



ADVENTURES IN GIRLHOOD

TEMPLE BAILEY

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Some of you will meet
Prince Charming, and
some of you will have
dragons to fight

*ADVENTURES
IN
GIRLHOOD*

*BY
TEMPLE BAILEY*



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1917

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Adventures in Girlhood

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Adventures in Girlhood

I LIFE AS A GREAT ADVENTURE

O, young Mariner, down to the haven, call your companions,
launch your vessel, and crowd your canvas, and ere it vanishes,
over the margin, after it, follow it, follow the Gleam!

When I was asked, not long ago, to write a series of articles for girls I wondered: "How shall I introduce myself to them? Shall I preach or prattle? Or is there any other way in which I can draw them close to me, so that we may be friends at first sight?"

I talked it over with the Most Beautiful Woman in the World. The Most Beautiful Woman in the World is my mother, and she said, out of her wonderful wisdom, "Be one of them."

And because I am one of you at heart, although a little older in years, I am going to believe that out of my own experience and out of my knowledge of the experience of others, I shall be able to talk to you frankly and freely of your problems, and of the joys which belong to happy girlhood.

I have chosen, as the keynote of our comradeship, the bit of Tennyson which heads this article. We are going to follow the Gleam together! To me there's a thrill in the thought of all our little adventuring ships a-sailing, a-sailing, like those of the three pretty girls in the nursery rhyme.

I am not sure what seas we shall sail, or what roads we shall travel, but I am perfectly sure that some of you will meet Prince Charming, and that others will have dragons to fight; whatever comes, we are going to find,

even the loneliest and saddest of us, that the world is so full of a number of things that we surely should all be as happy as kings.

GOOD COMRADES

And since we are to be friends suppose I begin by telling you something of myself, and of how I came to look upon life as a great adventure. And as you read, you may find that you can match my experiences with your own. You may have known the joy of the open road—the weariness of the rough places—and if you have known these things we shall, indeed, be comrades.

My childhood was full of pleasant things. We were prosperous folk, and looking back, I can see that my little-girl mind was much taken up with my high-heeled boots, and my wide hair-ribbons, and with the fine lace edges of my little petticoats. I had real beaver furs when the other little girls had squirrel, and I wore a velvet coat when the other girls wore cloth. I don't think I was a little prig. Indeed, I believe I was as democratic as my dear father, who counted among his most cherished friends men who were in the humbler walks of life, as well as those high in the affairs of state and country.

I am quite sure, too, that vanity had nothing to do with this attitude of mind. It was rather, a sort of self-respect, which made me value my own belongings, and my own appearance, and my own attainments, and which contributed to my feeling of perfect content.

The time came, however, when some unfortunate investments which my father made brought into our home the necessity for the severest retrenchment. I had to wear shabby clothes. I had to learn to do housework. I had to give up the social life which I felt was my due. At last I had to meet life as other girls had met it who were not the spoiled darlings of fortune.

And I am going to confess right here, that I didn't meet it well.

I moaned and I pined. I hated to dust and wash dishes. I hated to wear made-over clothes. I hated to go in street-cars when others went in carriages. I wanted to keep my nails manicured and my hands white. I wanted to travel and to study. I wanted life at its easiest and best. And I felt that this was my due, and that the world owed it to me.

BIG SISTER

I think that at that time I was a very uncomfortable person to live with. I had a Big Sister who adjusted herself more graciously to our changed

fortunes. I felt a certain unconscious contempt for her, as one who had not sufficient depth of character to suffer as I did.

If any one tried, and my darling mother tried, to tell me that I was no more unfortunate than many other girls of my age, I stopped all argument by the indignant emphasis which I gave to my flaming protest.

“Why, my life is too humdrum for *words*! Don’t tell me that other girls have less than I. If they have, they’ve a *perfect right* to be unhappy.”

You see, I hadn’t learned that no one has a perfect right to be unhappy. I was to find that some of the bravest souls are those who sing when the way is hard, and who smile when facing tragedy.

The Most Beautiful Woman in the World sang through all those dreary days of our poverty. But I was too young and too rebellious to know that her smiles, and her serenity, were the signs of a courage greater than that of him who goes down to battle. My awakening came in a funny way. There was nothing tragic about it, nothing of death or of disaster. It was just something that my Big Sister said to me one day when we were staying for a month in the country with our great-aunt Betsey. It had been a rather stupid holiday, from my girlish point of view. I missed the excitements of the seashore and mountain resorts where our summers had been spent in other days. At great-aunt Betsey’s we went to church on Sundays, and walked in the woods on week days, or read, curled up in a big butternut tree which stretched its branches over the road.

Now and then some cousins came to take us for a drive. But as there were four of them, there was, as a rule, room only for one of us to squeeze in. With a perfectly unconscious piggishness I was usually the one, who, crowded in with the others, would drive off, leaving my self-sacrificing Big Sister to spend a lonely evening with my old great-aunt.

Then one day the worm turned! As I started out of the door, to join the others in the carriage, my Big Sister said, “I think you are the most selfish person in the whole wide world!”

ADVENTURE

I felt a positive sense of physical shock, as if some one had dropped a bit of ice down my back. But it brought me to my senses. That she, out of her gentle sweetness and mildness, should have been goaded to such a denunciation! I made her go for that ride, and I stayed at home, took stock of myself, and for the first time saw myself as others had seen me.

I shall not try to tell you how hard I found it to look upon life from a different point of view, or of how slowly it came to me. But I shall tell you of the things which helped me. One doesn't change, all in a minute, from dissatisfied girlhood to serene womanhood, and I wasn't the kind of a girl to whom the resigned acceptance of a hard fate would appeal. I had to find some other reason for living in harmony with the world, and I found it in my love of adventure.

In my childish days, when I had read for hours in front of the library fire, my fairy-books had told of charming princes always questing in search of princesses who must be rescued from high towers or dark dungeons. Of my nursery-tales there had been none more fascinating than that of Dick Whittington. I could shut my eyes and hear the bells beating and booming, and warning and welcoming. When, a year or two ago, I found the story of Whittington enshrined in the heart of a volume of Alfred Noyes' poems, it seemed to me that my little-girl dreams of poor Dick's journey to London had been painted in words beyond any dreams.

Down by little Kimmeridge, and up by Hampshire forest roads,
Round by Sussex violets, and apple-bloom of Kent,
Singing songs of London, telling tales of London,
All the way to London, with packs of wool they went.

Then there was history, with its more-than-romantic Richard of the Lion Heart; there was Raleigh, with his velvet cloak and his search for Spanish treasure; King Arthur, and his Round-Table Knights—I knew them first in a little blue-and-gold volume of Tennyson, and later, in another blue-and-gold volume of Malory. There were Robin Hood and his Merry Men. There were David Balfour and Alan Breck and John Silver, to say nothing of the Amber Witch, and the “young lord” who saved her from the stake.

It came to me vaguely at first, but with increasing clearness that life taken as a quest could never be monotonous or threatening. The knights of old counted as nothing the terrors by the way, for there was a goal to be reached always, and if today they met a flaming dragon, tomorrow, mayhap, they would receive their reward at the hands of some gracious lady.

THE MARCH GIRLS

Yet, while I realized this dimly, I did not get what might be called a working-plan until I read, with a new vision, Miss Alcott's “Little Women.” It was from Meg and Jo, and Beth and Amy that I learned the lesson of how to make life interesting.

Here were four girls, dwelling in a shabby old house, shabbily clothed, compelled to economize, to work, to sacrifice. Yet, they looked upon life as a good thing, a glad thing, a rollicking adventure. If now and then they rebelled or brooded, in the main they met their temptations and troubles with a high spirit. And thus it happened that Meg went to Vanity Fair and came back unspoiled and content to live simply and quietly in an atmosphere of love and good-fellowship. Jo met Apollyon and conquered with the weapons of self-control and common sense, and Amy suffered in the Valley of Humiliation, until she reached certain heights of unselfishness.

In all of Miss Alcott's great book of girlhood there isn't a note of despair or defeat. Yet viewed by the merely material mind the lives of the March girls were humdrum and deadlly dull. It was what they made of their lives which counted. And that's what I learned in the days which followed my awakening.

Betty Dear, who is young and quite disconcertingly practical, contends that the problems of "Little Women" have nothing to do with the problems of today.

"Life isn't what it used to be. The demands on girls are more complex. They are not so much at home. They have to decide things for themselves. They can't always be running back to mother, as the March girls did."

Well, the March girls may have been old-fashioned. I am not saying that they were not. They wore nets on their hair, and funny little hats, and they lived in those archaic days before the new dances and the invention of the aeroplane. But bravery of spirit and good temper, and a philosophy which has to do with sweetness and light are things which are always in fashion. And so are self-respect and independence of spirit, and the optimism which makes the most of everyday experiences.

THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT

For my part I am tired of the materialism which says that man is a clod. I am tired of the people who think that money alone can bring happiness. I am tired of the people who think only of what they shall eat and what they shall drink and what they shall wear, with never a thought of the things of the spirit.

For my comrade along the road I want one who says, glowingly, "There are night and day, brother, both sweet things; and there's likewise the wind on the heath." I don't want to travel with those who complain, "If I could sleep and sup in a palace tonight I should be content." The chances are that

if these discontented folk could have their wishes gratified they would find the bed too hard or too soft, and the food too hot or too cold.

I am glad that life has come to hold for me a picturesque quality so that simple pleasures take on an aspect of vivifying interest, and daily happenings have never the quality of dullness. When I go to a play, for example, it becomes an event which has to do with pretty clothes and pleasant company and a lovely golden world of light and laughter. Going to church is likewise an event, with the dimness and the murmured responses, and the songs of the choir, and the sense that God is really in his holy temple. Even a walk in the morning or at sunset is a thing that is very worth while. I live in the city—a city of broad streets and of charming vistas, and there are rainswept mornings to remember, as well as twilights of amethyst, with the lights coming out like stars, and the crowds coming home. I often pity the people who see in these things only the monotony of the usual. My world would be dull, indeed, if the play meant to me only a way to kill time, if church-going were simply a habit, and a walk merely a means to reduce flesh.

SUSAN'S SOUP

As I have said, I once upon a time believed that to demonstrate depth of character one must not belittle life's tragedies. Yet those who have really suffered know that their burdens have been lightened by their appreciation of homely happenings.

I have never forgotten a day, about a year after my father's death, when I met the knowledge of financial disaster, and knew for the first time that I must find some work which would help to add to my income and make the Most Beautiful Woman in the World comfortable.

I came home from my visit to my lawyer's office tired to death, bruised, beaten.

I threw myself into a big chair by the hearth and closed my eyes. Dinner was ready, but I wanted none. Then presently our old cook, Susan, stole into the room, her wrinkled brown face full of concern. She carried on a tray a small blue bowl of steaming soup. There never has been and never will be for me such soup as Susan's. She is one of the old Baltimore cooks who know the secret of subtle seasonings, so that her culinary achievements are a delight to epicures. It was this soup, that, steaming hot, and flanked by little, old-fashioned oyster crackers, she offered me, and of which she coaxed me finally to partake. While I ate it she put a big chunk of coal on our open fire.

Then she took off my overshoes and put on my slippers, and presently such a sense of comfort stole over me, the comfort of being cared for, the comfort of warm food and of warm fire—that I was able later to go up to my mother's room and tell how, after all, things were not so bad—for we had each other, and our home!

Since then I have had many hard days, but not one which has not been illumined by some little flame of hope. Susan's blue bowl of soup has become almost symbolic in its suggestion of common daily comforts which count so much in the scale of contentment.

I should never dare tell Betty Dear that a bowl of soup could mean so much. You see, she has never known real tragedy, and so she can't understand, as I am sure some of you girls will understand, what Susan's coming meant at that particular moment. It was the homely ministration of a loving heart, a heart that understood. Susan is still living, and she still loves me, and for me her dear black face speaks of the tears she has shed for me and of the smiles with which she has cheered me. I have no doubt of her sainthood, in that heaven which is so real to her. And I can think of her as serving there as gladly as she has served here, and finding her greatest happiness in serving.

I wonder if you are getting my point of view? That if we meet life with high courage we can never be conquered by adversity? That if we meet life hopefully we shall come to old age, not crabbed and stuffy and stupid, but serene and smiling? That if we meet life with the faith which admits no evil we shall receive at last our heritage of happiness?

And are you going to set the sails of your little ships toward the horizon, and go forth with me in quest of adventure? Tell me! And here's a song for you to sing in your hearts, if not with your lips, as we go along:

Oh, the stirring and rough and impetuous song—
The song of the heart that dares,
That keeps to its creed and gives no heed
To the faces that fortune wears!

That heart that laughs when the foe is met,
And thrives and fires at taunt or threat,
And finds no tolling or traveling long,
For the sake of the good it bears.

II

THE ADVENTURE WITH PRINCE CHARMING

“Knight on the narrow way,
Where wouldst thou ride?
‘Onward,’ I heard him say,
‘Love, to thy side.’”

Of all the adventures in a girl's life, her love adventures are the most interesting and significant. There are people, nice, practical people, who deny this. They state that there are other things; but faced by the question, “What other things?” they stammer and stop. Their argument fails, because, as a matter of fact, love is the greatest thing in the world; the right marrying of men and women has everything to do with the future of the race, and those who refuse to believe this, or who belittle the importance of the tender passion, simply prove themselves out of harmony with the divine plan.

THE KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR

As for me, I have always agreed with the fairy-books that the moment when Prince Charming arrives is the perfect climax. Everything that goes before in the life of a girl simply leads up to that moment, and everything that comes after dates from it; and while the girl of the twentieth century, sallying forth in search of adventure, may not hope to meet at the next turn a knight in shining armor, or a sighing troubadour, she does hope, if she is normal and has the normal dreams of a girl, to find her hero in some of the men who pass her way.

A very clever woman, writing recently of “Fashions in Men,” contends that the popular hero of today is not the hero of yesterday. She asserts that no modern young woman should fall in love with Rochester, the beloved of Jane Eyre; she would choose, rather, a humanitarian hero, like V. V.

But I am not at all sure that the girl of today would care to marry V. V., although she would, undoubtedly, adore him at a distance. She would be a little afraid of him—as those other girls of another age were afraid of Rochester—not in this case for his badness, but for his goodness, which would seem to set him apart, and put him in a class by himself, like a saint or a monk.

And, by the same token, the girls of Charlotte Brontë's day did not, I fancy, begrudge Jane her experiences with the tempestuous Rochester. They were simply thrilled by the tragedy of it all, as one is thrilled by a spectacle in which one has no desire to participate. And I can fancy, too, that they turned from their reading quite thankfully to their own more commonplace swains, and to the protective love which presented no harrowing problems. The novelist writes of the unique. It is the exceptional woman who should mate with the exceptional man. And thus plain John and James and Peter have their innings, and are apt to make the best husbands, which is as it should be; for if most of us waited for these unstable story-book lovers we might wait forever, or, and this might easily happen, not know our own prince when he came.

TO LOVE AND BE LOVED

Looking back at my girlish ideal, I am convinced that I never wanted to marry the type of man that I found in my favorite books. I would not for a moment have considered D'Artagnan, or Henry Esmond, or David Copperfield as matrimonial possibilities, any more than I should consider today Senhouse or The Beloved Vagabond. Senhouse's letters to Sanchia breathe perfervidly the romance of the Open Country, and of the goddess worship of women. Yet life for most of us can not be a thing of mountain heights and of unreal ecstasy. However much we may have of the spirit of youthful adventure, our plans for the future have to do with a home and a hearthstone, with good neighbors, and a pleasant place in society, and with an honorable future for our children.

So while I was at various times in danger of being swept off of my feet by various sentimental enthusiasms, most of them were, fortunately, at long distance.

There was, I remember, an actor, of charming personality of whom I dreamed by day and by night. I shall not soon forget the Saturday afternoons in a dim old theater, when I hung on his words and lived in a world created by his art.

The name of my young actor is now a famous one—he has left the stage, and his hair is gray; but to me he will always be young, always debonair, always with the light gesture, the flash of eye, always with the silver voice which held the house spellbound.

Yet, I had no desire to meet him, no desire to bring to earth this shining distant star.

There was a boy, too, at the rink, who skated divinely. I did not want to know him, I wanted to watch him skate, to see him sway to the music, to fit him into my dream world, which was not my real world at all.

For in my real world were the boys who were the brothers of the girls I knew, and who were at their best nice upstanding fellows, and at their worst not worth considering. Young as I was, I think I felt vaguely, even then, that happiness was to be found in the strength and courage and chivalry of the men of the workaday world rather than in any self-conscious and swashbuckling hero of romance.

While my ideal may not be your ideal, yet I fancy that every girl forms a picture in her mind of the man she would like to marry. She thinks of him, perhaps, as tall, and as wearing his clothes well, and of saying what he has to say in eloquent fashion, and as one whose circumstances will permit him to ride in state—if not with the coach and four of the Cinderella prince, at least in a comfortable motor.

A HEART AT REST

And while she is hugging this image to her heart along comes some chubby college boy, with a stammering tongue—a boy who wears the wrong ties and the wrong socks, and who belongs to the wrong fraternity, and who hasn't much pocket-money, and he singles her out, and begins to let her know that he cares for her, and suddenly she discovers that she is being drawn to him in some strange fashion. She finds herself, when she goes home for the holidays, looking for the letters in the big sprawling hand, and when she goes back to school, she blushes furiously when the chubby boy meets her at the station, and she has a feeling, when he takes her arm in his, that she has always belonged to him from the beginning of the world. And when he calls on Friday nights her heart beats furiously; and when, in due course of time, he asks her to marry him she says, "Yes."

And this is love! And the chubby boy is Prince Charming! And he is Prince Charming for that one girl of all others, because, as our present day novelists put it, he is "her man." The beautiful football hero has eyes for many, the chubby boy has eyes for only one. He has made of love a thing, not of untried vows or of sudden passion or of mere sentimental experience; he has made of it, rather, a thing of constancy and of deep devotion. And so her heart rests in him!

Is it said of Robert Browning and of Elizabeth Barrett, that "They met, looked into each other's eyes, and each there read his fate! No coyness, no

affectation, no fencing—they loved. Each at once felt a heart at rest in the other. Each had at last found the other self.” It would seem to me that we need go no further than this for a definition.

