impression of Teacher's comeliness. The semimelancholy, semihumorous feeling of impatience with the world on account of its stupidity and the incessant torment of her eyes left their mark upon her countenance, but it never lost the radiance of spontaneous happiness until she was separated from John, and even then it had a winning smile for those whose sustaining affection she cherished.

Teacher's voice, which so faithfully tried to coax mine into naturalness, was itself a gift of the gods. She had never had any training in elocution that I know of, and yet her diction was wonderfully clear—not one word blurred, not an emphasis misplaced. Often she would declare that she wished she was a singer for the joy of creating melody and the material recompense it might have provided.

During our stay at Red Farm the United States declared war upon Spain, and Teacher applied for a position as a nurse in the Army. She and I were like-minded in our wish to have her serve, but she learned that it would take her as long to be trained for that work as building a ship, and she gave up the

idea. Then she had what seemed to her an inspiration. “Let us go to Cuba or some other island in the Caribbean and cultivate an orange or lemon plantation. We can at least grow old there in peace, and you will want to write perhaps.” My heart leaped up at the prospect of such an adventure, but I pointed out that there was no chance of our obtaining financial aid for that sort of enterprise, and that even if we were able to grow fruits, we had no right to risk her eyes by going away beyond the reach of competent medical assistance. She was not serious, I think, for in a few days she had forgotten her daydream. We were already leaving Red Farm for a camp which Teacher had rented on Lake Wollomonapoag, and to which we went every summer until we occupied our first home in Wrentham.

VII

At the camp Teacher was freer still, and as in memory I look down into the mine of her rich heart I behold more opals and rubies of her hospitable nature. She invited Mother, Mildred, and Phillips, my little brother, to spend the summer and part of the autumn with us, although she had scarcely the means to pay for our expenses. A more abundant store of holiday joy could not have been laid up for us. Teacher loved my family as her own, and after Father's death there was nothing that brought them more happiness than to be with us among the lakes and hills of Wrentham. Besides my little boat, the *Naiad*, Teacher kept a canoe, a raft, and swimming wings. All kinds of guests visited the camp—the gifted and the simple, bright young people from Uncle Ed's circle and all the Chamberlins. One summer when there was a convention of workers for the deaf in Boston, a large number of them surprised Teacher one morning by appearing at the camp, very gay and good-natured, prepared to have a swim and a picnic! Their uninvited coming was an imposition upon Teacher and Bridget who had just cleared away the breakfast dishes, and it required all their resourcefulness, humor, and energy to arrange the details for swimming and rowing and to feed the jolly invaders. But Teacher's inclusive cordiality and thoughtfulness of others' pleasure enabled her to rise to the occasion, and the inopportune party left the camp well pleased with their outing and gratified by her courteous interest in what she regarded as their too conservative methods of educating the deaf. However, as soon as they left, she entreated me not to allow myself to be drawn into any activities for the blind or the deaf or any other group until I had reached years of discretion. That was another of her innumerable problems—to prevent publicity from submerging me or twisting my perspective of life before I was well-grounded in programs of service to the handicapped.

The sparkle of Teacher's inventive spirit was infectious, filling our days with exciting adventures—in some of which I could participate—diving and swimming on the top of the water or under (I tied a long rope round my waist, with one end fastened to the shore or to a boat, so that I could move freely), canoe races at the conclusion of which we young people tipped one another over, water polo, lantern parties among the firs and pines, and long

rambles around the lake or investigations of the many ponds that shone like bewitching eyes in the Wrentham landscape—and there was never a moment when we talked with Teacher that she seemed like an older woman.

Teacher believed that health is the first of the freedoms, and certainly my ability to make use of whatever vitality I had created a new freedom for me. Greater physical self-confidence gained from swimming and riding a tandem added to the force that is the basis of health. Thus Teacher's making me happy in new ways was literally to augment my being and double the intensity of my life. Always it was a revelation even to us who knew her best—her capacity for rippling delight, gladness and responsiveness to the enchantment of the apple blossoms in spring or the serenity of hay-sweet summer evenings as she or I rowed the boat. Even when she was depressed, she was ever ready to strew hope along the rocky trails of existence. No matter how her moods varied, she thought that, on the whole, humanity experiences more enjoyment than misery; otherwise the race would have perished long ago.

Although as a child Teacher had had no experience in the water, she became an expert swimmer, and I loved to feel her sure movements as we glided a long way from the shore. One afternoon when Phillips and I were bathing, he grabbed my hand (he could not spell) and his face contracted with terror as I read his lips, "I don't see Teacher." We ran up the wharf calling wildly for mother. She rushed out to give the alarm, and several men rowed to the middle of the pond before they saw Teacher. She had been overconfident and tried to reach an island by herself. Her strength was almost exhausted when the men pulled her into the boat and brought her back. Seeing how distressed we all were, she smiled as she drank something hot and said, "Don't worry, I am all right. You know, Helen, how the Sirens tempt one!" The next day she was swimming again—not sadder but wiser.

Teacher was most skillful also in the equestrian art. All horses had a fascination for her—carriage horses, which she was able to drive provided she kept to secluded roads, and draft horses, in which she saw unfathomable depths of patience and energy. If her eyes had been more reliable, I believe that, like Atalanta, she would have ridden a race horse, matching the fire of her soul with his own. Once she mounted a broncho, thinking that her friendly voice and caressing touch would keep him under control. Unexpectedly he flung her off on a rough road, and she struck the back of her head against a sharp stone with such force that blood trickled down her neck. How she overcame her dizziness is a mystery, but she coaxed the animal—fearless, though erratic like herself—to let her lead him until she

reached Red Farm, where Mrs. Chamberlin and a doctor, hastily summoned, took care of her. A bad infection was expected but to everyone's amazement there was none, and in a few days Teacher was riding on a sober, sensible mount. "You see," she laughed to me, "it was no winged Pegasus but a 'Brownie' merry-go-round piece of horseflesh that tricked me the other day." After a while our friend Mr. Sanders in Haverhill, Massachusetts, the father of a deaf boy whom Dr. Bell taught, gave Teacher the dearest steed she ever had. We called him Lucky Star, and he carried a blessing with him wherever he went. He was as trusty, affectionate, and fleet as the ill-fated race horse in Donn Byrne's *The Hangman's House*. Teacher never needed a whip. As she wrote Mrs. Laurence Hutton, she took pride in cleaning and feeding him, and he whinnied all his wishes to her. He would lick her round arm before she got up on his noble back, away they would trot or gallop over a springy country path edged with varicolored flowers or stately plumes of goldenrod. She delighted in his head held high, the gloss of his bay neck, the sliding of his shoulder beneath her, and his rapid pace that bounced health and lightness through her body. Unbeknown to me she took a book with her, and when she found a cool spot under the trees with the light she needed, she would dismount. Then she would sit or lie down, the leading rein loose on her foot, and gather the forbidden fruits of a long reading while Lucky Star nibbled grass or moved about carefully pulling leaves from a nearby bush. What a winsome picture they must have been—Teacher in her plum-colored habit and Lucky with his well-brushed bay coat and flowing mane! It nearly broke her heart when she went to Cambridge and had to part with a creature that seemed to have been born just for her, but it was my last year in college and we were incurring heavy expenses, having our newly bought home reconstructed for the following summer.

VIII

Dismay clouds my first impressions of Radcliffe College. I do not refer to my happy relations with the girls I met or my studies which I loved, but to an increasing awareness of Teacher's ailing eyes. It was not possible for me to find out in advance just what books I should require for the college course, and consequently the Braille transcribing was much delayed. In Latin I was fortunate enough to obtain *The Aeneid*, *The Eclogues*, and Lucretius's philosophic poem—a startlingly close approach to our atomic age—but it was some time before I received Catullus or Plautus or Cicero's letters in Braille. I had read the *Anabasis*, and I found a Braille copy of several books of the *Iliad* awaiting me. But there were no embossed vocabularies, and Teacher searched ink-print dictionaries for the many words I wanted. The English Literature course fairly bristled with books not in raised print, from Chaucer through the period covered by Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, which was not embossed for many years. From the Elizabethan Age only Shakespeare's plays and sonnets and Spencer's *The Faerie Queen* were available in Braille. This meant Teacher's reading to me a multitude of books by medieval authors and also books in advanced French and German. Often her eyes almost failed, and she was obliged to consult Dr. Morgan, a famous ophthalmologist, whom Mrs. Hutton recommended. When he heard that Teacher read to me five or more hours daily, he exclaimed, "Oh my God! That is sheer madness, Miss Sullivan. You must rest your eyes completely if Miss Keller is to finish her course." How I hated books at that moment! No one could be found at once to help me, and those "delicate Ariels" which were Teacher's eyes continued their drudgery while I endured untold torture. When she asked if I did not want certain passages reread, I lied and declared that I could recall them. As a matter of fact, they had slipped from my mind. Finally, however, Lenore Kinney, who had just married Philip Smith, a geologist at Harvard, and who knew the finger alphabet, did the reading for me, and I have never ceased to bless her for my restored peace of mind. Without telling her of my lies I asked her to look for the passages I had forgotten, and thus I retrieved enough of them to pass my midyear tests.

Naturally it was almost impossible for Teacher to write at that time. She could not see much farther than the end of her nose and she had to concentrate on her pencil and the word it was tracing. This was a sharp trial to her temper and stopped whatever inspiration, gaiety, and flow of ideas there might be. After I had mastered typewriting I copied all her accounts, memoranda, and letters. Then her ideas bubbled out freely, and it consoled me to feel that I was of some small service to her.

All our friends who learned of our difficulties eased the way for us as much as they could. Among them was John Macy. Besides editing the story of my life, originally consisting of college themes, he suggested studies for my last two years at Radcliffe which would spare Teacher's eyes to some extent, and he read to me whenever he could get away from his tutoring.

Here I wish to pay a tribute of gratitude to Dr. Goldthwaite of Boston. For a long time Teacher had been obliged to have her feet strapped, a result perhaps of having to wear shoes far too small when she was a child. During my senior year she limped badly and John Macy persuaded her to go to Dr. Goldthwaite. After a thorough examination the eminent surgeon informed her that an operation was imperative. Promptly she told him she would not undergo the operation until I graduated. He replied decisively, "Miss Sullivan, your health is more important than Helen Keller's education." I could have embraced him for that. We had no money to spare for hospitalization. Therefore Dr. Goldthwaite came to the apartment where Teacher and I were living and brought a nurse and the instruments for the operation. Bridget scrubbed the kitchen to within an inch of its life, an extra table was installed, and the doctor and the nurse administered the ether. I shall never forget how tall, strong, handsome Dr. Goldthwaite was as he carried Teacher in his arms to the improvised operating room. He saved her from lifelong lameness, and in a month she was walking with me better than she had ever done. One should read Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-worship* to gauge Teacher's veneration for doctors after that experience.

In *Midstream* I described fully another attempt to divert me from my education—the plan to establish in my name a school for deaf-blind children. I was assailed on the affectional side of my nature, and I wished that I might be free to help liberate them from the double dungeon of soul and body I had once dwelt in, but it was my right as well as my duty to complete my college course so as to demonstrate how far doubly handicapped children could be developed. Teacher was determined that I should not be deflected by any school. I mention this merely because it was among the many upsets which we encountered, and which caused Teacher

such disappointment over my failure to attain the highest honors in every subject I studied. She was rent with emotion and overwrought by my apparent lack of zeal in obtaining the *summa*. She had a strange sense of enormous obstacles and abysses of perplexity and she needed tenderness until she was cheered by a fresh survey of life's possibilities. It is thanks to our strenuous apprenticeship under Teacher that since she departed from earth Polly Thomson and I have been able to clear away the plans of those who would dominate us and keep our position as free, self-reliant women.

IX

After Teacher and I had settled down in Wrentham, she changed her mind continually for a year in regard to marrying John, and I quoted to myself, "The course of true love never did run smooth." I was glad she had found a good man, as I then supposed, to share her tasks and burdens, and I waited. One evening after we had returned from a meeting in Boston where I had spoken for the blind and John had acted as my interpreter, and I was sitting in her room, she told me how pretty and graceful I had looked standing before the audience, and announced that she would never marry. "Oh, Teacher," I exclaimed, "if you love John, and let him go, I shall feel like a hideous accident!"

Somehow, as I try to penetrate the fluctuations of that distant past, I am haunted by a perception that Annie never wholly acquiesced in the fact of her marriage. She gained greater self-control—she held her darker moods well in hand like an animal trainer, but now and then she could hear them growling, and she said she needed me to keep her quiet and reasonable. John was marvelous in counseling me about my literary work, reading aloud to her a wealth of books delightful or witty or alight with genius and driving away her spells of melancholy. He had a keen eye for the glories of nature, although he never cared for the roughnesses of a self-reliant, simple life such as Thoreau knew, and sharing our pleasures he enriched them with his indefinable charm.

Yet there was a rift in the harp of the two lives that rendered my own blessed. Teacher's many-colored temperament, to which frayed nerves were an incessant aggravation, puzzled simple folk, and even the wise did not always chart the currents of her nature rightly. Only genuine affection enabled the best of friends to decipher some of the lights and shadows of her character. She was forever seeking an outlet for her restlessness. She believed in going somewhere often and seeing something new. By that I do not mean to imply a trivial craving for amusement, but a need of self-renewal. "We are too much creatures of habit," she would say, and I wish now that I had paid more heed to her suggestions. She went out of her way so that I might meet young people and have unusual experiences, thus

introducing a constant element of change into my environment. I think now that we should maintain ourselves by a process similar to molting in birds. A change of the right sort helps us to overhaul our ideas, so that our souls may recreate themselves, venture into a higher atmosphere with bolder wings, and arouse and quicken other interests. Who knows? That may be one solution of social problems. By creating measure and harmony in others one may unite duty and joy, the good and the beautiful. How I wished I might travel with her to the ends of the earth! But I had by this time harnessed myself to literary work. The unruly bullock in me had kicked and butted but had at last submitted to the yoke, and I did not want to break away until I had accomplished a certain amount of labor. She got very cross with me, but she respected my individuality as she did her own, and our tempest in a teapot subsided.

Again, she proposed a trip to Bermuda. After going over our accounts I saw that we simply had not the money to undertake such a trip—not even enough for immediate expenses, and I did not know whether I could earn enough for a carefree outing by writing articles on the voyage. Teacher stormed like the great god Pan, and then was irradiated with Celtic blitheness. All the same, I cannot forget that I caused her those disappointments.

Just to enjoy her delicious improvidence, I was ever ready to drop everything—cleaning, dusting, or typing—and walk and picnic with her in the pine wood near our house or rush to gather up litter for the huge bonfires in which she reveled as she watched the beautiful big flames leap higher and higher until they sank to the ground. Or perhaps we would be at the lake in our bathing suits while a storm whipped the waves to fury and the lightning played round us. The heavy drops of rain would drench us, then the sky would clear, and we would plunge into the water for a swim. Excitement was the breath of her soul.

As I reflect on those adorable features of Teacher's temperament, it comes over me that the underlying reason why she was eager for us to escape the eternal beat of my typewriter was the wicked accusation of overworking me in the Cambridge preparatory school for girls. After that incident I would not consult doctors while I was in college lest a false report might be leveled against Teacher. I suffered every day from headaches which rendered studying difficult, and in desperation I got rid of them by starving myself for a day or two and eating little or no breakfast. Teacher was a darling, and let me take the consequences of my self-will without a comment. The headaches vanished, but fate punished me for going too far,

and I suffered from anaemia and a long siege of neuralgia. It can now be imagined how deeply agitated Teacher was to find out the oppressive fear which had pursued me since my eighteenth year.

But there was another circumstance that brought Teacher and me great happiness. That was her complete freedom to talk to me as she did to others. Our experiences at the Cambridge school had given her a special prudence in expressing her views to me on public matters because she had heard it openly asserted that she imposed her opinions upon my youthful mind. A friend in Canada who was always trying, and often successfully, to promote cultural opportunities for the unprivileged wrote me a wise letter. He said I was a young girl who had been taught and led through a happy childhood in spite of deafness and blindness, and that education was a principle of democracy applicable to everyone capable of learning. He reminded me that I was often in the society of the great, the gifted, the influential, and suggested that, without mentioning his name, I lay his plan to open a school for girls in Cuba before some powerful philanthropist. His plan was ably outlined, he supplied all the information required, and Teacher saw no harm in my sending a letter to Mrs. Hutton. Mrs. Hutton was interested and showed it to well-known persons of wealth with whom she was connected. She thought, as Teacher did, that the idea was constructive and that someone might adopt it as his own. From such chance seeds have grown world-wide movements. What was our pained surprise when Mrs. Hutton informed us that her friends would not believe I had written the letter! Wounded by an attitude so lacking in imagination and public spirit on the part of the cultivated and the well-advantaged, Teacher after that remained silent to me on all matters—educational, political, social, or religious—which stirred her deeply. In college too she had been fettered by the tyranny of society, as she regarded it, which declared that I was an automaton, a mouthpiece that echoed her thoughts and sentiments. But after her marriage there was a welcome change. Her fingers—not to say her tongue—were loosed, and I thrilled to a new kind of companionship. In a home of our own, whenever John read aloud to us about controversial questions, Teacher spelled her opinions to me without reserve, and it was both entertaining and amusing for her and me to quarrel comfortably.

She was not a woman suffragist, and I was. She was very conservative at that time. She was never a standard-bearer, except in the sense that she fought against all man-wrought limitation as a crime, and held freedom of mind, conscience and inquiry as sacred. The more we talked, the less we thought alike, except in our desire of good and our intense longing for intelligence as a universal attribute of mankind. Like Mark Twain, she was

very pessimistic with regard to progress. Even the work for the blind was no exception. She had seen rich compensations won by exceptional blind men who turned their misfortune from a prison into a kingdom of service, but she was doubtful about the capacity of the average blind person to achieve a full life. It is a pleasure to me to be able to prove that the activities for "average" people without sight have so developed in this country and Great Britain during the last thirty years that an ever increasing number, including some deaf-blind, are gaining self-help and real happiness. Every time I turn my thoughts to Teacher, I pray that she may read in them the treasures which she did not expect to be uncovered in the darkness. Truly, as her full personality became clear to me, I saw it as a web of woven flame, and I felt like a favored being to walk in the unscorching fire of her swift intuition and forward-moving thought. The few years during which marriage yielded its satisfactions to her were in some respects the most fruitful part of our lives together.

But in the nature of things Teacher could not tone down her impatience to a village where nothing happened or discipline herself to housework—and Thoreau would have grasped her point of view. Whenever she had a chance she sought adventure in horseback riding. Unluckily one horse she had chosen was a villain; yet because he was beautiful and clever, she clung to him, and I hoped that her kindness and her charming voice might subdue him. One morning I had been walking in the field and as I entered the house someone said to me, "That devil of a horse has tried to kill Teacher. He hurled her off on the grass, and now she is lying down." I asked if she was badly hurt. "No, but badly shaken." Suddenly I grew angry. For sixteen years she had seized every opportunity of having a fling with any horse that would carry her, disregarding warnings if he was unsafe. She had tried my patience with her mad escapades, and now I was at my wit's end. I spoke to her sharply, and she laughed bitterly saying, "Is that the sympathy I get when I am in trouble?" Some hours passed, and lo! she had bowed her head. "I am sorry, Helen. I was trying to run away from the kitchen and everything that makes one old. Kiss me, and I will turn over a new leaf." I never heard a complaint from her about housekeeping again, and it was only after many years that I discovered the real cause of Teacher's extraordinary behavior. But that is one of the tragic secrets that are locked up in the hearts of men and women who see deeply into life's mysteries.

X

With sorrow I noted that Teacher's robust health was beginning to weaken. That was due partly to her periods of nervous tenseness, the never ceasing torment of her eyes, her enormous disappointment in not having a baby. Other physical distresses piled upon her—a major operation before we set out on our lecture tours, frequent severe colds on the road, and an accident in which she fell down the steps breaking her arm and dislocating her collarbone. Those injuries were never properly treated until she went to the hospital under Dr. Goldthwaite's care.

However, there was a bright patch of blue in the clouds of her anxiety. John took her and me up to Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, where Dr. Bradford, who years before had performed the operations which had given her a measure of sight, was living in retirement because of atrocious attacks of rheumatism. He welcomed us most pleasantly. He remembered every detail of the operations and marveled that Annie's eyes had done so well by her when she had driven them so pitilessly. He prescribed alum drops to remove the granulation which was coming back to curtain them, and for a while we breathed freely.

During those young days so full of stimulating discovery and mental gymnastics to foster my spiritual growth, I sometimes discussed religious subjects with Teacher. She had waited on time and the growth of my individuality to talk with me as frankly as she did with others. Like Robert Ingersoll, she had little use for the various creeds and dogmas whose jarring "noise" echoes through the pulpits of the world. "Religion," she would say, "is a way of living and not of believing only. Bear witness to what appears true to you in deeds rather than words. Through the ages people have torn each other to pieces over religious beliefs, and what good has that done? Far better is it to help others to live and live well. Try not to grieve any heart or disturb any soul in its effort to think intelligently and act nobly." I had told her how helpful Emanuel Swedenborg was to me in interpreting the Bible as a way of living. She seemed aggrieved that I should choose his eighteenth-century disquisitions or those of any other theologian instead of exploring my own mind. Elaborate explanations irritated her, and I did not tell her that

Swedenborg was not a theologian, but a constructive scholar devoted to the task of uniting love, or good will, and reason, or clear thinking, which had been divorced in many churches by the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Nor did I remind her of what she knew well—that most of us receive our thoughts from others in the first place and that our only originality is in the way we express them. Instead, I told her how happy I was that Swedenborg had set my imagination free to range over the mountain tops and valleys of personal immortality as well as the immortality of matter.

"I do not believe in immortality," she said. "There is a twist in my mind when I hear that word. Besides, the earth is beautiful and entertaining enough to fill the short time I have here."

"I love beautiful ideas too," I replied, "and none is more exquisite to me than a human being endowed with a happy immortality that has blossomed and borne fruit out of fine thoughts and beneficent deeds."

"It is balm to me that you can look forward with joy to a world lovelier than this. Of course I may say this or that at different times and seem to want you to think differently, but nothing is further from my wishes. I am not interested in religion, and you are. Let us agree to disagree and to the best of our ability live up to our ideals.

"Yes, dear, I am your mother in heart and mind, but I do not own you. I want you to form your views independently. Only keep yourself clear of competitive sects and creeds, and do not get involved in any fanaticism. Always be just and generous to those with whom you differ."

