AUTOBIOGRAPHY: INDEX TO THE NORM

by

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This work is of two parts; first, an essay entitled Autobiography: Index to the Norm; second, a body of illustrative material relating to the first part, indicated as Autobiography. The second part is a collection of chapters chosen from a much longer work done for graduate credit at the University of Kansas during the year 1924, as "creative writing." The original autobiography contains something like one hundred thousand words, and was almost a year in the making. Personal reasons for writing such a work appear in the introductory essay.

The most important thing about this thesis from my own point of view is the fact that it stands as the first piece of "creative" work, to be accepted by the Department of English at the University of Kansas. Heretofore, only research work has been
regarded as thesis material. This action of the committee is significant in that it presumably points to a time when greater range of expression will be allowed and encouraged in our colleges, instead of being frowned upon, as has been the case in the past.

Especially do I acknowledge the help and inspiration given by Miss Margaret Lynn, under whose guidance and supervision the autobiography was written. To Professor S. L. Whitcomb, and other members of the committee, I am indebted for special enthusiasm and encouragement in the preparation of this work; and to others whose interest, though not formally expressed, has been of assurance.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY: INDEX TO THE NORM.

1.
Autobiographer as Seer.

To every individual comes a moment of retrospection—a looking backward that reveals in one flash through the shadowy and obscure confusion of the past, an open pathway down which he may, with one brief but extended gaze, see in its proper place of importance every incident of his life in black and white whose form and outline is correct and unforgetable in every particular. Until one is given this vision, he has no just claim to memory; before this, he may recall incidents as units, or he may remember what others have told him about himself; but until he extends himself through his own eyes over the pathway of the past, he has no true claim to it.

Whether this image of the inward eye be "vision," or "dream," depends upon age somewhat; but in either case, the seer experiences a moment of clarification, after which he knows new horizons. This growth is not the growth of enlargement, but rather of specialization, when he is aware of a
sloughing off of an accumulation of false ideals, and cognizant of an emerging of an old self, new through rediscovery, which is the self he is born with.

The autobiographer does not exist until the man has had some such experience described; and not without assurance of this condensation is he entitled to sit and write of himself. What he then sees is shorn of all unessentials, devoid of false estimate or sentimentality. For this reason, the autobiographer may be depended upon to tell the truth; and more important, to give proper emphasis and coloring to the happenings of his life. His purpose may somewhat determine the tone of his writings; but however that may be, we have before us a true account of a human life portrayed more or less in one mood, and more important to the historian, sociologist or psychologist than volumes of data compiled by means of the more objective research. For now the writer becomes not the personal recorder, but a medium for the recording of man's life.

"Nature is betrayed by the autobiographer's
voice, and accent, and emphasis; he cannot hide, disguise, or omit it. If he is healthy, normal, idealistic, it shows; if he is perverted, cynical, disproportioned, morbid, vicious, it will out. In slight acts, little reflections, trifling habits of mind, nature seizes hold of his pen, and writes what he is, large and clear." (The Autobiography, Anna Robeson Burr, P. 390)

To some, the autobiography, the memoir, means a lurid account of unusual incidents relating to a man's life,—a sensational account in which the bizarre is given a large place; on the contrary, the autobiographer does not fail to recognize and give full place to the typical in himself. No one is more aware than he of the universal; to him, he is all persons, plus himself. This is one reason why I have purposely tried to correct the current impression by giving to this brief study the title it bears.

2.

Autobiography, A Builder of Personality.

In this day of high socialization, when the individual is likely to lose all sense of his in-
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individuality, there is no more important thing than for him to withdraw occasionally from his fellows, and see himself as a personality. Otherwise, he will be submerged, smothered, by the activities of the community, whose dominant idea is "common purpose for the common good." Unless he anchors, the man will be helplessly swept along with the crowds, his strength scattered to the four winds, his color neutralized.

The inward vision which guided his fathers to launch themselves into an unknown world without fear of extinction is unsought today. Alone, the man would regain that vision which is essential to himself if he would live. As Thomas à Kempis has said, "It is better for a man to live privately and to have a regard to himself, than to neglect his soul though he should work wonders in the world."

And no better clearing house stands today than the autobiography, in which man may regain his lost individuality. If he does not write, let him read some of the great autobiographers,—Cellini, St. Augustine, Goethe, Rousseau, Tolstoi. If he feels timid, he will get strength from the confessions of these great men who were great because first of all
VII.

they had reverence for themselves as human beings and individuals. The autobiography in this light, may be regarded as the confessional of the truly religious.

3.

Autobiography: A Study.

Given a little rock, or handful of dirt, the geologist can determine by analysis what the content of a hundred surrounding acres may be. In the same way, given the early memories, impressions, of a child's life, the psychologist can foretell the life of that child to a certain degree. In these early years, the mind-set is established, the habit of thought ascertained. The child's dream will unfold into a mature materialization.

In the following chapters chosen from the pages of an unpublished autobiography, one may read for himself cause and effect, image and reflection, prophecy and fulfillment. In the first cut, the stratum is known; farther over in cross sections of a life, we find outcrops of the same sentiment, wonder, speculation as we found in the beginning. The first impression determines the remainder, as a dye bath
colors a fabric; or, more significantly, as a fabric is immune to the dye.

Of special interest should these pages be to the Kansan, for they represent the typically Kansas point of view; to those of the present generation, for the war experience is practically universal; to those of the mid-west for the contrast one feels when transplanted from a free-prairie life, to the grim reality of a city. And especially to educators and reformers, do I invite attention to the inward workings of a modern girl's mind.
They say that on the night I was born it snowed, and a strange white cat came to the house out of the storm. The next morning Claribel hated to go to school because she would have to say there was another baby at home. But she never had to say this again for I was the last one; there were nine others. I had red hair, and when Mrs. Lightfield, our neighbor, went home, she said I was a very good baby.

They named me Esther. I slept a great deal, and never had a spoon in my mouth until I was over a year old.