The man in whom your heart rests is your Prince Charming.

THE LOVELY GIRL

A Lovely Girl whose heart is not at rest came to me recently with her problems. She is engaged to a man whom she met last summer in the Wisconsin woods. They were members of the same house-party at a luxurious camp. They saw much of each other, for their mutual love of the out-of-doors brought them constantly together. They fished over the same streams, and tramped through the woods in all weathers. There were moonlight nights in the great forest, there were dawns and sunsets which they shared, slipping away from the rest of the world that there might be no discordant note in the symphony of their appreciation of nature’s loveliness.

But it was when they came back to town that the trouble began. Civilization imposed upon them certain demands, and these demands they had always met differently. The man was raised on a farm, and in spite of his years of city life and a certain amount of sophistication, he still holds the ideals of his boyhood’s home, where his mother managed the affairs of a large household competently, and with the thrift which resulted in a protected and independent old age. The Lovely Girl is, on the other hand, city-bred—a dainty aristocrat, keenly alive to the duty which she owes to society, and to the traditions of her family.

“When we were up there in the woods,” she told me, “we seemed made for each other. It was such a wonderful romance—but now that we are back in town it doesn’t seem wonderful. We don’t seem to look at anything in the same way, and I am wondering if we are going to be happy.

“I find,” she went on, “that the things in which we differ are vital things. Robert has a good income, and I have some money of my own. I want to buy a house in one of the good suburbs so that we can keep in touch with the people that I have always known. Robert doesn’t see any sense in trying to be fashionable, as he calls it. I believe that a position in society is the expression in a man’s life, and in a woman’s, of the desire for a right attitude toward their neighbors, and toward the community. He believes that all such aspirations are the result of an artificial civilization.”

EXTRAVAGANCE

“He contends that beautiful gowns and beautiful jewels and beautiful pictures are rank extravagance, and that extravagance is the greatest evil of the age. I believe that the love of beautiful things is legitimate, and that his theories, pushed to the extreme, would lead us back to Indian blankets and bead necklaces.

“He believes that a woman should do her own work, and thus avoid the prevailing restlessness; I believe that servants are necessary to the kind of dignified living that his position as a professional man calls for; and I believe that there are other things besides washing and cooking which shall keep me from nervous prostration.

“When I analyze his theories, I feel that I ought to be big enough to measure up to the broadness of his democracy. Yet deep down in my heart I am not sure that he is right. And I could never be sure, for what I am is bred in me. And now what am I to do about it?”

As the Lovely Girl talked to me I realized that this was no weak woman’s wail over a fancied incompatibility. It was, rather, a strong woman’s facing of a future difficult adjustment. I am thoroughly convinced, however, that there is only one answer to her question. This man, who seemed at first sight to be her Prince, is really not her Prince at all.

If the Lovely Girl really loved the Prince his theories would not oppress and irritate her. She would, rather, listen to them and, knowing that a man’s theory and practice are often at odds, she would smile and say: “Well, we must see where we can get together. I will yield as far as I can, and I shall yield cheerfully. But I shall expect that you will yield a bit, and that you, too, will yield cheerfully.” Each would thus modify the other. Life would not be for them a battlefield. They would build, rather, a little Palace of Peace, where treaties could be drawn up and where arbitration would supplant all declarations of war. And their hearts would rest.

But since she does not love him thus, she should send him on in search of his Right Princess, while she waits hopefully for the man who can really wake up her heart, which is a very different thing from waking up her sense of romance. Any girl can imagine herself in love when all the stage is set with the witchery of dim green vistas, of moonlight, of high noon in the forest, of silvery lake, and of mountain top. But these things are not life. Life is a thing of bills to be met and work to be done, of pain to be suffered and sorrow to be borne, and you’ve simply got to love your Prince Charming

enough to suffer with him and sorrow with him and work with him, and then have a lot of love left over!

PLAIN JOHN

Now and then it happens that you may know your Prince Charming when he comes but that he may not know you. And there's heart-break in that, unless you can rise to the heights of Agnes, who, when David Copperfield married Dora, put aside her own disappointment and made life lovely for others, reaping her own great reward in the end. Agnes was the Right Princess for David. But you see he did not know it. His eyes went beyond her womanliness and goodness and strength, to Dora's curls and childishness, and it was too late when he learned that curls and childishness are not satisfying things to a man's heart-hunger. I shall talk of this another time, however. What we have to do with now is your own need of the clear-eyed wisdom which shall make it possible for you to penetrate all disguises and know your Prince, even though he does not come like the young lord in the "Amber Witch," "galloping round the corner, attired in a green velvet doublet with red silk sleeves and a gray hat with a heron's feather—dressed gaily, as became a wooer." Your prince may be some man of the workaday world, his clothes may be shabby, and he may arrive by subway, or elevated, or trolley, and his name may be plain John Smith. But if you feel, when he lays at your feet the great gift of his love, that all other gifts are as nothing beside it, if you feel that you'd rather be his wife than the wife of any other man in the whole wide world, then—in spite of the absence of the heron's feather, and the doublet, and the silk sleeves—plain John Smith is proved of royal blood, and you need wait no longer.

And with such a Prince, why should you pine for a more romantic hero; for a Rochester or for a Senhouse? Rochester weighted the woman he loved with all the heaviness of his own tragedy. Senhouse, steeped in his dreams, forgot that it is the first duty of a knight to protect his lady, and so let her fare forth with another man on a most unhappy quest.

And in plain John Smith, *your heart shall rest!*

III

THE ADVENTURE WITH MRS. GRUNDY

“Ah, wasteful woman, she who may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he can not choose but pay,
How has she cheapened Paradise!”

There is this to be said, that the dignity of the social fabric rests upon woman. It is woman who sets the pace. Chesterton puts it thus:

“The woman has a fixed and very well founded idea that if she does not insist on good manners nobody else will. Babies are not always strong on the point of dignity, and grown-up men are quite unpresentable. It is true that there are many very polite men, but none that are not either fascinating women or obeying them.”

Yet before she settles down, as it were, to be guardian of the social ideal, the average girl goes through a season of revolt against the doctrine of “the proper thing.” Strong in the sense of her ability to manage her own life in her own way, she wonders why there must be built about her such barriers of decorum. Little Anne, for example, rebels daily at the restrictions which are placed upon her. She wants to be set free from the bondage of chaperonage; she wants to go and come as she will; she wants to choose her own friends; she wants to wear the thinnest silk stockings, and the sheerest waists, and the highest heels, and all the tinkling and hanging chains which are in fashion. And because her mother says that these extremes and eccentricities are not in good taste, or because she insists that, until her daughter is more mature, she shall be guided by those who are older and wiser than herself, Little Anne chafes; just as her best friend, Lucia, chafes, when her mother refuses to have cigarettes passed after their very simply served company dinners.

“Mother, it is so provincial to think that because we never have done such things, we can’t do them now. It is so narrow.”

That is the rebuke which flaming youth gives to age. The narrow-mindedness of mothers is a thing over which, when girls get together, they wax eloquent.

THE NARROW-MINDEDNESS OF OUR MOTHERS

Yet are they so narrow, these mothers of ours? Isn't there, back of their demands upon us, something of the instinct which makes men hang up "Safety First" signs in the street-cars? You see, our mothers want us to be safe. They don't want us to take chances. They want us to be happy, and they know that the women who range themselves on the side of good manners and good morals, of refinement, neatness, and "niceness," are the happy women. They realize vaguely, perhaps, but none the less strongly, that the women who have for centuries guarded the dignity of nations have not been the painted and patched and powdered ones, whose names stain the pages of history, but rather the serene, if somewhat obscure, gentlewomen, whose standards had to do with plain living and high thinking.

A wise French woman, writing to Ruskin at the time when France mourned the wreck of her prosperity, said:

"It is the share, the sad and large share, that French society and its recent habits of luxury, of expense, of dress, of indulgence in every kind of extravagant dissipation, has to lay at its own door in its actual crisis of misery, ruin, and humiliation.

"Deeply and fearfully impressed by what my own country has incurred and is suffering, I can not help feeling sorrowful when I see, in England, signs of our besetting sins appearing also. Paint and chignons, slang and the reading of doubtful moral novels, are in themselves small offenses, yet they are quick and tempting conveyances on a very dangerous highroad.

"I would that all Englishwomen knew how they are looked up to from abroad, what a high opinion, what honor and reverence, we foreigners have for their principles, their truthfulness, the fresh and pure innocence of their daughters, the healthy youthfulness of their lovely children.

"Far be it from me to preach the contempt of all that can make life lovable and wholesomely pleasant. I love nothing better than to see a woman nice, neat, elegant, looking her best in the prettiest dress that her taste and purse can afford; or your bright, fresh girls fearlessly and perfectly sitting their horses, or adorning their houses, as pretty as care and trouble and refinement can make them.

"It is the degree beyond that which to us has proved fatal, and that I would our example could warn you from."

Now is there anything narrow-minded in that? Is it not, rather, a true presentation of the evils which follow vanity and frivolity, of the influence of high ideals upon civilization?

MRS. GRUNDY, THE GOOD FAIRY OF SOCIETY

Your mother's sense of "the proper thing" you will perceive, therefore, does not belong merely to herself; it belongs, rather, to all women of the better class. And this sense of propriety has been given a personality, and a feminine personality at that, and is known by the name of "Mrs. Grundy."

"Mrs. Grundy," says Angelica, who, up to this time, has been glad to adventure with me, but who is beginning to fear the things we are meeting by the way, "Mrs. Grundy is an old witch."

"She is the fairy godmother of society. We couldn't get along without her."

"I could get along without her," Angelica announced with decision. "I am going to tell you what happened the other day, my dear—a perfectly innocent thing, and yet I haven't a doubt that I am being criticized and talked about and mourned over, by a lot of old cats."

GOSSIP AND A GIRL'S "GOOD TIME"

"And I haven't a doubt but you deserve it." Angelica is young and pretty, and she loves what she calls "a good time." But her definition of "a good time" has to do often with the unconventional and daring.

"I don't deserve it. I simply went for a ride with Winthrop Lane. I met him down-town on my way to the library, and he asked me to get in, and—and we rode out into the country, and then he asked me to dine with him, and we stopped at a little place at the cross-roads, and had the funniest ham-and-egg dinner, cooked by the dearest little German lady, and then we started back—and something happened to the engine and an inner tube, and it was midnight before we got in. I telephoned to mother from the road-house, but she was frantic when I reached home, and she cried and said that all the neighbors would be talking about it, and when I said that I couldn't help it if the engine went to pieces and the tire was rotten, she said that I shouldn't have gone in the first place. And that's perfectly silly, Virginia. Girls in these days—"

“Girls in these days,” I stated, “as in other days, are expected to do the proper thing.”

Angelica gave me a sort of “thou too” look. “Of course, if you are going to agree with mother,” she said with some asperity.

I find that there is a disposition among the girls who give me their confidences to expect me *not* to agree with their mothers. I don’t know why this is, unless the wish begets the expectation. It is better to agree with a mother who is right than with a daughter who is wrong, isn’t it?

And Angelica is wrong, dead wrong. But I didn’t put it in that way to her.

“If you had stayed within city limits, or if you had taken some one else with you, it would have been wiser, Angelica,” I said.

“But of course we love the country roads, and we like to go alone, and I wouldn’t have missed that ducky dinner for anything—and if all the old cats in the neighborhood want to talk, let them.”

WHAT SOCIETY EXPECTS

“They aren’t old cats, Angelica. They represent Society, and you can’t afford to defy Society. Society knows the chances that a girl takes when she goes, unchaperoned and unprotected, with a man who may or may not have her welfare at heart. It expects a girl to be happily and safely at home at an early hour, and these are wise expectations, not foolish ones.”

“Didn’t you ever do any foolish things?” Angelica asked.

“Yes. I remember very well a long ride when I was just sixteen. I was at a winter resort with my grandmother. My health had not been good, so I had been taken from school, and was having a long and glorious holiday, with dances in the evening, and with all the gaiety and glitter and good times that are to be found at such places. The man who took me to ride was older than I, but I was immediately caught by his charm of manner and his romantic appearance. I told my grandmother that we would be gone only a few minutes, and that we would keep within the bounds of the little town.

“We were gone two hours, and we drove home in a misty, moisty rain. I blush now as I think of the silly things the man said to me; nothing wrong, but fulsomely sentimental. He simply wouldn’t listen when I said that I had promised to get back. He said that I was charming, and he meant to see as much of me as possible. I liked the things he said, because I believed that he

meant them, and I reached home with cheeks glowing. My indignant little grandmother came at once to my room and laid down the law. The next time I did such a thing, she said, I was to go straight back to my mother. Well, I wanted to stay, so I agreed to limit my acquaintance with the fascinating gentleman to the most extreme formality. But I agreed rebelliously. I was perfectly sure of the innocence of my little outing. You can fancy how stunned I was to find, a little later, that my gay cavalier was married and had a daughter older than I. You can fancy, too, my increased respect for my little grandmother.”

“Oh, but Winthrop Lane!” said Angelica; “I’ve known him all my life, and it’s different.”

“In a way it is different, but why doesn’t he come to your house and ask you to go with him, Angelica? Why does he pick you up on the street?”

She stared at me. “Pick me up?”

“Does he ever call for you?”

“N-no—”

“Yet when he takes Marjorie Martin out, he calls for her, and brings her home promptly; and when he goes out late, he asks her mother. And Marjorie rides with him more than you do.”

A MAN’S WAY WITH A FOOLISH MAID

Angelica caught her breath. I had hit her hard. But she braved it out. “He likes me just as well as he does Marjorie.”

“Are you sure?” I asked.

Angelica flamed, but I saw that she was not sure.

“If I thought that Winthrop Lane,” she said hotly, “would ask me to do a thing, and then respect me less for doing it—oh, why did you say it?”

“Because I want you to wait until Winthrop Lane calls for you properly and treats you as he does Marjorie Martin. The very fact that he treats you differently shows that he makes a distinction between you. If he cares for you, Angelica, he’ll call at your father’s house for you. He will be glad to respect your mother’s wish that you shall come in early; he will be glad to do anything in the whole, wide world that you think is right and proper. He won’t resent it, if he cares. Dear heart, he will like you just a little bit better, if you make him show you the deference which he is showing Marjorie.”

“But if he doesn’t care?”

“Then is it worth risking all that people may say of you?”

Angelica is nothing that is not honest. “No, it isn’t,” she said, “and I see what you mean. But just the same, I’ve got it in for Mrs. Grundy.”

THE LARGER FREEDOM

I think many girls, like Angelica, “have it in for Mrs. Grundy.” Yet you and I, who have agreed to take life as a great adventure, are going to find that our liberty is increased rather than hampered by observing her mandates, and that in listening to her we shall obtain the larger freedom which comes to those who observe the higher laws. Isn’t it the good little girl at school who gets the rewards and the holidays and the happy times? Well, life is just like that. If we obey the rules, we get the rewards.

“Do you mean to tell me,” demands Betty Dear, “that we should regulate our conduct by what people say?”

No. To listen to every criticism leads to self-consciousness, and one’s own self-respect must, in the first analysis, be one’s guide. But what society collectively has to say on many subjects is worth listening to. For generations it has built up a code which is meant to be protective, and which is protective, as our form of government is protective when it builds our navies, trains our armies, and puts policemen on the street-corners. You and I go through life unconscious of those who are keeping guard over us, but we would be conscious, if they were not there, of the disorder and danger of our streets, and of the menace to our liberty from encroaching and covetous countries. And in like manner, if there were no social code, we should feel the effect at once in the laxity of manner and morals, and in the necessity, which would at once arise, to be on our guard against those who were no longer restrained by public opinion.

It is Peggy who says that “goody-goody” people are insipid. And, alas, I am afraid that what Peggy really means is that good people are insipid. Yet Shakespeare did not think so when he made his heroines gentlewomen. For that is what they are. Not one of them can be accused of rowdiness or of coarseness. One cannot for a moment think of Rosalind as smoking a cigarette, or of Portia as dancing a turkey-trot. Yet they did not lack for adventure. They were frankly happy, sweet; having, usually, a good time—but never with a loss of dignity. Juliet, in spite of her impassioned eloquence, is always a lady in her loveliness. And surely you can not call Rosalind insipid, or Portia narrow-minded. With all her flawless feminine

charm, Portia combines wisdom and common sense, and Rosalind is never unwomanly, even when her wit flashes bright as a diamond.

ARE SHAKESPEARE'S HEROINES OUT OF DATE?

Peggy insists that Shakespeare's heroines are out of date—and that the heroines of our modern novels have a “peach of a time,” that the men are all in love with them—in spite of the fact that they break the social laws—and that not one of them cares a copper what the world says of them.

Well, you may take your choice. For my part, I'd rather be a Rosalind than the sordid little heroine of the “Salamander.” Wouldn't you? And anyhow, when it comes to that, there's little Peggy's own experience.

Peggy is just twenty—and very pretty. She is a stenographer, and she and her mother have a little four-room flat. Before they came to the big city, Peggy lived a pleasant, quiet life in a pleasant, quiet town; but now she wants to do as the Romans do, and when her mother warns her, Peggy complains—and brings her complaints to me.

“There isn't a bit of harm, and mother is so fussy.”

You see, it's mother's narrow-mindedness again!

In this particular instance, Peggy had been to the theater, and to supper afterward, with a man whom she met in the office, a client of her employer. He has never called on her, and he has never met her mother.

“Where did you go after the theater?”

Peggy told me, and I had a vision of her in that incongruous crowd. Peggy is as fresh as a daisy, and the restaurant to which she went is usually filled with poppy women and tulip women and tuberoses women—the exotic bloom of femininity. And there was Peggy, all innocence! And when she danced, for she did dance in and out among the tables, she was gazed at and commented on by men who weren't fit to touch the tips of her fingers, and by women who would not, under any circumstances, have been allowed to cross the threshold of her own little apartment.

PEGGY'S AND YOUR “BACKGROUND”

“Peggy,” I told her honestly, “I don't think it was very—nice.”

“Why wasn't it? Why wasn't it all right?” Peggy demanded. “Nothing happened.”

“Yes, something did happen, Peggy,” I said, “and the thing which happened was that you lost—your background.”