Together, Teacher and I saw life in many varieties, both good and evil, which rendered vivid and convincing the characters I read about in my books. Teacher's comments were brief, significant, and improving. The most evil persons she encountered had their useful qualities when her anger had subsided and she was far from their presence. There was a big innocence about her that refused to believe that anyone really loved evil. "One reason I don't believe in a future life," she would say, "is that I cannot imagine a wise, just God as burning His creatures in eternal fire for not doing His own Will. Besides, if they were *conscious* of their vileness, they would feel a remorse that would make life unendurable, and God would be compelled to kill them—an abdication of His Godhead!" I said that evil really punishes itself in this life and the next (I had not read Emerson's beautiful essay, "Compensation" which emphasizes this idea), and God mercifully draws a veil over the eyes of the incurably wicked and sets them in a sphere apart, congenial to their perverted tastes where their baleful lusts and pleasures

will not infect or destroy others. Anyway, I added, they do not grow any worse, and in wonderful ways beyond our dreaming they are used for the strengthening of those that desire what is right.

"Thank heaven," she exclaimed with a gesture of her hand, "you have received religion in joy and for the purpose of making earth at least a temporary home and hearth for mankind instead of enslaving it to the necessities of a premature future life. I can respect your beliefs because you do not use them like a weakling to console yourself for blindness and deafness, but as part of the happiness God wants to create for us all."

The creeds she abominated were those which impose upon human beings the idea that God does not want them to be happy. She also observed that in the world there are about a dozen different religious and ethical codes and thousands of lesser sects and creeds and that, though the faiths are many, the faults of human nature are the same everywhere. She could not see any difference between an evil Moslem, an evil Christian, and an evil Buddhist. Each lives according to convictions for which he would willingly lay down his life, and at the same time he hinders his advancement by not cultivating fundamental ethics. If he is converted by one of the broader, more flourishing scholastic or theological groups, he only acquires a new way to talk about the virtues he does not practice.

I think Teacher's mind would have opened—with one or two reservations perhaps—to Mahatma Gandhi's plan for the production of personalities—passive non-co-operation with customs and institutions that are an offense to the principle of right action. For individual progress it would not be necessary to upset the activities of others. We could just refrain silently from sharing in evil systems or institutions, but we must remember that individuals become strong only in proportion to the spiritual growth of their own development. We both believed that self-improvement is not too difficult if one sees its need with one's mind and realizes it as an inner experience of consciousness and will power. My beloved foster father, Mr. John Hitz, encouraged me in this approach to the problem and said to Teacher what she had divined: that ethical standards forced upon an individual from outside hamper his inner growth and entail an extra burden upon him by restricting the spontaneous expression of even his finest impulses.

"So you see, Helen," Teacher affirmed, "why you should not be swayed by the harsh theologies of the ages or grow self-righteous. Every human being is a mystery, and you cannot, nor can any mortal, trace the endless windings of his mind. Only God has that wisdom, and if there is a Hereafter,

He may find in the worst of His creatures a gleam of pure spirit that shall draw them up out of Hell."

Teacher could be unreasonable at times, I thought, in her reluctance to talk with me freely even for a few minutes about my fate-directing beliefs. "Just be simple, sweet, yielding to circumstances and——" I cannot enumerate the rest. She would become inconsistent, or so I imagined, to all that she was in the habit of saying about my right to freedom of speech and self-expression, and her excitement communicated to me a sense of secrets unrevealed.

In twenty-five years, after most of my books were written and my work for the American Foundation for the Blind was well-established, I learned the truth about Teacher's life in the almshouse at Tewksbury. Nella was writing a book about her, and I was thankful that such a true, discerning friend should undertake the task. Polly was abroad on her vacation. Teacher and I were alone at our little house in Forest Hills, Long Island. Before telling me her story, Teacher asked the maid to go out for the afternoon and even tucked her Shetland collie, Dileas, off in an out-of-the-way corner—her exquisite "puff from the creamery of Heaven." Then we sat side by side and the terrifying drama of her early years began to unfold in my palm. There she was—handsome, distinguished, sensitive—a teacher known around the world, a personality to whom the great and gifted had paid high tribute in my presence, pouring out a tale of a tragic childhood spent among human beings sunk in misery, degradation, and disease.

For a long time I had studied the problems of primary poverty, and she trusted me to understand. I put myself into the exploring spirit of the half-blind, lonely child who lived in that hideous environment and I nearly went distracted at the dreadful sobbing with which, after the silence of half a century, she spoke of her brother Jimmie's death in the almshouse. I could not sleep that night, so keen was the anguish in my soul. I kept dwelling on Teacher's love for her brother until I felt it as my own. It seemed to comfort her that both our hearts held his image in equal tenderness. I understood then the desolating memories that had rendered it bitter for her to discuss death or immortality with anyone. However, the situation eased somewhat after the telling of her story, and at times she tried to sense as I did "the sweet-within-sweet" of the spiritual life around the earthly one. And after all, that was the most revivifying part of my education—new stars set in the firmament of my mind,

a live word of God's mouth spoken,
Visible sound, audible light,

a word that illumined time and space and Eternity for me.

Another consequence of Teacher's narrative was that it gave me a sense of equilibrium. Previously, not knowing much about that part of her life, I had occasionally felt alone and bewildered by some of her peculiarities. Not for the world would I have invaded the secrecy that shrouded that life. Nevertheless, the strangeness was there. Something too subtle for words was lacking in our relations to each other, but after her brave, overburdened soul lay bare before my inner sight, I was conscious of courage of a new quality flowing into me from the fact of Teacher's crossing that awful desert of neglect to an oasis of education, and then finding the opportunity to devote her life to me even as she had dedicated herself to Jimmie for the few months he was her companion in Tewksbury.

To return to the early days in Wrentham. There was still another aspect of Teacher's nature that caused me to wonder. We had gone to Cape Cod for a short summer holiday. We were at a cottage near a boardinghouse where we could get our meals, and Teacher was particularly happy because she wanted to be alone. We had been in swimming and she had built a fire on the hearth, as it had suddenly turned very cool. I was startled by a strong whiff of burning paper, and I exclaimed, "What are you doing, Teacher?"

"I have burned my diary," she announced calmly, "and I am relieved."

When I was nine I had touched Teacher while she was scrawling with her face close to the sheet, and I had demanded, "What are you writing?"

"Oh, don't be such a Curiosity Shop," she had laughed. "You never do let me alone! I am also learning English, and I am writing a diary. Go away and don't interrupt me."

I never saw the diary. When it was burned, I expostulated with her. "Why did you destroy it? Surely there were original thoughts and your own ideas of education in it."

"I don't know about that, and I don't care," she said quietly. "It seemed to me horrid, vindictive, one-sided. I tried to read it over in case there might be something in it which you could copy for your notes on your biography of me, but it was a waste of my eyes even to glance through it. I saw so many scolding passages extending over page after page I flung the stuff into the flames. I couldn't have had a moment's peace if it had been read by you or John." She would not say when she had begun it or how long she had kept it up. She dismissed it roundly, declaring that it had outlived its usefulness—if it had ever had any.

Since the poor diary had been immolated to Teacher's perhaps too severe self-judgment, I could only reflect that Samuel Johnson had some of his papers burned before his death. I honored the greatness of soul which had prevented him and Teacher from needlessly troubling their contemporaries with personal outbursts that might savor of hatred or revenge. It was one of Teacher's endearing traits to seize any self-condemning epithet that popped into her head every time she recalled a hate-filled mood or a wild impulse to wring a persistent troublemaker by the neck. Therefore I imagined that, like Henri Frederic Amiel, she had used the diary as a kind of mediaeval self-mortification and had come back to the world friendly, compassionate. She had no doubt confided to it her tragic childhood memories, what she had heard of "those dreadful men" from the women who had babies in Tewksbury, her horrified understanding in adult life of the almshouse inferno she had survived. Perhaps she had mentioned her escapades at Perkins, the criticisms by her teachers which had rubbed her ego the wrong way, and the thoughtless laughter of the pupils which had maddened her. Probably she had hurriedly sketched her likes and dislikes, her fierce tenderness for the unprivileged and had tried to write out her mental itinerary, a wholesome protection against the destructive process of her unsparing intellectual analysis and the misunderstandings that were always fretting her. At all events, I know that the diary must have had important values for Teacher, if not for anybody else. I am confident that writing it must have preserved the vividness and accuracy of her early memories in a swift-flowing rush of time—recollections which no human being was able to recall to her. Certainly she never allowed herself to drift into solitude where she knew she would have to combat the temptation of misanthropy. She was always denying to me that she was "good," and for proof she pointed to the diary and to her often irrational behavior. The more she insisted, the more I perceived a slowly forming thought pattern—genuine self-denial which delights to do good for the joy of it. She had no use either for priggishness or ostentatious goodness, the sinner with a gloomy countenance or the *moqueur d'autrui*, even though they relieved the monotony of commonplace characters. Unfortunately in her noble zeal she forgot that one must not perform good works or spread wise ideas directly through bad people because sooner or later they pervert them. But no power on earth could turn her from a high purpose when once it radiated through her mind.

On one occasion in college Teacher must have been thinking of her diary when I recited an ode from Horace in an English translation, and she said, "Horace is right, Helen. There are few things you can absolutely call black or white. The Stoics say that you cannot justify faults as such, but in many

individuals there are faults that have a good side, as it were. For example, there may be someone you want to call 'stingy,' but really he saves to give real service to others and not for himself. Or there is a person considered ill-natured, but he is indignant at the meanness and selfishness of those around him and not at his own lot. Again, there are those who seem 'ambitious,' and who in reality seek out opportunities to serve others from whom they gain nothing. May I say without offense, do you think, that sometimes a fine virtue results from a fault engrafted on human nature?"

I said it seemed to me that in daily intercourse and literature words of fault-finding outnumber words of good-finding. "This is language running to the morass," she said. "Why cannot we originate mutants in the shape of terms naming new goodnesses and use them to break the evil repetitions of human nature's sluggishness?" We were delighted to learn that Dr. Edward Everett Hale of the Unitarian Church in Boston had listed words and the new forces they expressed which had existed only twenty-five or fifty years —*altruism* and *solidarity* among others—and he prophesied that many words would be coined to identify depths of love and powers of the mind still without a name.

With Teacher, "trying" to be good seemed lacking in spontaneity and insincere, and I just did not try. I was happy with her, and I simply "chucked" impatience or any other fault out of my system, or held on, failing and failing again until I pulled down the enemy as a wolf does a moose; then I thought no more about the matter, except to thank God and Teacher for encouraging me. Like Thomas Hood, I feel that I am farther from Heaven than when I was a child, but, inspired by God who led Teacher through appalling hardships, I am able to fight on in the effort to spiritualize my life on earth.

Teacher really loved people and longed to pull them along with her away from their ordinary selves, and yet they tormented her. It was a lifelong struggle for her to be kind to dull people. Their incessant chatter irritated her like a menagerie, and she wanted intensely to escape. But her kindness drew a silencer over their rattling inanities, or she formed little dreams about them in her mind, using an interesting circumstance to which they referred, an unusual remark they made, an expression she noted on their faces, or an anecdote they related about their families or their duties as citizens. Her intellect was like a violin of many tones, but most of those we met had not the wit to notice it. Their single-track intelligence wearied her, but she would not be Olympian or too subtle in her attitude towards them. Even if her imaginative pictures of them were not justified, under their spell the

people became endurable, amusing, and even appealing. There were times when I was thrilled to see the company lifted out of humdrum thinking by the infection of Teacher's wit or the fire of her utterances on politics, so that they expressed live ideas and argued with ability that would have honored groups of better-educated men I have known. Thus Teacher whiled away many hours of unconscionably long calls at our home.

Another pleasant memory I have of that time is the animated discussions I had with Teacher and John on psychology and the enthusiastic open-mindedness with which they read the statement of my existence before I was taught in *The World I Live In*. My study of philosophy at college had made me realize that while writing *The Story of My Life* I had not described that state accurately. When I entered Radcliffe, I was already old in the sense that my life story had been told many times, but as an individual I was very young and immature. So anxious was the girl Helen to appear like other young people that she simply thought of all her mental processes as resembling theirs. Composing her themes, she wrote for the joy of using words and not because she considered carefully anything in the years before her education began. As I looked over *The Story of My Life* afterwards, I was struck by this lack of precision of detail. I found that I had expressed too dogmatically a connected kind of thinking that could not exist in a Phantom's no-world—an unconscious yet conscious interval of non-personality. As I was working on *The World I Live In* I decided in Chapter XI, "Before the Soul Dawn," to recast my former statement. What I am going to quote caused quite a stir in the family:

> *I did not know that I knew aught, or that I lived or acted or desired. I had neither will nor intellect. I was carried along to objects and acts by a certain blind animal impetus. I had a mind which caused me to feel anger, satisfaction, desire. These two facts led those about me to suppose that I willed and thought. I can remember all this, not because I knew that it was so, but because I have tactual memory. It enables me to remember that I never contracted my forehead in the act of thinking. I never viewed anything beforehand or chose it.*

My mother was greatly disturbed on reading that passage, and she wanted me to omit it. Before Teacher came to Tuscumbia, one or two persons had told my mother, or rather implied, that I was an idiot, and she feared that the words I had written would indicate that I was not altogether normal mentally. It took much tact and testimony from Teacher about the

really feeble-minded whom she had seen to reassure Mother that the passage was harmless since it referred to her once afflicted child only as a dormant being. It was an occasion of unconcealed pride for Teacher. Not only did it please her to have me assert personal freedom by thinking for myself and putting into readable form the world as it appeared to my three senses as well as its glories for my inner eye, she said it also meant that from that time onward we would be true companions in literature. At last she had the satisfaction of feeling that I had arrived at the port of free literary self-expression. She could ease my wrestlings with the angels and demons of authorship by letting me talk to her, thus airing my ideas.

It was a marvel for me to have not one critic but two for my books—Teacher and John. A breakdown overtook Teacher soon after I graduated, and I was not well either, and a bad fairy of nerves chased me uphill and down dale for a long time. But the requests for articles on the blind and prevention of blindness, two subjects about which the public needed information badly, were numerous, and it was represented to me that what I wrote would be a service, so I could not resist the desire to comply. I wrote manuscripts in Braille and copied them on the typewriter, besides wading through and answering a mass of letters each day, until my hands almost refused to function. The miserable vacillation of Teacher's sight put it out of the question for her to read my books to me. So she made suggestions as John read the manuscripts aloud, and he went over and over them with my corrections.

Another book, the creation of which was a joy to me, was *The Song of the Stone Wall*. Once, full of the enchantment of a lovely May morning, Teacher and I were building up an old stone wall so as to extend my ramble in our green field. As we laid one stone upon another, I kept fingering the various shapes, textures, and sizes, and I became aware of a beauty in them that I had not sensed before. Having lately read a book on geology, I was freshly interested in the stones over which I occasionally stumbled—flat or grooved, big or little, some full of rents and jagged edges, some polished by cold and others crumbled by heat, still others with sharp and curved angles. Despite their rudeness and irregularity there was a peculiar quality that took my fancy very strongly. Through the chinks I could feel small breezes sighing and sunbeams sifting and bringing out different odors from the plants surrounding them. "Oh, Teacher," I cried, "here's a poem to write on these stone walls, if there is only enough of the poet in me for such a task."

"Why not?" Teacher responded eagerly. She was happiest with the play of words that sings audibly the charm of nature, and observing how the

treasures of delight within my fingers' reach were accumulating, she wanted passionately to have me embody them in poetry, which is a higher form of truth. She sat right down then and there, looked closely at the wall and described the effects of light and shadow and the tapestry of flowers and bushes that covered part of its surface. There was a Celtic tinge in some of her words as I wove them in afterwards with mine.

The walls are astir . . .
Soft whispers of showers and flowers
Are mingled in the spring song of the walls . . .

The walls sing the song of wild bird, the hoofbeat of deer,
The murmur of pine and cedar, the ripple of many streams . . .

For a long time, forgetful of work and everything else, I talked with her about how I wished to link the stone walls in verse with the Puritans, their valiant lives and daring idealism. The next day John took us to the old cemetery so that I might touch the moss-grown tombs and the inscriptions "graceless as death," yet full of unflinching faith. For weeks I spent hours reading New England chronicles and ballads and searching the words that would mirror poetically my thoughts of the Puritan settlers who forced the wilderness inch by inch to give way to homes, houses of prayer, and schools. Whenever Teacher had a bit of leisure, I read her what I was writing, and asked her to say my lines over and let me read her lips so that I might ascertain whether there was anything worth while in my rude verse. Often her glad smile reassured me, at other times she criticized my errors unsparingly until I captured a rhythm that pleased her. She was inexpressibly gratified when the Century Magazine accepted my poem. "Nothing could have made me more proud," she declared, "than to have you contribute, even if so imperfectly, to that great Poem, as Shelley says, which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world."

Thus Teacher opened unimaginable channels for the faculties with which God had endowed me—love, thought, action, and speech, by which I mean all communication. Four modes of life. And to others besides myself she was a fountain of encouragement to unfold their finer selves. In her best moods she enveloped everyone with her sympathy. She looked upon all she met as an undreamed depository of joys, sorrows, affections, and forces of creation, and often they were responsive to her. Indeed she was the moving spirit in many a gathering at our Wrentham home. She was always contriving something unusual to make her guests happy, and she was trying

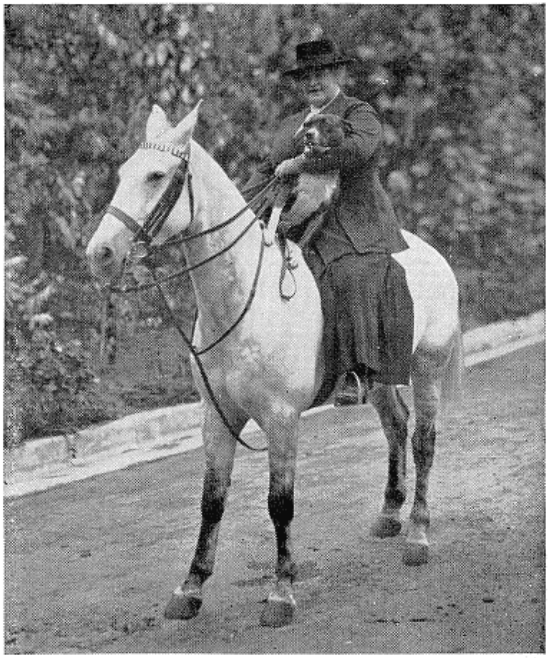
to be loving to all hearts. She was very extravagant in improving and extending our house, but that was another fault with a good side—an expression of her "creative verve" and her determination to push forward an enterprise that would justify the beneficence showered upon us.

It was all very well for me to pound out articles on my typewriter about the blind and inform the public about correct methods of restoring them at least in part to self-support and independence. We were glad to entertain sightless men and women at our home and to help them in every way, but that did not get us anywhere personally. On account of Teacher's immense capabilities I did not want to drag her into any cause of service small or short in reach. On the one hand, I was troubled that her life should be thrown away on housekeeping, which she detested. On the other hand, I was anxious to make a provision for her, as I had resolved to do at the age of sixteen when well-meaning but interfering friends had driven her to say to me that she worked like a slave. It took many years of aching patience for me to accomplish this desire.

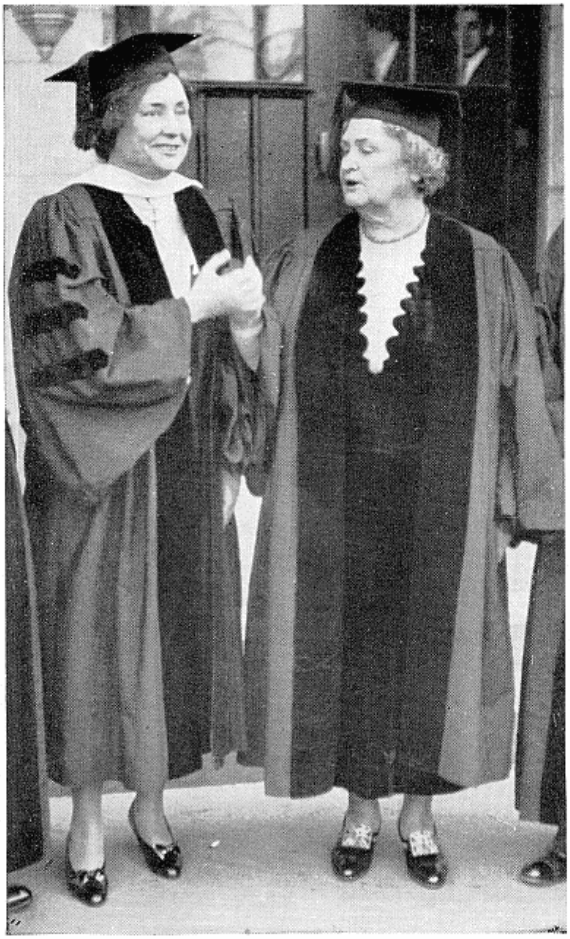
Photographs of Anne Sullivan Macy alone are not common. The date of this is unknown.

The teacher a girl, the pupil a child, both already famous, and the teacher keenly and protectingly aware of the dangers that attend celebrity. 1893.

Teacher and Helen on the lawn at the summer home in Cape Breton of Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, “one of the happiest visits of my life,” Helen says.



Teacher in California, 1918. Neither the horse nor the dog belongs to her, but she loved animals and could do almost anything with them.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTO

Helen triumphant! In 1931 she persuaded Teacher to accept an honorary degree from Temple University. Teacher receives the honor, but Helen feels it as her own.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTO

Teacher looks on as Helen reads the lips of Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, who was once a teacher of the deaf and whose interest in the deaf has been lifelong.

Teacher in the early 1930s, virtually blind, her task nearly done. She died in October 1936.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR OVERSEAS BLIND

Helen carries on without Teacher, but feels that Teacher is still with her. Her companion is Polly Thomson. Helen has visited Japan three times, and many of the blind children there call her Mother.

PHOTOGRAPH BY U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

For two and a half years Helen and Polly visited the wounded veterans in U.S. hospitals. Later they paid similar visits in European hospitals.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR OVERSEAS BLIND & FULTON'S STUDIO, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

With Zulu dancers in South Africa, 1951.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR OVERSEAS BLIND & © THE NATAL MERCURY

A blind father proudly hands his son over to Helen. The child is normal and normally bewildered by the camera.

AN FOUNDATION FOR OVERSEAS BLIND & © "THE ARGUS," MELBOURNE

This scene happens to be in Melbourne, Australia, but it has occurred in so many different places that it might be almost anywhere.

WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Helen and Polly depart for India and the Far East, February 1955.

WORLD PHOTOS

A few weeks later, with Pandit Nehru in New Delhi.

XI

By the end of 1914 Teacher was facing her greatest sorrow. She kept demanding my love in a way that was heartbreaking. For days she would shut herself up almost stunned, trying to think of a plan that would bring John back or weeping as only women who are no longer cherished weep. Mother, who was staying with us, said that it wrung her to see how Teacher suffered. “I do not believe, Helen, that fate deals more kindly with a handsome, brilliant woman who has been drawn into marriage than it does with other women. Certainly Teacher was aglow with plans which a man of John’s varied abilities could surely have been instrumental in developing, and now the life of which she dreamed is falling about her in ruins.”