When I was two, Fred was married. I remember that the older children had to be whipped and sent to school because they wanted to stay at home and go to the wedding. But I went, and wore white stockings. We all sat in a little dark lump in the low dining room of Lightfield's house, and my mother cried all the time to see her oldest son married. After the wedding, we went home, and the rest of them were angry at me because I was allowed to go.
A little later, Sophia died. Sophia was twenty-one and had consumption. She was sick for a long while and lay in a white bed in the parlor. We had visitors to see her, and while they talked, we younger ones played with the fan-shaped box of shells on the floor. Usually apples were passed. Once there was a great disturbance when the church people came to pray over her, and my father ordered all of them out of the house. My mother cried, and I cried too; she took me into the dining room to play with the spangles on the hanging lamp, and through my tears I saw their rainbow colors.

Another day I discovered David leaning against the wall in the kitchen beside the clothesrack; he was crying, his suspenders pulled in a big X across his shoulders. When he saw me beside the wood-box, he lifted me up nearly to the ceiling, and said that he was going away. Sophia had died.

I cannot remember the funeral—perhaps I was kept in the kitchen out of sight—but afterwards they showed me a box of Sophia's things. One among them was a little silver bell which had stood at her bedside, but they would not let me tap it.
Another was a small candy jar with a lid. She had had a lover, George Williams, who had brought her chocolates and little hard candies. The candy was all gone now, and although no one spoke of George Williams again, I always thought of him whenever I looked at the parlor door.

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Our dining-room at home was large and red and had yellow wainscoting. My mother would sit up in the evenings under the hanging lamp and plait rag rugs, or sew the bright rags together in long strings, later to be wound in enormous balls. My father would bring his working tools in from the smokehouse and finish mending his harness, or some of our shoes. He was always working with brace and bit, or sewing harness or canvas for the binder with a big needle and waxed thread. The room would grow smelly with leather and oil; my mother plaited on and on with the colored rags until the clock said Eight, and then I had to go to bed. My cat, clad in an old towel or doll's dress, would accompany me. The dining room door had to be left open a little crack, making it light enough so that I should not be afraid, and dark enough for us to sleep.
They went to town on Saturdays and got groceries and lumber. It seemed a long day while they were away, and in the evening when it was about time for them to come, we children would run out to the road and look west where the dark lumber wagon loomed up against the red of the setting sun, the giant horses with bobbing heads, and the two stooped figures on the high seat.

When they finally drove up in front of the house, we would climb over the groceries in the back of the wagon,—the big sacks of flour, the sugar and meal, the mysterious packages that might contain celery or bologna, or new material for comforts or dresses. Often in the bottom of the wagon we found little paraffine hearts fastened to clusters of roses, lilies and forget-me-nots of colored cardboard. Someone had hidden them there among the packages while the wagon was waiting to go home.

While the wagon was being unloaded, my father would sit up on the seat holding the reins tight, and squint over his comfortable house, over the tops of the great maples and elms that surrounded the grassy yard, and out to the green fields beyond the orchards as though he were glad to be home again.
Company was coming from Chicago,--Uncle Otto and Ben. Uncle Otto was Dad's oldest brother. All the other brothers and sisters had settled in and about Chicago too; only my father had come west. Our house was overturned. There was a great deal of loud talking going on, and they rearranged all the pictures on the walls and in the album, and planned what each one should say. They told me I had to keep clean and not be sassy.

I was in the garden when they came, underneath the asparagus bushes eating a devilled egg I had taken from the table which had been set for about an hour. They found me and took me up to the gate where they were unloading from the spring wagon.

"This one looks like her father!" said the white old man who tried to grasp me. He had a long white beard and held onto everything very tightly with his fingers as though he might fall. He finally sat down in a rocking chair and said, "And where is the little mädchen who is going to untie my shoes for me?" He could not stoop over to unlace his shoes, and this I did for him, getting as reward a taste of his brandy he carried about with him for dizziness.

Ben, our cousin, was soft and white for a man. He sat about, rubbing his hands together and asking
Uncle Julius, my father, all about the farm. On the second day with us, Ben brought out a box of chocolates, (he had had them all the time in his suit-case), and said for a kiss I could have them. As I stood in confusion not knowing what to do or say, he kissed me on the cheek and placed the box with red roses on it in my hands; the next thing I knew, my mother had taken the box of candy from me, saying, "That's all right!" Afterwards anger was added to my chagrin at this unusual treatment when I saw the boxful passed to the entire room; I wondered why he had picked on me to kiss, who got no more than two chocolates from the whole box.

They stayed longer than they had intended, as we had a flood and all the bridges were washed out. Finally my father drove them to Lewiston, and put them on their train. Ben sent back to us a large bag of candy,—chocolates with lemon, pineapple, strawberry and plain vanilla centers. Uncle Otto had given me a bit round silver dollar when they put by for me in one of the caps in the cupboard, and when I knew from then on as my "Uncle Otto dollar."
CHILDHOOD
(Religion)

We were sitting in the dining room by the sewing machine, I on the floor with the Bible on my lap, my mother at the machine piecing quilt-blocks. I had learned to read,--or rather to handle the Bible and spell at the words--from my grandmother, who, on her visit with us a few months back, had alternately read the Bible and knitted stockings and mittens for us children. She had taught me to pray too,

Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray thee Lord my soul to keep.

which I said,

Now I lay me down to sleep
I praise the Lord my soul to keep.

The prayer I neglected, but I did seize every opportunity to read the Bible, and I thought that some-day I too should sit in a chair and be old, and wear a white cap and knit, and read the Bible.

As I read now, my mother would pause in her noisy sewing, to thread a needle, or adjust the band which kept slipping off the wheel, or to pronounce one of the words I spelled out. It took me several minutes to spell some of them, and then she often did not know what they were. "Oh, you don't know what that means!" she would scold when I got into a difficult chapter.
Satan I pronounced "Satin" and time after time I had to spell out Jerusalem, for my memory did not seem to reach from one Jerusalem to the next. I wanted to know how Satan looked. My mother was rather impatient about this; her powers of visualization did not seem so satisfying to me now as they did in bed-time stories at night.