Peggy stared. “What do you mean?”

“Well,” I said, “it is this way. Every time that man thinks of you, he will think of you in the smoke-filled atmosphere of a questionable café. And that isn’t your real background, Peggy. Your real background is your own pretty living-room with its shaded lamp, and your mother coming in with her gentle greeting for your friends, and her plate of home-made cake and pitcher of lemonade, or her invitation to a simple little supper, with her snowy linen and shining silver. And the man you are going to love some day, Peggy, will want to see you with that background, and he isn’t going to smirch it or smudge it with shadows. In other words, he isn’t going to make you less than you are, Peggy.”

CHEAPENING PARADISE

I have purposely given the outline of Angelica’s revolt and of Peggy’s, because here we have two girls, at opposite ends of the social scale. Angelica, a little daughter of the rich; Peggy, of the workaday world. Yet they are both setting themselves against the laws which have been laid down for their protection.

It is for such girls that I have chosen the lines which head this article. Do we not really “cheapen Paradise,” we who insist upon that which lowers us in the eyes of others, and eventually costs us our own self-respect? And, after all, isn’t Mrs. Grundy a *dear*, to give us such timely warning: “Really you mustn’t. It isn’t the proper thing—and you’ll regret it.”

Oh, she’s a good old dame is Mrs. Grundy, and I advise you to make friends with her, for—let me whisper in your ear—*It is better to be with her than against her!*

IV

THE ADVENTURE WITH THE POTS AND PANS

“She girded herself into a white apron, and busily with knots and pins, contrived a bib to it, coming close and tight under her chin, as if it had caught her round the neck to kiss her. Over this her dimples looked delightful, and under it her pretty figure not less so. ‘Now, Ma,’ said Bella, pushing back her hair from her temples with both hands, ‘what’s first?’”

Elinor, the young and lovely and just home from boarding-school, is faced by a situation which has upset her plans. She had looked forward to this first year out of school as one in which the study of music should be combined with a triumphal social season. After that, she had thought of a year in Europe. And now she has been called upon to readjust her plans to the requirements of a reduced income.

Her father’s business has suffered because of the war, and the work of the house will have to be done without a maid. Elinor’s mother isn’t well, and Elinor is to be put in charge of the domestic arrangements.

And Elinor rebels. “It is so sordid.”

“It is your first real adventure.”

Her eyes are scornful. “Well, if you call *that* an adventure.”

“Why not? What did you expect?—that life was to be a flowery road? Didn’t you know that there would be storms and rocky stretches, and that you’d have to swing a kettle over the fire, and provide good cheer for your fellow travelers?”

Elinor eyes me pityingly. “You needn’t try to gloss it over. There really isn’t any romance in pots and pans. Father says that if I ever get married, I’ll be glad of this apprenticeship, but I sha’n’t marry any man who can’t afford plenty of servants. I don’t intend to be a slave.”

Now I really have more faith in Elinor than she has in herself. When she marries, it will be because she has found her mate, and she won’t ask whether he can keep four maids or none at all. And as for slavery, she will find that we are all slaves of drudgery, if we choose to look at it that way—it

is our attitude toward labor which releases us from bondage. Do you remember what Bella Wilfer says to her husband when, waked from her selfishness, she sets herself to help? "I want to be something worthier than the doll in the doll's house."

Elinor being of this generation knows little of Dickens, so I have set her to reading "Our Mutual Friend" and "Martin Chuzzlewit." The chances are that she will come back to me with the toploftical statement that Bella and Ruth were silly little things, who didn't know how to throw off the shackles of domestic drudgery.

HOUSEKEEPING THE WOMAN'S PART

But I am not sure that Bella and Ruth weren't wiser than some more sophisticated heroines. They accepted pleasantly the fact that housekeeping was a part of a feminine scheme of things, and they went to work to weave spells of competency over what Elinor calls the "sordid" part of it. And so we learn of Bella's delicious encounters with the Complete British Housewife and of Ruth's beefsteak pie and its captivating consequences. John Westlock and John Rokesmith were triumphant and happy husbands because of the home-keeping of their happy wives.

"You have such a cheerful spirit!" said John Rokesmith fondly; "you are like a bright light in the house."

"Am I truly, John?"

"Are you truly? Yes, indeed. Only much more so and much better!"

Now Elinor has lived always in a well-ordered establishment where the silver shines and the table-cloths are snowy, where the service is silent and perfect, where the salads are crisp, the soups hot, and the biscuits brown. But she has yet to learn that back of all this attention to detail which she calls "sordid" is a romance which reaches down to her mother's wedding-day, when, with a heart full of love, she promised to be a helpmate to Elinor's father.

HELPMATING A FINE ART

My own mother contends that "helpmating" is a fine art. She knew nothing of housekeeping when she married. Left an orphan in little girlhood, her guardian placed her in boarding-school, and it was from boarding-school that she was married. There was nothing sordid to her in her first encounters

with pots and pans. The road which she had traveled had been a lonely one, and now she was to know the bliss of contributing to the comfort of a beloved comrade. My father said that she spoiled him, but I think that it was a fair exchange, for he cherished her above everything on earth.

They were like two children in their little lovely home by the big blue lake. They had a cow named Crummy, and a pig which was as much of a pet as their big gray cat. My mother used to leave her bread-making to go out and match her skill against my father's at rifle-shooting; and in the early spring, deep in the maple-wood, with the snow still on the ground, and with a log-fire illumining the shadows, they would watch the sap all night as it boiled and bubbled, and go home in the white dawn before the rest of the world was awake.

THAT LITTLE FIRST HOME

My mother has told me many times of that little first home of theirs; of her kitchen with its yellow-painted floor, the sunshine across the threshold, and the blossoming lilac-bush beyond. It was when my Big Sister was a wee baby that, because of my mother's delicate health, my parents left their little home by the lake, and went to the Southland, where I was born. As my father achieved success, and my mother's cares grew heavier, she still continued what she called her "helpmating." Yet in her larger establishment there was never any of the dreariness of some servant-managed households. To us children it was an exciting event to go with her to market, and see her choose the roasts and the fish and the freshest of vegetables. We knew what it was to follow her to the kitchen and to be ravished by the spiciness and savoriness there. Those were the days of canvasbacks and diamond-backs, of preserves and home-made pickles, of fruit-cake which lasted from Christmas to Christmas. The winter brought oysters, succulent and salty from the famous beds of the Chesapeake, the summer brought hard and soft crabs from the same land-locked, bounteous waters.

As I think of that kitchen with its atmosphere of good cheer, its exquisite order, its promise of plenty, I wonder what are the compensating pleasures of the youngsters of today. I am perfectly aware as I write this that there are those who will view with scorn this record of culinary achievement, yet it is well to remember that it is to such hospitable homes that boys and girls look back. It is to such fatted calves that the prodigals return.

I am glad that in those early days I learned the romance of housekeeping. I am glad that I liked to go to market, and to the bakery, and to the oyster-shop with my big blue pitcher. I had a dainty and somewhat delicate

appetite, so that it was not so much the food itself which appealed to me as the beauty of the bounty of garden and of sea, with the picturesque background of firelight and feasting. I was interested in the household-machinery as a boy is interested in the machinery that runs an engine.

But there came a time when I was not interested. Having left behind me the frankness and simplicity of childhood, I began to feel a little scornful of my mother's share in what Elinor calls the "sordidness." It was in the days of our reduced fortunes; but my mother's skilful management made of our house a home. We lived plainly and appropriately, discarding the "frills" which to my youthful pride seemed so essential. I felt that we ought to keep pace with our richer friends. I could not see that it was the very fact that mother would not strive to keep up, which gave to our straitened circumstances the effect of dignity.

NO MAN CARES TO MARRY A COOK!

It was not to cookery-books that I turned in those days, but to books which told of Elaine and Lancelot, of Heloise and Abelard, of Aucassin and Nicolette, of Juliet, of Guinevere, of Iseult—I think the tragedies of these great loves contributed in some way to my sense of the importance of my own embryonic emotions. I felt, as it were, by proxy; for my own little affections and friendships were as yet as innocent and as happy as a child's.

In those days I was convinced that no domestic talents could commend me to the golden youths who began to flutter about me. I had more faith in flushing cheek and in sparkling eye, in pretty clothes and in pretty manners. When my mother remonstrated with me on my lack of interest in domestic affairs, I felt that in some way she had failed to grasp the masculine point of view. I am afraid that I even pitied my father a little, wondering if she had not chained him to material things.

And now I find Elinor duplicating my mistakes, and repeating, with the same air of finality, the same words which I once hurled at my mother: "No man cares to marry a cook. He can hire one."

And I can still catch the echo of my mother's response. "My dear, I am not trying to tell you how to win a husband, but how to hold him."

As the years have passed, and I have seen much of life, much of men, and of women, I have been forced to admit the sagacity of my mother's verdict. Men, the most frivolous of them, have a sense of what belongs to femininity, as women have a sense of what belongs to masculinity.

Back of all the glamour and glow of courtship, a girl sees in the man she loves the future wage-earner. Let him be deprived of this capacity, and he becomes impossible as a husband. You may say that this is not true, but deep in your heart you know that a man who fails to make a living is a man not worthy of respect, and he is a man unfit for matrimony. And in like manner, back of a man's dreams of a woman as a goddess or as an angel with wings is his dream of her as a home-maker. And if you don't believe this and prepare yourself for it, the day will come when you will be taking the fine edge off of romance, as you feed your bridegroom on burned toast and bad coffee.

Sentiment rarely survives slatternly surroundings. The way to a man's heart may not always be through his stomach, but good digestion makes for good cheer and good temper, and back of good temper and good digestion is good cooking.

So why tempt fate with wilful ignorance? And better is the experiment in your mother's kitchen, with her wisdom to sustain you, than in your new home under the eyes of a disillusioned lover.

HER FIRST ADVENTURE

Miriam, four years a bride, tells of her own first adventures with pots and pans. "I was a perfect butterfly when Ted fell in love with me, but I think he looked beyond that and believed in my possibilities. We had been engaged six months before I began to realize he was expecting as a matter of course that I should keep house for him. I resented this bitterly. I hated the prosaic, the practical. I wanted still to be my lover's little lady of dreams. Yet I had known when I promised to marry him that we must begin life in the simplest fashion, for Ted was only a bookkeeper in his uncle's warehouse. If we took an apartment we could not keep a maid, so I began to talk of boarding.

"Ted protested. 'It's just a makeshift. One doesn't really *live* in a boarding-house.'

"'If we keep house,' I said, 'I shall have to do my own work.'

"He looked puzzled. 'Why I thought—if we could take a duckie little apartment, and have a woman do the hard part—that you'd be crazy about it.'

"'You can't expect me to be crazy about a life of—drudgery.'

“I saw the light which had been in his eyes flicker and go out, then he said, gently, ‘Well, there’s lots of time to think about it,’ and changed the subject.

“But I was quite obstinately convinced that I was born for better things than broiling beefsteaks or baking bread. I began to feel a sense of grievance against Ted—that he should be willing to drag me down!”

TALK ABOUT DRUDGERY!

“I was brought to my senses when, one hot morning, I motored with my father to the docks. He wanted to see Ted’s uncle, so I went with him to the warehouse and looked for Ted. It was a gloomy, smelly old place, and Ted’s little office was in a sort of cubby-hole at the back, facing, not the harbor, but the street. Outside, the heavily laden drays rumbled, and the horses’ hoofs beat upon the cobble stones. The dust came through the open window, and in the midst of it all sat Ted in his shirt-sleeves, bending over a big book, making figures on the long white page.

“Talk about drudgery! I shall never hear the word without a vision of my lover at his task. From eight in the morning until six at night he was chained to his desk. He who had always loved his freedom as the wild things of the wood love it! But he had never complained. He had accepted his man’s task as a matter of course, and I think he had expected that I would take up my woman’s task in the same spirit.

“When I reached home I had a talk with mother, and then I went down into the kitchen and had a talk with Olga. I told her that I wanted to learn all that she could teach me. She was radiant, and the days that followed were busy ones.

“Well, I learned a lot in a few months, and one September day mother and father and Ted and I motored down to the shore for a picnic-lunch on the rocks. Everything that was packed in the lunch-baskets was of my making—the rolls, the raspberry tarts, the mayonnaise, the frosted cake. I had roasted the chicken and had stuffed the eggs.

“At noon, with the blue sea booming below us, we ate and ate. When Ted praised Olga’s cooking, mother smiled, and father’s eyes twinkled. And at last, when everything had been sampled and pronounced perfect, I revealed my wonderful secret, ‘It isn’t Olga’s cooking, but mine!’

“The light which had flickered out in his eyes came back, and he said, ‘You!’ as if it were the most wonderful thing in the whole wide world.

“And it was wonderful. For it taught me that I loved Ted enough to share life with him, and sharing a man’s life means sharing his labor.”

She is such a happy wife, this happy Miriam. She has a maid now, and Ted has a motor-car, and his office in the warehouse looks out over the harbor, but life will always be sweeter for Miriam and for Ted because they shared things in the beginning.

MORE IMPORTANT THINGS

I know there are those of you who are saying that advanced modern thought places woman in a higher plane than that of housekeeper. The emancipated woman has shaken off the shackles of domestic drudgery. Her time is needed for “more important things.” You speak loftily of cooperative housekeeping, and quote a writer whose vision of a home is “a large block of flats in a garden over a common restaurant; the staff is directed by an elected manageress and her deputy; a competent kitchen-staff under a well-paid chef prepares the meals.”

Well, if that’s your idea of a happy home it isn’t mine. Gone from such a “block of flats” would be all the romance of little Ruth’s beefsteak pie, and of Bella’s breathless delight in her culinary achievements. “There is,” says a certain clever woman, “a theory that it is better for any one to do many things for himself than to have them done, *even done better*, for him.” Ruth’s adventures and Bella’s, Elinor’s and Miriam’s, are all a process not only of achievement but of development. It isn’t the busy woman who has nervous prostration; it is the woman who, domestically, “never will know, and never will understand.”

And as for advanced ideas and emancipated woman, some of the biggest-brained and broadest-minded women are the most competent housekeepers. Brains make for efficiency in all directions. The most ardent suffragist of my acquaintance is a charming English girl who heads parades with her yellow banner upheld to the skies. She is a singer of reputation, but she and her lovely mother keep no maid, and, with only the help of a woman who comes in to do the heavy work, they serve such little suppers and such delectable luncheons that the people of their world wait expectantly for an invitation. And they do this because they like to do it, and because they can do it better than any moderate priced maid could do it for them.

POTS AND PANS

Oh, it's a great adventure, this one of the pots and pans! It is an adventure which has been shared by every pioneer woman who has helped to make a new country. It is an adventure which goes way back to the primitive fire, and to the woman who cooked the meat that her man had killed.

I am sure that of the girls who read this, there will be many home-keeping, housekeeping ones. Perhaps there may be some who, like Elinor, are hating the "sordidness." With these, and with all of you who have ears to listen, I shall leave these gripping words of one of our greatest Presidents: "There are many forms of success, many forms of triumph. But there is no other success that in any shape or way approaches that which is open to most of the many, many men and women who have the right ideals. These are the men and women who see that it is the intimate and homely things that count most. They are the men and women who have the courage to strive for the happiness which comes only with labor and effort and self-sacrifice, and only to those whose joy in life Springs in part from the power of work and sense of duty."

V

THE ADVENTURE WITH THE FLAMING DRAGON

“Don’t put on so many airs,” said Dulcie, “and scold so with your eyes. I wonder If you’d be so superior and snippy if you had to live on six dollars a week.”

Little Ellen works in a department-store. She gets seven dollars a week, and she is the bravest woman I know. Indeed, I know of no one, man or woman, who is braver than Little Ellen, although when I say that, you are going to think of the men who are fighting in Europe, and laying down their lives for a cause. Little Ellen is not laying down her life, she is simply living it, and, with all the odds against her, she is living it well.

Little Ellen is one of the great army of working-girls. She is the slave of conditions which ought not to be, but which are. Her hours are too long, her work is too hard, and her pay is too small, but she looks at it this way, “If it can’t be helped, you’ve got to make the best of it.” So it is with her little sword called Making-The-Best-Of-It that Little Ellen is fighting the particularly shiny and scaly dragon who lies in wait for girls who earn their own living.

Now the name of that dragon is Temptation, and he lurks, hidden and hideous, in the tall, waving grasses of the Field of Pleasure. Before you know it, you have come upon him, and there’s simply nothing to do but tackle him, single-handed, and cut off his head!

If you don’t cut off his head, the end will be too horrible to contemplate. Yet there are girls who don’t put up any kind of fight. They don’t even try to run away. They just give up and say: “He’s too strong for me. I am so weak and helpless, and—” Well, we will shut our eyes to the sequel. The Flaming Dragon *gets them*.

LORD KITCHENER TO THE RESCUE

Do you remember O. Henry’s little tale, “The Unfinished Story”? When I first read it, I thought it very fine and wonderful, and I still think it fine and

wonderful. But, as I read it over today, it was borne in upon me that there was something wrong with the end of it.

It is the story of a girl named Dulcie who works, like Little Ellen, in a department-store, but the girl in the story gets only six dollars a week instead of seven. And Dulcie has to live very close to the wind to make her six dollars a week pay for rent and food and clothing, and at last one night she accepts an invitation to dine with a man whom she calls "Piggy," who is rich, and fat, with "the soul of a rat, the habits of a bat, and the magnanimity of a cat." But Dulcie knows that if she goes with "Piggy," there will be delicious things to eat, and music and lights and pretty ladies; but she knows, too, deep down in her heart, that if she dines with "Piggy," she must pay the price.

She dresses herself nicely in her poor little best, and surveys herself finally in the wrinkly mirror against which are propped pictures of General Kitchener and other celebrities. And just as she is ready to go, and the landlady has announced "Piggy," Dulcie turns to her dresser to get a handkerchief, and there, "straight and slender and tall, with a look of sorrowful reproach on his handsome melancholy face, General Kitchener fixed his wonderful eyes on her, out of his gilt photograph-frame."

Well, Dulcie doesn't go. She stays at home and dines on crackers and jam, and she offers General Kitchener some jam on a cracker, "but he only looked at her, as the Sphinx would have looked at a butterfly."