The happy light faded from Teacher’s face, but she was too reserved to show her grief openly, and she refused to be comforted. To no one, except myself in the silence of the night, did she speak of her anguish or the terrible dreams that pursued her. Her health was not good. She had once exercised vigorously, but one of her chief difficulties, overweight, was causing her immeasurable discomfort. Her sight was worse, and she could no longer console herself by even short periods of independent reading. But she was steadfast in her resolve that the healthy development through which she had piloted me should not be shipwrecked by any deficiencies or maladjustments that might beset her.

Earlier in 1914 my mother had accompanied us on our first lecture tour to the Far West. Now late in the year Teacher was showing the ropes to our new companion, Polly Thomson, a spirited Scottish lassie, who had little knowledge of the world but who was eager to see the United States in all its splendor and natural grandeur, and whose generous heart asked no other boon than to serve us. After only a few months training she went with us on our second tour across the continent. And never has an explorer of the Arctic or the Antarctic or of darkest Africa met adventures and hazards with a stouter will than Polly in her quest of accomplishment and her effort to understand the whimsicalities of Teacher’s nature—an ability essential to the best results.

At that time the melancholy which had now and then seized Teacher overwhelmed her with a despair that made it misery for her to exist. Actually she feared insanity for a while, but her judgment was not impaired and she never ceased to work with her brain or her hands. It was her imagination, not her reason, that was disturbed. But that unsettled imagination brought on an increasing aversion to regular habits, and she planned her activities and amusements so as to break the obsession. She could not rest as she should, but the pain in her eyes grew less toward morning, and when she had a chance she slept late, thus fortifying herself for a labor that exacted hour after hour of exertion from her weary body. Occasionally she would lay her head on my shoulder saying, "How I shrink from this day!" Then she would straighten herself exclaiming, "Our audiences have nothing to do with what has happened to me. At least I have your story to tell, and you may encourage some people to bear burdens that would otherwise crush them. Think of all that has been done for us and help me to return that good will in service. Remember, Helen, Shelley's lines:

> '*A ray of courage to the oppressed and poor;*
> *A spark, though gleaming on the hovel's hearth,*
> *Which through the tyrant's gilded domes shall soar,*
> *A beacon in the darkness of the Earth;*
> *A sun which, o'er the renovated scene,*
> *Shall dart like Truth where Falsehood yet has been.*' "

So we traveled and lectured, and still my wish to provide for Teacher was unfulfilled.

Owing to our ideas of economics and how wealth should be distributed among the people, we had resolved to keep ourselves going by our lectures, and whenever possible I earned money by writing articles. Andrew Carnegie, our wonderful friend, helped me by bestowing a pension which compensated for my lack of sight and hearing, thus easing my climb up the steep hills of self-support and ultimate happiness. Except for his understanding, drawn from the *res angustae* which he encountered in his boyhood, we two handicapped women could not have kept a home in Wrentham or on Long Island, nor could I have made possible a short holiday to Puerto Rico for Teacher to recover her health—for a time.

At first—this was in the early winter of 1916—Teacher had gone to Lake Placid to be treated for a long siege of coughing brought on by the rundown condition of her body. Polly went with her and I went to Alabama with Mother. Polly wrote that Teacher was unhappy, bored, and irritable

under a trying combination of gloomy weather, loneliness, a tired-out feeling that hung upon her like lead, and the "elderly, stodgy people" surrounding her. I had never seen her submit tamely, even to the authority of doctors, if the circumstances were too disagreeable and I was not surprised when she sent word that she was sailing for Puerto Rico. My heart never throbbed with sincerer gratitude to a benefactor than to Mr. Carnegie when I received her letters, pricked out by herself with a Braille stiletto, full of delight in what she called her "joy isle." The first one fairly took away my breath. She told me that she and Polly had sailed eleven days out of the snow, the piercing winds, and the leaden skies of the Adirondacks. "It seemed incredible, Helen! I had to pinch myself to see if I was awake or dreaming. There, beyond that narrow stretch of rippling, sun-warmed ocean, was Porto Rico, like a great ship afloat in violent waters!"

She raved over the paradisaical loveliness on the island—"a perfect riot of color, blooming trees, and shrubs, roses, clematis, treelike lilies, poinsettias, and many beautiful flowers I never saw before; even the telegraph poles are festooned with a gorgeous parasite. But best of all, the climate is glorious, warm, not hot; I mean it is not cruelly hot; there is always a delightful breeze from the ocean. The houses have no windows, and the natives wear almost nothing. Indeed, the little black children go naked. The houses are painted all colors of the rainbow, which gives a picturesque appearance to the streets."

In those letters I felt blessed. As I deciphered the words in the old-fashioned American Braille, I realized how many years had elapsed since Teacher had used it for my instruction. The slow, tedious process by which she wrote would have been enough to endear those letters, and there was far more—her revived joy in living, the ecstasy with which she drank in the tranquillity and poetry of Puerto Rico, her rapture over the glories she saw, the free flow of her talk that had been the stimulus of my childhood. Her happiness meant more to me than my own, and it comforted me to think again of her as the Annie Sullivan of bygone days, blithe, hungry for adventure and fun, pushing aside curbs on the fullness of life, reading—with difficulty it is true—but enriching herself with El Dorados of delight. Her amusement in trying to make the natives understand her by the sign language, their chorus of "*Si, si, Señora*" and their bewilderment if she shook her head were delectable, which reminds me that I once wondered why Teacher showed no inclination to learn languages. Surely a strong wish would have induced her to add this treasure to her slender store, but I noticed afterwards that her eyes almost refused the task. For instance, it was a severe strain on them for her to look up words for me in Greek, with its

peculiarly shaped letters, to read Goethe's "Hermann and Dorothea," with its "barbarous print" which I could not obtain in Braille, and the difficult type and accents in the plays of Molière, Corneille, and Racine.

Teacher's old independence is recognizable in this extract from the letter I have quoted. "I am going to take a little shack in the hills and keep house. The camp, as we call it, has four rooms. Nothing else . . . I will buy the necessities and manage as best we can. You know it will be some time before I shall be good for much, and I believe I can be happier here than any other place I can afford to go to. The shack is high, and is right in the middle of an orange and grapefruit grove with a pineapple patch in front."

Teacher's decision caused anxiety to us all, and letters full of expostulation and entreaty sped to her. But she had so often got her own way and at the same time had proved the wisdom of her course that I did not say much in opposition. Somehow her next letter, so full of her incorrigible charm and arch playfulness, poured ease into my heart:

> "Now I must say a last word about mother's prejudice against Porto Rico. I wonder that she can have such strong opinions of a place she really doesn't know. I wish you could make her understand in a nice way that I intend to stay here until April. I'll march right into the lion's den rather than return to Placid. To paraphrase Emerson, the chambers of the 'Club' are jails. John Bunyan went to jail rather than attend the parish church. George Fox went to jail rather than take off his hat in the presence of the magistrate, and I'll be martyred somehow before I'll return to the Adirondacks.
>
> "If all people knew what was good for them and acted accordingly this world would be a very different world, though not nearly so interesting. But we don't know what's good for us, and I'm spending my days in experimenting. The experiments are amusing—and sometimes costly, but there's no other way of getting knowledge . . .
>
> "I'm glad I didn't inherit the New England conscience. If I did, I should be worrying about the state of sin I am now enjoying in Porto Rico. One can't help being happy here, Helen—happy and idle and aimless and pagan—all the sins we are warned against. I go to bed every night soaked with sunshine and orange blossoms, and fall to sleep to the soporific sound of oxen munching banana leaves."

By that time Teacher and Polly had settled in the shack, and I can imagine Annie's mirth when several oxen used to march solemnly into her room and gaze at her with deep pools of quiet in their eyes, while Bayamon, a waif dog adopted by her and plumped and bathed to a pleasing effect, barked furiously . . .

The letter continues:

> "We sit on the porch every evening and watch the sunset melt from one vivid color to another—rose, asphodel (do you know what color that is? I thought it was blue, but I have learned that it is golden yellow, the color of Scotch broom) to violet, then deep purple. Polly and I hold our breath as the stars come out in the sky—they hang low in the heavens like lamps of many colors—and myriads of fireflies come out on the grass and twinkle in the dark trees!
>
> ". . . The place has cast a spell over me. Something that has slept in me is awake and watchful. Disembarking at San Juan was like stepping upon my native heath after a long, distressful absence."

How it must have fatigued Teacher to drudge away at the small Braille slate and spell out her beautiful descriptions, especially since she was unfamiliar with the numerous contractions and abbreviations which are necessary for easy reading and writing for the blind. Besides composing, she was busy with household affairs and she was teaching Polly to cook, training her to take her place beside us in every emergency of our private lives and public activities. Polly had looked after our correspondence and our wardrobe while we were on the road and had helped carry on interviews. Now a heart more golden than gold and a proud sense of sharing Teacher's struggle nerved her to augment her capacities so as to help lift the burdens that pressed upon our shoulders then and for years to come. From what Teacher wrote I could see that she was far from well, and I was thankful that Polly was there to make it possible for her to relax and immerse her whole being in the healing calm of her "joy isle."

In another of Teacher's letters to me her soul seemed to spill itself in rapture:

> "The sun is flinging shafts of gold across the floor. The air is sweet with the scent of orange blossoms, and the ground is aflame with the long, ribbon-like pineapple leaves. From the verandah it

looks like a Persian rug, only more brilliant, and not at all inviting to stretch out on. The pineapple is lovely to look at, but it is as comfortable to the touch as—a hedgehog. If I had a grain of the sense of the humming-birds that are circling around the banana tree like a string of fire-opals, I shouldn't have wasted so much time and so many punches on reflections about war. Aren't we foolish to fill our minds with the deviltries of men instead of with the beauties of nature? But we must help each other all we can, and we must try to keep sane, all the more if we believe the world has gone mad."

It was welcome news that the cost of keeping an automobile in Puerto Rico would not be great, and Teacher told me how Harry Lamb, our chauffeur, had brought our car down for very little. "Harry will be a great comfort in many ways, and oh, how we shall enjoy the car here! We really needed it besides, as we had no means of getting anywhere, nor even of getting provisions except through the kindness of not very near neighbors. So come along, I will show you every nook and corner of my Paradise."

Once Teacher wrote me about a very strange experience she was having.

"I constantly seem to remember things, sometimes in a shadowy way, again vividly, of having been here before, or in a similar tropical place. The feel of the hot sun after a downpour of rain stirs and excites me. The green of the sugar cane on the hills is disturbingly familiar, and the blue shadows cast by the shoulder of a mountain where there is a sharp curve of the road make me—well, make me turn my head aside quickly, as if I expected to see someone I know. Isn't it queer? The bayonet-plant makes me want to run, I'm sure I feel the sting of its long, sharp fingers in my flesh! The impression is so strong that I find myself feeling the spot!

"The other night as we were driving home from San Juan a turn of the road brought us close to dark water. A yellow moon was gliding in the east. Harry said, 'Look!' Polly leaned out of the car to see what was there. I couldn't try to see, my whole body was stiff with fear. I knew as certainly as if I saw it with my physical eyes that two naked men were fighting fiercely in that dim light. That is just what was happening. When Polly and Harry told me what they saw, I was cold all over, and filled with a desperate sense of loneliness. Fantastic, isn't it? Whatever the

cause, these impressions seem reminiscent. Who knows—an Irish maiden of the ancient line of Sullivans may have loved a Spanish soldier well, but not wisely. You know the armies against Ireland were often mercenaries—French, Spanish and Dutch—adventurers from every land.

"As the peons work or walk or sit on their doorsteps, they croon in plaintive, rhythmic measure what they are doing, much as you talk to yourself, Helen—'Picking oranges, one by one.' 'Fishing, throwing the line, pulling it in.' 'Walking, one step, then another, short steps, long steps'—the way I taught you adjectives, do you remember?

"I wish it were easier for me to write Braille! The slowness of the process keeps many a thought unspoken. But you know they are in my heart as surely as the golden daffodils you wrote about were underground all winter. My thought will bloom in the spring of our reunion and, like the daffodils, give you a moment of joy."

Her invitation was tempting, but neither Mother nor I felt that we should go because we were sure it would take away the aloofness from the world Teacher so desperately needed.

Some of her letters were a precious stream of counsel, expressing thoughts that have braced me to this day. In reply to what I wrote concerning my worries on her account and our future, she said:

"Helen, you must not worry about the future. I am not going to die yet—I know that I am going to get well. I don't feel ill a bit . . .

"But even if I should die, there is no reason why you should not go on with life . . . If you quietly observe the life about you, and your life in particular, you will see that the future cannot possibly be as hopeless as the beginning seemed before I came to you. Besides, you believe in the loving watchfulness of a Heavenly Father. (I have not that consolation, but I am deeply glad that you have it.) There is always a way out of the most difficult situation if we really want to get out of it."

On another occasion she encouraged me in a method that I still use:

"I am glad you are reading poetry to put your mind in tune. It is a delightful mental exercise to strip off the leaves of a poet's thoughts, expose the fruit to the sun of our own spirits and observe how the flavor is changed by its rays. It is fascinating to watch how the blossoms and fruits of his mind take on different hues, odors and savors when transplanted to another brain." (She remembered as poignantly as I did the distressing mental immobility I experienced in the "Frost King" episode.)

"The game of words is the only game you can play on equal terms with the best of them. Don't get impatient because the game is slow. Remember, the great writers often practice for days before the right phrase or image comes to them . . . you are interested in the questions of the day and the handicapped. You desire to serve mankind. How can you do that, except by writing?"

The cross of Love for one leaning towards agnosticism weighed upon me as I read her reaffirmed disbelief in immortality. I recalled how close to death she had been, and it grieved me that the glorious sense of continuing life was not hers.

"It pains me deeply, Helen, not to be able to believe as you do. It hurts not to share the religious part of your life. To me, as you well know, this life is the important thing. What we do Now and Here matters much because our acts affect other human beings.

"I am fond of the Bible as poetry. I find beauty and delight in it, but I do not believe it was any more inspired by God than all fine writing is—inspired. The future is dark to me. I believe that love is eternal, and that it will eternally manifest itself in life. I use the word 'eternal' in the sense that it is as far as my imagination can reach.

"With you the belief in a future where the crooked places will be made straight is instinctive. Faith in conscious immortality helps you to find life worth living despite your limitations and difficulties. The idea of living forever in some place called Heaven does not appeal to me. I am content that death should be final, except as we live in the memory of others."

How my spirit turns towards Teacher as I quote the above paragraph! I long to assure her that I have loved life for its own sake and because of her coming to me. I accepted the beliefs of the New Church joyously and not on

account of the "consolation" they afforded me for deafness or blindness or any other difficulty. Fundamentally I have always felt that I was using five senses within me, and that is why my life has been full and complete. Now and here I am in the spiritual world where my life will continue to eternity when I wake from this earth-dream; therefore I have never felt that Teacher and I were really apart. I shall not be oppressed by eternity any more than I am by time here. I shall not be curbed by "place" in pursuit of new experiences of emotion and thought. It is sad for me to reflect that Teacher's impatience prevented her from grasping the Absolute in us all that gives validity to the five senses residing in the brain and thus bestows light on what is unseen and music on what is unheard.

Now I have come to some letters from Teacher which have a beautiful significance because they show her deep regard for me as a human being, not as a deaf or blind creature. Never under any circumstances would she have me think or speak or act against my conscience. She counted among my God-given privileges the right to express my views on politics, economics, and religious topics and to hear what others said with equal frankness. She never taunted me with my bodily limitations, she listened with open mind to whatever opinions I adopted, no matter how widely we might differ, and she stood by me in my mature years while I developed my ideas and sought openings for my individuality.

> "You know, dear, you are an impassioned reformer by temperament. We both fight for peace like soldiers on a battlefield. How often have I said that we both make too much of a battlefield of life! Maybe there would be more peace in the world if we cultivated the gentler virtues. It is up to us who think we are in the right to try to be patient and tolerant towards everybody. God Himself cannot make this a kindlier world without us . . .

> "It is a cause of regret of course, that Wilson has not expanded with the expansion of the world. But has the world about him expanded? It seems to be a fact that some minds cannot assimilate anything that is not very personal to themselves. They grow old, and imagine their maturity is wisdom.
>
> "I am not influenced in the least by Upton Sinclair's faith in President Wilson. Sinclair is one of those parlor Socialists that Joe Ettor despises. He would be just the one to be caught by Wilson's verbiage. No, no! Wilson is not a great humanist. All his words

and acts are controlled by a fixed idea. I am not clear as to just what the idea is, but it will be disclosed as events unfold. One thing is certain: everything he does will be for the world's supreme good. Exploitation is always benevolent—it is the Christian pose. I am afraid nothing short of a revelation from above could open my mind and heart to see anything approaching altruism in President Wilson's deeds and many words. I guess I'm one of those people who can't expand."

Her next letter pierces my heart. At the time we entered World War I, my conscience was clear, and I succeeded in retaining my pacifism, but when the second conflict broke out, the issue seemed clear-cut to me—liberty or Hitler—and I did all in my power to help America and the Allies to overthrow a horrible tyranny. Yet I felt as if I had deserted the celestial standard of Peace and I am still troubled by it.

"Of course you can't shut out of your mind the horror of this awful war. There is nothing we can do about it but wait. I think we shall jump into it before many months. I don't see what good that will do, but we, as individuals, have done all we can to keep America out of the maelstrom . . .

"Yes, it is unthinkable that anything so infamous should happen in the age we have been living in and calling enlightened and civilized. You can understand why Bill Haywood derided the idea that any country is civilized. I remember his saying that our high refinement was a thin veneer concealing liars, swindlers, and murderers. I thought at the time that he was talking rather wildly, but now the abominations of this war make his statements appear mild.

"You know, I never have trusted President Wilson. He is an egotist, a tyrant at heart who wants to be Bismarck without Bismarck's intelligence. When the bankers get nervous about their loans, they will force him to enter the war. But you know, Helen, that in history we have found the worst things, the most dreadful disasters served as stepping-stones to a new epoch. The blight and ruin and horror of the French Revolution were necessary to awaken abject peoples to a sense of their human rights. Who knows? This war may topple to earth the brutal stupidities and uglinesses of this huge, materialized plutocracy. The waste of capital may be so prodigious that capitalism will not be able to rise

again. The sacrifice will be beyond calculation, but perhaps the benefits will also be enormous. Oh, dear, what a dismal letter this is! And oh, how out of key it is with my surroundings!"

My heart was electrified when Teacher enclosed in her next communication an open letter to President Wilson from Romain Rolland. No, I did not expect that there would be any response to Rolland's generous plea, but it confirmed afresh my faith in the desire of humane men everywhere for peace.

The peoples are breaking their chains. The hour which you anticipated and wished for is striking. May it not strike in vain! From one end of Europe to another there is rising among the peoples the will to take control once again of their own destinies and to unite for the purpose of the regeneration of Europe. Across the political frontiers their hands are seeking each other in order to join together. Yet between them are ever the open abysses and misunderstandings. A bridge must be built across this chasm. The chains of that ancient fatalism which drives these peoples to national wars and lets them hurl themselves blindly upon one another for mutual destruction must be shattered. Alone they cannot do so. And they cry for help. But to whom shall they address themselves?

You alone, Mr. President, still enjoy a universal moral authority among all those who are now burdened with the terrible honor of guiding the policies of the peoples. Answer the appeal of these pathetic hopes. Take these hands which are extended and help them in a reunion. Help these groping peoples to find their way again, to found the new charter of freedom and unity, whose principles they are passionately seeking for.

Consider—Europe threatens to disintegrate into the spheres of hell. The peoples in all lands have little confidence in the ruling classes. At this hour you are still the only one who can speak to and be heard by the peoples, the bourgeoisies of all peoples, on both sides; you are the only one who can today be a mediator between them. (Can you do so tomorrow, also?) If this mediator fails, the divided human masses, without counterpoise, will be driven by fate to excesses, the peoples to bloody anarchy, and the parties of the old order to bloody reaction. Class war, race war, war between the races of yesterday, war between the races that

are forming today, blind social battles that seek to satisfy only the hatreds and common greeds, the raving dreams of an hour of life without a tomorrow.

Heir of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln! Do not espouse the cause of a single party or a single people but rather take in hand the cause of all! Invite the representatives of the peoples to the Congress of Humanity. Preside there with all the authority which your high moral conscience and the mighty future of tremendous America insure for you. Speak, speak to all! The world hungers for a voice that transcends the borders of the races and classes. Be the arbiter of the free peoples. And may the future greet you with the name of the Reconciler.

The letters from Puerto Rico reflect the only part of Teacher's life from which the perpetual conflict between outward circumstances and the ideal world was absent—even then a world war intruded. I do not wonder at the extreme reluctance with which she left her "joy isle" to return to her care-laden environment. She knew that the changes and vicissitudes which she had once loved to explore would not be open to her. She knew that she had no way to fill the gaps left in her world by her old enemy—analysis. She dreaded the details of activity circumscribed by the increasing cloudiness of her vision, and she dreaded the struggles with her own stormy temperament.

XII

It was only the hope of providing for Teacher that led me to Hollywood to have a film made of my life story. She was not fully recovered and could not lecture for more than a year, but working on the picture restored some of her equilibrium and kept her mind fully occupied. It was summer 1918 and most of the days were hot, but the nights were cool. An unfailing delight were the geraniums growing like shrubs, the gorgeous poppies, and the poinsettias which Teacher said reminded her of my soul climbing to new horizons. As we made our way to the studio, the unexpected greeted us—an expedition of Eskimos and their sledge dogs over unmapped regions of Alaska, an old-fashioned pony express dashing across country, or a party of climbers on skis.

Between the scenes in which we posed Teacher talked and joked with the director and the other workers. Full of the symbolic schemes which she shared with me, she argued with Dr. Liebfreed, the representative who paid the bills, and extracted iridescent promises from him that he would be a Hermes to us in our efforts to find new ways to capture the interest and sympathy of people who were to view the picture. Those promises remained unfulfilled, and whenever he grew purple with rage over the mounting costs, she would patiently but unmercifully remind him of the breach of his word. Then the torrent of his anger was loosed, and Teacher would be seized with her old-time recklessness. He would interrupt their battle of words, turn to preach love to me, then return to the attack. He wanted a commercial "thriller" and Teacher and I asked for an historical record, and those two points of view appeared irreconcilable. It was a grim comedy, but, though Teacher saw red and her temper ran away with her, she stood unswervingly for my right to try untraveled regions of experiment and extend the borders of my understanding of earthly affairs.