I read in the Bible to learn more about Hell. For I was threatened with Hell frequently. I would go to Hell someday, according to what the older ones said, if I kept on telling stories. These were made-up stories, and I told many of them every day, in fact, whenever anyone would listen to me. One day I came in saying we had a blue kitten. "Maltese," corrected my mother. This was not maltese, but sky-blue; and I stuck to my story. Martha and I went out to the smoke-house to look, but when we got there and all the new kittens were examined, the sky-blue one had disappeared; and I had told another lie. Satan would get me someday for this, Martha said. And out by the woodpile when I saw the trees suddenly divested of their leaves, and the bark become red, I told about this too, but they did not believe me. I said I thought the trees would have been very pretty that way; then they started to describe Hades to me. Each day I wanted to hear more about it,
and sometimes I told things at random, more interested than anything else in learning more about Hades. I wanted to see too flitting over the face of Martha the terrible expressions that these explanations called forth. I did not dread Satan myself, but I did dread one of his instruments of torture,--a great wheel, like a grand-stone, but edged with a sharp knife blade, which you sat upon, and which cut you up the middle clear up to your head. I visualized that process often--how neatly done it could be! I often thought of this revolving knife--how I could lift myself someway from it, and thereby escape being cut in two up the middle.

Another feature of Hell was a large field of needles or spikes which, as soon as you stepped upon them, grew tall and stuck tight into the bottom of the foot, if you did not walk on quickly to more spikes. These needles torture me, and again I tried to reason out a logical method of procedure whereby I should step on the tallest ones, which I should crush down instead of having them rise up under my feet, and then immediately step upon some more tall ones, which would not prick me because of my courage in choosing them instead of the little ones. Some parts of Hell, of course, were the common fire pits where one burned to a cinder, but still retained all the sensibilities of a living body.
On Sundays we went to Sunday school—four of us in a little roadwagon, three in front and one clinging behind as we bumped over the three miles of rutty roads to the school house. I was dressed in white with large white ribbons on my yellow braids. My red and freckled skin with the streak of brown sunburn across the neck did not especially become the white frills, but it all pleased my father, who would call me to him, turn me about and say, "Well, well! I did not know my little girl could dress up so clean and stylish." My mother would wrinkle her nose and laugh at me; and pushing me out in the middle of one of her braided rugs, would say that my hands hung down like sledge hammers. They were rather pink and heavy after the morning's scrubbing, and my finery did make me self-conscious. The others did not have white dresses. My father and mother did not go to church, nor did the older ones; they were considered too old to go.

At Sunday school, the little ones went into a separate room where we were read to, given little colored cards showing Christ and his disciples, The Last Supper, the Feast of the Romans with festoons of pink roses and fountains, and in the background, women's figures with dog's heads.
"In olden times, they lay down to eat," our little Sunday school teacher explained to us. She had lovely grey feathers on her hat and cried every so often while talking about the lesson.

"Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God." she would say, and have us repeat it after her. "And how many of you say your prayers?"

I raised my hand with the others, although I had never said my prayers, excepting the week when Aunt Sally was with us, and I earned the new red dress. They all repeated "Now I lay me," and I thought it strange that they should know my prayer. I resolved to say it every night from then on. I did not wish to be looked at so strangely by our teacher, as she had looked at several who had not raised their hands.

We went into the big room, and sat in a group near the front, but soon turned around to watch the young peoples' class. Everybody in the church turned to watch the young peoples' class as a matter of fact,—even the old ladies paid a great deal of attention to the sly whispering and leaf-shuffling among the girls and boys. Their teacher was interesting in herself, with a very round face, and a delivery which was so forceful and spirited that her gushing words made a perfect rainbow in the sun, as they flew from her lips. She regarded with tolerance her pupils' inattention.
to her fiery prophecies, and took their indifference as a matter of course.

The superintendent, a toothless old man with dim blue eyes, now tapped a bell, and we were dismissed from our several classes to sing together:

When He cometh, when He cometh
To make up His jewels;
All His jewels, precious jewels,
His lov'd and His own.....

The wheezy little organ, played upon all through the week by the school children, groaned and creaked under the sudden fervor of the organist; bass voices came from the men, sad altos from the family who had just moved into the neighborhood, all ringing out over the dusty school seats and floating out of the window to the cornfields and woods in the next valley:

Like the stars of the morning,
His bright crown adorning,
They shall shine in their beauty,
Bright gems for His crown.......

After a prayer and benediction, we all loaded up into our separate wagons and rode home, driving fast or slowly, according to the pace of the other most interesting family that drove our way. Down into cool valleys, up over sunny slopes we jogged on until we reached our own hill and saw the barn roof, the maple trees, and the garden with long rows of light green lettuce which showed a mile away.
CHILDHOOD
(Winter at Home)

Snow came, and the others went to school, wrapped in fascinators, overshies, plush coats. Instead of staying inside by the stove, I would go outside and play in the snow. I worked hard while snow-men grew up in the yard, both because my mother might tap on the window any minute and call me back into the house, and because I wanted to have something ready for the others when they came from school. The men usually stood underneath the cedars. They were round and stiff and had mouths and eyes of mud, a pine cone for a nose and eyebrows of sticks. Whenever I returned from the back yard where I went for mud, I usually found an arm lying down on the ground beside my man in the snow; or an eyebrow had fallen to one side, giving him a crooked look. I straightened everything, and stook off to survey the effect.

"Come in now; that's enough!" my mother would call rapping on the window pane. But I went on until he was finished even to the sprig of evergreen in his hand. "She will take cold," my father would scold. And my mother would hurry me into dry things, saying, "You might as well be at school as out playing in the snow all the time." After every snow storm I would have a spell of tonsilitis, when my face would be bright red.
and I would be delirious until the doctor came to lance my throat.