And it is then that she says to him: "Don't eat it if you don't want to, and don't put on so many airs, and scold so with your eyes. I wonder if you'd be so superior and snippy if you had to live on six dollars a week?"

Now, for fear you may not get the point of the story from this scrappy synopsis, I'll state, right here, that Dulcie stayed at home because she had an ideal which had to do with men like Lord Kitchener, and because she was too good and fine to pay the price which such men as "Piggy" ask. But the thing which is wrong with the end of the story is this: it gives a dark hint of a time when "Piggy" may again ask Dulcie to dine with him, "a time when she is feeling lonelier than usual, and General Kitchener happens to be looking the other way, and then—"

Now why should anybody hint such a thing of Dulcie—of Dulcie, who, having fought one battle bravely, can fight others, and who will keep on fighting and winning until the end?

IT IS A GREAT AND GLORIOUS THING TO BE A GOOD WOMAN

It seems to me that the “Unfinished Story” is a good one for employers who pay starvation wages, and for oppressors and tyrants, and for rich men who ask girls like Dulcie to dine with them, and it was for these that O. Henry meant it, and all honor to him. But it doesn’t seem to me a good story for girls who are contending with hard conditions; for, having carried Dulcie triumphantly up to a certain point, it leaves her hanging, as it were, on the edge of a precipice.

Now I believe in Dulcie, and in Little Ellen, and in other girls like them. I believe in their fineness and their fighting blood. I believe that they know what every girl who contends with the hard things of life ought to know, that *it is a great and glorious thing to be a good woman.*

As soon as a girl gets that idea fixed firmly in her mind, she is safe. She is safe in spite of the fact that certain people may say—kind people, whose charitable pessimism has robbed more than one girl of self-confidence —“Poor thing, she can’t help it. No one could expect her to live on six dollars a week. As long as men pay such wages, girls will go under. The fault is in the system.”

Perhaps the fault is in the system, and the sooner that rich men learn that the highest philanthropy expresses itself in a living-wage, the better, but in the meantime are we going to say to the lovely little things who toil: “There’s no help for it. You can fight, but you’ll fail. The Flaming Dragon will get you”?

THE EASIEST WAY

Well, I for one shall not say it. And I shall not say it because I have in me the blood of women who endured hardships for the sake of an ideal. Do you think that the Huguenots and the Pilgrims chose the “easiest way” when they left lives of luxury to battle with conditions in a new and unknown country? Do you think that the women of the South, after the Civil War, felt that their poverty gave them the least excuse for disloyalty to their traditions of moral integrity?

Surely it was not easy for those women of the South, who had never buttoned their shoes or braided their hair, to take up the burden of hard labor which their losses forced upon them. It was not easy for women who had worn frills and fine laces to wear homespun and queer hats and heavy shoes.

It was far from easy for women whose doors had been flung wide in generous hospitality to keep squalid boarding-houses, and to be at the mercy of even more squalid boarders. Yet would any one have dared hint that poverty in such a case was anything less than honorable?

I have in mind four sweet women who had lived like princesses before the war and who, afterward, existed on the ragged edge of nothing. They were two widowed sisters and Miss Leila and Miss Sophia. As I look back on their triumphs of economy, I find them nothing short of marvelous. Their dining-table was of old mahogany, highly polished, and there was, to my childish eyes, something especially sumptuous in the display of little crocheted doilies which were Miss Leila's handiwork. There was a silver basket which held the buns for our lunch, and an old silver pot for our tea. There were thin cups and thin spoons. And there was nothing to eat but the buns and tea. At my own home, we always had cold meat for luncheon, and hot bread, and sometimes a soup or a salad, and a sweet. But our table never had the air of elegance which Miss Leila managed to impart with the doilies and the buns and the silver basket. For dinner, there were, usually, little stews, served on a Sheffield platter. There was never a very generous supply, but I always had enough, and I know now that the dear ladies probably went empty that I might be filled.

I was to learn later that the silver basket and the teapot and the shining old table and the Sheffield platter were all that was left of former grandeur. They displayed them bravely, and kept their little tragedies of privation strictly to themselves.

POVERTY

Now, when poverty first came to Miss Leila and Miss Sophia, they were young and lovely. Life was before them, as it is before Little Ellen and Dulcie. But can you fancy for one moment that any one would have said of Miss Sophia or Miss Leila: "Poor things, they will probably go under. The Flaming Dragon will get them"?

No, you can't fancy it, and I can't, for Miss Leila and Miss Sophia were the product of an idealism which would face death rather than dishonor. They lived on less than six dollars a week. They lived on so little that if I

should reveal it, you would stand aghast. But they came to old age with a loveliness which had nothing to do with painted cheeks, and with a dignity and grace which makes them shine like stars in my memory.

Do I hear the murmur, “But they were ladies”?

LADYHOOD A QUALITY OF SOUL

And what is ladyhood, may I ask, but fine and gentle womanhood? It is a quality of soul as much as of station, and the girl who earns her living may share it equally with the woman who lives as a lily of the field. But to share it, she must set up an ideal of purity and of steadfastness of purpose. She must be sustained by hope and high resolve. When I was young, I came under the influence of a man who preached the doctrine of strength. “To be happy,” he said, “is, after all, but an incident. To be good and to do good, to know God and to serve Him, are the important things.”

Does that seem a hard philosophy? To me it did not. It was a clarion call. It made me feel like a soldier, who, going down to battle, does not expect to have softness and ease. But he does expect to conquer. And when he fights, his blood thrills, and though he may be worn and spent when victory comes, he has a singing sense of triumph. The knights of old who fought dragons went forward, you may remember, to meet them. If they had been cowards, they might have scuttled down some byway to the back door of the castle, and have eaten and drunk with such timid souls as themselves, while the dragon ramped and raged outside, frightening the populace into fits. But they were not cowards, and so they conquered, and when they came to the castle, the gates were flung wide to welcome them. And you, too, must not be cowards, but must fight bravely, and you, too, *will conquer*.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF IT

Little Ellen says quaintly that making the best of it means getting the most out of it. “If you are dissatisfied because the little sausages that you have for your Sunday dinner aren’t turkey, and the book that you get from the store library isn’t a ticket for the show, and the nice little bargain shirt-waist isn’t a velvet gown, then you are sure to be miserable. And nobody,” says Little Ellen cock-surely, “can make me miserable. I want life to mean to me something more than a grouch.”

It is Little Ellen’s philosophy which gives flavor to her morning bread and butter, to her noonday bowl of soup, and to her simple dinner. “You’ve just got to find something in each day’s work that interests you,” she further

elucidates, “and somebody to be friendly with. And you’ve got to think things out for yourself. You mustn’t ever let anybody own your mind.”

There are rich women who might easily envy Little Ellen her self-respect, her serenity, her independence of spirit. And let me say right here that there is no weakness in this attitude of Little Ellen’s. Her eyes are wide open to the injustices of the present social system, but she doesn’t believe that there is anything “divine” in discontent. She is sure that the time is not far off when the girl who earns her living will be treated with fairness, but until that time comes she refuses to be ground in the dust by the commercial Juggernaut.

And now are you not beginning to perceive that Little Ellen has in her the high spirit of adventure? It is this which makes her see in the day’s work something more than drudgery. It gives zest to her encounters with the most crabbed customers. It makes her look upon her fellow workers as boon companions. And so, I don’t want you, when you think of Little Ellen, to be too sorry for her; I want you to think of her, rather, with her head up, her eyes shining, her sharp and sure little sword in her hand, her foot on the neck of the Flaming Dragon.

THE RICHNESS OF LIFE

But it is not only the Little Ellens and the Dulcies who have dragons to fight. There’s Drusilla, for example, who has a government position, and who hates drudgery. She hates getting her lunches in restaurants or eating it cold on her desk. She hates the monotony of the gray days, with the same people to right of her and to left of her. She hates the street-cars o’ nights and o’ mornings. She hates the tailor-mades which are her daily attire. She wants boudoir-caps, and days in bed, and dancing teas, and long walks in the sunshine, and, because she wants these things, she is going to marry a man she doesn’t love. For, you see, Drusilla isn’t wise, and she doesn’t realize that there is a slavery more degrading than that of the day’s work. For what happiness is there in a loveless household? And what freedom of soul is there for the wife who expects all and gives nothing? And what of the years which stretch ahead? Perhaps, if the man Drusilla is to marry were wise and strong, she might learn to love him, but there’s just his money and the things it will buy. And Drusilla will have a big house, and plenty of servants, and the boudoir-caps, and the days in bed, and the dancing teas, but, somehow, I can’t think of Drusilla as I think of Little Ellen—with her head up, her eyes shining, and the Flaming Dragon at her feet!

You see, the trouble with Drusilla and others like her is that they look with envy on the women who have nothing to do but “have a good time.” They do not realize that doing nothing does not always mean having a good time, it sometimes means having a very bad one. As Ruskin says:

“You are to go the road which you see to be the straight one; carrying whatever you find is given you to carry, as well and as stoutly as you can, without making faces, or calling people to come and look at you. All that you really have to do is to keep your back as straight as you can, and not to think about what is upon it. The real and essential meaning of ‘virtue’ is in that straightness of back.”

THE HUNGRY HEART

Please don’t think that I am trying to preach to you tritely, “Be good and you’ll be happy.” I know that youth’s idea of happiness has to do with pretty clothes and nice things to eat and freedom from care. And I wish that all girls might have these things, and especially girls like Little Ellen and Dulcie. But if you must have them at the expense of finer things, then I would not wish them for you. For a lobster supper has never yet filled a hungry heart, and the loveliest gown in the world has never compensated for the loss of loveliness of soul.

But I shall say to you, “Be good and you’ll be blessed,” and your blessings shall be those of a richness of life beyond anything that you have ever hoped or dreamed. It is that which is within us that counts. We are masters of our fate, captains of our souls. No one can rob us of our right to fix our eyes on the stars.

And to those of you who have met the Flaming Dragon, and who are standing with your backs to the wall, with *defeat* staring you in the face, let me tell you this, that the Flaming Dragon is, after all a cowardly fellow—one thrust of your sharp little sword and he is done for, and you can go your way with a thrilling sense of victory!

“Be strong!

It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long,
Faint not, fight on. Tomorrow comes the song!”

VI

THE ADVENTURE OF THE OPEN COUNTRY

“You *are* free, really. All right then; act as if you were. Drop all the rest; walk away from it into the Open Country.”

I am going to take it for granted that the girls who read this are not of those musty-fusty folk who shut themselves away from fresh air and sunshine and live grubby lives in houses, and grubby lives in offices, and grubby lives in—automobiles.

I can hear you protest, “But one can’t live a grubby life in an automobile.”

Oh, yes, one can! I know an old woman who has a limousine. It has padded cushions and a glass flower-holder full of scented, artificial orchids. It has a chauffeur who is so stuffed with high living that he almost falls asleep in his seat. And every day for hours and hours that old woman rides alone in her limousine with all the windows down. And she wears furs and a velvet hat and a spotted veil, and she has a little, fat, spotted dog who sits on the cushion beside her and shivers when the door is opened! And if you can think of anything grubbier than that selfish old woman riding in lonely state, I can’t. If she would only open a window and throw away the make-believe orchids, and ask some invalid to share the padded cushions, and let the fat chauffeur take the fat little dog for good long walks between rides, how much lovelier her life would be!

But we must not spend another moment with our grubby old lady, for I have much to say of green fields and running brooks, and of the way you may all share in the joys of the Open Country. And I know that if I don’t say these things clearly, you will come back at me with, “It is all very pretty, but we can’t make it come true.”

Well, of my own adventures in the Open Country, I could write a book, and every story would be a true one. But of yours I can only hint. It will be for you to make them come true.

“BUT I CAN’T GO”

But if you are to make them come true, you must have eyes to see and ears to hear. You must have senses keen enough to be ravished by the perfume of the pine-forest, the taste of salt mists from the sea, the feel of the stinging storms of autumn, the sound of the wind in the trees; and with your senses thus attuned, you shall go forth in search of adventure, and you shall see what you shall see!

Again I hear your voices: "But I can not go. I am bound to my desk," and: "I must stay in town all summer. The war has made things hard for father."

Ah! but for those of us who adventure, there is always the Open Country. "You *are* free, really"; free to find joy in the things that are nearest. And the thing which is nearest to you may not be sapphire sea or mountain top; it may be merely a city park, or the breadth of a city street. But whatever it is, it is Open Country for you, because it is a place of freedom, a place of escape from the darkness and dullness of a narrow life.

And remember that when I speak of a narrow life, I do not mean one limited by poverty. There are rich women whose lives are so narrow that they might be measured by an inch-rule. A year or two ago I spent several weeks at a fashionable resort. On the beach the waves boomed and broke, the sandpipers skimmed across wet sands, the white gulls dipped and rose and dipped again. There was a cove with good sailing, and a little village two centuries old and quaintly charming. Beyond the village one entered into the dimness and sweetness of hemlock-groves, coming out again upon sunshiny glades where the long grass rippled like the waves of an inland sea.

THEY PLAYED BRIDGE

Yet, with few exceptions, the women of that big hotel rarely walked on that beach; they never penetrated to the heart of the dim groves or came out upon the beauty of the sunny glades. From morning to night they played bridge. The sandpipers meant less to them than a spade-make, the gulls were not half as interesting as a no-trump declaration; with all the lovely world calling them, they had no ears to hear.

There were girls among them, girls who were willing to forego their heritage of outdoor interests for a chance to win honors above the line or points below. Can you think of anything more narrow than that? Why, little Peggy, who takes her walk along the Drive after the day's work, and who has her eyes open to the beauty of the sunsets, and to whom the night boat is a ship of stars, is getting out of life something which those bridge-mad girls

are missing. And I say this not because of the game, for bridge on a rainy day or on a winter's night may have its place, but it is a poor substitute for that which makes the eyes shine, and the blood beat, and all seem right with one's world. Nature takes her revenges. If we do not pay court to her, she withdraws from us her gifts of sound minds in sound bodies. Freedom of body speaks for freedom of soul.

I have been immensely diverted of late by the adventuring forth every morning of a neighbor of mine, a dear old lady of eighty. She is hale and hearty, and nearly every day in all the years of her long life she has gone to market. She always walks, and she always carries a basket. Most of us do not carry baskets in these days. But I wish we did. And I am looking for some daring and delightful young woman of wealth to start the fashion. Why not? Can you fancy anything more enchanting than the vision of Gloriana, who is eighteen, and who has her hair bobbed, and whose covert coat is of a cut to madden those of us who can not afford Gloriana's tailor, and whose hat is tip-tilted and of a tender spring-like freshness—can you imagine anything lovelier, I say, than Gloriana going to market with a basket on her arm?

Well, anyhow, my old lady takes her basket, and away she goes. Then, after a while, she comes back with her radishes and lettuce and spring onions, and goodness only knows what treasures of pot-cheese and dill pickles tucked away in corners, and she comes back with her eyes as bright as diamonds, and with cheeks pink like a girl's.

DULL EYES

And across the street another old lady sits in her steam-heated rooms and rocks and sews and thinks about herself, and she has a cupboardful of cold creams and complexion-helps, and her eyes are dull, and her cheeks are pink with the color which she puts on from the little pots.

And you are saying: "Please, do get back to your subject. It is the young ladies, not the old ones, whom you are addressing."

My dears, the young ladies whom I am addressing must some day be old ladies, and years do not make as much difference as you may think. Wrinkles are external things, and stiff joints are a joke if the heart is young. And I am perfectly sure that my old lady who goes to market is much younger than Judith, whose idea of exercise is a trip to the shops in a trolley-car, with two blocks to walk at either end. And Judith's idea of amusement is

a moving-picture show, or a matinée, or a tea-dance, and she hates the summer because “there is simply nothing to do.”

But there is really a great deal to do, and a great deal to see if Judith only knew it. And now, as the nursery rhyme puts it, “My story’s begun.” And it begins with my own girlhood. We lived in Baltimore. For reasons of economy we had to stay in the city. August was hot and humid. I felt chained and a prisoner. I yearned for the green world beyond brick walls. By day we drooped in our darkened rooms, at night we sat on the white marble steps, and there came to us through the hot twilight the quavering cry of the old negro crab-man,

“Day-villed crabs,
Day-villed crabs,
Don’t you want
Nice day-villed cra-a-a-bs?”

I grew desperate, and my big sister grew desperate, and one morning we started forth in search of adventure. We carried a bit of lunch with us, and we took a horse-car to Druid Hill Park.

GILDING THE COMMONPLACE

There was a flock of Southdown sheep in the park, and a collie dog. There was a little lake, and the sturdiest of old trees, and stretches of green. We carried books and embroidery, but we did not work or read, for the great flock of Southdowns passed us, and the lambs were not too old to be frisky. As the sheep moved on, we followed them, and it was in following them that we found the deer, quite still in a shadowy spot.

I have not time to tell you of all our adventures, but that early-morning pilgrimage was the beginning of many others. We persuaded our little mother to go with us, and as we worked or talked we would pretend that we were on our own domain, and that behind the trees stood our own stately country house, with a retinue of servants, and everybody invited for a garden-party, or a dinner, or a dance on the lawn. For, you see, we were gifted with imagination, and so we gilded the commonplace. The city park was for us Open Country, the place of freedom, the way of escape.

Perhaps for some of you this summer, Open Country may be a trolley-trip, a walking-tour, or a sojourn at some inexpensive little resort. And whether you find the Open Country as you adventure will depend upon your point of view and the grasp you have upon opportunity.

Marjorie tells of a summer spent at a funny little boarding-house in Maine. The prices were so reasonable that it did not seem fair to complain of the stuffy little parlor, and the stuffy little bedrooms, and of the little dining-room which smelled of varnish.

“At first it was rather awful,” Marjorie relates. “I was quite frantic to think that I had come. It seemed to me that if I couldn’t afford anything better, I might have been happier, very much happier, at home.

“Then entered the Wise Woman. She was much older than I, and the morning after she arrived she said: ‘Won’t you walk with me? I have been coming here for twenty years, and I know all the lovely places.’ As I went to put on my hat, I wondered how she could have spent all her precious summers in such a hole.”