I hoped that the peculiar circumstances of Hollywood would bring out more revelations of her real self, but she was most reserved when we met Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mrs. Carrie Jacobs Bond. Everybody was friendly, but in their compliments to me I was unintentionally left with a defrauded feeling. Few, if any, spoke of Teacher

as one who deserved special praise for having ploughed furrows through my limitations and given me the precious harvest of my human heritage. However, Teacher was her exuberant, charming self with Charlie Chaplin. They had both endured poverty and the deformations it creates in body and soul. They had both struggled for education and social equality, and as success had crowned their efforts they had poured themselves out in tenderness to the unprivileged. Both were shy and unspoiled by their victories over fate. So it was natural that they should understand each other and form one of the friendships that afford solace to great artists in a world too often unfaithful to the children of genius. But it was rarely that, with all my silent watchfulness and desire for her as an individual, my vanity of her (if love can be called that) was satisfied. If she thought that in my superfluity of public approbation I was always happy or resigned, she was blinded by her love for me. It is a sense of fair play and not ingratitude that leads me into a survey of the stupid judgments with which Teacher's work with me was burdened.

I have already written of my plagiarism in "The Frost King." In connection with that, the sin I cannot forgive is that Annie Sullivan was charged with having warped my mind. During my studies at Radcliffe College some persons who called themselves "Christian" and "friends of the blind" strewed doubt and suspicion along my way because I was without sight or hearing and, without mentioning Teacher's name, implied that I was being forced to take up subjects which my mind could not be capable of appreciating.

Even in the happy Wrentham days, when for the joy of it I wrote on the Shakespeare-Bacon dispute, taking the side of Bacon, friends like Richard Watson Gilder of the *Century Magazine* were shocked. Mr. Gilder had permitted me to write *The World I Live In* and "The Song of the Stone Wall" for the *Century*. The first was highly controversial, yet he accepted it. But when I sent him the article about Shakespeare and Bacon, he expressed the fear that I might be injured by speaking my views publicly on such a subject. He even blamed Teacher and John for letting me write the article! How could he dream that they would interfere with my right as a free woman to say whatever I liked! I mention this not on account of its importance but because it was the first time that I had let outsiders know I would think for myself.

The chief restraint against which I chafed was being confined to two topics. The first was myself, of which I had grown heartily tired, and the second was the blind. Teacher would hardly let me say anything about her

even in *The Story of My Life*. In 1906 I was disappointed when I was selected as a member of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind instead of Teacher with her long experience in work for the sightless. It troubled me that I, not Teacher, who all those years had had firsthand knowledge of methods to assist the handicapped, was consulted. I was surprised that the many visitors at our home in Wrentham should discuss with me the widely different problems of the deaf, the blind, or the deaf-blind instead of seeking the counsel of the skilled teacher who could answer their questions competently.

When Teacher and I first settled down in Wrentham, I was supposed to work for the blind and not for the saving of sight. The blind alone would have been sufficient to keep me fully occupied. I had had a chance to live my own life for only a few years and I still looked to Teacher for wisdom when the complicated problems of the blind tumbled upon me. We had long talks together as different questions arose, and John read books and reports, some of them in French and German, about how the problems of the sightless were approached in America, in England, France, and Germany. Let it be remembered, the movement for the blind was comparatively new in America, and hardly anyone, except those in the few schools for the blind, knew much about the methods of teaching them. The more I investigated the situation, the more I felt my inadequacy. The public thought, and still thinks, of the blind as one class. As a matter of fact, no two blind individuals are alike any more than the seeing are alike; they need almost as many different kinds of help as there are blind people. There is the training of babies without sight and a different way to train children with limited vision or none; there is the employment of the adult blind in special workshops or in their homes; there is the care for the aged and infirm blind. And there is the duty of the people and the responsibility of the government in meeting their ever shifting needs. Is it any wonder that Teacher and I often had to wrestle with a new phase of the work before I could speak at public gatherings or plead with legislatures in behalf of the handicapped? And does it seem strange that I should regard Teacher, with her rich experience among the blind and her ample resources, as the woman Nestor in our work together and myself as a hand maiden of a Divine Plan of Good we sensed from afar?

Now I want to say here that a time when *Ophthalmia neonatorum*—blindness in the newborn—was a subject forbidden in society, I went of my own accord into the movement for wiping out that disease. I took the step also because I was moved by Teacher's suffering from her eyes. Yet a dear friend of mine blamed me—and Teacher—for the articles I wrote and the addresses I made on preventable blindness! "Why do you bother your head

about such futile questions?" she said. "It is human nature to ruin babies' eyes through sheer carelessness, and you know how hopeless any attempt is to change human nature." I argued with her long and to no purpose. The water has flowed under many bridges since, and such prejudice seems incredible to us who know that today international congresses are held each year to discuss better methods of combating all blindness that can be prevented.

Some of the time I could laugh at the absurd concepts which were, and still are, circulated about the deaf-blind and the impossibility of their knowing anything about the world and its affairs; they knocked the wind out of flowery compliments to me as "a goddess" or "a saint" or "an archangel appearing in darkness." But I loved Teacher, and many things happened to her that love would not tolerate.

When I was appointed to the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind I felt a special interest in the fight which the state was waging against prejudice and ignorance so as to safeguard the right of the adult blind to be trained and placed in positions of self-support. I remembered that Teacher had been a pupil at Perkins and that it was Dr. Howe, the first director, who had planned an establishment that would employ all the capable adult blind of the state. This constructive idea had not been carried as far as it should have been and Teacher and I exerted ourselves to the utmost for its fuller realization. Suddenly I received a terrible shock. It happened that I was acquainted with Mr. F. B. Sanborn, the editor of the Springfield *Republican*. He used to be a member of the board of directors who had charge of the almshouse at Tewksbury, and it was through him that Annie Sullivan was brought to Perkins. One would have thought that, faced with the courage with which Annie had struggled for her education and the humanitarian work to which she had devoted herself, he would have honored her reticence concerning Tewksbury, but I was disillusioned. After I had spoken to the Massachusetts Legislature about the needs of the adult blind, loyal friends informed me that Mr. Sanborn had insulted Teacher. He brought up her humble origin against her and dwelt on her "ingratitude" to the institution which had accepted "a state charge" as a pupil. Teacher never said a word to me about the affair, but, contrary to her wishes, I poured out my indignation in a letter to Mr. Sanborn. To this day I cannot excuse his mean-spirited behavior. Little did he remember that, however impatient we may be with our fellow men, we are all bound together and live for and by one another. Our chance of worthy accomplishment suffers by conduct that lowers human dignity. It was a bitter lesson for me to see how one who had

worshipped the Ideal with Emerson and Thoreau could draw from it scorn instead of good will to the poor and the unfortunate.

This terrible sense of the cruelty and ugliness that human nature often exhibits did not, as it were, seize me by the throat during the lecture period from 1914 to 1916. Our audiences everywhere were kind, and I admired the patience with which they listened to my defective speech, but I could not escape a feeling that Teacher was not fully appreciated. Since she had a natural gift for public speaking, her part on the program became the principal one, and I was happy to see that her precious light—her work—could no longer be hidden under a bushel. From their few indifferent words in reply to questions I asked of the audience I knew that they did not care for what I said about peace or the structure of society or the labor movement; they wanted only to hear about the blind or perhaps a message on happiness. However, it gratified me that they should listen to Teacher. I imagined how, as she stood on the platform, simple and modest, her message on true education for both normal and sense-marred children would go forth to

> *Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth,*
> *Ashes and sparks*

and quicken fresh thoughts throughout the world, but disappointment followed me from place to place. Although nice compliments were lavished upon her, I perceived that most audiences were not keen enough to grasp her ideas. The fact was made evident that comparatively few realize what a miracle language is, and that fewer have as genuine a love of it as Dr. Bell and Teacher did. She never permitted me to express the wish that she had been more widely and warmly recognized, and if I even looked rebellious, she threatened that she would not lecture again.

Even among the socialist and other liberal groups where Teacher and I felt more at home, I sensed the lack of intelligent appreciation of her work. It was years before I passed out of my youthful impatience sufficiently to understand that ideas on education, economics, government, science, or any subject contemplated through the ages are of slow growth. Like mighty sequoias they send their roots inch by inch down into human consciousness and spread their branches of enlightenment little by little into the wide skies of thought. Teacher had found this out long ago, but, despite the tragedy of the World War I, our loss of faith in some of the radicals, and her own moods of discouragement, she stood unflinchingly by me in my efforts for the disinherited and the impoverished and for peace. Her first and last thought was that as a member of humanity I should attain complete freedom

of will. She told me whether my attitudes towards social questions were approved or censured by the best-informed, and I accepted the responsibility of free choice. In this respect she was not swayed by her individualism as some people are whom I have known, and whose egocentricity, consciously or unconsciously, destroys the personalities that they profess to develop.

At first everything seemed to be against me in my desire to provide for Teacher. We had gambled for big stakes in Hollywood and lost. Then we turned to vaudeville. My voice, which was an essential part of our act, had not improved as much as I hoped it would. I did not expect to be spared by the audiences any more than we had been in the past, and I almost lost heart when I reflected that if we failed, it would be Teacher, more than I, who would suffer from the snarl of the tiger and the tooth of the wolf. But circumstances favored us. The audiences, even when there were "roughnecks" among them, showed pleasure in our act and took kindly my message on the wonderful changes that would occur in the world if people only realized that there are enough brain power and good will to heal the avoidable great misfortunes of mankind. I was as proud to earn a living through a dignified act as Madame Schumann-Heink had been, and it did not matter to me that super-delicate sensibilities were shocked. Our manager, Mr. Harry Weber, smoothed the way for us with unusual thoughtfulness, and I succeeded at last in acquiring the modest fund for Teacher which had been in my dreams since I was a young girl. I was especially grateful to Mr. Weber for knowing how to handle our critics. When they objected that I should give my talk in lecture halls and churches, but offered no practical solution for our finances, he would merely ask, "Will you pay them what we do?" and we did not hear from them again. It was also an advantage to us that music occupied a larger part in our act and that the performance lasted twenty minutes instead of an hour and a half. Besides, we could stay a week in one place, and we were not required, as formerly in the lectures, to accept the well-meant but wearisome hospitality of those who engaged us.

On the other hand, those two years were a fearful ordeal for Teacher. She had never relished public speaking, although people everywhere told me that it was a delight to listen to her voice. Then too, every time she appeared over the footlights she suffered agony in her eyes. Besides, her large spirit chafed against the confinement and the many trivialities she saw and heard. She amazed me with her sense of justice whenever she spoke of the tiresome hours she spent in vaudeville, but I knew well how her sensibility gasped at the commonplaces that amused ordinary audiences. Her life seemed always

to turn and turn in circles of futility as a fish in an aquarium, and her fits of melancholy did not help her. In an anguish of endeavor her soul shed

. . . drops of fire
All unquenchable by tears.

She hated the quarrels, jealousies, and pettinesses that are to be found in every profession, art, and occupation. She met persons with whom she lost patience because they only half believed their own creeds and preachments, who seldom or never embodied their resolves in action. When they talked with her, she would cry out, "No matter what happens, keep on beginning and failing. Each time you fail, start all over again, and you will grow stronger until you find that you have accomplished a purpose—not the one you began with, perhaps, but one that you will be glad to remember." And who shall count the innumerable times that she tried, failed, and conquered?

It causes me remorse as well as admiration to reflect that Teacher went on her vaudeville tours at an age when she should have rested. It also saddens me to remember how I troubled her with my propensity to answer awkward questions with little or no reserve. Her health was deteriorating, and she was apt to stumble unless Polly walked by her side. Again and again she caught a severe cold—laryngitis or bronchitis. Oculists in the various cities where the Orpheum Circuit took us examined her eyes and declared that she must give them respite, or she would lose her sight altogether. She would not take their orders, but struggled on until in Toronto, during 1921, she went to bed on account of a nasty attack of influenza. Polly, who had not been prepared for such an emergency, managed to act as her understudy before the footlights. Teacher recovered sufficiently to go on for a while, but at the beginning of 1922 bronchial trouble forced her to stop, as she could not speak above a whisper. Polly had mastered the situation wonderfully under Teacher's instruction and was able to work with me on the stage. There could not have been a more dramatic proof of Teacher's love than her lessening my physical dependence upon her and making it possible for me to continue my stage work with someone else. For a time I felt quite lost, missing the chief inspiration of my act, but I dared not mourn after the heroic sacrifice she had gone through for my sake.

XIII

It was a sad homecoming for us three from vaudeville to Forest Hills. Teacher gave me a most touching sign of her appreciation of what I had done to enlarge her "narrow means" of self-support, but I was not deceived. It was too evident that the rich joy of living had ceased for her. The light that used to shine out of her face had been quenched. She ached all over for the independence she had enjoyed when she could walk and drive by herself and read books unaided. It was not the change of living in a new world that she felt but rather a brutal fate reducing her powers. I do not mean that she was really overcome. She braced herself for gaiety and stimulating talk every time she entertained friends in our home. She could not bear anyone who thought it was wise and clever to be gloomy. Her scorn fell upon those who peeped between the curtains of life's shrine, found it empty and went away grumbling, never suspecting the dimness of their own spiritual vision. But she could not reconcile herself to the fact that her neglected, overdriven "Ariels of vision" would sooner or later be unable to serve her. She had always believed what Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe had said after being director of the Perkins Institution for sixteen years: "To suppose there can be a full and harmonious development of character without sight is to suppose that God gave us that noble sense quite superfluously."

Teacher did not deny that there were compensations, and she remembered Milton's superb sonnet on his blindness with the words, "they also serve who only stand and wait." But from her point of view the compensations were not sufficient for the long night of shadows. She was one of the sensitive spirits that feel shamed by blindness. It humiliates them like a stupid blunder or a deformed limb. They do not count on the compassionate understanding of others, and they shrink from the comments of those who watch their struggle against misfortune. Blindness is a blow to their freedom and dignity, especially when they have always been active and industrious.

If Teacher had been rightly trained as a child in ways suited to the dark, she would have developed techniques that would have preserved her independence longer, but even so she carried frustrations of which only

those nearest her were aware. People insensible to that fact were sometimes guilty of unintentional cruelty. Even with friends eager to read to her, she could not resign herself to what happened afterwards—her inability to find passages she wanted in ink-print books. She feared to become wholly a burden and troublesome to those who cared for her. Since she felt so keenly in memory the darkness where she had once dwelt, her brain was "fierce with light," and she could not easily accept a return of her exile from that light.

But as always Teacher pushed those *bêtes noires* out of her mind, and in a day or two was hot in pursuit of a work of good or a path to happiness. "What if I said this or that about the futility of living?" she would exclaim impatiently. "You know what a chameleon I am. Let us bear each other's burdens! Let us adjust our lives to the actual. Let us sow without counting the grain. Let us be useful to someone else. Let us convert what senses we have into beneficent energy. Then we shall think less of defending ourselves against circumstances and more of creating sunshine around us—and perhaps I shall succeed in making my experiences god-like and understand the wisdom of the joys and sorrows of which our days are woven."

Just to show that Teacher was the soul of good-fellowship, no matter how perverse the impulses that might besiege her, I will put into words what she tried to tell me: "Good-fellowship checks a too harsh judgment. Left to oneself, one's intellect is ruthless, and one frets at the stupidity of most minds. Life becomes dull to highly cultivated people unless they have poetic vision. To those who think arrogantly everything common is a swamp of boredom. But good-fellowship softens the unfriendliness of perception, and does not hold up for undue criticism the shortcomings of the general intelligence. It is not haughty, but looks with kindly humor on the idiosyncrasies and imperfections of mankind. It stands a gentle witness before worldly wisdom so that others need not suffer. Good-fellowship displays a lovely flower or a precious fruit on a tree of slow growth, a gleam of splendor where all else seems commonplace, an opal gracing the drab whole. Good-fellowship overcomes its dislikes so as to encourage and set free hidden worth. 'The smoking flax shall he not quench.' " In these new thoughts appears a greater measure of Teacher's spiritual ennoblement during her work in vaudeville.

As in the lecture days and on the stage, Teacher kept herself occupied in all sorts of ingenious ways after our return to Forest Hills. While Polly ran the house, cooked, answered the telephone and the doorbell, and looked after our accounts, Teacher supervised my voice practice. Oh, if I could only

have continued it hour after hour! If my fingers could only have seized the fairy of sound that gives up its secret to the ear as I read her lips and repeated my own words after her! No other power on earth could have had Teacher's will to remove the two great obstacles—monotony and lack of inflection in my speech. She had a patience for this which she could not equal in anything else. She would read aloud to me a short poem or a bit of prose (my arm fagged too much when I held it up to get an article from her lips), and I would say it over and over, trying to catch the "ring" and the up and down movement of her articulation. She was pleased when I put humor or earnestness into my speech, but the "ring" and the accent were forever eluding me. She would use all kinds of similes about the ripples of a brook, the full-throated ease of a bird, or the notes of a musical instrument to suggest what she was striving for. I would at times have the sensation of words round, smooth, and pleasant in my throat, and fancy that I might succeed; then she would tell me that my tone was sweet, but the words did not come out distinctly. She would entreat me to practice morning, afternoon, and evening up in the attic where we slept. I wanted to passionately, and I could not. Gone were the spare hours in Wrentham when I could experiment in reading aloud to myself, hum, try to sing, and put my hand on different kinds of materials to see how they reacted to my vocal vibrations. I am probably indulging in wishful thinking, but it seems to me that if we could have stayed quietly in Wrentham a longer period and had fewer lecture engagements, I might have advanced a good deal further towards normal speech. Our wanderings from one end of the country to the other took all our time, and the hurried rehearsal of my speeches before the lectures afforded us no leisure for the careful and perhaps constructive practice which might have rendered my voice pleasanter and more intelligible.

Once we were settled in Forest Hills, the depressive effect of my unsatisfied ambition to speak normally and my uneasiness as I stepped on the platform had lessened the enthusiasm with which I could once have tackled the speech difficulties. The alluring goal of a natural voice now seemed beyond attainment. For Teacher's sake I would gladly have shut myself up and practiced until I was exhausted, but other demands took all our energies. Our work at home was redoubled trying to fill the gaps of information about the blind, the deaf, questions of peace and war, books just published, socialism, and so forth. Besides, there were literally thousands of unanswered letters piled up in the house, most of them in ordinary writing or typewritten. Polly could not attend to them, as we had no servant. It was darling Teacher with her sick eyes who picked out the most urgent ones for

me. Polly sent a line of reply to some of the others whenever she could escape from her household duties. So the hours sped by in the vain attempt to lessen my burden of correspondence, and my speech that should have come first was almost neglected.

But Teacher would not let me worry endlessly over the "bad fairies" that had defeated my best intentions. She remembered how, while we were motoring somewhere in the mountains, we had slept under the firs and how we delighted in the fragrances of the night and the stars shining overhead. She planned a novel sort of trip through New England in the summer of 1924, while Polly was on a vacation in Scotland, and Harry Lamb went with us. In the automobile we carried a new kind of tent with mattresses, a stove, an icebox, and the mistress of our hearts—our red-gold Great Dane, Sieglinde. It was a joy to me to notice how Teacher's interest in life revived as we fled from the heat and the oppression of a long drought to the friendly green Berkshires. As we lay in our tent after a delicious supper of steak and camp potatoes and marzipan, Teacher said to me, "It is wonderful just to breathe this air so pure that only God's Hand can pour it. And there are

> '*The owl and chipmunk at the night's cool doors*
> *Talking to silence*'."

In the morning, while we were sitting outside the tent in a pasture, some cows gathered around me. I smelt their sweet breath, and one of them actually licked my face. Nothing could have pleased Teacher more than my happy, direct contacts with nature's children. We had our ablutions in the cold stream nearby, and the shiver of its fast-flowing waves was a vibration of the simple life that I loved. A keener enchantment awaited us when Harry drove us up into Maine and early one morning we slid into the rushing water of the Kennebec River. Of course we could not swim, we just clung to the rocks while huge logs shot past. In those exciting moments we both felt through imagination the adventures of the explorers who discovered the Kennebec and the fierce greatness of the lumber industry. Our next camping place was at Moosehead Lake, where the woodsmen greeted us in their free, hearty manner. The smell of new-mown hay and wild roses drifted down to us as we sat sunning after our plunge in the lake. I was disappointed that we did not glimpse a moose, and so was Teacher, we had heard so much about the moose and the caribou in Maine and Canada. As we penetrated the deep fir and pine woods, I thought of Thoreau's marvelous descriptions of that region, and the "standing darkness" of trees was something I could really grasp without sight.

Afterwards we caravanned along the St. Lawrence towards Montreal and Quebec. Teacher and Harry, who could spell, told me about the quaint shrines and little statuettes of Jesus by the roadside. When they described the many different colors of the houses, I began to think they were "seeing things." In Teacher's serene enjoyment of the tour I sensed a peace that I wished might be lasting. Every time I touched her face, my own happiness was complete because life was sweet to her. Despite romantic discomforts and deficiencies, she was glad to be free from the ever haunting cares and distasteful tasks that made up her life in Forest Hills. All the immensity of earth, sky, and water was ours. We could talk, laugh, or be silent, we were far from all society, and we could dress as we liked and indulge in daydreaming for hours together. I was released for a while from the remorseful thought (she never in her life suggested it) that perhaps her individuality was subordinated to my own. There was nothing more gratifying to us than the sense of equality between two souls communing in the breadth, depth, and height of the universe as well as in love. That is why the joy we shared equally in the beauty and tranquillity of that trip remains to me inexpressibly precious.

The weather had been ideal, but as we were returning homeward through New Hampshire, the winds from the four corners of the heaven conspired against us. We had scarcely lain down for the night when they attacked us with demoniac fury. The tent door was forced open, and we held on for dear life to our blankets. The poles began to snap, and poor Sieglinde howled piteously. We feared that before daybreak the winds would blow us and the tent into Lake Winnepesaukee. In frantic haste we threw on our clothes, flung Sieglinde and everything else into the car, and Harry dashed us off at top speed. The winds pursued us unmercifully until we reached a quiet spot way down in Massachusetts. Having rested a little, we cooked breakfast, and Teacher consoled Sieglinde with bacon and eggs and buttered toast. We lay around all day, and the night passed without incident. Before falling asleep I pushed my fingers under the tent and caught the noiseless rustle of the grasses and tiny notes of insects crawling or winging their way through the stillness, and I breathed out a tender farewell to the gypsy days that had caused my heart to beat high. Teacher said she was not sorry to be nearing home, but I shall remember how full those days were of the spiritual fire and light that give birth to the fire and light of life.