In the winter evening when my snowmen in the yard had been buried in drifts many times their height, we would all sit beside the big stove and tell stories, or color pictures, or make a shadow show of animals on the wainscoting under the clock. Someone would put on shoes and go out after apples; no one wanted to do this, but whoever did do it was a hero. The apples buried in the west yard beneath a heap of dirt and straw, were half frozen when they came in, but we stayed close to the stove, watching our breath after each bite come out cold and smoky as though we were outdoors.

When bedtime came and my cats had to be turned out, I grieved. It was too cold for them on the porch; where did they go? Once I took a pencil and paper and wrote out a long ballad,--a fearful tale about what would happen to my yellow kitten if it were turned out of the door. This time it wandered about the yard all night long crying and crying for shelter until it died, upon reaching the apple pile.

Not only were frozen apples there
But a poor little kitten, with yellowish hair,
was the refrain to my poem. They all thought it was fine when they read it, and upon hearing their praises,
I did not worry any more about the cats, which my mother said were kept warm by their fur.

The boys went out for big chunks of wood to keep the fire all night; we brought in the water bucket from the kitchen; and everyone hurried to bed, eager to get up in the morning to see what the windows would be like. Already they were freezing over in delicate frost patterns.

If the snow was too bad, they all stayed at home, and then there were real caves and snow men who stood up high as our ladders would reach. Randolph would shovel paths from the barn to the corncrib, from the corncrib to the garden, or to the mail box,—often unnecessary paths shovelled from eagerness to be outdoors. We would just about have a cave finished when we were called into the house to get warm. But at noon the chickens needed warm water; now we could use one of the deep paths. And how short the distance to the chicken house! Through the half-open door, the hens would look out with envy at the banks of snow that came up to the very walls of the sheds; we threw in great handfuls of the snow, and they ate it along with their corn, still sniffing and poking their heads about, craning their necks, waiting for a chance to fly out into the cold.
The bad weather kept them from laying eggs.

Into the house again, with a promise to go out in the evening to help to do the chores. When we looked into the woodbox to see how many armfuls of wood we could carry, we found a surprise— a gunny sack full of dead rabbits, limp ears flapping, and stiff feet sticking up. The boys had been hunting, and the kitchen smelled of cleaning out guns. We ran to ask Ma if we couldn't have fried rabbit and onions for supper, but she was already peeling onions at the kitchen table, and turning her face sidewise so that her tears would not fall into the crock.
When I was six, they bobbed my hair and sent me to school. We had to walk several miles, since we went around the road on my first morning in order that I might learn the conventional way; I had heard much of the pasture they sometimes cut across, the fences that always tore their clothes and gave my mother so much patching to do,—the big ditch, the grape vineyard in the deserted farmyard. So it was with great anticipation that we all looked forward to this first day,—on my part because it seemed for years past that everything was gauged by the time when I should start to school; on theirs, because they had a new little sister to show off to the others, who perhaps, had had no new little sisters or brothers to bring to school that year.

On that first day when we were playing at recess, I kissed Henry Bowman, one of the big boys, and they all teased him so much that he cried and went home at noon. The teacher, a red-haired lady with high heels, gave me some magazines to look at; it seemed to me that I had never seen such a long day. In spite of the attention paid me by everyone when I talked aloud in the school room, and the special attention of Martha and Merna, who almost quarrelled over which one should take care of me,
my identity was lost among these forty-odd pupils who sat continually playing some game with slate-rags, pencil sharpeners, sling-shots, and the like. Everyone went to the hall to drink from the big water bucket. I too drank from a special paper cup made by Martha; but the novelty of these things soon wore away, and I was very glad when they took me home.

The next day was exciting as the first, but when noon came, I found that some of the older ones had eaten all the meat sandwiches from our dinner bucket—the sandwiches I had been looking forward to all morning. My disappointment turned to homesickness, and I refused to have the plain bread-and-butter ones. Leaning my head against the back of the seat, I cried until the tears ran down the yellow shiny boards, and I thought indeed that school was a sad place, and that life was sad; and although the older ones tried to comfort me, I cried on until my head ached and I was altogether ashamed to lift my face to the others in the school room. I stayed in this position most of the afternoon, and no one could pry me loose. Finally Martha told me it was time to go home, and she held my hand all the way to the corner and wouldn't let anyone look at my swollen face. On the way home, I regained my self-respect and ate one of the bread-and-butter sandwiches they had saved for me. At home no one said anything about my having cried at school.
It seemed that I loved my kittens more than ever now; and all that I took at the supper table, I divided with them under the table. I hated leaving them for school, and I hated to have to get up in the morning to have my hair combed. Martha brushed it first, bringing the stiff bristles of the brush low across my forehead, seeming to raise my very eyebrows in this torturing process. Next the comb was run through to get the tangles out. I hated the pretty ribbon they put upon it lastly, to soothe the pain of having it dressed.

At school we sang of mornings.

What does the robin redbreast say,  
Waking up at break of day:  
Cheer up! Cheer up! Oh chee! chee! chee!  
Ripe cherries, ripe cherries,  
For you and me!

Instead of singing I would sit at my desk and cry. After that, and before she took up the older classes, my teacher heard me spell. Having verified her suspicion that I did not know anything more about my lesson then I had the day before, she stood me up in the corner, behind the red hot stove, with my speller in my hand.

The others laughed at me, and I made faces at the teacher when she turned her back; but that all over, it was serious. I held my book up in front of my face,
not to study, but partly to shield my face from the heat, partly to hide from the other pupils' gaze. I stood on one foot, then the other, then on both, finally studying a little. But the teacher did not have time to hear me spell now, having other classes; so on I stood, still hot, and burning and tearful with resentment.