THE FAR HORIZON

“Well, that walk was a revelation! We went straight down the village road until we came to one which she called the King’s Highway. At the end of that road we saw the sea stretching out to the far horizon. Presently, as we sat on the rocks, several shiny black heads were poked up through the water, and I had my first sight of young seals. And then the gulls came sweeping in after a school of fish, and the Wise Woman told me that the dark-plumed gulls were the young ones, and the shining white ones were the old gulls.

“We walked home through a field which was a tangle of bay and juniper, and there was wintergreen growing very low and very lovely with its shining leaves. I came back to the stuffy hotel with my arms filled with fragrant branches, and I made my stuffy little room sweet with the spiciness of the woods. And I ate of the plain good food in the dining-room, and was so hungry and happy that I didn’t even smell the varnish. Every day after that I walked with the Wise Woman, and she told me why she had come to that place for twenty years. She was a teacher, and her income was not adequate to meet the demands of more expensive resorts. She loved the wildness and the beauty, and it was for her, Open Country.”

Do you catch my meaning—that somewhere there is freedom for us all in these summer days, if we will only look for it? Sometimes we must go deliberately forth to find it, but that’s the inducement—and the adventure.

ON THE ROOF

Little Kitty found Open Country on the roof of her apartment-house. She sells books in a department-store. Her days are long, and the small room in which she lives is stifling in summer-time. So Kitty bought two comfortable folding chairs, a tray with thin glasses, and a fat, round pitcher. And up under the stars little Kitty rests with all the city lights below her. She asks the friends who have no roofs of their own to share the restfulness with her. She serves lemonade in the thin glasses, and she feels quite elegant and uplifted as she dispenses her simple hospitality.

At the other end of the scale, there is Winifred, who has everything in the whole wide world, who rides and golfs and plays tennis and swims and dances, and who, in spite of all these things, felt, until recently, that she was a bird in a gilded cage.

“It wasn’t really mother’s fault,” she confided. “I was trained to do all the things which a girl of my position is supposed to do. But I wasn’t really happy. It always seemed to me that there must be something more to life, but I didn’t know how to find it. You see, I hadn’t really known father. I am afraid I looked upon him as some one to pay the bills, and I was nineteen before we discovered each other. Father bought a farm. Mother hated farms, but father spent a lot of his time there. And once he was hurt by one of the horses, and I had to go to him, for mother was not well.

“It was in the early spring after father had begun to go around the place with me that I suddenly waked up to the kind of man he really was. He was interested in everything. He knew all about the birds and had put up houses for them. We used to watch them through our field-glasses. Have you ever seen martins on their nests, or teaching their young to fly?

“And there were the pigeons and the adorable squabs; the little ducks, the goslings, and the funny geese. Everything seemed so young and alive, and life took on new meanings. I don’t think I can just explain it, but that farm seemed so far away from all the artificial things which had surrounded me that I felt free for the first time. Everything was so natural and simple. And the best thing of all was that father and I had found each other.”

That is something of an adventure, isn’t it, to find a father—and to find him in the Open Country?

And now do you understand that to reach Open Country you must simply walk away from the things which have bound you, away from your worries. You pant for freedom, not knowing that you can free yourselves. As I write, it seems to me that I can hear your voices calling, “Let me out, let me out!”

Yet I alone can not let you out. The gate is Getting-the-Most-Out-of-It. Marjorie and Kitty and Winifred have opened it, and I lifted the latch and went through in those early days in Baltimore. And any one of you can open it, if you will wrest from circumstances something of joy, something of gladness, something, indeed, of adventure.

VII

THE ADVENTURE IN THE HOUSE OF LEARNING

“As the bird wings and sings let us cry, ‘All good things are ours.’”

September is the going-away-to-school month, and, as I write, I am thinking of the girls who, when they read this, will have left home for the first time. Some of you will, perhaps, read what I have written as you speed eastward, or westward, or northward, or southward. Some of you may read it in school or college library, where you sit “a stranger in a strange land,” a little afraid of this new House of Learning, a little afraid, too, of the life which is before you, a little homesick for the friends and the family upon whom you have hitherto leaned, and by whom you have been shielded.

And it is because you may be reading this with tears in your eyes and a lump in your throat that I want to tell you to dry your tears and go forth buoyantly to meet this adventure—for of all the adventures of your girlhood there will be none which you will share with so many good comrades, none in which you will feel so keenly the joy of youth and the zest of high spirits.

I wish that I might talk these things over with you, face to face, instead of writing them. I wish that we might be really starting out together on a great adventure; and that, before we entered the gates of the House of Learning, we might sit down on some grassy bank by some little shining stream, and speak of friendship, of courage, of sincerity, and of good-fellowship, of all the things which make it possible for people to live together in harmony and happiness.

Yet since we can not talk, I can at least tell you what I think of these things, and you may, perhaps, have something to tell me of your own experience after you have read what I have written.

SCHOOL LIFE IS COMMUNITY LIFE

The first somewhat difficult fact that you will have to face is that school life is community life, and on your power of adaptability your future

happiness will depend. So I am not going to talk to you of scholarship, but rather of your attitude toward the other girls, those other girls who seem to you at this moment so very formidable, and to whom you seem equally formidable.

For a little while your world will be turned topsy-turvy. The chances are that in your own home you have been the queen of a small kingdom, although you may not have realized it, nor have you given your parents credit for a certain soft-heartedness which has made them wish to keep you as long as possible from the hard things of life. And you have been allowed to do very much as you pleased, and you have, I am sure, stayed up late o' nights, and have lain in bed o' mornings, and you have often had your breakfast brought to you on a tray, and have pattered downstairs at midnight to make raids on the family refrigerator. There has always been some one to pick up your room for you, no matter how often you may have left it in a riot of the things you have worn and the things you thought you might wear. If your mood was a silent one, there was always some one to coax you into talkativeness, or if you wanted to talk, you were listened to with eager attention.

And now living under the same roof with you are dozens of girls who have had things picked up for them, and who have breakfasted in bed, and who have made midnight raids on the refrigerator: who have, in other words, been spoiled, as you have been spoiled, by adoring parents, and who are going to demand, as you are prepared to demand, of this new life more than they will get.

If you are wise, you will begin at once to understand that the new conditions are not, necessarily, hard conditions; they are only different, and the difference is the very thing that is needed to develop you and to bring you to broad-minded womanhood. For, you see, you will have for the first time to consider the rights of others.

For me that phrase, "the rights of others," has a most inspiring sound. It makes me think of the really big and brave men who have fought for freedom. There's the ring in it of our own Revolution, of Washington and of Cromwell, of Kosciusko and of Garibaldi. There's the ring in it, too, of the spirit which says that all men are free and equal. And that all *girls* are *free and equal*!

THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Hitherto, you have claimed everything, and your claims have not been contested, but here at school they will be contested. Your roommate from the first is going to do things in a way that you have never done them; she is going to like things that you do not like. It may even be that your tastes will be utterly different, so that you may wish that, like the Boffins in their Bower, there might be a dividing line down the middle of the room, or, better still, that there might be a partition to shut out all sight and sound of this disturbing creature who is making unprecedented demands on you.

Isabelle, who has a sense of humor, smiles as she tells of her trials and tribulations with her first roommate. I fancy, however, that even her sense of humor did not save her from many a moment of tragedy.

“Mary was little and slender, and I thought when I first saw her that she was the loveliest thing in the world. She had such dear, appealing ways, and when she unpacked her trunks, I sighed with envy, for I had never seen such exquisiteness. But in a week I was sighing for other reasons. In spite of her sweetness, in spite of her really nice disposition, Mary wore on my nerves. She thought only of her looks. She spent hours in front of the mirror. When she slipped out of her clothes, she dropped everything in a heap. She was immaculately neat personally, her nails were always manicured, her hair shone from its frequent brushings; but it seemed to me that our room was always in a haze of powder, that every washcloth and towel was a smudge of red, that the trail of cold-cream and toilet-waters and bath-tablets and tooth-paste was over everything. I had been brought up to believe that nice women took a cold bath in the morning, dressed carefully for the day, and then forgot themselves until they dressed for dinner; and even the dressing for dinner meant with me only a change into a simple gown, and an extra twist to my hair. But Mary’s demands encroached on everything. I was always hooking her up or unhooking her. She was always in the process of getting dressed for something, and yet she went to no more places than I did.

“At last I rebelled. I felt that I surely had some rights. I scolded, and Mary wept. I told her that she was vain, and she told me that I was unsympathetic. But at last I brought her to a real understanding of the situation. She was encroaching on my domain. I was willing to concede something to her, but I was not willing to concede everything. The room was mine as well as hers, I asked only that I might pursue my way undisturbed. In the end she curled up on the couch and cried in my arms. After that I played Big Sister to her. I made her depend upon herself. I was not always on hand for the hooking up and the unhooking. I let her clothes lie where she dropped them, and steeled myself to see her get marks for untidiness. I put

up a shelf for her powders and pastes and perfumes and sternly insisted that they must stay where they belonged. And after a time we got along very well. She made me wear boudoir-caps and curl my hair, and choose pretty colors for my kimonos; she brought out a softer and more feminine side of me. She was really 'just sweet,' and I loved her."

But all differences are not so easily adjusted. To put two perfectly human girls together and expect them to become at once patterns of docility and gentleness is to expect the impossible. The best that you can hope for, usually, in your relations with your roommate, is that a certain amount of good temper and tolerance on each side may make things bearable until affection and propinquity bind you with the ties of friendship.

It is your adjustment to all the girls rather than to one, however, which will show the stuff that is in you. You will meet morbid girls and arrogant girls, silly girls and snobbish girls, wise girls and womanly girls, timid girls and tiresome girls. You are going to meet girls who will dispute your rights to have things your own way, and, on the other hand, you will meet girls who will make slaves of themselves to do your bidding. Remember, however, that your school friends are your equals, not your inferiors or your superiors. You meet on a common ground. Whatever you concede to one another of popularity or leadership must come from spontaneous recognition of qualities of fearlessness and strength, gentleness and generosity.

I realize that this is a somewhat difficult course to pursue, for snobbery is rampant everywhere today. Money counts, and position counts. It is useless to deny these things. The whole world is tinged and tainted with the love of material possessions and the worship of gold.

Yet surely this makes it all the more necessary that the girl who enters the House of Learning should take with her an ideal which has to do with nobility of character and independence of spirit, that she should set herself strongly against these things which are sapping the life of our nation, and which are spoiling the flavor of its democracy. In social matters it is our American women who set the pace. What girls are thinking now will have much to do with the future of our beloved country.

RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW TO FACE IT

Does this seem a very serious way of putting it? But it is serious. What you think and the way you act will have their effect on the whole school body. Your destiny is closely linked with that of your comrades. You can not escape individual responsibility.

I wish that every girl who passes beneath the classic portals of the House of Learning might whisper to herself: "Here may I learn of Life. May I reach out for the big things and the broad things. May I put away smallness and meanness. May I lay aside envy and malice, jealousy and arrogance. May I show myself sincere. May I show myself brave. May I be true to the best that is in me, and in being true to myself, may I bring out the best in others."

This judgment by externals often results, too, in sad mistakes. I remember that in my own school-days, there was Sarah, who was very plain and most unfashionable. She was sweet and wise and companionable, and we liked her, but I am sure there was always a tinge of condescension in our manner. She came from some vague place "in the country." We were city-bred and loved ourselves for it. And so, just the least bit in the world, we looked down upon Sarah, and drew a line between our relative importance and hers. We smiled at the simplicity of her clothes, and here, to be sure, we were blind to the good taste which insisted upon low heels and loose waists for growing girlhood.

In due time, Sarah was graduated with honors, and went back to the "farm." A year later or two she married, and cards were sent to us. It was borne in upon us as we read that Sarah had made a wonderful match. How did it happen? What was there in *Sarah*?

It developed that there was this in Sarah: The country place of which we had thought so slightly was an inheritance of ancestral acres; Sarah's family held a position in the country of almost feudal dignity; they were impoverished by the war, but their social connections had given to Sarah's début an importance which was not matched by the entrance into society of any of us. The man she married was of her own kind. He had a little more money: that was all.

I visited Sarah not long ago, and in her mansion near Central Park she is still as sweet and wise and companionable as in her school-days; and she is now a great lady. And not one of the girls is so worthy of a high place as she whom we deemed of too little account in our school circle.

THE STORY OF EDNA AND ANNE

On the other hand we have the story of Edna and Anne, who came from a little town in the West. Their father had money, and he was one of the really big, fine men who are the backbone of the nation. His wife was as fine as he. But she made one mistake in bringing up her girls. She did not teach them to be fine; she taught them instead to be fashionable, and so she sent

them East to an expensive school, and gave them entirely too much pin-money, and entirely too many clothes, and then she and her husband settled back in their comfortable home, and lived the lives of plain, comfortable people with utter content.

But Edna and Anne forged ahead socially. So exclusive was the atmosphere with which they surrounded themselves that in the minds of the other girls their comfortable home was visualized as an ancestral castle; the comfortable father and mother became a royal pair. And on the strength of this atmosphere of aristocracy Edna and Anne were sought with eagerness; they were entertained at holiday times and at week-ends at the homes of the most exclusive girls in the school, and they really almost forgot that the Ancestral Halls and the Royal Pair were not realities.

When their school-days were over, however, they remembered, and so they asked no one to visit them. The other girls wondered, but Edna and Anne went home, promising to come East again, accepting various invitations for the future, but extending none in return. They could not tolerate the thought of introducing the other girls to their nice unfashionable mother and father and the nice unfashionable house. They had a vision of mother in her white apron flitting in and out of the kitchen as she gave directions in the interest of a fricasseed chicken dinner. They saw father in his alpaca coat presiding genially on the front porch. And they did not want the other girls to see these things.

Yet one of the girls came, quite unexpectedly. She was traveling in that part of the country and hunted them out. She looked for the Ancestral Castle and the Royal Pair, and she could hardly believe her eyes when she saw only a comfortable house and a nice comfortable father and mother in it. She was a sensible girl, and she liked the things she found in the home of Edna and Anne. She liked the chicken dinners, and she liked to sit on the porch with father in his alpaca coat. But Edna and Anne could not quite believe that she liked it. They were glad when their guest left them, and they did not ask her to come again. They sacrificed the claims of friendship on the altar of false pride.

Of course you are saying that Edna and Anne were very foolish, but I think they need your sympathy very much. For what to us seems a comedy was their tragedy. If they had not tried to be so grand, they would have found plenty of friends and could have kept them. There would have been nothing to hide, hence no bitterness in their friendless later years.

FALSE PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

Their fault was not merely that of false pride. It was that of arrogance. They separated themselves, as it were, from the other girls by their attitude of exclusiveness. They had no right to build a fence around themselves. They belonged to the student body in a higher sense than that of enrolment. Their truth and honor and sincerity belonged to the other girls. That they withheld these things brought retribution. They missed all the zest of this great adventure which has to do with good-fellowship and the exultant joys of youth.

For the joy of youth—"the glory of youth," as Stevenson calls it—is beyond any other joy; it transcends the glory of any other age. It has nothing to do with snobbishness or with class distinctions. It has much to do with courage and high spirits and love of one's own kind.

It has to do, too, with achievement. In the House of Learning there are towers from which you can look forth upon the world. But you must climb those towers before you can gaze through the windows upon the high peaks of Knowledge. And it is the other girls who will help you to climb—those dear companions who cry with you, "All good things are ours," and who even now are waiting to take your hand that you may begin your ascent together.

VIII

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BROKEN HEART

“Life is a lovely thing when our hopes are high; but the secret is to know it lovely and lovable when we have no hopes at all.”

Although you may read this in the cold weather, I am writing it in May. Outside my window the birds are singing their love songs, all the world is budding and blossoming, and the mail this morning brought cards of invitation to the weddings of two June brides, so why should I, in the midst of all this promise of fulfilment, be setting my pen to paper to speak of broken hearts?

Because, my dears, my mail brought me something besides the wedding-cards. It brought a heart-cry from a girl who was to have been a June bride, and who has discovered, at the eleventh hour, her lover's unworthiness. And the letter reads: “I know I shall *never* love any other man—I am so unhappy. Oh, dear friend, what shall I do? Is my life ended?”

Now, if any of you who read this are so sophisticated or shallow that you smile at the idea of a broken heart, I ask you to turn from this to other pages; you have forgotten your youth, and you have no right to pry into the secrets of a girl's soul. But for those who believe that love is the greatest thing in the world, and who realize that there is real tragedy in disillusion, I shall speak freely and frankly of this adventure upon which so many have entered with high hopes, and from which they have come forth “sore wounded.”

I remember very clearly my childish opinion of a woman who stated, quite flippantly and frivolously, to my mother, upon a certain occasion: “My heart is like a rubber ball. You can't break it. You can't even dent it. It always rebounds.”

As I surveyed her, with youthful disapproval, I was convinced that her heart was not of rubber, but of stone. She gave an effect of hardness; her bright, hard eyes, her red, hard cheeks, her thin, hard lips, her shining, hard finger-nails, her round, hard figure. I felt perfectly sure that my own dear mother had a breakable heart, and I was glad of it. For it seemed to me that the possession of a breakable heart must have something to do with the

softness of my mother's eyes, the gentleness of her voice, the comfortable and comforting clasp of her arms.

BROKEN HEARTS AND BROKEN LIVES

I have never had reason to change my childish opinion that the women with breakable hearts are finer and sweeter than the women who have no hearts to break. But life has taught me this, that broken hearts do not always mean broken lives. It has taught me that to these fine and sweet women, the fruits of disappointment and disillusion are not bitterness but bravery, not cynicism but serenity.

It is not easy for the young to see hope die; to see love die. Indeed, it is not only youth which suffers in the face of such catastrophe, but youth has not the philosophy which age brings to the bearing of sorrow, and thus we have the cry of the girl whose letter came in my morning's mail: "Is my life ended?"

Oh, my dear, *no*, it is not ended, it is just beginning. Hitherto you have followed the flowery path of careless youth, but now, at last, you are in the midst of that great Adventure which has to do with fighting and with failure, but which has to do also with victory.