The outing was the most beneficial preparation that we could have had for the strenuous years that followed. The American Foundation for the Blind was started in 1921—the clearinghouse of information concerning the blind that all enlightened workers for the sightless had long desired. Teacher

and I were still in vaudeville when the Foundation first approached us. It was out of the question to break our engagements then, but in 1923 we began to speak at meetings here and there around New York. Of course I had had much experience lecturing as an individual and acting in vaudeville, and this had fitted me for broader service to the handicapped. But as yet all was "light on the goal and darkness on the way." I confess that I shrank from the prospect, and so did Teacher. When I first spoke before the Massachusetts Legislature urging opportunity for the adult blind to be trained for self-support, we were both young women full of aspiring ideals, and I was sure that all the able-bodied blind in the state would be reached quickly and warmly accepted as well-qualified to work in many occupations. Teacher foresaw slow progress, as there was no organized effort to educate the public to the problems of the blind, which is the only way to obtain effective assistance for them. It was pathetic to see a few ambitious blind—more than in the past, it is true, but still few—working for unsatisfactory wages in a small number of trades and crafts and very rarely able to obtain admission into factories with the seeing. Always the dream of a brighter world for the blind burned before me, and I followed it as a pioneer, but I did not expect to live to see so much of the desert of blindness as I have seen since then become "bright, lucid, blooming, a little island of Creation amid the circumambient void."

But the Foundation was a novel movement for us in some ways. It has been one of the experiences that are so uneven and jolting that one must use all the philosophy, sportsmanship, and endurance one has to weather them. Life's sudden, strange situations throw one pell-mell into crises that must be faced unhesitatingly, and that means a quick pulling together of all one's faculties, reorienting one's thoughts, modifying one's relations with others, and changing one's mode of life. That is what happened to Teacher almost to the end of her life, and especially while she shared in the Foundation's activities.

If Teacher had been left free to choose her destiny, she would never have limited herself to the cause of the blind. It was only because she saw a chance of usefulness to them that she joined her wealth of mind and heart to my endeavors. And it was not my own blindness that drew me to them nor any special tenderness for any afflicted group but the love of the common humanity which throbs in the blind and me. They have mental sight, and so have I, and they are put here on earth as other human beings are to discover means with their own energies and the help of others to make their lives worth living. I am so constituted that I would have worked with equal zest for the crippled or the poor or the oppressed.

Teacher's personality appeared to me in a new aspect during our first years of work under the Foundation. She was often consulted by the members of the staff, and I observed that her comments, criticisms, and incisive wit had a marked influence upon the policies they pursued. One of the members was a splendid, devoted worker from Massachusetts who had progressive ideas about the adult blind, who enthusiastically accorded to Teacher her rightful place as a pilot star in the night of the sightless, and who believed that really to solve their problems they must find out about life for themselves. Teacher knew that the blind must learn all they can about the life of the sighted from the faculty open to them—touch—since the word "sight" can mean nothing to them unless they had seen before the light was extinguished in their eyes. Teacher did not tell her little pupil about tangible objects; she put them into her hand and gave their names—dog, cat, chicken, pigeon, book, watch, telescope, and so forth, and she placed my fingers on her face with its infinitely varied expressions. Thus she let everything I could touch display its qualities to me.

Teacher was among those who first perceived the harmful nature of the chief stumbling block to the sightless—pity. Pity had created schools for the blind—but those buildings were called asylums, not schools. Such an attitude almost neutralized an act of genuine good will. There may be poetry in tears shed over the unfortunate and in the overwhelming sense of fate over human beings, but that is not the way God wishes us to lift their spirits above the infirmities of the flesh. A person who is severely impaired never knows his hidden sources of strength until he is treated like a normal human being and encouraged to try to shape his own life. That is why enlightened friends of the blind turned to Teacher for advice and suggestions.

She believed in education as Education, not as alms to any group, not even the feeble-minded. As I have said elsewhere, she was never conscious of my limitations. I was to her a little explorer of life, and she did not pet nor praise me unless my efforts equaled the best of which normal children are capable. She devised means for me to explore and was not unduly alarmed if I ran into a laundry basket or bumped my head or scratched my hands picking blackberries or roses. She knew that I would learn to protect myself against the hostile elements of nature and even make sport of them. All the persevering, thinking blind who are permitted to experiment have worked out this principle of self-reliance and have shown how beneficial it is in obtaining some of life's fullest satisfactions. The examples are numerous, and some of them heroic, and now they are increasing all over the world, but I am writing about Teacher, and this is a special pleasure because for the first time I am free to portray certain facets of her complex personality as they

appeared to me. For a long time the burning of my first manuscript on her life seemed to me an irreparable draining away of my powers, but a day came when I realized that the book over which I had grieved was not, after all, the kind I wanted to write about her. I had begun the manuscript under her dictatorial supervision. Very seldom did she give me free rein in describing her trials and illnesses and she never let me refer to the frequent indifference towards her as my guide to the treasures of light and beauty. My affection for her has not changed, but I am free as I write this to speak of our two separate souls, minds, hearts, and strengths. I picture her, who lent her humanity to create mine, as fulfilling her destiny on earth and following a happy path of life in another world, from which in critical moments she sends down a smile of approval to me or a gesture of warning.

The situation that confronted Teacher and me in 1923, when we started the work I have pursued ever since, was a chaos of good intentions for the blind. Although it is known that unity in education among the seeing is essential in the system of writing and reading, there were five different systems in raised type for the blind, and the adherents of each system fought for it with uncompromising fierceness as the one and only path to salvation. Teacher and I listened to those discussions until we were worn out, and tried in vain to persuade the combatants to lay down their arms and outline a modus vivendi to carry on the work for the blind in general. The party spirit boiled over to such an extent that we could not broach the subject in open meeting.

Until 1915, when the committee afterward known as the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness was formed, there was no organization in the United States caring for the blind as a whole, unless we regard the American Printing House for the Blind as national. Dr. Harry Best's *The Blind, Their Condition and the Work Being Done for Them*, was the only really informative treatise for me in my preparation of articles, and how Teacher managed to read any of it to me I cannot guess, except that with her wide knowledge, intuitive good sense, and her amazing gift of grasping the meat of a book she did not need to go through it from beginning to end.

There existed private agencies, such as the Lighthouse for the Blind in New York City under Mrs. Rufus Graves Mather, whom I first knew as Miss Winifred Holt, but, speaking generally, the American workshops and associations for the blind were few and scattered, and the schools were mostly isolationist in their methods. Few workers in any locality were informed about what the others were doing. Consequently much money,

time, and good will were wasted in unorganized effort. A few states had passed and enforced laws to protect the eyes of newborn babies and older children, but the struggle of the blind, on the whole, was beset by persistent frustrations. And it was at the earnest call of the blind themselves that the American Foundation for the Blind came into existence. I should be astonished that it happened at all in those turbulent days following the World War I if my faith were not rooted deep in the sure though gradual growth of human co-operation and wisdom. Teacher greeted the Foundation as a symbol of great events that might yet transform the lot of the blind and perhaps make their usefulness equal to that of their seeing fellows. Her thought was this: as radium under proper treatment becomes spontaneously luminous in the dark, so the philosophy of service to the handicapped endows them with light in their capacities that can be realized, not because of their handicap but because they are human beings with minds to be educated and powers to be trained for skillful performance and purposeful, happy living. Revealed to their better selves they can rise above the status of "afflicted creatures" and transfigure their somber manhood and womanhood into the splendor and dignity of God's children.

In one sense Teacher's and my work has behind it the ideas and endeavors of the ages, just as the cliffs of England are composed of the shells left by millions upon millions of tiny creatures, but in another sense Teacher was one of the pioneers in civilization for the blind and the deaf, and I must keep her image constantly before me as an elixir of strength for the long, long trail extending into the future. That is an approach to the ideal which she instilled into me—the usefulness of whole souls in imperfect bodies, their justification in the Book of Creation and at the same time an homage most acceptable to God.

Joining the Foundation was to both of us entering a new world. It is true, we had been accustomed to do work as individuals—answering letters about where blind adults could be trained and find positions of self-support, making suggestions to the parents of children without sight as to how best to minister to their needs, agitating for prevention of blindness, and I could send heartening messages to blind students struggling through college, lend them the embossed books I had used at Radcliffe, and name the libraries from which they could obtain more. But the circumstances were very different when Teacher and I placed ourselves under the Foundation, which was slowly forging unity out of dissension. Again we journeyed up and down and athwart the vast continent, stopping only a day or two in each of the cities we visited and holding meetings where the objectives that the Foundation wished to emphasize were explained to the public. A clergyman

of the city or town called down a blessing upon the undertaking, one or two prominent citizens urged the cause of the blind of America upon the generosity of the audience, someone from the Foundation outlined the national program, and I appealed to the people to picture to themselves what it would be like not to see, and to give as much as they could for the training and employment of the capable blind. A blind musician of ability who traveled in our party played while the money was being collected. I was moved by the spontaneity with which the people almost everywhere responded—newspapers and magazines, some of which conveyed my message intelligently and without the destructive element of pity, well-known men and women in all spheres of influence, large donors to whom I wrote, and even children who denied themselves pennies and dimes which they could have spent on their little pleasures. The years we spent building up the endowment fund of the organization, mostly with small contributions from those whose loving heartbeats are the true wealth of a nation, were unforgettable.

At the same time Teacher and I felt real shame to appear as mendicants at the doors of plenty, even though we were laboring with all our might to raise the blind from beggary. There was always a volcano of resentment within her because, despite all praise and high-sounding professions of philanthropy, the fact remained that the blind were looked down upon as they had been through the ages. I do not mean that the blind in this country were willfully relegated to the haunts of misery and humiliation, but the habit of regarding them as objects of charity was incredibly hard to break. It was almost impossible for the Foundation, with its rich ammunition of proofs, to persuade employers to give work even to blind persons well-trained and able to take their place with the seeing. In places like Chicago gifted blind musicians found it difficult to secure engagements because it was thought that those who came to hear them would be too overcome with pity to enjoy the playing, and we kept up the long fight against the ignorance and prejudice which encompassed the blind of America, and still debars them from the goodness of life in the greater part of the world.

There were gallant soldiers of good who stood by us through those years. But Teacher was unique in the prodigious energy with which she flung herself into the fight for the advantages that I should have in winning the victory. I could not avoid sensing a mysterious power that drove her on, and I would ask, “Why are you so insistent on this or that plan for me when you are really not interested in the blind with a capital B?”

“You are always imagining things,” she replied impatiently. “Let us work on your voice drill.”

But, judging from subsequent events, I know that her anger against the poverty that causes blindness, deafness, insanity, and the larger part of human ills was the trigger in the gun that she fired upon the foes in my path. As I wrote to a faithful fellow worker: “Sister Anne ascends to the tower to see if the cavaliers are coming to the rescue, and comes down with a rueful countenance saying that there is as yet no sign of them.” But as always she was a burning bush that no winds could quench. Whenever we had a free day in California, which she loved, she would take us all on a motor drive of enchantment either to Monterey, Del Monte, or Santa Barbara, and we would picnic in a spot of ravishing loveliness between the mountains or by the sea.

“The only reason I don’t live here all the time,” she would declare, “is that all this beauty would bewitch me past redemption, and I couldn’t do a bit of work.”

But observing her closely, I knew that she was enduring pain. Besides the frequent refusal of her eyes to serve her and the terrible bronchial colds to which she was subject, from time to time she lost the sense of smell through which she had rioted as I do in exquisite waves of sweetness.

Another of Teacher’s extraordinary traits was her thoughtfulness of my future. With the presentiment that she would not much longer be at my side, she helped Polly to fit in with her work. Polly listened behind the scenes night after night and learned to tell Teacher’s story in the third person singular. She got a good idea of the kind of questions to ask and of those likely to be asked by others. Now and then I suggested new questions to which I could answer with fresh ideas. In the nature of things I would never feel that anyone could really take Teacher’s place, but Polly’s deep integrity gave Teacher confidence that the “fine ligament of sympathy” between her endeavors and mine would never be broken. Thus during Teacher’s recurrent illnesses Polly was able to relieve her, and most of our audiences welcomed us with tenderness.

XIV

In 1927 Teacher, who had by then, as a rule, given up public appearances, said to me, “Why not lay off for a year from your work and bring the story of your life up to date, as the house of Doubleday has so long begged you to do?”

“No,” I exclaimed, “I would rather write your biography. Here I have been a chiel takin’ notes of your life, and I shall be terribly disappointed not to write that book.”

“Oh, Helen, don’t look like Misery on a monument! Whatever you write about yourself is about me too.”

An instinct impelled me to reply, “That is true only in one sense—you are the life of my life, and I am no end thankful for that, but you and I are separate personalities, and it is too much a part of my faith in the rights of everyone for me to sacrifice your right to your own individuality!” She did not answer, and for some time we discussed, swithered, and let the subject of my later life drop.

Then I was requested by a minister of the New Church to write about Emanuel Swedenborg and what his teachings meant to me. It was a chance for me to escape from a task I dreaded and lay on love’s altar one of the messages of faith that are a source of energy and joy, a principle of action, and one which had assured my partial independence of earth-conditions. With pleasure I remembered a verse Teacher had once read to me suggesting the freedom of choice in what I wished to believe.

. . . O Spirit, as a runner strips
Upon a windy afternoon,
Be unencumbered of what troubles you—
Arise with grace
And greatly go, with the wind upon your face.

In that state of exhilaration I had accepted the teachings of Swedenborg, had drunk in his interpretations of the Bible, fearless, reverent, yet as unconfined as the sun, the clouds, and the sea, the liberty of which Teacher

had breathed into me. I did not expect help from her, as she had no faith in religion, and I could have cried when she put herself in my place, imagining what my faith must mean, and spelled into my hand long articles on the Swedish seer and the New Church, of which he did not wish to be regarded as the founder. She also read me how his writings had influenced Elizabeth Barrett Browning, William Dean Howells, and the elder James, father of William and Henry James. I had already read in Braille Emerson's *Representative Men*, which includes Swedenborg.

One day I discovered her rereading William James's *Talks to Teachers*, which she had enjoyed through John Macy's expressive voice. Although I was stabbed to the soul by the thought of her failing sight, I appreciated the love-filled associations she had with the book, and I did not remonstrate as was my habit at other times. When I had finished *My Religion*, Teacher said to me coaxingly, "You have insisted that we are two distinct personalities. I have put aside mine for you. Now won't you please let us exchange the best of ourselves, put yourself in my place and make a record of the work we have done together the past twenty years—not a record of ourselves except as instruments in the ultimate deliverance of the blind?" Thus she converted my dread of an unwelcome duty into an act of love.

However, I thought Teacher grew less reasonable as I approached the end of *Midstream*. She compelled me to use an unnatural constraint in the chapter I called "My Guardian Angel." She did not permit any reference to her humble birth or the almshouse, her sufferings and disappointments. Actually I felt humiliated, as if I had almost lied to God Himself, and I never spoke of *Midstream* to her after an experience that caused aversion to myself. For I loved Teacher and not myself in her.

I was not troubled by the countless tasks that crowded the years between 1927 and 1930—literary work, a staggering burden of correspondence, activities in and around the house that were a positive relief to me from the everlasting beating out of words on my typewriter, and the delight of reading aloud to Teacher. The sorrow that oppressed me was the knowledge of her coming total blindness. She could not read with her naked eyes or with ordinary glasses. She was under the devoted care of Dr. Conrad E. Berens of New York who used to visit her often in the evening. He prescribed frequent drops and telescopic glasses of the double-lensed type. They weighed heavily upon her face, and because of this and the nauseating pain she could manage to read only for a short time before she was obliged to stop. Even a white tablecloth spread before her caused her acute distress, and candles and unshaded lamps pierced her eyeballs. At my earnest entreaty she did not

read while Polly was visiting her family in Scotland. Somehow she got our meals, looking at the stove as little as possible, feeling the bread until it was toasted, and listening intently to the coffee as it simmered. When breakfast was ready, dear old Sieglinde would sit between us, her velvet nose against our hands for her share. Teacher's pleasure in a meal was never complete unless there was a dog to steal or beg a part of it, and Sieglinde was the most adorable company imaginable. She had been with us from puppyhood, and Teacher cherished her with a tenderness like that of the poor man in the Bible for his one little ewe lamb. Sieglinde read her moods in a way that was touchingly human. Whenever anyone entered the house who bored Teacher, Sieglinde knew it perfectly well, and she would edge close to the visitor and try to push him away. She was as big as a Shetland pony, and one of the dearest memory pictures in my fingers is the afternoon I found her standing with her paws on Teacher's shoulders, licking her face and drawing one of her soft ears gently across her eyes as if she understood their sick look. Besides my own affection, I had the delicate sensation of living every line of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem, "Flush." But alas! that angel Sieglinde could occasionally go a-thieving. One day a pot of delicious ravioli was left on the kitchen table while Teacher was talking with the grocery man, and Sieglinde slyly reached up and ate the rich repast before anyone could rescue it. I marvel that it was not the death of her!

It was during this time that out of the bigness of her heart Teacher employed a sweet woman, herself without sight and who afterwards worked for the blind of Vermont, to copy the notes for Nella Henney's book. This was but one example of the cheery hospitality with which the blind and the deaf were welcomed to our house in Forest Hills. Some of my former classmates in the Wright-Humason School for the Deaf lived not far from us, and because Teacher wanted me to have the joy of foregathering with them now and then when I was not on the road, she used to invite them to my birthday parties and other social affairs. Delight and jollity spring up in my memory as I evoke those occasions full of bright talk (on their fingers) and reminiscences of our school days. A lively young Canadian with some hearing and a talent for verse stayed with us until she obtained work in the city. Elizabeth Garrett, a daughter of the last and greatest of the sheriffs of the Far West, was studying under the celebrated singing teacher, Mr. Witherspoon, in New York, and often visited us. I loved her for her expressive face without sight, her joyousness, gaiety, and wealth of laughter-provoking stories which put Teacher into a happy frame of mind. Elizabeth had courageously traveled alone singing and playing all over the country. But, proud of her as we were then, we were even prouder later when she was

celebrated as a musician throughout her state of New Mexico. In these and manifold other ways Teacher tried to keep bright our home atmosphere and to forget the crucifixion of her eyes. She was always urging me on to be one of God's ambassadors, to search fresh kinds of life, to create more kingdoms of ability for others and not to waste a sad thought on her. More than ever my soul stood erect before her courage, which, as Dr. Johnson declared, is greatest of all the virtues because unless one has that quality he cannot be sure to preserve any other, but I could not forget that her willful abuse of her sight had shortened the period during which she would be able to see, and I knew how Dr. Berens implored her with tears in his eyes to follow his carefully thought out treatments and especially to rest. Neither he nor I nor anyone else could induce her to spare herself. Even when I did not touch her, and indeed when I did, she had her face buried in a book. Reading was veritably her life now, and my fiery martyrdom had to run its course. She read me some of the more important letters that each day's mail brought, and I replied to them. She threw the rest pell-mell into cabinets and drawers from which Polly dug them out on her return from abroad. While Polly was away, the telephone and the doorbell might ring unheeded till the end of the world—I could not hear them, and, like Dr. Bell, Teacher refused to answer. Her reading went on until she was ill, as happened more and more frequently, and she had to go to bed.

By that time the first draft of *My Religion* was finished, and after several days' rest and belated obedience to Dr. Berens's orders she tried to read the manuscript and spell it into my hand. I had composed it in the midst of interruptions which, like an electric current turned off suddenly, killed thought, and it was "all gone with the wind" from my mind. Even Teacher's telescopic glasses did not help her to decipher a word! She was like a child in her improvidence. She seemed to have forgotten how one's faculties, properly used, help those of another, just as Dr. Frederick Tilney used to say that her good and wise teaching had been essential in releasing my mind from the bonds of ignorance. We were stymied, and a terrified silence fell upon us. Fortunately our gracious friend Mr. F. N. Doubleday came to our rescue when he heard how matters were and commissioned Nella Braddy, as she was then, to serve as eyes for Teacher and me. From that memorable day to the present her rare, precious friendship has been as a benediction upon our lives.

Teacher seemed subdued when she realized that the joy of reading for herself was about gone. But her incurable restlessness prompted her to accept an invitation for us to spend the summer in a hunter's cottage on a tiny island near Cohasset, Massachusetts. Nella joined us for a while.

Teacher's desire for a change this time was partly caused by emotions akin to those which "A. E." described in "Transcience." She was forever seeking perfect beauty, but no matter how enraptured she was at the treasure she found, she longed for another. One of her sayings was that all things pass away, and that wherever we may be, we want to be somewhere else. "Perhaps," she would say, "that may be allowed to keep us from liking this world so well that we may be reluctant to die and try a lovelier, a more perfect sphere." That was the last time I saw her take pleasure in change. There was still a champagne sparkle in her talk, a wholeness of her body that flashed out mirth when she laughed—I could feel it physically. She walked with us around the island and loved the sunny, salt-air solitude. Sieglinde had died the year before, and Teacher was so overcome that she spelled to me, "It is worse to lose such an appealing embodiment of affection that cannot speak than a child!" Of course that was said impulsively. Later she declared that she would make friends with all dogs if she could, and she adopted a little black terrier and a Great Dane, Hans, from Germany. These were the two newcomers to our family that frolicked on the island, chasing one another among the white sands, the unyielding rocks, and the gently rolling waves. Until she passed away, dogs were indispensable to Teacher's comfort—dogs of different nationalities and breeds—Danes, terriers, Shetland collies—any dog that could love with tongue, paw, and wagging tail and entertain her with unexpected insights into their capacities of nobleness and deviltry. There on the island we huddled together in the cottage one stormy night when the billows dashed against the cement wall that stood between us and the foaming sea. The dogs howled, but we others were rejoicing that Nella had read the last galleys of *Midstream* and Teacher had spelled the last pages to me.

Now that *Midstream* was completed and out of the way, Teacher and I could once in a while snatch some moments of intimacy to air our private thoughts and feel that we "belonged" to each other before we resumed our regular activities with the American Foundation for the Blind. I had expressed myself freely in *Midstream* on economic, social, and political subjects, and she said that by a different route—direct experience of life in the raw—she had arrived at the same conclusions.

"You say, Helen, your philosophy teaches that blindness and deafness are nonexistent in a world which you recognize as one and total. Therefore any experience of humanity is intelligible to you, and you need not give up the thoughts and ideals that you have adopted as your real self. While as a writer about the physically blind and a public champion of their cause you were not permitted to refer, except in passing, to my early life, yet you are as

sensitive as I am to the horrors of primary poverty and the sickness, debility, and want of decency it creates. I too have endured distress seeing poverty crushing people down and down in the social morass, but I have never believed that anyone intended to hurt others. And I am sure that no one foresaw how horrible, appalling, and enslaving industrial life would become —employers, landlords, and financiers as well as laborers caught in the toils of an economic and mechanical system that grew faster than human foresight could have predicted."

Nevertheless, Teacher could never forgive the conditions that caused Vachel Lindsay to write "The Leaden-eyed." For that meant the stifling of the divine gifts of literature, music, painting, sculpture and the intellectual life she worshiped. That is why she had never been at ease while I solicited funds from the rich and powerful.

"But so long as there are those of us who refuse," she declared, "to accept as inevitable world turmoil, hatred, fraud, and the clash of interests, prejudices, and the right of the strongest, there will be a chance for mankind to survive. We can look at history from above as well as from below and refresh our purposes with the music of the eternal spheres."