After several hours, they had recess,—a time when I suffered more than ever, for the others rushed past me out into the yard—I did not have any recess—and left me standing in the corner. Now the teacher could hear me; my heart grew large in my throat at this chance, but the excitement of finally reciting for her overcame me, and I was almost dumb as she pronounced word after word to me. She pronounced them to me in a mixed order, and as I had learned them as they stood in the book, what little I knew of them vanished, evaporated, as she fixed me with her firm eye. My mind was a blank, and my face scarlet from the heat waves of the stove.

"No, you haven't your lesson!" she would exclaim; and pushing my book back into my hands, she jerked me back in position behind the stove. Soon the others came in, some of them looking pitifully at me, others laughing a little and teasing me for being so stupid. I could not understand it myself, as each night when I took home my book to study, I learned the words all right there; but when I returned to the hated school, all my knowledge of my lessons escaped me, and no amount
of concentration could bring it back. As a matter of fact, while behind that hot stove I did not concentrate on my lessons, but rather on how miserable it would be, when the teacher again tried me out, and found that I would not know my spelling.

She sat up at her desk very straight in her shirt-waist and skirt eating her apple—the only lunch she brought—chewing each bite thirty times as it said in the physiology book, her face working like machinery.

It seemed to me that four invisible walls were closing in upon me, as wave after wave of enveloping heat came from the stove. Bitter tears ran down my cheeks as I stood pitying myself.

(Years later this teacher committed suicide by drinking poison.)
When I was little, Merna, the sister next to me, could hardly wait until the time came when she could lead me out to the pink rose bush in the yard to gather the pale rosettes that clustered all over it. When I was old enough to walk, we visited the flowering currant, the bridal wreath, and now finally we played hide-and-seek with the older ones in the evening among the giant lilac bushes. Poplars, cedars, elms, maples all grew in our spacious front yard, besides the many bushes and shrubberies; it was a happy conglomeration of bloom and fragrance, mystery and experiment, for we too set out, not perennial shrubs, but live-for-ever from the garden, rosemary, and violets from the meadow. Bleeding heart, wild lily-of-the-valley, Mayapple blossoms, were brought up from the timber in withered condition, planted with our more domestic plants; and sometimes these lived. And when we got things growing well in the front yard, we started setting out beds in the garden again; for the original beds had suffered from transferring their best plants to the yard.

Like the older ones who visited the cemetery on Sundays, we had our cemetery where we buried dead cats and chickens, and often our dolls,—when nothing had
died for a long time and we longed for the dramatic emotion of a funeral. But these latter burials were of a temporary nature; the following afternoon, our children would be again swinging in their little hammocks under the lilac boughs. All of our kittens were baptized as soon as we were able to find them, especially when we knew they had to be killed.

Ida was largely responsible for the baptizing. She was our little neighbor and came often. She was golden-haired, imaginative, but not so wildly imaginative as we; for her mother supervised her thought to a degree. She once said that she told her mother all we said and did together, and for a long while after that our friendship was strained.

Ida and I had discovered together that corn-doll babies were the best kind, because of their long, and various colored hair. We discovered together that children did not come, like our dolls, from the stalks of corn, as we had supposed at first when we began questioning these things. Neither of us had had younger sisters or brothers, and we had spent many long afternoons together in the wheat bin solving mysteries of this nature. We thought that the little calves dropped from the hay loft; she maintained that their little colt had walked out of the manure pile behind their barn, but as we had no colts, I could not say.
I did know that my father was very cross with us if we hung around the barns too much. "Run into the house to Mumma," he would say.

Besides this natural curiosity, Ida and I had something else in common,—a too vivid sympathy, or soft-heartedness, which on one occasion kept us both from school for several days. It was when our class was reading "Faithful Fido"—the story of that little hero-dog who was found dead by his master's saddle-bags. Ida's mother would come to see my mother, saying, "I made Ida stay at home today; she cried nearly all night with a headache."

And strange to relate, my mother said I had had headaches lately too, and had insisted on staying home from school. "It must be that they eat too much grape-nuts and cream," said my mother, who always suspected my diet.

But Ida and I, although she was the most truthful of little girls at other times, never told the real cause of our continued avoidance of school. This long story of Fido, pathetic as it was, was divided into three parts, and drawn out, it seemed, to fill at least half of our reader. Diligently I would inquire of the older ones the progress of our class, often receiving
negative and once a false report. On the strength of this false report we went to school only to have to be sent home crying about noon with severe headaches. Even the picture of Fido in his little white coat lying curled up down by the roadside was enough to send us both into spasms of heartsickness. The rest of the class, taking an unusually long time because of their depleted numbers, finally struggled through "Faithful Fido," and Ida and I had no more headaches.

A day came when I was finally through with school; I "graduated," an achievement which to the average child of our neighborhood meant the end of school, and the beginning of work at home. I had passed my examinations, and had written an acceptable essay on John Greenleaf Whittier; my white dress was ready, and when the day came, they took me to town to the exercises held for all the graduates of the county, in the Methodist church.

"Are you going to high school?" someone asked, seeing me standing stiffly about in my white pin-tucked finery and butterfly ribbons.

And my teacher, who stood proudly nearby, said, "Yes, I want Esther to go to high school."
II.

AT THE UNIVERSITY.

(First Semester)

Ellen who came home Christmas, said that I should be placed in school at once, wrote Claribel, who invited me to the city the next week end.

I shall never forget my first city experience: we shopped all day and went to shows at night, and in between whiles stopped in at many kinds of restaurants and cafes for food, so that we could do more shopping. Claribel bought me a green winter suit with a fur collar,—a green velvet hat with a mustard-colored plume, a Marie Antoinette looking hat, and she said, as we left the last shop,—for we had looked at all of them, and some twice,—"Now you must make the most of these things because they are probably all you will get for some while. You must make the most of your opportunity; not everyone gets to go to the University."