ONCE IT WAS THE FASHION TO DIE FOR LOVE

It was once the fashion to die for love. Maidens who were disappointed in matters of sentiment "shrieked shrilly," swooned, and gave up the ghost. There was Elaine, for example, who spoke thus of her passing:

"I take God to record, I never loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall, and sithen it is the sufferance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight, I beseech the High Father of Heaven to have mercy on my soul."

It is thus that Malory puts it, and I must confess that when I read his frank recital of the woes of the Maid of Astolat, I can never quite rid myself of the feeling that Elaine shirked—she could not have what she wanted, and so, in spite of her father's need of her and of her brothers' grief, she simply chose the easiest way, and curled up and died! Tennyson's poetic rendering of the tale softens her selfishness a bit, and casts a halo of tender tragedy over the lily and the letter, the blind bargeman and the funeral journey down the Thames. But I am convinced that the methods of Elaine were meet only for the days of chivalry, when women lived for love and died loving, and

when men fought for love and died fighting. Such despairing cowardice does not fit in with the belief of our own time, that life is too big and beautiful to be spoiled by any one disappointment, no matter how overwhelming it may seem.

Of course, the thought of life's beauty and bigness may not at first ease the ache of one's heart, it may not relieve the intolerable loneliness and longing, but I shall ask the girl whose letter came this morning only this: that she shall give herself time to get adjusted, and then let me try to show her what others have done, men and women who, when hope seemed dead, were still able to make life "lovely and lovable."

One of the most touching scenes in literature is that in "Martin Chuzzlewit" where little Ruth Finch discovers that her brother Tom is in love with a woman who is betrothed to another man. When she has tried to tell him how sorry she is and has wept a little on his shoulder, he comforts her:

"You think of me, Ruth, and it is very natural that you should, as if I were a character in a book, and you make it a sort of poetical justice that I should, by some impossible means or other, come at last to marry the person I love. *But there is a much higher justice than poetical justice*, my dear, and it does not order events upon the same principle. People who read about heroes in books, and choose to make heroes of themselves out of books, consider it a very fine thing to be discontented and gloomy and misanthropical, and perhaps a little blasphemous, because they cannot have everything ordered for their individual accommodation. Would you like me to become one of that sort of people?"

"No, Tom. But still I know," she added timidly, "that this is a sorrow to you in your own better way."

"It is a sorrow," said Tom, "it is sorrowful for me to contemplate my dream, which I always knew was a dream, but the realities about me are not to blame. They are the same as they were. Are my words to be harsh, and my looks to be sour, and is my heart to grow cold, because there has fallen in my way a good and beautiful creature whom I can not call my own—?"

There are those who may think that Tom Pinch's love as compared to Elaine's was as water unto wine, but I am not sure. Elaine, had she lived, might have loved another. Tom Pinch loved once, and only once. His quiet passion had in it the quality of constancy, of undying devotion. The love that he might have given Mary, he translated into love for the whole world. He made it great and wonderful because of the nobility of his own fine spirit.

Then there is Agnes in “David Copperfield” who, when the man she loved married another woman, set herself to live out her life finely and strongly. She made a friend of David’s child-wife Dora; she was David’s friend, and a true and good one. She thus dignified an affection which might have seemed undignified if she had felt herself spurned or set aside.

It happened that in the end David, having lost Dora, came back to Agnes, to find inspiration in the steadfast and serene qualities which he had failed to appreciate in the days when he was blinded by the charms of the child-sweetheart whose curls had caught his boyish fancy.

HIS LADY OF DREAMS

But in real life, as Tom Pinch has said, things do not always work out by the rules of poetical justice: mistakes are made which are never rectified, love is given which is never returned, sorrow comes and loneliness, and it is the sweet and tender natures which suffer most keenly.

It is not only in stories, however, that men and women have risen above their dead hopes to heights of serenity and happiness. There is Mildred, for example, whose lover died two weeks before her wedding. All of Mildred’s lovely lingerie had to be put away, her wedding gown folded and shut in a box to grow yellow and creased, her wedding gifts had to be returned, the little house, furnished with such high hopes, dismantled and closed, and, amid the wreck of her hopes, Mildred had to adjust herself to a new attitude toward her future. For two years she had looked forward to marriage, to a home, and a husband’s protection. She had held in her heart the thought of a fireside and smiling children’s faces, and now suddenly she saw ahead of her—loneliness. The Greatest Gift in the World had been given her, and it had been taken away. And like Elaine, she felt, “I never loved none other—and never shall.” She wanted to die, but she could not. The way was dark—her soul dead within her.

Then, suddenly, light came. She had been reading her lover’s letters in the silence of her own room. She had wept until it seemed to her that there were no more tears to shed. And one sentence challenged her, “Whatever comes, you will always be my lady of dreams.”

She realized that she was not living up to her lover’s expectations. She knew that he had believed her brave and unselfish and fine. These qualities belonged to his “dream-lady.” His idea for himself and for his bride had been that they might grow mentally and spiritually, and that the world might be better because they had lived and loved.

So Mildred, from that moment, resolved to be all that her lover had dreamed that she might be. She made him still a part of her life, but not in any morbid sense. She did not shut herself up with his picture and his letters, to weep. She did not waste hours in heartrending visits to the cemetery. She read the books which they would have read together, she interested herself in the charities with which she knew he would have been in sympathy. She made friends of those with whom he would have wanted her to be friendly. She made of love something which reached out and enfolded all humanity. And, at last, out of this love, she found work to do. Almost timidly at first, but with increasing confidence, she wrote stories for her dream-children; and real children, reading them, and recognizing the mother-heart of the author, gave to her an unquestioning adoration, which helped to satisfy her craving for affection.

Mildred is still a young woman, but she is busy and happy. It is useless to question the quality of her happiness, or to ask, "Is this enough?" We must not look at things as they might have been, but as they are. What the future holds for Mildred none of us may know, but whatever happens she will have made life big and beautiful for herself and for others, and she will have realized to the utmost the dreams of the man who loved her.

ARE ALL MEN FICKLE?

There is, however, a sadder story than Mildred's, and it is the story of Sylvia, whose dream of love was shattered not by death, but by the inconstancy of the man who, having wooed her affection by the most ardent pursuit, found his love cooling when he had won her devotion.

Sylvia grows cynical and sarcastic as she discusses it: "All men are fickle, my dear," is her bitter assertion. "I was not easily won, you know that. He seemed so sincere! How could I guess that he was simply eager for conquest?"

I hardly dared put the question, but I did. "Is it your heart or your pride that is hurt, Sylvia?"

And then I was sorry that I had said it, for Sylvia began to cry with real anguish. "Isn't pride, then, a part of a woman's love?" she asked, when she could speak. "I was so glad to be loved as I thought he loved me—I was so proud."

"But what of your lover, Sylvia, did you find him really lovable? Did you find tenderness, strength, constancy?"

Then she said, very low: "You know very well I did not, but the hard part of it is this, that such a man should have it in his power so to—humiliate me. If I had been rich, would he have dared? Or if I had been beautiful, would he?"

It was all out now, all the distrust of her own charms, of which a little while ago she had been so sweetly and girlishly secure.

"Sylvia, dear," I said, "listen. No girl, no matter how attractive or beautiful, can hold the type of man who is keen for conquest. He is always in pursuit, and if you had married him, he would have still pursued, not you, but some other. And so you have, most fortunately, escaped. It is for you to hold up your head and thank God."

But Sylvia is not ready to be thankful. "I am done with men. Oh, my dear, can't you see that it makes me feel—common—to have given so much?"

I wonder if men can ever know how some girls suffer at such moments. The kiss, the clasp of the hand, the broken, whispered word of love are sacred things; the hurt, the heart-breaking part of it, is to have thrown them away upon one who "never will know, and never will understand."

And so Sylvia says: "I am done with men. They are all alike."

But that is not true, and you know it, and I know it. And I think that deep in her heart Sylvia knows it. For there are true men, and good men, and fine men, just as there are true women, and good women, and fine women. Would you want all femininity judged by the hardness of Becky Sharp, or by the wickedness of Lady Macbeth, or by the weakness of Goethe's Gretchen? Then why judge all men by the weakness, and hardness, and wickedness of one?

And there is this for all girls to remember, girls like Sylvia and like the one whose letter came in my morning's mail: your life is your own. It does not belong to any one else. It does not belong to the man who has disappointed you. You gave your love to a man whom you thought steadfast and true, a knight in shining armor, ready always to unsheathe his sword in your defense. That he has proved but a weakling with a broken lance is, indeed, sad; but since you know him as he is, you must turn from the path which you have traveled together and go on alone, sturdily and stanchly, remembering always that there are other and braver knights to be met on the highroad.

Because your life is your own, no one can spoil it. It is there before you with all its possibilities. What are you going to do with it? Are you going to let it be shadowed by your past? Or are you going to see ahead of you a great light which shall illumine your future, the light of Perfect Love?

Perfect Love has, of course, to do with imperfect people; its perfection is in its sincerity, and constancy, and truth, its sympathy and understanding. The thing which should break your heart is not that you have lost your lover, but that you have lost your belief in the rightness of life. You think now that things are very wrong. You must help to make them right. It is your own attitude which shall save you, and bring solace and serenity.

IX

THE QUEST FOR FRIENDS

“Let not him that seeketh, cease from his search until he find.”

I have received recently three letters, one from Helena of California, one from Felicia of the Middle West, and one from Emilie of Boston. Helena’s letter says, “I want to find more friends, more real friends,” Felicia speaks of her loneliness in a new town, and Emilie deplores the self-consciousness which seems to shut her up like an oyster.

And, since these letters are but echoes of many others, it has seemed to me that our present adventures should have to do with friendship. Let us therefore set forth valiantly, for a life without friends is like a desert without an oasis.

MY OWN ADVENTURES IN FRIENDSHIP

My own adventures in friendship would fill a book: such funny adventures, ending now and then tragically, more often not ending at all, but continuing with deep affection until this day.

There are the Twins, for example, the adored companions of my little girlhood, who are matrons now with little girls of their own. But to me they are just “Kitty” and “May,” and when I close my eyes, I can see them with their be-ribboned hair and their quaint frocks, singing “Pinafore” in their sweet, piping voices. They were always “the cousins and the aunts,” and I was “Josephine,” and not long ago I went to a revival of the tuneful old opera that I might live in retrospection those little-girl days with my dear little friends, who are still my friends in spite of the passing years.

My boy companions were few. I had no brothers, and I never attended a coeducational school. So, while I met many older men, brought to the house by my brilliant and popular father, boys were rare visitors, although I remember a certain quaint pair of youngsters who would trudge over to our house for a second breakfast of waffles, or at the twilight hour steal in to sit by our fire and hear my mother read “Hop-a-gog and His One Leg.”

Following came a blond and masterful youngster who bought chocolates for me out of his bountiful allowance, and who teased me and ruled me, but

who, in his later years, when traveling abroad with his tutor, never forgot the little girl who was left behind, and to whom he sent each year a valentine. After a triumphant career in college his bright youth was blotted out, and they brought me the news that my boy "Daisy" was dead.

There was another boy, whom I met one summer at a lake resort, and who taught me to row. He was masterful, too, so masterful that I was quite charmed by the novelty of having this dominant male issue orders. His special votive offering was Italian creams, and his parting gift was a napkin-ring of sweet grass. I was eleven when we met, and I never saw him after that summer. But always with my memory of him is associated that of moonlight nights when we sat safe and sound on the edge of the pier, with our two mothers chatting comfortably on the seats behind us, and saw, slipping silently through the water, the canoe of two Indians who had a basket-shop on the bank. I was always thrilled and fascinated by the witchery of the scene, and while my companion would swing his feet and murmur derisively, "Whoop Big Injun," or "Pickled Papoose," I fancy that he, too, felt the charm of the night, the moon, and the shining lake.

BECAUSE I LIKE THEM

As I come to my later friendships I stand on the threshold of a sacred place. What my friends have been to me I can not put into words. I know only that without their faith and sympathy I should have been less than I am, and infinitely poorer in happiness. And because I am so rich in friends, I have wondered a little why others should be bankrupt. I have no conceit in saying this, for I have nothing of wealth or of beauty or of great attainments to draw people to me. And since I have none of these things, I am forced to believe that people have liked me *because I like them*.

All my life I have been intensely interested in men and women. Even as a child, when very old ladies came to our house, I would sit at their feet and hang on their words, reveling in a certain garrulousness which had to do with enchanting details of dead and gone days. Old gentlemen, otherwise considered bores, were my most cherished companions, and they would unfold to my attentive ears tales of their adventuring boyhood, or of battles in those years of the Nation's storm and stress.

I liked, too, little boys and little girls. I liked my mates at school. I adored brilliant people and sympathized with those who were dull. Humanity presented to me a never-ending spectacle. It was a puppet-show for my delight.

And that's the secret: you *must* be interested in others if you expect their attention to be fixed upon you. And many of you are not interested, although you think you are. What you are really demanding secretly is their opinion of you. There's Helena, for example, who says, "*The other girls think I am a snob,*" and Emilie says, "*The boys think I am not brilliant and witty like the other girls,*" and Felicia is sure that *everybody thinks* her sister is the attractive one of the family.

WHAT OTHERS THINK NOT A MATTER OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE

Now how do Helena and Felicia and Emilie know what others think? They can only surmise, and their deductions may be wrong. And isn't it much more important to know what we think of others than to try morbidly to analyze their attitude toward us?

Do you who long for friends ever ask yourself the questions: "What do I think of these people whom my life touches? Do I like them? Am I bored? Do I find them silly, cold, indifferent, disagreeable?"

If you are thinking such things, get yourself right at once, else you will have no friends. For your thought must inevitably affect your manner. You will repel, because you can not with sincerity show yourself pleased. And if you can find only faults in others, there must surely be some fault in you.

Carlyle has said something about drawing around ourselves a little circle to preserve intact our individuality. I wish that each of you might stand within the radius of a magic circle which would preserve your self-respect. Lack of self-respect is at the root of self-consciousness. It is not vanity which makes you know that you have some qualities to commend you to others, and knowing this you have no right to believe that the rest of the world is so stupid or so cruel as to withhold from you the recognition which those qualities deserve.

Indeed, my girls, the rightness of your world depends largely on the rightness of your point of view. Janet, who, like Emilie, was for a time overshadowed by the attractions of an older sister, had her lesson along this line, and it may interest some of you to hear of her experience.

"It was not mother's fault," she said; "she always treated us alike, and I was not in any sense a Cinderella; but I was shy, and as I grew older my shyness developed into an intense self-consciousness. My sister, Margaret, was two years my senior, and very charming. I became convinced that I was completely overshadowed by her popularity. I could not see that I might be,

if not the sun, the moon. I wanted all that she had, or nothing. It seemed to me that Margaret occupied the center of the stage, while I was thrust into a corner. I was not aware that I was really thrusting myself into a corner by refusing to meet people half-way. No remonstrances of my mother or Margaret could change my opinion. I knew what I knew, and I was sure they were blind. At last I refused to go down when there were callers, and to accept invitations. I felt that I was called upon and asked only out of deference to Margaret's wishes in the matter."

ENGAGED

"Then, during a certain summer spent at my grandmother's, I met a man much older than I. He was really quite wonderful and eligible and charming. And quite as wonderfully he fell in love with me. He was going to South America for several months on business for the mining company which he represented. After my return home, he wrote and asked me if I would marry him when he came back from his trip. I was in love with him, and I went at once to my mother and told her about it. He had written to her, too, and she liked him and had good reports of him. And so I became engaged, although it was not to be announced until his return.

"Well, from that day everything seemed changed. Everybody seemed friendly. I went freely among Margaret's friends, and found them gracious and responsive. I found them ready to welcome me into their midst with open arms. Yet they had not changed. They were the same people whom I had eyed with distrust. The same people whom I had thought hateful and indifferent. They did not know that I was engaged, or even that I had a lover, so it was not that which had changed them. It was I who had changed. Because I loved my lover I loved the whole world, and the world gave me love in return."

A man told me recently that he had lived for fifteen years in New York and that he hadn't a single friend. "It is a cold, hard place," he said. He did not know that it was he who was cold and hard. One *can not* live for fifteen years *anywhere* without friends if one chooses to be friendly. Of course, I know enough of the world to realize that in our big and crowded cities the making of friends is somewhat slow. We are such busy folk that we forget the stranger within our gates. But it is only forgetfulness, not brutality. The man who had been fifteen years without friends might have found them if he had looked for them in his office, in the nearest church, at his club. There would have been always some one to smile back at him, and to hold out the hand of good-fellowship. I rather fancy, however, that he was not ready to

smile, nor to grasp the hand held out. It was his own “grouch” which separated him, not the grouchiness of others.

WE GET WHAT WE GIVE

There was once upon a time a woman who began her married life by thinking that her husband’s friends and neighbors “looked down on her.” She lived in the country, and all about her were kindly folk who were willing to be friendly. But she did not believe in their friendliness nor in their kindness. She withdrew more and more from society, until finally she and her husband lived in their great house all alone. She became wistful in her old age, wanting love very much, and not understanding why she did not receive it. But she did not give love, she gave resentment and suspicion. *And we get what we give.* Her supersensitiveness put the neighbors at last upon the defensive, and they ceased their efforts to know her better. But they never had “looked down on her,” indeed they would have looked up, for she had much of real charm and beauty and talent.

I have said nothing of that snobbishness which seeks friends only among the socially elect.

If you are looking beyond the pleasant, sincere people whose friendship is yours for the asking, to those with automobiles and big houses, or who entertain lavishly, or have their names constantly in the papers, then I can not help you. And indeed I do not want to help you. For of all our sins the worst is this: that we should value people because of their possessions or seek them because of their worldly prominence.

“WITH ALL YOUR FAULTS YOU ARE MY FRIEND”

And now, since we have talked somewhat at length of the meeting and making of new friends, it might be well to dwell a bit on our attitude toward those who have been tried and tested.

Thoreau says, “My friend is one with whom I can associate my choicest thought.” I can not quite agree with him. He seems to place friendship on the cold, bleak heights. I should rather warm my friend at the little blaze of my own frivolity or of my everyday commonplaces. With those I love I want to relax. I want them to like me, not for my “choicest thoughts,” but for my human qualities, my faults and frailties, as well as my perfections. And this does not mean the lowering of the ideal of friendship. It merely means that friendship to be at its best must be charitable. We must not say, “Unless you

are perfect, I will not love you.” We should say, rather, “With all your faults you are my friend.”