The winter of 1928-29 almost submerged me in a torrent of work—money-raising to train little children in normal habits before they entered school, scholarships for blind students in college, speeches before Congress begging them to increase the annual appropriation for embossed literature for the adult blind, and so forth. Polly went with me to the meetings, but Teacher put a new touch into all I wrote and spoke. She had a witchery of using simple words with new facets of meaning, as if she intentionally displayed them where they would shed the most light. It was uncanny the way she perceived just how blind people with seeing minds would feel who heard me—she seemed to have acquired a sense of divination entirely beyond the physical sight she was losing. I was proud when her clear phrases, like arrows, shot from my bow to the goal.

The summer of 1929 Dr. Berens operated on Teacher's right eye, and afterwards Polly and I found a cottage on Long Lake in the Adirondacks. The place was a spot of delight where I could have a rope-walk down the shore and use another rope to swim, but Teacher was no longer able to join me in the water or walk with Polly and me among the firs. She was not as well as she had been, and it was an incessant fight for us to prevent her from reading. The requests I received on that vacation were exceptionally heavy, but Teacher would not spoil my pleasure by breaking in on the scanty time I had for swimming, watching for the humming birds whose wings I felt as

they fluttered along my rope-walk, listening to tales about the dogs that worried the porcupines and were duly punished by getting quills in their muzzles. She was as excited as I when she heard a big bear climbing the apple tree near the cottage and munching the fruit. When there was no sun to torment her, we all would get into a motorboat and drift or take a run across the lake. Teacher would dwell on the loveliness around us and her old-time vivacity would return. She loved perfection and nonsense—two entities that seem quite opposite but which often meet in artistic natures. But once back in Forest Hills she said to me, "Oh, Helen, what a sad experience it is to feel one's decline! Every power that leaves me is a foretaste of the decay that is worse than death. To climb down again in the scale of being, isn't that awful?

Earth hugs to it my bones.
Leave me, O sky-born powers,
Brother to grass and stones."

XV

The spring and summer of 1930 enriched Teacher and me with—I do not say a new life, since life is universal—but an appreciation of countries having a history different from our own, a different atmosphere to breathe, other fauna and flora in which to take delight. It was essential for us to go abroad if Teacher's left eye was to get a complete rest, and I obtained a leave of absence from the Foundation.

I thought I was quite familiar with Teacher's whims and caprices, but just at that time I was shocked by a perversity unexpected in one who could analyze herself so justly. At first it was suggested that we go to France. Teacher laughed and said, "Oh no, not for all the world would I dream of going to that Gallic land."

"What!" I exclaimed. "Don't you want to visit Paris, whose styles you have so often admired, the Seine, Notre Dame, the Tuileries, Versailles, and the places bristling with revolutionary memories which you used to describe to me?"

"I will not go," she said waving her hand saucily.

Our friends joined in our pleadings, and I am afraid we overplayed the game. She became disturbed, then angry and did almost everything against good sense and courtesy. She bemoaned the illness, the weariness, and the decrepitude in which we would drag her off to more boredom without books and amusements or charms of nature. I kept quiet under her abuse, and she stopped all talk by seeming to yield. Polly and I rushed our preparations for sailing on the *President Harding* before she could change her mind, only to discover several hours before we were to leave the house that no force or persuasion was of any avail. Our passage had to be canceled.

Then Teacher awoke as from a dream, and saw how sad, tired, and spiritless Polly was, never saying a word. I went to my work at the desk and said nothing. Quite repentant, Teacher asked what was the next ship we could take. Fortunately the *President Roosevelt* was sailing on April 1, and she really enjoyed the beautiful weather when we glided out of New York harbor. We had no idea where we should stay, but she did not care. It was

not long before a violent storm of several days' duration pounced upon the ship. The tables and chairs in our stateroom banged into the beds, a big fruit basket tumbled over, and Polly dived after the apples and oranges as they rolled across the floor. Teacher wailed, "I wish I had stayed at home!" She was not seasick, however, and after a few hours' sleep she shared with us everything that was laughable and pleasant on the voyage.

We were all excitement arriving at the Lizard near Lands End—the tongue, the eye and ear of Britain. In Plymouth we found word from Polly's sister that a cosy retreat was awaiting us at Looe, a village in Cornwall. The day was perfect, and my heart beat fast as we drove through Plymouth from which some of my ancestors had left the Old World for the New. The streets were full of carts filled with narcissi, daffodils, and other spring flowers, which sent Teacher almost "daft" with joy, and the result was, she bought enough of them to crowd the automobile that carried us. On the way, a river ran beside us, and violets were everywhere in pools of blue. At last we reached a bungalow high up on a cliff round which gulls swarmed and screamed. Teacher was fascinated by their bell-like cry, so different from that of the American gull. There we passed two months of enchantment during which her health improved and she regained her old gaiety. On warm days she would walk with me up a path leading from the bungalow to a pasture full of sheep and sit down right in their midst. Several of them would draw close to me and sniff my blue dress as if they thought it might be good to eat. She would have Polly read her all the poetry and legends she could find about Cornwall and spell them to me. I seemed to be back in my childhood after she began to teach me; she literally overflowed with delight as she tried to impart the picturesque in everything—hospitable old inns, villages of fishermen's cottages going right down to the water, separated by paths more like gangplanks than streets, ancient little taverns, weatherbeaten stone churches, the rugged coast line and windy moors, farther inland. Sometimes we walked through flocks of sheep which were being driven to the shearers, and it was a curious sensation to both Teacher and me to have their warm, thick woolly coats touch us as they crowded past. She expanded like a sun as we drove for hours in fragrant winding lanes full of harebells and wallflowers and other blossoms growing on hedges and garden walls, all throbbing with dew, sun, and salt air. And we got out so that I might put my hands on the small, thatch-covered dwellings. As we drove along, Teacher listened to tales of King Arthur, Morgana, and the lake where Excalibur was sunk, and Old Artful, his misdeeds and pranks as she had once lent her ears to the stories of Irish chivalry and the "little people." There was such a delectable, weird quality in those legends that she and I wanted to share

them with the blind at home. Therefore she took particular pains to tell me all she had heard, and I dashed off a manuscript on a borrowed typewriter and sent it to the *Ziegler Magazine for the Blind*.

We also drove up into quiet, reposeful Devon. The apple trees tossed to the spring breeze their luxuriant pennant-blossoms. Everywhere were verdant lawns, shady lanes, meadows, and hills, and the birds sang in orchestras of notes joyous and plaintive. Once we visited the village on Egdon Heath where Thomas Hardy was born. We entered his cottage, with roses climbing up into the window, and saw the simple room where he wrote in seclusion. We went to the little churchyard where his heart that had throbbed with such varied sympathies for human suffering was laid to rest.

In June of the same year Teacher, Polly, and I took passage for Waterford, Ireland, on a freight boat picturesquely called the *Bally Cotton*. Pleasantly I recall our talks with the crew, especially one member who bestowed such thoughtful care on the animals aboard. Teacher was impressed by his refinement and his high intelligence concerning not only British politics but also social problems all over the world. I confess I was sad at the thought of visiting Ireland where we were to try to find traces of Teacher's parents. I had read of great beauty in parts of the country, and gratitude had overflowed my heart to Ireland for her daughter who had transformed my life from hunger and thirst to joy and the fulfillment of desire. But Teacher's distress over the seemingly hopeless poverty that had weighed upon the land for ages was duplicated in my soul. As she wrote afterwards, she shrank from "the rusty black shawls of the women, the lagging feet of the men, the gaunt sides of the poor little somber donkeys, the sun which came into Ireland timidly, as if unwilling to look on so much woe." She hated the grim rocks on the hillsides, the bogs from which the people had dragged out peat for their fires, and the wretched aspect of County Clare. She was very tender speaking to me of the river Shannon —"the tear that fell from the eyes of the Lord" at the unhappiness of Ireland —which had flowed through her dreams since she was a child. But in spite of herself she blazed up with hot hate against England, which a short time ago she had found so enchanting. A force tried to break away from her, like an army blindly fighting it knows not against whom or why. Through a process of clear thinking she had become denationalized, and usually she sympathized equally with all the hard-pressed races of mankind. She knew that Ireland's economic woes were not fundamentally different from those of Africa or Asia or the Philippines, but just then she was torn by atavistic instincts. She kept saying that no one need tell her she was unreasonable, she knew it, but she was held fast as if in a nightmare. She was no longer

herself and I was glad when we waved good-by to Erin and returned to brighter days in England.

It was a kindly fate that permitted Teacher to shed upon me the charms of Indian summer before our homecoming to Forest Hills. For it enabled me to put all my energies to raising money for the first world council on work for the blind which the Foundation was to convene in New York City in April 1931. Such an enlargement in the prospects for the blind upset our routine and the publicity sometimes weighed upon us like chains, but it was a glorious adventure, another step in making the history of the blind progressively more broad and luminous.

There is another event which occurred in 1931 which is as grateful to my memory as incense was supposed to be to the gods. At the urgent, persistent request of Mr. A. Edward Newton and others, the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters was bestowed upon Teacher by Temple University. Always with gratitude my thoughts turn to Mr. Newton as one whose sense of justice accorded to Teacher her true place in education. Dr. Bell used to say that she was one of the greatest contributors to the teaching not only of the deaf but also of normal children. Dr. Maria Montessori, whom we met in San Francisco during the Exposition in 1915, paid a sincere, beautiful tribute to Teacher as a "true pioneer" in pedagogy. Proudly I quote Mr. Newton's words:

> *Another reason why I trust you will accept the degree which Temple offers is this: it gives Temple an opportunity of announcing its wish to encourage rare achievement wherever it may be found, especially when the recipient of its honor occupies a position which makes it unlikely that she can ever do anything by way of return. Too many degrees are given by universities in the hope of receiving a quid pro quo. Temple is not moved by this. Its honor then you have no right to decline. May it not be that Miss Keller and your many friends more correctly appraise the value of your work than you do?*

And he did not add the equally compelling fact that Temple University had been established to give working boys and girls a chance in life. Teacher refused the degree at first, though I had accepted one for myself, and it seemed to me that she acted contrary to the spirit and humanity of the people to whom she owed her birth and to the faculties with which she had managed to climb out of her harsh lot to wider horizons.

Yet every chance she had, she spoke in public of what other teachers had done. After we had received a double honor as Fellows of the Educational Institute of Scotland she said, "I have never thought I deserved more praise than other teachers who give the best they have to their pupils. If their efforts have not released an Ariel from the imprisoning oak, it is no doubt because there has not been an Ariel to release.

"What earnest effort and consummate ingenuity I have seen teachers expend upon hopelessly dull children! I have known them to renounce pleasanter tasks in order to devote their lives to what seemed to me monotonous, uninteresting work. I have watched them reduce earth, sea, and sky and all that in them is to benefit beings incapable of doing anything faintly remarkable. With Christ-like love and patience they are ever ready to succor the neglected, backward, or unhappy children of the human race."

It is that great-souled personality that I loved and still love best in her—and because of her I strive to live with noble spirits that lift me to a higher plane.

Now I am going to speak out frankly regarding Teacher's personality and mine also. Comparatively speaking, the movement to rehabilitate the blind so that they can live normal lives is new, and few people understand it. From time immemorial the blind have been looked upon as creatures apart from the human race, though throughout the ages blind men of unusual ability and keenness of intellect have attained distinction. Homer and Milton composed poems in the dark that have commanded the admiration of the world. In one of the worst periods of Roman history the great blind lawyer, Appius Claudius Caecus, drew up a body of statutes that protected the rights of the people, including even slaves, and there are many others whose deeds of light have outshone all shadows. But whatever genius or talent they had was not because they were blind.

The majority of the blind, untaught, are like wood and coal waiting to be kindled by ideas from seeing minds; and too often those with sight lack "seeing" minds. They endow the blind who learn to do ordinary things well with qualities that do not exist, instead of trying to find out how they employ the physical senses they still have. The same is true of the deaf, the crippled, and other disabled groups.

It was into this dense mass of ignorance that Teacher flashed her beacon. She treated me exactly like a seeing and hearing child, the one exception being that instead of speaking words to me she spelled them into my hand. She never allowed anyone to pity me or to adopt the overprotectiveness that

can render blindness such a tragedy. She did not allow people to praise anything I did unless I did it well, and she resented it with spirit if anyone addressed himself to her instead of to me as they would to a normal child. She encouraged my family and friends to talk to me freely about everything so that I could acquire language more rapidly. It took real courage, for my mother and Cousin Leila Lassiter were the only ones in Tuscumbia who understood the wisdom of her course.

Years later I was grateful to a geometry teacher because she let me see her anger when I was too slow in grasping Proposition XVIII, and I felt that Professor Copeland regarded me as a normal pupil when he condemned my inept translations of La Fontaine with his severe, sarcastic criticisms. Teacher's wholesome judgments of my successes and failures were responsible for whatever mental equilibrium I preserved. She did not at the time divulge to me what she knew about the general misconceptions regarding the nature of blindness, and that is why I wrote *The World I Live In* with glee, laughing at the critics who denied me the use of such words as the *light* of the moon and stars, *tones* of the voice (which are palpable to touch), *colors* and *scenery*. It was a genuine pleasure for me to show how I could get fun out of playing with words whose meaning I could guess only from analogy and imagination. Teacher strove hard to arrange life so that I might dig the hidden beauty out of limitation and perhaps cause my readers to adopt a healthier concept of blindness and deafness by viewing them against the background of general psychology.

What I want to say is this: while I have been generously and extravagantly praised for my accomplishments, I have never regarded those tributes as my due. None of the triumphs of "genius" have fallen to my lot. Genius is said to be the capacity of taking infinite pains, and I have never had such capacity. I have simply worked harder at some ordinary tasks on account of my triple handicap. I was fortunate because Teacher and I both loved English and literature. I have always tried to show how she was eyes and ears for me in the acquisition of language, and how she not only encouraged me to write but also suggested ways in which I could best use my writing and speech in service to the handicapped. The misunderstandings arose from the erroneous psychological patterns established by the seeing towards the handicapped. I suppose it was almost inevitable that few of the people I met could recognize Teacher's audacious ability or take me simply as a normal human being using the resources of the soul, just as anyone else can who will, to fill out physical deficiencies. Teacher created for me a full destiny because she believed that every human being has hidden away in him capabilities waiting to be discovered. She had

the faith to grasp life for me, as the eagle seizes its prey and carries it up into the air; and she had risen with her prize into the serenity of creative activity. Achievement is a pleasure—the most satisfying of all pleasures, but it is won only at the price of a valiant fight. It is the palm that crowns the creator. Achievement is a part of the boundlessness of life tamed. Teacher did not manufacture life out of her limitations, she lived it out of her Powers. She did not suit her actions to my weakness. She coaxed my spiritual faculties up to them. She did not tolerate the sense-arrogant, their patronizing authority over the blind or other unfortunate groups or their almsgiving where discerning love was needed or anything in them that deadened the will or enfeebled the power of life-renewing deeds. As often as possible she swept the fumes of false pity from their minds and confronted them with the upward-looking humanity they had denied in the handicapped. To be a Sappho one must have the soul of Sappho. To be a veritable Mother of Minds, as Teacher was, one must marry an active ideal and have a womb that brings forth souls. Teacher's pioneer spirit—I beg the reader's pardon for repeating—was led on by the dream that intelligence would at last arise everywhere in evaluating the abilities both of the normal and the handicapped, that the stubborn bars of prejudice would be broken, that new thought would quicken a wonderful spring, and that the old gardens of education would greet the new dawn with fresh young leaves and the flower beds be thick with radiant blossoms and sparkling streams would issue forth in songs of a new world to be.

How far the workers for the blind, devoted and persevering though they be, are from this goal! Problems are constantly falling upon them of which they did not have an inkling. For instance, there is the urgent question of special teachers giving all their time and energy to children totally blind or with only light perception and other teachers for the partially seeing who cannot benefit from education conducted entirely in the public schools. Teacher was fully aware of this complicated difficulty, and of the fact that the blind must be approached as individuals if satisfactory results are to be obtained, but it is only recently that educators and workers for the blind as a whole have begun this task.

Teacher also knew intuitively that "the visual handicap is no more a unifying factor than sight is . . . Quite the contrary is true, it adds variables which must be carefully considered." From her own experience she was convinced that the adequacy of each individual's sight for the particular tasks of his daily life is more important than optically measured visual acuity. She was interested in the influence of blindness upon personality, space perception and orientation and creativity, and she looked forward

hopefully to a deep understanding of general human nature that would eliminate the theory of a unique class for the blind. I am saying all this by way of explaining why I regret that she was so seldom consulted on matters which I could not in the nature of things grasp firsthand. She was no standard-bearer, as she herself said, and of course as a free woman she had a right to speak or be silent on any subject. Still, I should find it easier to understand if some people had looked to her large judgments and derived the benefit of her rich counsel and imaginative views. As it is, I can only draw comfort from the fact that her wish for the good of the blind and all the other disabled groups is now realized in the sincere friends which they are winning not only in America but throughout the world.

XVI

Teacher was exhausted in the spring of 1931 after we had worked for and attended the meetings of the first World Council for the Blind, and in the summer we went to Concarneau, Brittany, to rest and struggle with unanswered mail. But we soon discovered that we were wanted in Yugoslavia to raise funds for the rehabilitation of the blind—my first venture of the kind outside America—and Teacher refused to be spared. Consequently she was ill when we returned to Brittany in the midsummer heat. Besides, she was depressed because her little sight was failing, and it rained almost every day we were there. Our visit to Yugoslavia had meant the hardest kind of work, and travel at best was a formidable nuisance for Teacher. She said that while she had all the caprices, inconsistencies, and contradictions of the Irish, she did not share their desire to wander from land to land. "Home, sweet home, is the only place for me," she would exclaim, as if England, which she had found so charming a year before, had vanished from her memory. She bemoaned the barrier of the French language, which I had thought would prove a godsend to protect us against interruptions.

Yet she broke down the barrier with a delicious *diablerie d'esprit*. The sweet woman who looked after the little house we rented did not know a word of English, but we got along famously. Gestures, pointing to things, guesswork with much laughter, and the French or English I could translate made us feel quite at home. Louise was not only a wonderful friend to us and our Scottie, she was also a fine cook. She had a sensitive face, and was most picturesque in her Breton costume. There was real affection between us. We delighted to have her sit with us sipping tea or accompany us on a picnic when the day was sunny or on a visit to an old Breton church. She told us she had never traveled more than twenty-five miles from Concarneau, and that she longed to see the city which in her dreams symbolized not only the beauty, the art, and the history of France but of all the world. So when the time came for us to leave, Teacher arranged for her to drive with us to Paris. I never saw anyone more absorbed or more filled with rapt wonder than Louise as we passed such places as Rennes, the Loire bristling with castles, and Orleans where we glimpsed the statue of Joan of Arc. The brilliant lights of Paris greeted us late that evening. Louise spent

the night with us, and after breakfast we showed her as much of Paris as we could before she returned home in the afternoon. She was in a constant flutter of pleasure over Notre Dame, the Seine, which was at its loveliest in the golden weather that day, the tomb of Napoleon and other places of historic interest. It was hard for us to part from such a responsive friend. There is a tender melancholy in dwelling on the multitude of kindnesses Teacher contrived for humble people whose service or friendship she valued.

No task is more gratifying to me than to celebrate the big warmth with which England and Scotland surrounded us with hospitality, appreciation, and opportunities to aid the handicapped and finally gave us a chance to rest in peace amid the healing influences of nature. When we went to Scotland in 1932 so that I might be honored by Glasgow University, Dr. James Kerr Love, a great aurist and an old friend, installed us in a charming cottage, Dalveen, covered with roses, where I could have a little privacy to prepare speeches. As I leaned out of the window, I could almost feel the buds bursting. Every morning I stepped out into the garden, and sometimes Teacher walked with me to share the finger-glimpses I caught of the beds of forget-me-nots and anemones, which her ailing eyes could see only dimly. She had wished that we might have spent the whole summer in Cornwall where nature spoke to her the most exquisite language of beauty. But she cheerfully accepted the turn our affairs had taken, since the degree that Glasgow University was to give me pleased her immensely, and she was happy that we could work at Dalveen with everything singing, humming, and blooming around us. But for her imaginative suggestions I could not have successfully weathered the barrage of interviews, letters, telegrams, and photographs which the publicity concerning the degree occasioned, and the conferences with officials of the University of Glasgow. We had rather dreaded the gorgeous ceremonies of that august establishment which represented such brilliancy, such impressive records of eminent scholars and men of genius going back to the fifteenth century. But Dr. Love had the magic of sympathy and was able to make everything easy for us, and Teacher was grateful to him and his sweet wife for the atmosphere of intelligent understanding and cordial friendliness they created about us. Seeing us together, they realized how wonderfully Teacher was a part of me. They were among the few who perceived the interwoven quality of our lives.

After accepting the first invitation, it was not seemly to refuse others, and we did all that was in our power. We were asked to do all sorts of pleasant things and meet interesting people. I wanted to visit establishments for the blind and the deaf about which I had read, and which had sent me

tokens of loving regard since my childhood. Among the first was the Institute for the Deaf in Edinburgh, which I remember especially because Mr. W. W. McKechnie of the Scottish Education Department spoke of Teacher with eloquence and wit. He had the clairvoyance which looks beyond the unthinking, ignorant adulation always being heaped upon me and sees her unwavering devotion and constructive labor to retrieve my life and impart to it form and comeliness. Not often does one listen to words of such glowing distinction. As he spoke I felt

As if again the gods were calling
From some Homeric yesterday.

Truly that day Mr. McKechnie raised our struggles and victories to the dignity of divine things.

After leaving Dalveen we went down to London where we attended three, four, or five functions every day, and I have a wonderful memory of how Teacher battled against fatigue and nervousness to interpret my many speeches. There were different kinds of engagements, such as dining in the House of Commons, attending a beautiful garden party at Buckingham Palace where Teacher, Polly, and I met King George V and Queen Mary, visiting Hampton Court and appearing at the National Institute for the Blind where the generous assistance of Mr. W. MacG. Eagar, the then director, and his secretaries helped us through our crowded London program. Mr. Eagar was another leading educator who showed an enthusiastic admiration and friendship for Teacher. We spent a memorable day at the Royal School for the Blind, Leatherhead, Surrey, where penetrating, beautiful tributes were paid to Teacher by the Rev. E. H. Griffiths, principal of the school, and others. I wished the people in America could have heard the illuminating phrases spoken of her at Leatherhead and the constructive ideas uttered concerning the deaf-blind. But rushing from place to place was too much for us, and when it was over, Teacher was ill with a bronchial siege, and Polly and I paid the penalty of having been too eager to see everything by being worn out. The doctor thought a higher altitude would benefit Teacher, and we fled to the Scottish Highlands.