My new suit pleased me much, made me stand up very straight; the only thing I regretted was my shoes which were old and broken. Claribel promised me some of her old ones, and I felt better. I had no heavy topcoat, but what did that matter; if I was going to the university?
The next week-end Claribel came home for a visit, telling the family how pretty the girls at the "Y" had thought me. One of them had said, as Claribel and I had come in together and proceeded to our table in the dining room, that we looked like Tempest and Sunshine; none of them would have suspected we were sisters. Now things seemed to be coming all right; my heart grew lighter as I mailed the news to my old high school teacher that I was at last going to the university.

The transition from the high school to college, always a difficult readjustment,—was made doubly hard for me. The conceit that rests upon the head of the high school senior had descended upon me like heavy dew, and the added accumulation of it while staying at home through the fall, had rendered me cocksure of myself in every respect.

My history class was distinctly a sophomore class, the professor a business-like, short-spoken man. I stared in amusement at his balding head, his tongue, which had a way of becoming entangled over his set phrases. He asked a question, then before a student had time to give the correct answer, went down the roll in alphabetical order, marking zeros as he went. He would finally stop
at the end of about ten names, and take occasion to give the correct answer to his question. As he talked, the class feverishly took down what he said in their great, black note-books; and soon the teacher repeated the whole process again,—asking a question, marking zeros, explaining the answer finally himself, while the others scribbled.

"They say he flunks half his class," whispered the girl next to me. I looked around the crowded classroom, row after row, some fifty students, and noted their sullen, downcast faces. No wonder he flunked them; the room was overhung with almost a visible atmosphere of failure and unhappiness.

On this first day he dismissed us briefly after telling us about his reserve shelf in the library. The rest of the forenoon I spent at the library, trying to locate Ibid, and other as elusive historians, in the files or on the shelves, waiting with others for the few books which had been snatched up by the first fortunate arrivals. But these books, very limited in number, were never released, except to the friends of the possessors, who seemed always to appear casually at the tables at the right moment. There were dozens of students for each book, and as waiting longer seemed fruitless, I went downstairs to the reading room and the desk where I called for books I had been wanting for ages to read.
These were not texts on history, but books of poetry,—John Keats, and Walt Whitman in particular, whom I did not dare ask for at the little city library, where the librarian had been sniffing over my taste in fiction for several years. But this was the university library; my liberal education had begun, and I waded deeply into what before had been forbidden waters.

The next day I went to my Rhetoric class, strongly braced, expecting again to encounter something difficult in my teacher; but this time I was taken aback. We found awaiting us in one of the upper rooms an almost feminine man, hardly distinguishable from the students, his slender plump limbs clad in a salt-and-pepper suit. His fingers were dexterous as he sat at his desk sorting cards, and I thought as I looked at him that he must have spent most of his life handling books. Two large black eyes wide open behind black-rimmed tortoise shell glasses stared out at us as he paced back and forth giving the assignment. With most explicit instructions, he bade us write a description for our next lesson,—a description of some familiar object,—a lead pencil, a box, a book, or a ruler. This seemed easy enough, so simple in fact that it was disarming. But before we could ask many questions, he dismissed us. I felt my foundations in the university grow steadier. As we left his room, one of the boys in uncertain speculation as to what next was to come, said to another: "Oh Lord! He's a poet, they say!"
"You can write," my English teacher in the high school had told me. Mr. Williams, my rhetoric teacher, soon said the same thing: I had known it would not take him long to discover my genius. Every day he read aloud my compositions to the others. While he did this, I sat on the front row, with, I am sure, a virtuous, proud expression upon me, feeling much superior to my classmates.

Often whenever we had time left over from the dictation of rules, our instructor would take from his little black case,—his "baby satchel" we sometimes called it—books of poetry or stories; and we would be entertained for the rest of the day by William Allen White's boy stories; Walt Mason's jingles; "The Barrel Organ," or The Highwayman." Our teacher told us how Walt Mason years ago had drifted into a Kansas newspaper office with a typewriter strapped to his back, and settled down there to stay. He told us of Harry Kemp, the tramp poet, and how he had walked out to our state from the east seeking the writer of "Each in His Own Tongue." Of Harry Kemp, he always spoke defensively, as though to shield that poet from our young scorn at least if he could not from the wiser world's judgment, because of his scandalous carryings-on with some woman in the east. "The world is willing to believe anything," he said, "and it always pays to be open and above board about all you do or say."
And he quoted to us a dozen times if he did once, "Be careful what you set your heart on, for you will attain it."

Never before had I realized what my state meant to me,—the early struggles of the pioneer against drought and flood,—the struggle for freedom of the slaves during the Civil War. Outside of Lewiston was an old cemetery filled with the graves of those who had died in Quantrill's Raid. Our teacher told us about Carrie Nation, Sockless Jerry Simpson, Jim Lane, and told us to walk down the street some evening to see Lincoln's shadow in the street light,—a shadow I had seen often in high school days, formed by the roots of an old maple tree on the sidewalk.....

All this was fascinating; doubly so to me, for my own parents had gone through it. I saw my state for the first time in perspective; and when we read Carl Becker's Essay on Kansas, I felt that I owned a part of the universe.

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I neglected my history; my name now had innumerable zeros after it; the professor had written on one of my quiz books, "Are you serious, or trying to be funny?" To the boy who sat next to me, this professor had said, upon hearing him recite, "You must have dreamed that; you didn't read that in any reference book of mine!" to the utter chagrin of this student.
My French I had neglected also: I had great difficulty with the irregular verbs; the course seemed to consist entirely of these. My French teacher, a tall young man with nervous rolling eyes, seemed more like the spick-and-span model for a clothing firm than a linguist, so perfect were his proportions, so slender and well-groomed his appearance. Many times he stared at my confusion over what seemed so simple to him.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est?" he would hiss over and over again at us. The best in the class spoke with great hesitation, their tongues wooden, their eyes uncertain to a painful degree. Here was difficulty and trouble, but the swallow fluttered at the window; the doves cooed among the ivy vines on the stone wall outside. We struggled on with "Le Crayon," "La Boîte," "Les Libres," "La Plume," "L'école." When he returned my written exercises badly marked up in red ink, I consoled myself thinking of my compositions in rhetoric which were receiving many favorable comments.