Yet friendship, although it recognizes the fault in another and forgives it, should not lack some inspiring quality. It should not drag down, it should lift up. Neither should friendship demand too much. My dearest friend and I do not write daily letters. We are afraid to write so often lest the time come when, one of us failing, it might seem to the other that some bond had been broken. Yet there are times when I write two letters and even three without expecting an answer. I have something to say and I say it. And my friend writes to me when the spirit moves her. And it is the same with our visits. We make no demands, yet our love carries us often swiftly toward each other. We give faith for faith, love for love, courage, inspiration, sympathy. We know each other’s faults and forgive them. Indeed, I think that perhaps my friend loves my faults and would not love me so well if I were a paragon of all the virtues. And I am sure I could not confide in her and lean on her if I associated her only with my “choicest thoughts.”

It is worth a life’s adventure to find one such friend. Do you remember that Stevenson says, “If we can find but one to whom we can speak out of our heart freely, with whom we can walk in love and simplicity without dissimulation, we have no ground of quarrel with the world or God.”

Yet we need more than one friend; we need to get ourselves into a friendly attitude toward all the world. Few people can resist a frank and cordial manner. And if you who yearn for friends want a little practical advice, let me suggest that upon entering a room you smile as you enter; that you sit quietly and listen to those who talk. There is no flattery so subtle as an intent and earnest gaze.

Then, if, having listened, you will speak simply and pleasantly of the things which interest you, you will be sure to find some one who will listen. But to do these things well, and to draw people toward you by the force of your personality, you must still that insistent inner question, “What do they think of *me*? What do they think of *Me*?” The chances are that they are not thinking of you at all. If you were a queen, you might at once command attention. But you are not a queen. And there are lots of nice girls in the world. So wait your turn and give people time to find out that you are worth knowing. They will be your friends if you will let them. It is on you the final issue depends.

X

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MERRY HEART

“Without the door let sorrow lie,
And if, perchance, it hap to die
We’ll bury it in a Christmas pie,
And ever more be merry.”

I am going to sing today the song of the Merry Heart. For Christmas is at hand, and it is for you to say whether it shall be to you a season of good cheer or of grouchiness and gloom.

Helena announced yesterday, most emphatically, that she hates Christmas.

“Last year,” she said, “I made up my mind that I shouldn’t give anybody anything. And I asked people to stop giving to me. It’s just an exchange anyhow. Of course it was awfully stupid, but at least I came to the first of January with all my bills paid.”

“Didn’t you even hang up your stocking?” I asked, hoping to perceive some vestige of human feeling in this coldly speculative damsel.

“No,” said Helena, “why should I?”

Now what do you think of that? It seems to me that Helena’s Christmas must, for sheer dullness, have matched that of Samuel Pepys, who, in 1668, wrote in his Diary: “Christmas Day. To dinner alone with my wife, who, poor wretch, sat undressed all day, altering and lacing of a noble petticoat, while I, by her, making the boy read to me the life of Julius Cæsar and Des Cartes’ book of Musick.”

To me Christmas has been always a day of great adventure. I come to it at the end of the year as a weary wayfarer comes to the steps of some Joyous Castle, through whose wide-flung doors he feels the warmth and sees the lights, and hears the sound of voices that welcome him. And if you don’t feel that way about Christmas, then something is as wrong with you as with old Scrooge, who didn’t know the meaning of peace and good-will until he was forced to look upon his past and his present and his future, and to see himself as a cross and crabbed and crotchety curmudgeon.

If Helena's Christmas was stupid, it was her own fault. If your Christmas is dreary or disappointing, you will have only yourself to blame. And please don't try to argue the question with me. You have youth and youth's heritage of high spirits and a happy heart. You will need no money to make this the merriest Christmas possible, if only you will enter into the spirit of it, and understand from the first that the secret lies in giving and not in getting.

If you think that by "giving" I mean that you are to rush down to a Fifth Avenue shop, or its equivalent in your own town, and order dollars' worth of lovely and exclusive and expensive things, you have not caught my meaning, for such giving has nothing to do with mirth or with merriment; it has only to do with the commercialism which forces us to spend more than we ought for things that nobody really wants.

YOUTH SETS THE PACE

The things which people really want at Christmas time are Joy and Jollity; they want to be caught up away from their cares and enter upon a season of light-hearted fun and frolic. And it is youth which sets the pace in these things, so here's for an old-fashioned Christmas, and for an adventure which shall have to do with holly and mistletoe, with carols and with shining candles, with family feasts and friendly reunions!

Dickens more than any other writer is the apostle of the Merry Christmas. One can not read his books without feeling the uplift of his cheery optimism. He shows the happiness of the humble. He draws homely pictures of young and old united by a common bond of simple pleasures.

I wish that in every family this year there might be a revival of old festivities and old customs—that we might have a tree and hang up our stockings, bring in a Yule log and invite all of our poor relations, to the very last cousin, to share our feast.

Yet even as I write this I can hear you saying, "But I live in an apartment. For me the glory of Christmas Day has departed. If I had a big house and plenty of money and plenty of servants—why, then—"

My dear, if you have the real Christmas spirit, you won't need a big house and plenty of servants; and as for living in an apartment, you surely have a shelf where you can set two tall candles which shall burn like stars on Christmas morning; you have some window in which you can hang a wreath; you have a little table on which you can stand a wee, Christmas

bush with its ten cents' worth of shining tinsel; you can ask some guest to eat with you who would otherwise dine alone.

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO YOU?

I know that there are men and women so dead to the ancient meaning of Christmas that they treat it not greatly different from any other day in the year. A good dinner, a game of bridge, a play at night—these are always with them; and they can give a check for charity! As for the fun and the feast and the sense of family reunion, they do not know what they miss in their neglect of their holiday possibilities. Modern luxury has made turkey a commonplace, modern medicine has voted mince pies indigestible, modern philanthropy has stolen from us our right to touch hands with our less fortunate fellowmen. If we give, we must give through certain well-advised channels. In robbing Christmas Day of its great human meaning of good-fellowship, we are robbing it of its divine meaning of good-will.

When I was a child, my Christmas Day began with the night before when I hung my stocking, lean and lank, from the mantel above the sitting-room fire. My last peep at it in its shadowy environment was accompanied by thrills of appreciation of the expansion which would take place before I should see it again, when it would have swelled to a prodigious fatness utterly incompatible with my childish contours.

It was my father's joke to tuck in a switch at the top of my stocking, and there were little Christmas apples, round and shining, like wax-apples. There was always a package of burnt almonds and many French sweets, and these in spite of the boxes of less delectable candies which I knew I should find later at the foot of the tree.

In the tip of the toe of my stocking I found each year my choicest gift—a fine-linked gold chain, a wee heart-shaped locket, a little ring with a blue stone, a round pin with pearls. I still have some of these trinkets, and they speak to me eloquently of those mornings when my handsome young father and my lovely young mother bent over me for the kiss and hug with which I thanked them.

Our stockings emptied, we were given a glass of milk and a piece of bread and butter while our elders had coffee, and then off we went in the delicious frosty darkness to early service. Out of that morning walk with my father and mother and big sister arose, I think, my lasting reverence for the mystical meaning of Christmas day. I wish that every child might duplicate my experience. It was so wonderful to see the stars and to hear the bells. It

was wonderful, too, to come into the church all gold with lights, and to listen to the songs about the Babe of Bethlehem and the Shepherds and the Three Kings.

Coming back to a good old-fashioned breakfast of steak and hot rolls and baked potatoes and to the opulence of our tree, we lost for a moment the sense of the spiritual from our day. Yet, as I look back I am aware that there was no moment that meant so much to me as that of the mystery of the dawn and of the stars, and of the singing in the church.

The tree had its charm, however, and there was, of course, its subtle connection with Santa Claus, in whom I believed and in whom I still believe, for the old saint belongs to that mysterious world of fancy where dwell all the shadow-shapes of a vivid imagination. He typifies for me the Merry Heart, and since we have robbed our children of him we have given them no substitute.

The part which the Babe of Bethlehem played in my Christmas was not in the least usurped by Santa. We were taught that because Christ was given to us we were to give in turn. The good old saint merely set us an example of generosity.

THE STORY OF TWO GIFTS

And now having brought myself back again to the subject of giving, I shall tell you the story of the Ten Dollar Check and of the One Dollar Bill.

The woman who wrote the Ten Dollar Check was very rich and very exclusive, and she had asked half a dozen people as rich and exclusive as herself to dine with her on Christmas Day, and they had eight courses, and the things which were served were brought from all the markets of the world; so that there was a Russian soup, and a tropical fish, and a salad and a sweet invented by the French chef, and there wasn't a single dish that belonged by tradition to Christmas; nor a single guest who rejoiced because it was Christmas Day.

But the woman who gave the dinner and who wrote the Ten Dollar Check felt that she wanted to do some good in the world, and that she ought to see that somebody somewhere had plenty to eat; so, quite conscientiously, she sent her check out on the first of December, and it was cashed by the society to which she sent it, and it was spent carefully to provide food for several needy old couples who were glad to get it.

But their gladness was not the gladness of those other old couples who were invited by the woman who spent the One Dollar Bill. You see she had only a dollar, and so she felt it necessary to add to her meager purchases the richness of love and friendliness. With her one dollar she bought a chicken and made it into a pie, so that with its crust and its gravy it would go as far as possible, and she made a pudding in a big pan, and she set her table in her very best fashion, with a bunch of holly in the center, and she made funny little placecards because there wasn't a cent to spare for gifts, and when her guests came, she gave freely of her smiles and of her charm of manner, so that the weary old faces brightened and the old hearts that were hungry for companionship were warmed by the wine of her welcome.

In this material age, we find it hard to make people understand that souls are often as hungry as bodies, and that there are gifts which money can not buy.

CLARISSA AND CONTENTMENT

Clarissa shrugs her shoulders when I talk of the gifts which money cannot buy. Clarissa believes in the power of riches to procure happiness. She is very pretty and up to date, and for a Christmas present she wants either an electric runabout or a phonograph or a diamond ring, and she has given her family to understand that if they can't give her one of these, they needn't give her anything. Yet if Clarissa could really count the cost of these things, I am sure she would not ask for them. For these are strenuous times in business, and many a man is working harder than he should and getting grayer and more bent, and growing old too rapidly because his lovely daughters demand that he shall give and give and give, and spend and spend and spend, and there's the rub, for while there's a certain compensation in getting gray and bent and old to make some one else happy, there is no compensation at all in finding them still unsatisfied.

Now the gifts which Clarissa should really desire have to do with Contentment and a Merry Heart. If she could say to her father, "I am young and strong, and all the world is before me; life is a great adventure, and I love it," she would see the radiance of youth come back to his eyes, and his back would straighten—and what better gift could Clarissa have than that, to bring the light back to her father's eyes?

Then on the other hand there is Leila, who with the best of intentions is missing the real meaning of Christmas Day. Leila is the Martha of modern society. She is oppressed by many cares. She has on her shoulders the sorrows of the poor, and she is unable to see the sorrows of any one else.

And so, you see, Leila is really placing as much emphasis on material things as Clarissa, although she is a finer woman and a better one. For the thing that Leila is eliminating from the Christmas celebration is Joy. Merely to eat a big dinner doesn't make for merriment. It is the spirit back of the dinner. Leila takes her Christmas Day very seriously, which isn't the way to take it at all. When you give to the poor—and surely each one of you will share something this year with those less fortunate than yourselves—give useful things if you will, but for the love of Santa Claus, add to your basket some bit of brightness. One year I sent with the Christmas dinner for a family of eight a dozen of the fancy crackers that you pull and find within queer paper caps. And I always tuck in some such foolish trifles. A fresh pack of cards for the old man who loves his solitaire; a new magazine with a holiday cover for the old woman who loves to read; a doll for the little girl, a rattling good story for the boy with the eager mind.

FIVE POUNDS OF CANDY

There's a family living far out on a Maryland river farm, a very poor family of seven, to whom my father for years played Santa Claus. Each Christmas he sent a box, and in addition to the substantial gifts there would be toys and candy, a bag of smoking tobacco, a pretty dish, or a dainty bit of neckwear. When my father died, and my mother and I knew that we could not give so generously, we pondered long over what we should send. Should we choose some useful thing or something that would lift them above the sordidness of their limited lives? We decided at last upon a five-pound box of good candy. Every year it has gone to them. The children are older now, but still they look for it, and so we send it. It adds to their Christmas day a touch that would otherwise be sadly lacking. The pretty box speaks of the big shop in the big city which they have never seen, the sweets in their trays are unlike anything ever sold at the cross-roads general store, the lace paper, the silvered tongs, even the ribbons that tie the box, these are all treasures to be divided and saved and shown to admiring friends.

Then there's the old lady who gets the bunch of red roses every Christmas. She lives in a cheap boarding-house, and there are sensible persons who say that she needs many things more than she needs red roses. But I know that she needs the red roses on Christmas day, because they have to do with memories of a happier time and with the lover who is dead. And who is it that has said, "If you have but two loaves of bread, sell one and buy for your soul white hyacinths—"? Well, my old lady's hyacinths are—red roses.

And when, to the box of candy or the bunch of flowers, I tie a card which says, "Merry Christmas," I know that the words are not meaningless either to my little old lady in the cheap boarding-house or to the family of seven on the Maryland river farm.

As for cards, they have a place all to themselves. I hate Christmas cards that aren't Christmassy. I like them with plum puddings on them and wreaths of holly and branches of mistletoe, and little girls singing carols and little boys ringing bells, and I like verses such as the one which heads this article, and I like to spell that good old word, "Merrie" in the good old way.

Of course there are those of you who won't see my point and who will spend this Christmas in the same stiff-necked and stilted fashion that you spent the last. And some of you will still demand runabouts and diamonds, and think that the world is all wrong because you can't have them.

But some of you, I hope, will adventure with me and make this Christmas merrier than the last, not only for yourself, but for those who love you, and for those whose happiness in some way depends upon you. For you are young, and joy, as I have said, is your heritage. And to go forth to give this joy to others, is it not a—Great Adventure?

XI

THE ADVENTURE OF THE DISTRESSED DAMSEL

“Jane was tall and twenty—not very handsome, but better, she was good-looking. She looked good because she was.”

It has been a matter of much surprise to me to find such intense bitterness on the part of girls who feel they have been deprived of the gift of beauty. “I hate myself,” says one; and another, “There is no place in the world for women without good looks.”

It is with such distressed damsels that I shall adventure in this article, for surely they need the breath of reviving winds and the glory of sunlight to inspire them to clearer thinking.

The desire to be beautiful is, of course, a normal one and not to be set lightly aside as unworthy, but to make the lack of beauty a cause for unhappiness is not only morbid but stupid, since thousands of women without perfection, either of form or of feature, have lived vividly and joyously in spite of the handicap of homeliness.

Never in the history of the world has there been such a chance as there is today for the ugly woman to “make good.” It took a different generation to pay homage to the “icily regular, splendidly null” type. Men are not worshipping at the shrine of beauty in the old, blind fashion. Personality, individuality, good temper, the ability to play the game of life bravely, these are the charms which differentiate the heroine of today from the heroine of yesterday. We have learned that the world is full of a number of things—for the woman who takes her destiny into her own hands. There was a time when marriage was the only goal. If a girl had loveliness, men sought her eagerly; if she was plain, she was often in the plight of Pauline Pepys, of whom the naïve Samuel writes in his famous diary, “Walked in the garden with my father, to talk about a husband for my sister, whereof at present there is no appearance, but we must endeavor to find her one now, for she grows old and ugly.” He tells later that a suitor has been discovered, “a plain young man, handsome enough for her,” and he finally gets the whole matter

off his mind thus, "I have news that my sister was married on Thursday last, so that work is, I hope, well over."

Poor Poll Pepys, forced to marry in such a practical fashion! If she had lived in this most glorious woman-century, she would have snapped her fingers in the face of the ungallant Samuel. She would have known that her life need not be a tragedy of mismatching that her future would depend entirely on the strength of her determination to rise above insignificance. Then having risen, she could have married or not, as she pleased, and if she did not please, she could have found other roads to happiness.

THE UGLY DUCKLING

I have a feeling that there is a flaw in the story of the "Ugly Duckling." You will remember that it concludes, "It matters not if one is born in a duck-yard, if one has only lain in a swan's egg."

Now if beauty depends on the way we are born, where's the moral? And what of those who have lain in duck-eggs and must turn out to be ducks?

I like better Elbert Hubbard's analysis of Jane Austen: "She was good-looking. She looked good because she was." That seems to place the emphasis on character, and it gives a certain amount of encouragement to those who can never be swans, but who may develop nice and comfortable and companionable qualities, so that people will say of them, "For my part there's much to be said for this little duck."

It is told of Madame de Staël, "She was tall and finely formed, but *her features were rather heavy*, and in repose there was a languor in her manner and a *blankness in her face*." Yet "her cordiality warmed like wine, and her ready wit, repartee, and ability to thaw social ice and lead conversation along any line were accomplishments which were perhaps never equaled. She *gave herself to others* and knew whether they wished to talk or to listen. All talent was brighter for the added luster of her own. This simplicity, this utter frankness, this complete absence of self-consciousness was like the flight of a bird, that never doubts its power because it never thinks of it."

Of course you will say that Jane Austen and Madame de Staël were exceptional women, that they had other endowments that made up for their lack of beauty. But I am going to tell you of a very commonplace little girl who forced destiny to meet her own demands. And I shall call it the story of Little Mary Smith.

PLAIN MISS SMITH

Little Mary was the ugly duckling in a handsome family. She had a pretty mother and pretty sisters, a brother like a Greek god, and a father who was tall and soldierly, with straight features. She knew that people spoke of her as the “plain Miss Smith,” and she realized that if something couldn’t be done, she was likely to spend her life in obscurity. If she had been a weak woman, she would have wept and wailed and blamed fate for making her less lovely than the other members of the family. She would have gone through life cynical and soured. But that was not the way that Little Mary met her adventure. She sharpened her sword and went forth to conquer, and presently she had the lions fawning at her feet, and the dragons eating out of her hand.