In an agitated, feverish mood we hastened up to Tain, a mountain village where Polly's brother and his family were on holiday. It was the hunting and fishing season, and for a time we feared that there would be no retreat available for us, but finally we located a farmhouse at South Arcan near Muir of Ord, Ross-shire, and I felt like Christian when his pack fell from his back. Just to see the purple, gold, and blue of the Scottish hills was magic

enough for Teacher to improve. All we wanted was quiet to work on my correspondence, and yet we did not want to miss any of the glory around us. There were all the charms that gladden a lover of nature—seclusion among great corn-fields, moors with purple heather in bloom, and the music of burns. Teacher revelled in the silence, broken only by the mooing of black Angus cattle, the bleating of lambs, and the whirr of many wings. There I could walk alone using a shepherd's staff, as I followed an old wall shadowed by oak trees and a hedge of arbor vitae, foxgloves, and bushes of golden broom which rained honeyed fragrance, and whose popping pods vibrated in my fingers. As Teacher and I wandered through the fields with our Scottie at our heels, she would tell me delightedly how the dog startled coveys of partridges and grouse, pheasants, thrushes, and gray doves. When Teacher's bronchitis was brought under control we took exhilarating drives around the country, but all too soon our days of enchantment in airs alien to our workaday existence were ended, and our unsparing consciences headed us back to New York, where our winter campaign was being planned.

I knew that the work for the sightless was rapidly extending beyond the United States and that a great deal of money must be raised to meet the demands upon the American Foundation for the Blind. On our tours that year were just the two of us, Polly and I, except for what assistance a member of the Foundation staff could give us, to attend to the lectures and to answer the too often uninspired questions of the press. Most of the reporters seemed to think that it was still a simple matter to help the blind if we only stated what they needed most, and I missed Teacher's felicitous repartees. But in endless ways I tried to explain to the newspapers that there is no formula for service to the blind—that some have a bit more sight than others, and there are almost as many kinds of aid required for their different disabilities as there are blind people. My heart bled as I thought of Teacher alone in the Forest Hills house, suffering pain much of the time, trying to read when she should not, and looking after the dogs. We had no servant, and I wondered how she prepared her meals—or if she went without them. Many a night I lay awake trying to find a way to ease things for her. Often after journeying afar Polly and I would return to Forest Hills about midnight, haunted by her solitude and trembling as we imagined all sorts of awful things happening to her, and find her wide awake and ready to laugh at our nightmarish fears, but she could not fool us. We knew that increasing weakness was on her track, but she would not hear of our postponing any engagements to take care of her.

My only consolation was that the loveliness of Scotland caressed her spirit as a brooding bird gathers her fledglings beneath her wings, and Polly

and I finished the campaign for the Foundation as soon as possible and hurried her back to the farmhouse at South Arcan in June 1933. At first she seemed to recover and I thought that no spring or summer could display the richness and mellow sweetness that I felt in the autumn of her life. Thus does sweet hope light us on through the "dark hours and crooked passages" of destiny.

Again the fascination of Caledonia overflowed Teacher like a tide, and I shared her feeling that there was no country more captivating, peaceful, or more abundant in sanative influences. That time she was able to be idle and serene in the quiet of the Highlands. She loved to listen to the birds, and she threw out crumbs as they crowded about the door. She renewed her delight in the heather, and in her mind she could picture the splendor of hills and streams which the curtain closing upon her eyes hid from her. Her joy was too great for words in the lanes of silvery birches, rowan trees, whistling larches, and blossoming hawthorn. Occasionally she managed a long drive in which the spirits of the wild wove sympathies between our souls too deep for words. At such moments I rejoiced in the consciousness she had imparted to me that

> *The green earth tilts through a sphere of air*
> *And bathes in a flame of space.*
> . . . . . .
> *And a sun far off in a shell of silence*
> *Dapples my walls for me . . .*

I believe the reason why she found that life so sweet was her discovery that she was in a warm, kindly world. Many of the friends we had met the year before came to see us at the farmhouse and their sincerity, their responsiveness, memories of their genuine kindness and hospitality were precious to her. For many years Anne Sullivan Macy had been constantly alert, strained, on guard, and it was a comfort for her to relax under the touch of their discerning sympathy. She spoke to me of the life rising up in us which tends to renew itself without us, heals its own injuries, puts hope into our hearts, sharpens our mental vision—"and why cannot all this happen to me as it has done so often?" she said, to soften my shadow which she divined. As of old, she threw herself into lavish entertainment and gaiety. Polly's family visited us often. Dr. and Mrs. Love, Mr. Eagar, and others spent several days with us. Friends from Inverness, Muir of Ord, and other places all round were always doing something beautiful for us or cheering Teacher and imparting to her an affectionate appreciation. It is seldom that I have witnessed such active balm of love. Teacher's goodness

to the crofters was immense, as it always had been to the lowly, and their rugged but warmhearted hospitality is gratifying for me to remember.

Polly, her brother, and I took Teacher on a sail to the Orkneys and the Shetlands, which I hoped would benefit her. We stopped at Orkney, and all of us, except Teacher, explored the ruins of the Stone Age village at Skara Brae. We went down steep, narrow steps, and owing to my clumsiness I got caught between the walls in a spot where I could not turn around or move downward. For some moments I had visions of being held fast forever and a day amid the mysteries of a far-off past. Luckily I was extricated and guided safely to the rooms below. The roof was so low that we stooped as we explored. I was intrigued by the skill and smoothness with which the people had wrought out of the rock their beds, cupboards, and shelves for clothes, weapons, and ornaments. I also touched compartments where they kept fish and other foods in salt and the hearth in the center with a hole in the roof to let the smoke out. My memory of the Orkneys is a delight because the islands were so fragrant with clover.

When Teacher started on that voyage she was determined to enjoy it, but she found the sunlight on the water unbearable; so she lay down and slept while the rest of us sat on deck. I feared that she would not be well enough to sense the peculiar Viking atmosphere of the Shetlands, but she rose to the occasion. As we walked through Lerwick, she half saw and half imagined the quaint houses and the dried fish hanging from the roofs. She got much delight out of my touching the small Shetland animals—ponies, sheep, and collies. When we went around several islands in a motorboat, her fingers fluttered with excitement at the noisy clouds of gulls, skuas, and puffins that surrounded us. It was an odd sensation to feel the sun shining with all its might day and night and the vibrations of the wide-awake activity of people in the market place or at the nets until the small hours of “morning.”

We returned by way of the Orkneys, and as we passed them an unexpected joy lit up Teacher’s face. The sun was setting upon the sea in a mingled glory of soft hues and tremulous shadows, and she gazed upon it spellbound until its afterglow vanished. That was the last time that she could gather even a meager harvest of beauty from things on land or at sea. Nothing could ever take away the inward treasure of her imagination, and her heart spilled its incalculable light around her, but her too stubborn will had extinguished the slender ray of light that might otherwise have served her to the last, and gone was the independence that was more precious to her than a throne to a queen.

The autumn came upon us, and I realized that Teacher's health was far from improved. Therefore I obtained a leave of absence—a sabbatical year—from the Foundation. I was determined to leave nothing undone so that she might get well. We settled down in earnest at the old farmhouse, and if the phrase were not misleading, I should say that I was like a galley slave just released. As a matter of fact I had not had a real vacation since my college days. I had dedicated myself gladly to the activities of the Foundation, but a heavy toll had been exacted from my vitality as well as from Teacher's by literary work, lectures, and vaudeville, and the uneasy thought of her eyes and health had pursued me for years. Life in New York and the attendant publicity had never been congenial to me, who was born and bred on a spacious southern farm, and my soul cried out for a longer stay in the Scottish Highlands. It seemed like a fairy tale when the Foundation sent word permitting us to rest for a year. Then for some days I just lay quietly for hours in the pasture, trying to cultivate W. H. Hudson's habit of not thinking after one of his tremendous periods of writing. I succeeded in gaining an inundation of calm that refreshed my tired brain and to some extent smoothed out my nerves. Gratefully I wanted to kiss the "bush," the little river Orrin, and the sun that flooded me with a new sense of good. I was happy to have bracken in my hair or heather in my tweed dress after a walk around the fields. It was a source of wonder to us that we should be only eighteen miles from Inverness—a city of lochs, firths, and old castles—and yet enjoy perfect seclusion.

But winter was coming on, and Teacher experienced the beginning of a distressful invalidism. We went to Glasgow at Christmas time and stayed a few weeks. Dr. Love secured excellent medical attention for Teacher, and the loyal and leal friendship that enveloped us was most touching. But fate thwarted all efforts to relieve her, and we went back to South Arcan in low spirits. She suffered from carbuncles for a year, and Polly, who also deserved a long rest, was constantly nursing her, reading to her, keeping house, and running after my Shetland collie, Dileas, and Maida, the Lakeland terrier, who was always hunting hares or rabbits. After their wild jaunts the two rogues would return, jump on Teacher's bed, and share her meals. Dileas, brown with a white collar, white paws, and an adorable pompon brushing the ground, and Maida, black with a funny smoke-blue head and loving, bright eyes, were a comfort without which she declared she could not have dragged through the winter.

When she was not too ill, Teacher suggested topics for the articles I was writing for the *Towers* magazine, and I worked on the first biography of her which the fire consumed that burned my first home down in Westport.

Through her compulsory inaction during long days and nights arose thoughts which shrink from the scorching sun of the world. With her most subtle emotions she perceived the forces which have their home in each of us, though the tumults of earth prevent us from hearing them. She gave less heed to things that exasperated her and was more sensitive than ever to the hardships of others. Thus she dragged through a winter comparatively short according to New York weather standards but damp, foggy, frosty, and occasionally icy with the breath of the Arctic. Although it snowed seldom, we could hear the sheep crying out in the cold, and the black Angus cattle would utter their long-drawn, plaintive lowing.

In the early spring Teacher was able to take a few steps with me among the violets, harebells, and daffadowndillies which she touched just as I did, and she spelled to me, “What a blessing it is for you, Helen, to walk through our Gethsemane and feel its abundant blossoming!” During those intervals of convalescence she invited a few friends to the parties for which she was celebrated, and the sunshine of their geniality and the comfortable dew of their understanding sped golden hours for us all. But there was in my heart an inescapable foreboding.

The Foundation had announced the invention of the talking-book for the adult blind and had expressed a wish that I would join in the campaign for funds to manufacture machines for this new mode of “reading.” Teacher grasped the value of an entertainment which would be much easier for the older blind than the Braille system which most of them could not read with ease or pleasure, and she begged me to do my share in securing the pecuniary means, which I did the following winter. Yet I sensed her dissatisfaction. She would have liked to see the endowment fund I was raising completed. Besides, she was disappointed that nothing had been done for the deaf-blind whose wretched lot, she knew, weighed upon me. In Forest Hills she had considered trying to make a new life for herself by teaching another pupil deprived of sight and hearing. When a neglected deaf and blind baby was discovered in Louisville, Kentucky, the thought of imparting light and the music of joy to the little one went through her as if the flame of immortal youth had entered her tired body. It was only after many an unwilling argument that we who knew of her failing health induced her to give up the idea of adopting the baby. But her darkness throbbed with the hidden fire of that longing, and she would often remind me of the deaf-blind throughout the world waiting for deliverance. “Hold out your arms to them, forget yourself in them, and be faithful to their cause. That will be your true memorial to me, Helen. There may be a wall between you and

them, but hammer it down, stone by stone, even if you are broken by the effort, just as some of Florence Nightingale's nurses died of exhaustion."

Many heavy tasks awaited us on our homecoming. Besides the everlasting appeal letters and other correspondence, I was requested to attend teas and meetings around New York for the talking-book. Again Polly and I went without Teacher, and every time I settled down to the joy of being with her for a while, I was obsessed by the fear of neglecting some urgent duty to the blind. Even in my study next to her room in the attic it seemed as if I were a great distance from her. But we did not have to leave her alone any more. A young man, Herbert Haas, had joined us, and we liked him greatly, he was so pleasant and friendly. He had a sunny sense of humor, a face like a smiling red apple, and varied capacities. During our absences he was able to amuse Teacher, and a deep affection sprang up between them. Afterwards he occupied a room in our house, and he was inexpressibly glad of a real home. His parents were dead. His father was a musician, and his mother was a general nurse. From her he inherited a soothing touch which Teacher loved. He looked after the house, and was a good manager in domestic matters, which took much responsibility from Polly's shoulders. He drove the car—when we had one—he understood office work, and could repair my typewriter and Braille machine. He learned to spell to me and also to write Braille so that he could copy immediately articles and documents about the blind which Polly had previously sent off to be transcribed. Our dogs were fond of him, and nothing could have pleased Teacher more. Herbert's expansive manners won him a genuine popularity. He was intelligent, honest, a great worker, and his genial smile, blunt speech, and fondness for jokes and stories were a pleasure to all who knew him.

Meanwhile Polly and I did our best to approach persons likely to be interested in the talking-book. Will Rogers, the beloved philosopher and humorist, broadcast a warmhearted appeal. I received a marvelous donation from Mrs. William Moore, whose sincere regard for the blind had long been precious to Teacher and me. With the help of many smaller contributions, the Foundation was able to open a studio where experiments were conducted until the value of the industry was recognized, and Congress granted a generous appropriation for talking-books as well as for embossed literature.

During the spring of 1935 Teacher went to the Doctors Hospital in New York for treatment of various ailments, and it was deemed best to keep her very quiet. I was allowed only a few minutes with her occasionally because she got excited over my work, and that had an unfortunate effect upon her.

She was worn out, and, as she confessed to me afterwards, she had let herself drift into futile rebellion against her blindness. “I have behaved like a naughty child,” she said, “and cried for the moon and disobeyed all my own injunctions to treat a handicap as an opportunity for courage.” Besides, ideas had been clustering in her brain which she craved to have me write down for her, but when I could visit her, they had faded away beyond recall. Poor Teacher, it was worse for her to lose a lovely fancy or a thought bred by the music of nature or forceful words about the greatness or the terror of the creative power of the soul than to be in the dark.

Polly, Herbert, and I took her to the Catskills that summer, and there she sought solace in the shadows of the hills, trees, and lakes. Once again her greed of life overcame her weariness. Polly and I forced a gaiety we did not feel for the little parties that came to “cheer her up.” Among the guests were Mr. Migel, the president of the Foundation, and Dr. Berens, and all of us except Teacher spent some time catching trout. Teacher insisted on a booklet more suited to the ordinary reader than *My Religion*, and in free moments I wrote *Peace at Eventide*.

She did not recover, and she was consumed with restlessness—her old incitement to adventure was now her enemy. She kept talking about her “joy isle,” Puerto Rico, and her wish to try a similar nook of delight. In October 1935 we four were off for Jamaica in the West Indies. It was a marvelous island with tropical gardens, palm trees, precipitous mountains, and colorful old churches, but for Teacher it had none of the fascination that had enchanted her in Puerto Rico, and she was oh, so tired! The fixed idea haunted her that old age was more difficult than to die, for it meant less to give up at once life and all its blessings than to renounce it detail by detail, She mourned over what seemed to her her increasing decrepitude, and in her blindness thought of herself as old, but I do not consider that as her real tragedy. The tragedy was the fact that as a child she had not received the training or acquired that mental outlook that would have enabled her to enjoy far more independence, to listen to the counsels of reason, and to use her sight prudently. I agreed with her that it is a misfortune when mind and body grow old, but I reminded her that there are so-called young lives not hard pressed by poverty which are feeble and old beyond redemption in this world. I said that too often

> *The wise want love, and those who love want wisdom;*
> *And all best things are thus confused to ill.*

"Tradition and custom," I continued, "should not permit people, young or old, who grow wrinkled in heart and warped in thought to influence the affairs of mankind. Your splendid example of conquest over environment, Teacher, is a thundering challenge to men and women who work and think, a witness that the more they clear away the rubbish of obstructing pessimism and blinding optimism, the greater will their power be to fashion a world of young hearts and intellects open to truth and the founts of idealism."

"I wish I could be sure of that, Helen," she answered wearily, "and I hope that you with your seeing and hearing mind may keep your place on the forefront of the struggle."

Again Polly and I were involved in a campaign to meet the Foundation's budget, and we were seldom at home. On one of those rare occasions Takeo Iwahashi, the head of the work for the blind in Japan, came to see us. He was studying American methods of solving the problems of the blind. He had a command of English that amazed us. Blind himself, full of poetic fire and enthusiasm, he urged me to come over to Japan and pour sunshine into the hearts of the struggling blind. I told him of Teacher's condition—she was too ill to see him—and said I could not think of leaving her. When she heard of our interview with Takeo and saw how impressed we were by his noble personality and well-developed capabilities, she said, "Here is a unique opportunity that you must not miss."

"But I simply can't go without you, Teacher, and since you can't accompany me, I shall not accept the invitation."

"I beg you, Helen," she insisted, "to promise me that after I am gone you and Polly will be light-bringers to the handicapped of Japan."

"We will try, Teacher, but I cannot bear just now to think of such a jump into the unknown."

Teacher had been trying to persuade Dr. Berens to operate on her eye. He told her frankly that it would not in his opinion do her any good. She put her arms around his neck and besought him with tears to make the attempt. Finally he consented, and the result was precisely what he had foreseen. Teacher saw no better than before. It was heartbreaking to see her disappointed and discouraged as well as sick, in pain and unable to rest. While she was in the hospital Alexander Woollcott wrote her charming notes and every day sent her small fragrant bouquets of flowers which she could hold in her hand. She had enjoyed his whimsicalities and his wit, but Polly and I both remember how shy she was when he had first visited her in Forest Hills. She could not see what interest she could have for such a brilliant,

aggressive man, riding high in celebrity, but he persisted in talking with her and reading to her and she gradually came to feel at ease with him. At the time of her death he was asked to be one of her pallbearers, but he refused with a brusqueness that seemed uncalled for. Afterwards I learned that it was because he had not considered himself worthy of the honor. I shall always remember him affectionately among the most understanding interpreters of her personality.

Conscious of our distress at her inability to recuperate, Teacher pulled herself together and asked Polly to inquire about a place for us to spend the summer. Finally Herbert drove us up to La Corniche, a village some distance from Quebec, in the Laurentian Mountains. The journey was too much for Teacher, and she felt the cold so keenly that she kept to her bed. We were at a camp overlooking a lake in the heart of the woods. I have a memory of how Herbert, without saying a word or counting the cost, cleared a path through the woods for our dogs and me to take a walk every day. I suffered because the place was too beautiful; it hurt me to enter into its delight without Teacher. That feeling was something with which she did not reckon —we had to be together to enjoy anything wholly. She was really vexed with me and with herself for feeling so ill in the midst of absorbing beauty in which she had no pleasure. Was it not, she said to me, just what she had loved—trips with me into Vagabondia, all anxiety about the future forgotten in the healing wisdom of nature? How illogical and like her! We spent my birthday in her room, and the cheerful face I wore hid a presentiment that it would be my last birthday with her. She told me that she would have to take strenuous measures—journey all the way back home and put herself into a different frame of mind to continue living somehow.

Her words did not deceive me. I knew that she had begun to die. Instinct told me that as soon as she realized she would never see again, she would lose interest in living, but she was a silent woman now, and passionately as I yearned to communicate with her, I was checked by an indefinable fear of breaking open the door she had closed. By August we were all back in New York, and after spending a few days at the Chatham Hotel we learned of a cottage by the sea at Greenport, Long Island. That was our desperate last effort to strengthen her so that her life might be tolerable. One day she surprised me by walking down and wading into the water, thinking, I suppose, that its salt buoyancy would support her. Suddenly she became dizzy and collapsed. We half carried and half led her to the cottage and put her to bed. “I am trying so hard to live for you” she said sobbing. But I noticed one of the innumerable changes in her that had occurred during her unpredictable years on earth. Although the oil of light was low in her tired

body, the flame of her inner life was burning clearer and higher. With Promethean will she fought back pain and lassitude so that she might give whatever assistance any part of my work needed, in counsel or suggestion. But next day she was taken to the hospital in an ambulance. Before she left she said to me tenderly, "I have wasted time grieving over my eyes. I am very, very sorry, but what is done is done. I have tasted the bitterest drop in my cup, but if you are right about God and immortality, we can be sure that He will not allow to perish 'great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end'."

Teacher was carefully examined, and the doctors and nurses in that hospital were most kind to her, she told me. One day after one of my visits she said, "Lying here in the hospital I feel that I am at the Feet of God." When all that was possible had been done for her, we accompanied her home.

In the days that followed it seemed as if my heart would stop beating. Teacher would shift from mood to mood. She would yield to despair and much of the time did not seem to care that Polly and I were full of anguish. When someone tidied her room, she kept talking to me about the Angel of Death coming for her soon and we should have everything in order at his arrival. Then, regardless of what she had just said, she would ask about my work and what good news I heard from my appeal letters for the Foundation. In another moment she said, "You can leave your correspondence and stay with me until I am gone." Yet she never let me do that. Once a member of the Foundation staff visited me on urgent business when I was sitting by her bedside. She had been semiconscious, but she aroused herself and made me repeat aloud—to his embarrassment—what he was spelling to me, and nothing would satisfy her but I must attend to the matter under discussion after he was gone!

Not until a week before the end did her unconquerable, generous soul and her too easily wounded heart show themselves to us as they really were. A nurse had come to relieve Polly, and Teacher somehow got the impression that this meant that Polly was going to leave us. I caught her staggering pitifully after crying, "Polly, oh, Polly, don't go!" Polly caressed her and coaxed her back to bed saying, "I am only going downstairs to get you a cup of tea." Turning to me, Teacher spelled, "Will you two come with me to Scotland next spring? I have always felt that lovely land cuddling down in me, and I should be at peace there." I promised.

My last memory of Teacher as I knew her was an October evening when she was fully awake, sitting in an armchair with us around her. She was

laughing while Herbert told her about the rodeo he had just seen. She spelled to me all he said, and how tenderly she fondled my hand! Her dearness was without limit, and it was almost intolerable. Beautiful was her touch—the creative flame from which sprang the joy of communication, the power of love binding me to my kind, and the intelligence that quickened new senses within my limitations. Afterwards she drifted into a coma from which she never awoke on earth.

Teacher's funeral took place at the Presbyterian Church on Madison Avenue, New York. Many strangers as well as friends attended. Dr. Fosdick gave a moving talk about her work in education and the delicacy of her artist gifts in shaping the individuality of a deaf-blind child. Alexander Woollcott wrote a touching article on her childhood and brought her story home to many hearts in his warm, forceful way.

The funeral was on October 21. Teacher's body was cremated and when the ashes had been placed in the National Cathedral in Washington, D. C., Polly and I took passage for Scotland, where her brother generously received us into his home for about three months so that I might recover my equilibrium.