Thus winter wore on to spring. The red-birds were plentiful now. The robins, too, hopped about impertinently under my very nose, and I recalled that old song we sang at school—-that song which mocked me by its bright falseness:

What does the Robin red-breast say
Waking up at break of day?
Cheer up! Cheer up! Oh chee, chee, chee!
Ripe cherries, ripe cherries
For you and me!
AT THE UNIVERSITY.
(Social Life)

My room was humble; downstairs was a kitchen where a half dozen girls besides myself did our cooking. We ate together at one large table in the dining room. Our matron, aside from being a little fussy, was easy to get along with; she spent most of the time in her garden tending flowers, or talking to her cat. To her cat she said what she wanted us to know.

I had a room mate, a shy, dark, unobtrusive little girl; she took the lower half of our bed, and I took the top deck. I did most of my composing and reading up on top the double-decker, for the light was excellent there. I discovered that I could think better lying down, and certainly that position was better for reading poetry.

My room mate looked at me many times carefully and then chose to study most of the time with two of the girls upstairs who were from her home town in the western part of the state. At night she said her prayers; I could not see her from my high perch, but I felt the silence while she did it. In her trunk she kept a very pretty party dress, salmon-colored,
trimmed with tulle, a dress which she had brought with her hoping to be invited sometime to an "informal" by one of the boys from her home town. But somehow this engagement never materialized,--he being a fraternity man; for there was an unwritten law in this university that a fraternity man could not make engagements with non-fraternity women. So her dress, fresh as on the day when she had brought it, lay folded up in her trunk.

From where I half-reclined I could see the tops of the dresser and chairs, the closet door and my window ledge which stretched out at my right hand supporting a number of apple cores and my bottles of ink. I used a great deal of ink to replenish my queer fountain pen, for besides doing my themes, I kept a faithful diary in which everything I thought and did, from A to Z, was carefully recorded.

Besides my diary, I compiled several bulky anthologies of verse, sentimental romantic songs and love confessions. I collected stray bits of philosophy from all the fiction I read, for in spite of my avowed faithfulness to my studies, I always found time to read a great deal of cheap fiction. I enjoyed Robert W. Chambers and the Saturday Evening Post: I do not know what would have become of my sense of the Twentieth Century had I not read these, for in them I found contact
with the world about me; the student's life is essentially an unsocial one, and mine was especially so.

Our university seemed to be organized into rigid social strata,--fraternity, sorority, "barb;" the "upper classes" were unexplored by us whose social life was confined to Y.W.C.A. meetings on Tuesday afternoons. And I did not attend these meetings for I could not tolerate the glib testimonies given by the girls or the older visiting women about each and every one of us leading a richer and fuller life.

Reading ancient works only isolated me the more, for I was generally steeped in their atmosphere to such an extent that when I awoke in the morning after reading late the night before, I did not clearly know whether I was in Greece, England, or the United States and Kansas.

Like at our rooming house would have been unbearable monotonous had it not been for my week-end trips to the country.
The campus appeared to me a dreary dry place, the students upon it had the appearance of shadowy beings who, with a little encouragement from my imagination, turned into this or that kind of animal,—a game that I made for my own amusement. Looked at from one of the high windows, they looked like ants, beetles, grasshoppers; at closer view, that one was like a possum, this a good, kind old dog, a weasel, a calf,—when he had any expression whatever.

They ran here, there, everywhere on the campus, going to classes every hour, drawling inane, "Hallows" at each other as they passed on the walks, congregating in the library finally to sit a moment with open books at which they did not look. I often wondered if they knew what they were there for. Most of them looked bored, indifferent, annoyed in the classes, but they were always present. There was little enthusiasm among them, except on such an occasion as an athletic event; then the whole school turned out to shout and push each other about. There were no school traditions here; if there were any, they were kept carefully hidden from freshmen, for I had encountered none as yet.
I took no writing courses now: composition, to my dismay, was not given to sophomores; and when I had sought the English office to petition that I be allowed to do junior composition, my request was not granted. As a result, I turned to my art work: I had done free-hand drawing in the high school which pleased my teachers there.

Our art department was not large, but the students who dabbled there were happy. I smeared myself with black charcoal for months, dreaming of the day when I should be able to sit at an easel and paint oil portraits, to have a studio of my own with models coming and going, tea.

My art professor, a middle-aged stout man with a balding head, regarded me with curiosity as I started in. "Ever had trouble with your eyes?" he asked.

"No," I said, "Why?"

"Did you ever see a man's nose here?" he asked, rubbing his dirty thumb across my picture. We were doing David with the curly hair. "You need glasses," he chuckled as he pushed himself down beside me and took my pad. He lifted David's chin, tipped his head down, revised him generally. As I watched his skillful drawing, he asked me where I came from, where I was going next, what I was doing there.
"Your drawing is healthy, anyway," he said consolingly, after he had straightened the lines of my mass of rough scratching. The others worked on in their smooth, exact lines, first making a nose, a mouth with full lips, a chin with a dimple. I smiled at their petty self-satisfaction; true, my faces seldom had eyes, excepting deep holes, no ears except blocks where ears could go sometime. This professor recited the rime about the ten-o'clock scholar to me more than once, as I came in late, ending "You're late!"

"What are you going to do about it?" I would ask; and after the outburst of laughter from the other students, we would all settle down to serious work. But the atmosphere of seriousness about art never becomes too heavy; someone in the group always dissolves it. I know of no silence that compares with the silence that hovers over an art class when all are concentrated to the fullest extent. It is the silence of God, sworn to by the white statuary that stands witness. This stillness sometimes comes for a brief moment after the musician renders a stupendous number, while the audience is still held in the spell of his magic, but it is always short-lived.