To accomplish this, you may be sure that Little Mary did not live a life of ease and indolence. She set herself to rise above insignificance, she made up her mind that under no circumstances would she be utterly ignored.

Realizing the value of a free and flexible figure, she took long walks, she danced up and down the room on the tips of her toes, she kept her shoulders straight and her head up. She had pretty hands, and she learned to use them so that they became a beautiful part of her. She kept her hair waved and shining. She had not much money to spend, so she made every purchase a matter of thought. Since individuality may be expressed by clothes, she never bought a gown which lacked distinction. She would not follow any style slavishly. She knew that only beauty can wear a hideous hat or a freakish gown. Yet she did not confine herself to somber and sober things. She wore lovely colors, and, whenever she wished to be especially splendid, she bought a big red rose and gave the final vivid touch to her personality.

Having thus made the most of her looks, she turned her attention to the development of such little talents as she possessed. She learned to play a better game of bridge than her sisters. She became the best dancer in the family, and partners began to flock toward her. She mastered the art of the chafing-dish, and at little late suppers she was much in evidence, with her lovely hands holding the eyes of the men, and her rarebits and Newburgs pleasing their palates. And since she read newspapers and magazines and kept her mind alive, these same men sitting with her in a corner found something immensely taking in her interest and intelligence. She could not sing, but she set a watch upon her speaking voice, she made it expressive and musical. She gave up slovenly and slangy English.

Being wise and good, Little Mary knew that there is nothing so hideous as *ugliness of soul*. She tried to live pleasantly and serenely, and so well did she succeed that people began to speak of our little Cinderella-Mary as the

“charming Miss Smith.” She was not only admired but loved. And this is a true story and not a fairy one, and the girl’s name is really Mary—but not Smith.

BEAUTY—OR CHARM?

Beautiful women are not always attractive, nor are attractive women always beautiful. As you read history, you will find that many illustrious ladies were not lovely. It has been said that Helen had red hair and that Cleopatra was coarse and fat. The most popular actress in America is not pretty, but she has such grace of speech and of manner, such potent tricks of hands and eyes, taste so exquisite, personality so winning that we fall at her feet and worship. I have been told that she was an ugly little girl, that she was scrawny and snub-nosed and freckled. She has made herself what she is. She did not sit down hopelessly in the midst of her unloveliness and expect a fairy godmother with a sweep of her wand to make her irresistible. She made herself irresistible.

The difference in the charms of women is the difference between the picture one likes in a gallery and the picture with which one likes to live. I can not fancy myself faced daily by some of the Venuses and Dianas that grace the walls of great salons. And, in like manner, there are men who feel that women of assured beauty are not for everyday life or for the home.

I remember that as a child I visited often the old Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington. It was a huge, red-brick building, with sandstone lions guarding the doorway. One stepped straight from the everyday street into a world peopled with marble gods and goddesses, then up a stairway to a place which was a heaven of color—the room where the pictures hung.

There was one painting, “Night,” before which I often stood. I liked the lovely lady floating in filmy sable draperies against a background of stars. I never failed to take a look at her beauty as soon as I entered the room. But the picture which drew me again and again, and before which I spent hours, was that of a hunting-lodge in the Black Forest. In front of a hot, red fire sat an ugly, tired man smoking his pipe. Two ugly, tired dogs lay at his feet. The rest of the room was dark with shadows.

Now the woman in the “Night” picture was highly idealized, exquisite, but she suggested nothing to the imagination; she was just a goddess among the stars. On the other hand, the warmth and cosiness of the homely picture carried me not only backward but forward. I saw the hunt, the fagged dogs, the weary man, the cold twilight and the long tramp. I saw them enter the

room with its welcome of blazing logs. I saw the steaming supper, I shared with the ugly man and the ugly dogs that season of peace which the artist has presented. I felt that the night would see them safe and warm and that the morning would find them eager and ready for the chase.

“HOW LOVELY LIFE WILL BE WITH HER”

Like my little picture, there are little women who seem to send one's imagination flying to home and hearthstone. I heard a man say the other day of his betrothed: “I am always thinking how lovely life will be with her. She is like a fresh breeze on a summer's day, a flower in a desert waste, a vision of peace in time of war.”

He was, of course, speaking with a lover's enthusiasm, but you will note that the charms which he catalogued had nothing to do with physical graces; they were rather those of the mind and spirit.

“But, dear girl,” says my cynical friend Jane, “men don't care for mind and spirit.”

But I can't see it as Jane does. Perhaps my head is in the clouds, but I fancy my viewpoint is no more distorted than Jane's, for she sees the world as worse than it is, while I see the world as I want it to be. And I know this, that there are thousands of men who love devotedly women whom the world calls plain. But these women are not plain-minded or plain-souled. Their inner beauty is revealed by an outer radiance.

There is no reason in the world why a girl without beauty should “hate” herself. I fancy that I was a rather odd child and I know that I was not a pretty one. I had freckles, and my hair was as straight as an Indian's. Yet I would not have transferred the real me into any other body. I just wanted to be myself with the freckles left out, the angles filled, and my cheeks round and red. So I put my hair up in kids and cold-creamed my freckles. I drank milk—though I hated it. The curls did not materialize, the freckles stayed, the milk did not make me fat. Yet I was not unhappy. I had many books to read, and the days were short. I had wonderful friends and rapturous hours with them. In fact, I was so busy with living that I had little time to think how I was looking.

As I look back upon my school-days, I am struck by the fact that the girls whom we considered somewhat commonplace have not lived commonplace lives. Indeed, the only one of us all who leads in a brilliant social circle was a quiet mouse of a thing, who crept into our hearts because of her dear sweetness, and who undoubtedly won the heart of her lover-

husband because of that same dearness. A keen, thin girl, without a vestige of good looks, married a brilliant lawyer because her mind met his own. A domestic little Jenny Wren is making home happy for a famous surgeon. Of the girls who did not marry, the ugliest one plans beauty for others. She has perfect taste, and she designs gowns. She is earning money and winning a reputation in a business of her own, and when she wears her perfect creations, one is reminded of the rime of the “plain Miss Jones,” of whom it was said:

“Each time she wore the cupped-down hat,
With streamers waving, ‘do come follow,’
No one took note her nose was flat,
And no one deemed her chest was hollow.”

I picked yesterday a bunch of white petunias for my table. I used to think that petunias were very common flowers, but that was before I learned to group the colors separately. My big bunch of fragrant posies, in a gray pottery bowl, made a charming effect, and when later I dined quite magnificently at the house of a friend, I was not envious of her orchids.

Dear girls, not all of us can be the roses and the orchids in the garden of life. Some of us must bloom in garden plots instead of in a conservatory, but we can all of us stand up very erect and firm, with our heads toward the sun, and give our best to the world.

There are lots of folk who prefer white petunias to orchids, so it may be that we shall not go unnoticed, but will be chosen from among the rest. And if we are not chosen, we can still go on blooming, we can still stand erect and firm, we can say to the sun, “Good morning, may I help you to light the world?”

XII

THE ADVENTURE OF THE GOLDEN CREST

“The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all other human souls; in short, behaving as if we were in heaven, where there are no third-class carriages and one soul is as good as another.”

Clementina wrote to me recently on her new paper. It is quite gorgeous and imposing, and with the family crest in gold.

The crest fits in with the new fortunes of Clementina's family. Five years ago they lived in a modest stucco house in a pleasant suburb, and Clementina went to the public school and the Presbyterian church. She had a group of friends who lived in other modest houses and who went to the same school and the same church, and she was really very happy without either a fortune or a family tree.

Then her father made his money; and lo! in a moment everything was changed. Clementina was whisked away to a fashionable boarding-school, the stucco house was sold, a country place was bought and a mansion in town: both were furnished in most expensive fashion, a staff of servants was taken on, from a butler down to a boy in buttons, Clementina's mother began to move heaven and earth to get into society, Clementina's father joined a golf-club and bought three motor-cars, and Clementina made new friends and forgot her old ones. When, last of all, she finished off with a year in Europe, she came back entirely made over from a nice little girl into a snob.

And because Clementina is a snob, and because she is placing the emphasis on things that are not worth while, it has seemed to me that I might use her to point my moral and adorn my tale.

I shall not go into the question of the right of a good American to use a crest. To me, however, it seems somewhat incongruous that we who have done with crowns and coronets should be so eager to proclaim ourselves of noble lineage. Why should we not be content to let the honor and glory of

our houses rest on the achievements of the men who in '76 fought for an ideal of liberty and equality?

THE FAMILY TREE

The discovery of Clementina's family tree was a labyrinthine task for the genealogist. You see, it was necessary to go back of all the butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers of the generations immediately preceding Clementina's father, and as for a crest, it was a burning question for many days whether Clementina was entitled to one. However, there it is, safely stamped on quires and quires of stationery; so Clementina is serene!

Now the quarrel that I have with Clementina is not that she sports a crest, but that the possession of it and of the things that it signifies have changed her, so that she is no longer a nice, good-natured girl, with a smile for every one. She smiles only on those to whom she considers it expedient to be gracious. Her manner to the servants is haughty and overbearing. She refuses to be seen with girls whose clothes are not bought at the right shops. She objects to motor-cars that are not of expensive make. She does nothing spontaneously. Her whole life is artificial.

Yet why should Clementina let money change her? Why should she strut like a little peacock? Why should she make everybody uncomfortable? Why, to sum it all up, should she waste these golden years in ignoble striving?

She does these things because she has the wrong ideal, and she has it because her mother has it and her father, and thousands of other Americans have it who ought to know better, and who ought to study the meaning of that good word "democracy," which was understood more clearly in the early days of our national life than it is at present.

It is the people who have the wrong ideal who are trying to build up an aristocracy of wealth instead of an aristocracy of integrity. It is the people with the wrong ideal who are ashamed of work and of working ancestors. It is the people who have the wrong ideal who are substituting glitter and show for the stately and simple standard of your grandfather and mine. It is the people who have the wrong ideal who insist upon "putting on," and who are thus robbing friendship of its grace and hospitality of its fine meaning.

I remember an instance in my own life of "putting on." It was in the lean days of our family fortunes, and we were having some difficulty in making ends meet. Our home lacked nothing of refinement, but it lacked everything in the way of luxury. My mother's ideals, in the main, upheld us, but now and then our youth rebelled against her standard of "plain living and high

thinking.” I wanted to do things like other girls. My mother preached that independence of spirit would bring bigger results than servile imitation.

I have never forgotten the moment when I first grasped my mother’s point of view. Some rather grand folk had come to town and had taken a house in our neighborhood. Everybody else had entertained the young daughter, and when my turn came, it seemed best, considering our barren resources, to give a small afternoon party.

“EVERYBODY HAS IT”

It was in the dead of winter, and when we talked over the refreshments, my mother very sensibly suggested that we serve hot coffee and sandwiches and home-made cake. But I held out for ice-cream, which in those days was a rarer and more expensive treat than it is now.

“Everybody has it,” I said, “and if we don’t, they will think we don’t know how to do things.”

“It is not a question,” was my mother’s quiet response, “of what people think. It is a question rather of what we can afford, and of what is appropriate.”

But my heart was set on the ice-cream, so she let me have my way.

Now our house in old Baltimore was heated by a Latrobe stove, where the fire glowed red through little panes of mica, but which on very cold days was not adequate to the demands of the big and frigid drawing-room.

It was chilly when our guests arrived, and it stayed chilly all the afternoon. We brought down shawls and scarfs and, wrapped to our chins, we essayed to be cheerful. At last we went into the dining-room, to be faced by sixteen pink mounds, miniature Alps of iciness! The little confectioner’s cakes—for I had scorned my mother’s suggestion of home-made ones—were bits of unsubstantial fluff. We ate and shivered, and, as a climax, the guest of honor had a chill!

Then mother took things into her own hands and swept us out into the big kitchen with its warmth and glow, Susan made us a cup of coffee each, our blue noses were brought back to normal, our spirits rose as we thawed out, and we finished the afternoon with some romping games.

A week later a return invitation came from our fashionable friends. I had visions of a magnificence which would put my own poor little party to shame. But I found no atmosphere of frigidity or of formality. The room

which we entered was warmed by an open fire, and when the refreshments came in, there was a big pot of tea and a mammoth pile of hot buttered muffins. And the girl whom I had envied and had looked upon as a young woman of elegant leisure had made the muffins!

Now Clementina would not dare to make muffins. She would not willingly admit that she had ever worked; she wishes to be looked upon as a lily of the field, with servants to the right of her and to the left of her to do her bidding. And, speaking of servants, I must tell you what Clementina had to say about them recently when I was a guest at one of her intimate boudoir tea-parties.

I wish you could see Clementina's boudoir. Its walls are paneled in white with a fine edge of black. Its furniture is upholstered in satin stripes of bright green and white, and everywhere there are bunches of deep-red roses in baskets. In the midst of all this sits Clementina, in a classic little frock of white with its waist belted with a line of black. There is a black cat in the window and a red parrot on a perch, and anything more utterly up to the moment than Clementina and her cat and parrot and her room it would be impossible to imagine.

Clementina was holding forth, as I have said, on the subject of servants. "My dears," she informed us, "Mrs. Smedley-Jones says 'please' to her butler. I heard her—really. 'Jenkins,' she said, 'will you please serve tea in the garden?' And Lady Strangeways was there and heard her, too. I can fancy what she thought of it—"

Of course there was a laugh at the expense of poor, gentle Mrs. Smedley-Jones, but I am sure that some of us decided that it was better to say "please" to a butler than to treat him as Clementina does hers. She snaps him up and freezes him out, and he is really a sedate and sensible old Englishman, who knows the difference between the quiet dignity of the mistresses with whom he was trained, and who did not, perhaps, say "please," but who made their requests with the voice and manner of those who are too well-bred to show insolence to a servant.

REQUESTS RATHER THAN COMMANDS

Few of us have butlers, but most of us live in houses where there are maids, and for my part I like to request service rather than order it. I do this because I feel that we Americans, more than any other people, should make of labor something which lifts up rather than degrades. In the North, two generations ago, many of the houseworkers were of good blood and

breeding, daughters of neighbors, who sat at the table of their employers. We have grown away from that, yet we need not laugh at it. For in simple times people are drawn together by the day's work: they are not separated by the idleness of one and the industry of the other. Today my servant can not sit at my table, because she is not the daughter of my neighbor, but I have no right to forget that she is a woman, and that politeness is her due.

I was always taught to say, "Please, Mammy," to my old nurse, and her dignity deserved it. I say "please" to our black Susan, who has grown gray in loving devotion to our welfare and who is entitled to our respect. It is not well for us to draw the line too sharply between those who serve and who are served, nor to copy the fashions of nations not pledged as we are to democracy.

Yet, lest you blame Clementina too much, and laugh at her because her poor little head has been turned, I would have you look to yourself and to your own ideals. You may not be new-rich or consciously a climber. But aren't you just a bit priggish? Do you judge people for what they are, or for what they have? Do you in school and in society, yes, even in church, draw a line between the sheep and the goats?

ABOUT NOSES IN THE AIR

Miriam made a sober little confession to me the other day. "I've had a lesson," she said, "about sticking my nose in the air. You know, I've always done it—always. I've liked to feel that I had the nicest friends, and the nicest house, and the best pew—and I never realized where I was drifting until the other day. Dear Miss Alicia showed me."

Miss Alicia is Miriam's Sunday-school teacher. She is rich and belongs to an aristocratic old family, yet she is absolutely sweet and unspoiled. In spite of her efforts, however, the six girls in her class have grown deplorably self-satisfied, so that they have lost all the lovely meaning of the things Miss Alicia has tried to teach them. The climax came recently when Miss Alicia brought to the class a young girl who worked in a department-store: a refined, well-educated girl, with a battle before her of wage-earning and effort.

"Well, we were furious," Miriam stated, "because Miss Alicia asked her. We didn't want her, and I am afraid we showed it. The next Sunday the girl didn't come, and then Miss Alicia told us what she thought of us. The visitor had come from a little country town, and her father was dead, and her stepmother didn't want her. And Miss Alicia said, 'Suppose one of you girls

should be forced out into the world like that, and you should want friends and should come to the church to find them, what then?"

"‘But couldn't she be put in another class?' we asked.

"‘Why should she?"

"‘Well, we don't want her.'"

"Oh, it sounded perfectly awful after we had said it, and Miss Alicia just blazed. She said that she was ashamed of us, and if we didn't want the new girl in our class, we could find another teacher, and she would begin a new class with the new girl. I felt like a worm and I knew that all the other girls did, and we begged her to give us another chance. But the worst of it is that the new girl won't come back."

It is an awkward thing, as Browning says, "to play with souls," and here was a lonely child, standing on the threshold of the sacred edifice, looking for—friends—only to be shut out. Surely our little Miriam has had her lesson. But I wonder if at the door of your church there stands some other girl—looking in?

It is a great mistake to judge people by their golden crests, or their golf-sticks, or their maids, or their motor-cars, or even by their luggage. I am perfectly sure that Clementina would not know a princess if she arrived without the proper trunks and bags, and I can't tell you how much Clementina will miss as she goes through life, for they are a brave company, these folk who haven't any luggage to weigh them down. It is they who can adventure. It is they who with knapsacks slung across their shoulders can travel the common road and call every man "brother."

I have a feeling that underneath all of her fashionable veneer Clementina is just a wistful little girl, asking more of life than it is giving her; that she really enjoys all the things she enjoyed when she lived in the stucco house and went to the public school and to the Presbyterian church. If she dared to adventure with the rest of us, she would, I am sure, be a pleasant comrade, and she would be glad to tramp in the dawn and the twilight, and to sleep beneath the stars.

But because, forsooth, her father has made a lot of money, poor Clementina has elected to go through life on cushioned tires, and to sleep under down quilts—and to grow fat of body and lazy of mind. Unless—and here is the hope for little Clementina—unless, as the years go on, she learns the true meaning of democracy, the lesson of the open road. Rich and poor may travel it, old and young, but if one wishes to receive the love and

support and respect of the others, there must be no assumption of superiority. This is the ideal set for us by our grandfathers. This is what they meant by liberty and equality—not that all men should be alike, but that all should have the freedom of the Great Highway.

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.

[The end of *Adventures in Girlhood* by Temple Bailey]