I have never lost faith in personal immortality, but Teacher's departure so disorganized my life that many months passed before I could reorientate myself, and I have not done it completely to this day. I was so conscious of her soul as a separate being that I did not cling to her physical part—her earthly garment, as she had clung to the body of her little brother, and I cannot say that she seemed to live on in me. She was lent to me from the Lord so that I might develop my own personality through darkness and silence, and I dared not ask for more, except that He render me worthier of His gift. Like Meleager in the Greek tale whose life hung on a brand that his mother kept burning and then extinguished in her anger, I felt powerless. I was not slain, as Meleager was, but it was as if the fire of Teacher's mind through which I had so vividly experienced the light, the music, and the glory of life had been withdrawn. There was still the wonder of language which she had left in my hand, but the mysterious battery from which it had been kindled was withdrawn. So also was the irreplaceable stimulus that comes from day-by-day living with a unique individual, one who had kept the shadows, ever pressing down, from closing in upon me. I had not then sufficient inner light to beat them back alone. Not until after Polly and I had made our voyage to Japan on the *Asama Maru* did a spark of self-activity begin to illumine the void for me.

XVII

I felt as if a loving hand was held out to me when I caught whiffs from the land—what I recognized as Nippon's personality, and Polly described Fujiyama which, like a big, comforting thought, rose majestically in the spring sun. On landing we were welcomed by Takeo Iwahashi, government officials, representatives of schools for the blind and the deaf, Ambassador Grew and other distinguished personages, and the Mainichi press. My work began with a rush which lifted my mind above personal suffering—conferences with high dignitaries on the correct process of rehabilitating children without sight or hearing, press interviews, a visit to Prince and Princess Takamatsu, a garden party at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo at which we were received by the Emperor and Empress, and speeches at institutions for the handicapped. Despite the encroachment of Western civilization here and there in large cities, Polly and I were enfolded in an atmosphere breathing of gracious antiquity. Takeo and his wife took us to villages nestling among the hills. We ate Japanese meals sitting on our heels with what grace we could, and we slept in the houses of those who entertained us. Lying on a *tatami* had a peculiar charm for me; I could put my hand on the spotless carpet and watch the vibrations of sliding doors and windows, the light pit-pat of the women's feet and the rustle of their kimonos. I felt close to the faith of the Japanese as they scattered incense, lighted their "spirit-sticks," and worshiped at the family shrine. Our forms of belief were different, but I loved the warmth with which the people cherished their departed dear ones and anticipated their reunion.

There was also the intense love of beauty around me which I had known in Teacher, and in Nippon every palpable object was within easy reach—cups, fans, screens, the colorful obis of the young Japanese girls, the indescribable loveliness of cherry trees in bloom, the simple grace of gardens with rocks, pools, and dwarf pines and the torii of temples. At Nara the priests permitted me to climb up a ladder to the feet of the great Buddha sitting on a colossal sculptured lotus, the most perfect flower emblem of all virtues. I was the first woman in the world to be allowed such a sacred favor. By placing my hand on the rope I caught the thunderous, rich voice of the mighty bell as it pealed the praises of the Lord Buddha. In Shizuoka I

touched the tea plants growing in field after field, and the big hats of the patient workers who picked the tea leaves in the broiling sun. In the village of Takarazuka we walked up in the hills with the two charming Japanese girls who were our attendants, and I felt the well-watered rice paddies which yielded such a vital part of the people's nourishment.

But all these glimpses of rural life were by the way. Polly and I were continually visiting institutions for the blind and the deaf from one end of Japan to the other, in the Inland Sea and around the hot springs of Beppu, up in Korea and Dairen, Manchuria. We conferred with prominent people, such as the Minister of Education, Marquis Okuba, whose special interest was the blind, and Marquis Tokugawa in the work for the deaf. Takeo worked indefatigably translating my messages of encouragement into Japanese, explaining the ignorance of the seeing public concerning the blind, the pioneer character of the many schools which we visited. Thanks to him I met with less trepidation the questions asked by those who wanted to create paths of inner light to darkened minds and stunted lives. Even at this distance of time I am filled with admiration of Takeo's courage and vision. He was in a position similar to that of advanced leaders in Egypt, Turkey, Iran, and India today who are breaking up a feudal regime of thought and emotion so that the normal and the handicapped alike may be liberated through education. On our visits to the schools the honor in which teachers, or *sensei*, were held was a revelation to Polly and me, and many affectionate tributes were paid to my *sensei* in particular. This expansion of Teacher's work to far lands and the rebirth of her presence in my life are the most treasured souvenirs that I gathered on my first trip to Japan.

I knew positively that Teacher was with me, and I felt her presence still more when Polly and I undertook our colorful trip through Hawaii and Australia and New Zealand and especially in the autumn of 1948 when, on the invitation of General MacArthur, we visited Japan for the second time. In all countries the blind greeted me with open arms and I felt inspired by the spirit that was abroad.

The changes that had taken place in Japan since the arrival of the American Occupation Forces were an immense advantage to me. On our arrival at the station in Tokyo Polly and I were greeted by Brigadier General and Mrs. Sams, members of the Helen Keller Committee, representatives of the government, and others. A tremendous crowd pressed upon us, but gone were the stately formalities I had associated with Nipponese etiquette. Gone were the reserve and fear imposed upon the multitude by an all-prevailing despotism. The spontaneous warmth with which their love enveloped me

was truly dramatic. Finally we were able to reach Takeo and his wife, Kio, and walk with them in a blaze of Klieg lights along a scarlet carpet which had hitherto been kept exclusively for the Emperor. What a symbol that carpet was of the passage of the blind and the deaf through liberty from the stifling walls of limitation to equal opportunity with those who see and hear!

Takeo was undertaking an historic campaign to raise fifty million yen for the rehabilitation of the blind, and it was my privilege to assist him in reaching his goal. When I gave my first lecture in Tokyo on September 3 I was thrilled by the news that on that day more than a million handicapped persons in Japan were gathered to pledge themselves to secure legislation which would enable them to overcome their difficulties and attain the dignity and usefulness of human beings. At the same time there was a grand rally of the blind to demand speedy enforcement of the law for their benefit. On September 4 there was a huge crowd—seventy thousand—at the Imperial Palace Plaza to give Polly and me a national welcome. Before I appealed for donations, Takeo traced eloquently the threads of fate which bound me to Teacher. He stressed the fact that, as Rome was not built in a day, I was created by her endurance and devotion of fifty years. Through Anne Sullivan, he said, "God is shedding His radiant Light upon our ship of beneficence," and with that high sentiment the campaign was carried to its conclusion. I felt certain that Teacher lent wings to my soul when a sense of inequality to my task assailed me. The peace-bringing strength that flows from the Heaven-side of life helped me to master the difficulties of a defective speech and an environment unlike any I had known.

Another element which gladdened me was the emancipation of Japanese women and their activities as members of the Diet. I was encouraged to see how steadily they were gaining experience as social welfare workers, and I felt sure that those who were devoting themselves especially to the blind and the deaf would be a priceless bulwark in their rehabilitation.

Another change which impressed me was the swiftness with which the multitudes at our meetings responded to my appeals for the handicapped. It was reflected in the speeches of welcome from governors of prefectures, mayors of cities, and distinguished educators—all part of a newly liberated people, bewildered, it is true, but reaching out bravely from mass uniformity to individual growth and nationhood founded on personality and collective responsibility for the welfare of all.

The campaign was unlike any in which I had yet participated. The excellent publicity and the skill with which the meetings and receptions were arranged, the crowds at the stations we traveled through, and the

embarrassing tributes I listened to were events to be remembered forever. As I learned from Polly's hand and subsequent translations, Takeo moved the audiences with his poetic fire, his rich voice, and delightful humor.

Mainichi sent representatives with us wherever we went. Through interviews they showed the seeing public that the blind can be taught not only to read and write, but also to become proficient in handicrafts and music, and they helped to convince the sightless themselves that blindness need not be a doom. Through superb publicity given by Mainichi to the campaign there was a blending of all forces to ensure its success—the generosity of the occupation troops, of authorities over cities, towns, and prefectures, ministers of education, labor and welfare, myriads of men, women, and children united by a noble impulse of compassion to brighten darkened lives. The self-denial that had worked through the ages for the nation as embodied in its Emperor was turned freely to compensate the loss of sight and repair the injuries of deafness. For instance, as we were journeying down from Hokkaido, a typhoon swept over the Tokohu District, and floods broke loose, but they did not slacken the zeal of the campaign. Deeply shaken, we traversed the scenes of the earthquake in Fukui that had reduced it to desolation. We ached all over as we passed mile after mile of empty places where homes had once stood. Yet Fukui contributed its share to the fund for the blind, although the winter cold menaced the people and they were in a hurry to secure some kind of shelter while rebuilding their homes. Even Hiroshima, so fearfully razed to the ground by the atomic bomb and still limping through a slow process of reconstruction, and Nagasaki, one third of which had been destroyed, took an active part in the campaign. That is my supreme impression of Nippon—reverence for the people practicing their creed of compassion under another sun beneath whose rays I saw them dedicating their gifts to a cause finer than charity—the restoration of the handicapped to their rightful place in society. All the time I was there tributes rose like incense in honor of Teacher, and during our visit to Miyajima the great stone lanterns were kindled as a symbol that the tree of her memory should bear abundant fruit forever. What monument can hold up more fittingly Anne Sullivan Macy's life for future teachers than the splendid association of the Japanese Blind and the creative law for the welfare of all disabled persons in Japan? And what light from earth can gladden Teacher more than the honor accorded to her by a people whose passionate love of beauty, deep-down kindliness, and spiritual qualities she had always so much admired?

XVIII

The currents of life have borne me far, as I am certain they are bearing Teacher, from a narrow to a wider sphere, and onward to a larger view and a freer air. Thanks to the unquenchable fire she has dropped along my way I have been able with Polly to undertake one journey after another carrying messages of encouragement to wounded servicemen in army and navy hospitals and to the blind and deaf of other races.

In the winter of 1944 when Polly and I started at Valley Forge and Butler, Pennsylvania, to try to brace the recently blinded and deafened soldiers for a new life, I did not expect to be among those privileged to visit the wounded in general. One day I was talking with Nella Braddy Henney. She realized how World War II had coiled itself about my mind with burning anguish, and without preface or apology she blurted out on her fingers to me, "Why not go to the wounded soldiers and find out yourself what you can do for them? You have your two hands, your heart, and your faith in their strength to rise above circumstances. Remember, they have adjustments to make just as you had when you were a child. You have forgotten the very traces of the dark and silent horror that clutched you. You owe a debt to the soldiers. We all do. Perhaps you can pay yours. Paying it will enable you to accept their sacrifice—their sacrifice for us, for each other, and the unrealized dream we call civilization."

After Nella's challenge, I felt that through her Teacher was urging me, and suddenly I was released from the consciousness of my broken speech, my clumsiness and slowness. I laid before the American Foundation for the Blind the question of visiting the disabled servicemen throughout the country. The magnanimity with which the Foundation met my wishes made possible whatever I was able to accomplish in this undertaking.

Soon Polly, at whose faithful guiding hand and cheery readiness to carry out my plans I have marveled all these years, and I were on our way to visit groups of servicemen at hospitals in Washington and Atlantic City. It was like leaving an island, which blindness and deafness really are, for a continent of heterogeneous landscapes and winding rivers. During the next two years and a half we went to more than seventy hospitals, and to my own

surprise I discovered that my lifelong frustration was dissolved. Owing to the huge variety of contacts with all kinds of people and the new light shed upon the work for the blind and the deaf, I could live in a knowledge of the whole instead of hobbling along with a fragment. That was an objective on which Teacher had expended her labor and her humanity, and I was happy in the thought that it was fulfilled.

Our first long tour began in Hot Springs, Arkansas, at a hospital for paralyzed servicemen. We went on to Oklahoma to the progressive Borden Center for deafened soldiers at Chickasha. We continued through Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, California, Oregon, and Washington State. At first I had carte blanche to enter army hospitals only, but when I wrote to Admiral McIntire for permission to visit those under the Navy also, he consented most graciously. Polly and I worked at both army and navy hospitals from coast to coast, up to Idaho and through the South and Middle West; and on our tours abroad we visited the wounded in Britain, France, Italy, and Greece. This is outwardly a bare itinerary, but to my memory it sings, glows, and throbs with a legion of warm friendships, the heroic and often triumphant efforts of the wounded to surmount obstacles, and the electrifying progress of the art of rehabilitation during the last two decades. Thousands, as I can testify, whose lot would not so long ago have been declared past betterment, have valiantly reclaimed their wrecked abilities.

It is impossible to do justice to the epic of heroism I witnessed. It was greater than Homer's, gathered out of many ages and lands. Men of all intelligences, tastes, qualities, occupations, of every shade of religious and political belief, descendants of nearly every nation, including East Indians, Filipinos, Chinese, and Japanese, had their part in it. As I moved from bed to bed—and Polly and I walked miles every day—the soldiers' words were eloquent to my imagination. My thoughts jumped over land and sea as I heard the various fronts mentioned. I was dumb in the midnight silence under which the giant armada put troops ashore in North Africa—shaken by the explosion that blew this or that soldier out of a ship; I was traversing the icy wastes of the North Atlantic or creeping through the tropical jungle—crouching stunned with the infantry in a universe of smoke and dust and dreadful sound as air raids shook the earth—marching with fighters in the desert—straining up the mountains of Italy—enduring deadly loneliness on the bleak Aleutians—shut in with emaciated prisoners of war in Germany. Deep beyond what they said, their modest and gallant souls gleamed as star dust.

Veritably I explored the foxholes of limitation in which the stricken ones of the war fought on, and I know that there is no darkness that does not open to a prospect of coming victory over the crippling, separative effects of life-harming wounds and illnesses. Miracles of reconditioning were wrought, and are still being wrought, by the inventiveness and skill of surgeons and the devotion of staffs, and, what is more, the benefits are being carried into all areas of civilian suffering. From firsthand knowledge I can say that the war-blinded and deafened have been re-equipped for public service and self-support to an extent unparalleled in the history of rehabilitation. The day is drawing ever nearer when the disabled everywhere will be elevated to responsible citizenship. This springs from fearless experimentation, social conscience, the co-operation of science, medicine, surgery, and the art of teaching. If Teacher is conscious of this vast accumulation of good—and I believe she is—she rejoices that she was instrumental in sending me out farther and farther with the gospel of healing into the world where life still is a tragedy. Once she said, "Helen, you will be glad when you recall the merciless prodding to which I sometimes subjected you," and most truly I am.

After the glorious social resurrection I had witnessed among the handicapped servicemen, my zeal to help the deaf-blind blazed up more intensely than ever. Phantoms many of them were, as I was once. Among the lessons Teacher instilled into me I felt most keenly the fact that truth and responsibility are the basis of all human relations, and I could not bear to see the American Foundation for the Blind growing stronger and extending its service—and nothing done for the deaf-blind. In 1945 I tugged with all my might at the stumbling block that debars these loneliest of human beings from their share of education and citizenship. After much writing I succeeded in arousing the interest of Mr. Ziegler, president of the Foundation, and a few others, and a committee on the deaf-blind of America was formed. I was cheered by the fact that the Brooklyn Industrial Home for the Blind was already employing thirteen deaf-blind in its workshops. Now the Foundation has launched an intensive campaign to locate all deaf-blind children who can be taught. In compliance with requests from all over the country, an attempt is being made to obtain from health, educational, and welfare agencies complete information about each doubly handicapped child so that his home state may be assisted in planning for his individual training and educational needs. This humanitarian endeavor alone would have justified Teacher's ardent strivings.

I did not have a chance to "live" in the other countries that Polly and I have visited like South Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. I

mention them here briefly because those trips were further growths of the tree of Teacher's life in me. However, they were exciting adventures beyond her dreaming and I am proud to have shared them. For instance, Polly and I flew to Victoria Falls, and when we stood on the shore near where Livingstone had lived, I felt the voluminous spray as the water boiled and thundered down into a gorge below. Then there were the three days we spent at a camp in Kruger National Park, where from dawn to evening we drove over many miles and saw numerous kinds of wild animals and beautiful birds. It was a veritable boon for me to turn over the pages of God's wonderbook of landscapes and wild life, of which Teacher had read countless chapters with me.

As to our work for the handicapped in South Africa, I regret to say that as far as I know the results have not been so satisfactory as those I read of in Kenya, Nairobi, and other parts of East and West Africa. The rehabilitation of the white blind in South Africa is being pushed with great vigor, but the struggle against racial prejudice continues to be heartbreaking. Every fiber within me revolts against circumstances that threaten the minds of handicapped people—or any other group—and narrows their chances of well-being. I can only pray for a time when the various races of Africa will take an equal share in promoting the welfare and happiness of their handicapped. Already there are strong souls undismayed by the folly and meanness that darken so much of human nature, and who are molding a great fraternity of all races governed by justice and reason.

An event of great significance to me in our tour of South Africa was the opening near Johannesburg of the St. John Ophthalmic Foundation—the first eye hospital for natives south of Cairo. Often it had been my privilege to speak for restoration of sight, but never had I had the feeling of awe that came over me that memorable Saturday the nineteenth of May, 1951. Surely new ideas and the true Christian ideal will accompany the cohorts of mercy from the St. John Ophthalmic Foundation and save the eyes, and the ears too, of myriads of human beings more precious to Africa than all its gold mines and diamonds. Thus the happiest memory of my day at the hospital

Wakes to the birth and bloom
Of life and light.

Our pilgrimage of service to the handicapped of the Middle East was bright with confidence in positive accomplishment. We traveled through Egypt, Lebanon, Damascus, Jordan and Israel, and although on one land or two I found flowing great rivers of darkness not yet reached by enlightened

humanitarianism, I found abundant reason for encouragement. In Egypt I gained a profound, awful impression from touching the Pyramids near Cairo —monuments to oppression, superstition, and the abuses of kingship. But what really stirred me was Egypt's awakening from its slumber of many centuries and the prodigious energy with which it was taking hold of the reins of a new civilization. Another form of awakening that electrified me was the beginning of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind—the goal towards which Teacher and I had directed such passionate labor in 1931. Owing to that council's influence there was a United Nations project functioning in Cairo for improving the condition of the blind, and I spoke before that group. The following year a new demonstration center was opened in Cairo for the training of teachers of the blind not only in Egypt but throughout the Arab world, and I trust that it will prove a potent factor in the upbuilding of a class which has through the ages been sunk in ignorance and neglect. Polly and I visited several excellent Egyptian schools and workshops conducted by men and women with fine powers of organization and a warm understanding of the problems and desires of both the blind and the deaf. In Beirut, Lebanon, we visited the School for the Blind under the Swiss friends of the Armenians, ably managed by Mr. Karl Meyer. I was touched by the long, hard struggle of the school but confident of its final triumph. In Jordan I found a young blind man who would have won Teacher's heart. Through tremendous efforts he had succeeded in establishing a school and a workshop for blind youth, not large but growing, and from the latest reports I feel that he will ultimately carry through his daring plans for the sightless of the entire Arab world. In Israel I was uplifted by the sense of mighty purposes and colossal enterprises creating order, health, and fertility out of the chaos, malaise, and desert wastes that had cursed the land from which rang out God's message of strength and comfort to mankind. Despite untold difficulties, the blind and the deaf are gradually receiving their share of knowledge and opportunity, and as time passes they will participate in the development of their glorious commonwealth.

The great charm of our tour in Latin America was the warmth with which the people received us. Flowers of indescribable beauty and fragrance were heaped upon me wherever I went until I felt almost buried—how Teacher would have loved them! In Rio de Janeiro we spoke at the Benjamin Constant Institute for the Blind and addressed the teachers and the Institute of Education, the largest normal school in Brazil. I talked about the debt of gratitude which the world owes to its teachers, and I said that the community that has the best teachers is in the vanguard of progress.

I was delighted with the progressive spirit of São Paulo in the work for the blind and other enterprises. I was astonished at how much Senhora Dorina Nowill, director of the Brazilian Foundation for the Blind, had accomplished, blind and almost singlehanded—finding competent persons for her staff, obtaining a Braille printing press and establishing a library, caring for pre-school children without sight, working out advanced ideas of educating the young blind with the seeing, and seeking out useful occupations for the adult blind. But she needed public co-operation, and that was why she had invited me to Brazil. At different meetings I expressed gratification at the growing activity in the most important of all work for the blind—conservation of sight. I welcomed the news that groups of eye men travel regularly through small towns and villages to give treatments and that campaigns were being launched in factories to eliminate or reduce industrial accidents. The enthusiasm with which my message was received caused me mentally to stand on tiptoe, as I often do when I catch a glimpse of the approaching—slow but sure—era of world-wide good will.

After filling various engagements in Chile, Peru, and Panama City we spent ten crowded, happy days in and around Mexico City. On Monday, June 15, Polly and I visited the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, Vienna Coyoacán, and I was proud of the variety and artistic quality of the baskets, rugs and knitted goods and woven cloths they produce. The blind also transcribe for the Braille library and help emboss books at their print shop. I rejoiced at the zeal with which Mexico had joined the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

On Thursday the nineteenth we were at the Clinic for the Prevention of Blindness, where two hundred patients are treated free daily. I was moved by the unselfish labors of the eye men who not only give treatments without pay but also perform operations. The doctors asked me to plead with other ophthalmologists to bestow gratuitous care on patients in humble circumstances, and I complied. Afterwards I learned that several others had promised their services.

On June 20 Polly and I spent an exquisite, tearful hour of joy at the Mexican Institute of Hearing and Speech. When we entered the hall, I touched the name “Anne Sullivan” carved on the wall. Then followed beautiful speeches about her work, and I felt my teacher very close indeed. With emotion that almost choked utterance I thanked the teachers for recognizing the source from which I had drawn my strength. Thus it is that Teacher ever journeys with me to all places where new tests are laid upon

me, and after all the years, still shares with me the joys “which mingled sense and spirit yield.”

I can think of her as a spirit giving out warmth, a sun of life. It is not necessarily true as Romain Rolland says, that one who has known rich intimacy and limitless friendship with another human being “has a joy that will make him miserable the remainder of his life.” There was such virtue and such power of communication in Teacher’s personality that after her death they nerved me to endure and persevere. I was gripped by the might of the destiny she had mapped out for me, it lifted me out of myself to wage God’s war against darkness. Of course there is always a choice between two courses, and, shocked out of all security, I might have let go any further activity, but Teacher believed in me, and I resolved not to betray her faith. Conscious of her being alive with me, I have sought new ways to give life and yet more life to men and women whom darkness, silence, sickness, or sorrow are wearing away. And at times it seems that God is using her, who touched my night to flame, to kindle other fires of good. Advancing in years and knowing that I shall be glad to get rid of my worn-out body, I yet experience new birth and youth in the soul of Teacher. The certainty that her creative intelligence and truly human quality of mind do not perish, but continue their vivifying work, sweetens my loneliness and is like the warm spring air in my heart.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *Teacher: Anne Sullivan Macy, A Tribute by the Foster-child of Her Mind* by Helen Keller]