Along with my other subjects I took Economics, having the Formal Discipline Theory in mind when I chose it; I must have some unpleasant things to battle with,
I had told myself. But I soon found that I liked its clean-cut thinking; it was a superior course. Our teacher in this was a handsome man with a high forehead, far-seeing grey eyes, rather English looking, for he had his training at Oxford. All of the girls loved him, and some of the boys; but there were some who were not equal to his clear thinking, and these dropped out of the course.

We discussed in this class the man who was born with a gold spoon in his mouth in contrast to the one who was born with a wheelbarrow in his hands. "Supply and demand," was the watchword; everything could be explained on the basis of supply and demand. "Marginal utility," "unearned increment," were terms that we rattled off glibly, we finally understood them so well.

There was no getting around it; we were made to think. Our teacher did not ask us one question, to which we could answer Yes, or No; but a series of questions, each following upon the other with a terrifying rapidity,—questions which exploited the workings inside our heads, and left some of us, alas, rather befuddled and pathetically aware of our own poor reasoning powers. Our statements were met by his "How?" "Why?" "In what respect?" until we had to know what we were talking about, or else keep still. And to keep still
in that class was torture, when to recite well was so exhilarating. I felt as though I were on my ascent to heaven on two bright wings when I went successfully through a series of his questions, and I am sure the others had much the same feeling.

He was married, and often Sunday afternoons one of the other girls in the class and I went to the concerts out at the Indian school to watch him stroll about with his wife, carrying a cane, and followed by an aristocratic looking dog. From the school room, this teacher went into public life, became an expert on farm mortgages, later went to England where, we heard, he made fifty thousand dollars a year. How many teachers can go out into life and put into practice the theories they spout from their desks?

I avoided carefully Chemistry and Mathematics in college; the former because of my almost fatal accident in high school chemistry when testing the explosive properties of gasoline.

Arithmetic I remembered as a hated subject from the days in the little stone school house in the country, where I wept in vexation and self-pity over my stupidity at solving the problems given us. Cube root, square root, were difficulties which forced me literally to tear my hair. And the long involved problems written in the back
of the book, the very phraseology of which was confounding to a youngster, made me despair of life in general. "A man walks from rear to front through a railway coach three miles per hour, and the coach is running at the same time A miles per hour. How fast does the man pass the telegraph poles along the track? How fast does he pass them if he walks from front to rear?" Much too involved for me, and I am not a fuzzy thinker, either.

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Geology was a joy; I learned that man came from the horse, probably, and that the world started from a rolling ball of fire. This study was a revelation to me; I had known the most fundamental things I heard in our class discussions, from hints I had received at that a high school lecture; but I had never suspected the university would tolerate such an intelligent subject. It tore to pieces that story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden, and proved that the first life was a mere accidental combination of water and salt, which resulted in a unicellular animal, which evolved up to fish, to birds, to mammals and finally to man.

Our geology teacher was a tall dark man from Harvard,—the most brilliant man Harvard had put out in eight years, they said,—and his speech delighted me far more than did his absolutely stunning and original theor-
ies, if that were possible. He was very courteous and considerate; told us about the shell fish one ate in Boston restaurants, which we in Kansas, never got; about a little rock which had been named for him, as he had discovered it—(this very modestly); about our shale and salt beds in the western part of the state which the ocean had left when it swept across America; about the big glacier which had come down from the north through this part of the country and left the deposit a few miles from our own university, the hill, Blue Mound. I had always supposed, as we had rambled over the Mound gathering Dutchman's Breeches and Indian arrow-heads, that Blue Mound had been built by the Mound Builders, but I did not correct him, as I did not wish to interrupt his beautiful speech. His speech was soft, very distinct; he had no r's except at the end of words where they did not belong.

I brought him a box of rocks that I found in the bottom of our big ditch in the pasture, shells and stones which showed the impression of old ferns; he was tolerant of these, thanking me mildly. And inspired by this course, which showed me to a degree my own smallness, insignificance, and relieved in a way the heavy depression that fell upon me when I thought of my unprofitable existence, I wrote a poem in the back of my notebook, for
my teacher's inspection at the end of the term:

To A Trilobite.

O trilobite,—head, legs, and tail
Imprinted here upon this shale.
I hold so close within my hand,
You crawled along and left your trail
Upon a shore of muddy sand.

O trilobite, I wish I might
Leave in the sands of this dark night,
In after years to be descried,
A sign, to gladden some searcher's sight
And show where a mammal lived and died.

This professor's better discretion forbade his mentioning it to me, if he indeed, noticed it.

I became involved in Philosophy, Bishop Berkeley's "Theory of Vision," staring at the wall behind the professor's round face until I saw figures in its black surface,—unknown faces which came and went—women with high-piled hair, white-faced men, then elephants, donkeys, which all quickly came to an end with the close of our discussions. Was it really a desk I saw before me, chairs with people in them, or did I imagine it all?

I was especially good at abstracting, inasmuch as I had built up, and was still building up, a defense
mechanism of rationalization,—of philosophy which aided me at every turn. I pushed my way through my classes cheerfully enough, but at the same time, because of this protective philosophy, I became immune to many subtle influences which might have benefitted me had I allowed myself to be more susceptible.

Even with my enforced optimism, I felt woefully lacking in moral support. I visited what few art displays we had; many times I sought the library, going back in the cool stacks, standing helpless and forlorn before the collection of Russian Literature. Now I read these stories with more sympathy and fervor than ever. Death, in a Russian novel—how satisfactory it is. What a relief it must be to go calmly up to one’s enemy, shoot him outright, cut his head off, pour scalding water upon his puling children. I was bound to a society which would never permit any of these things. How superior this, to our own American Witchcraft!

In the spring I discovered psychology which had a curative value for me. Like Philosophy, this subject allowed me abstract thinking. Our professor was a cool young man with a high forehead, blond hair and mustache, a detached air about him, a bright look upon his face which marked him as a scientist. His classes were full, yet of the hundred students who sat in that crowded room, I often felt that his lectures were spoken, were meant for me.
I relieved my self-consciousness in the generalizations of Memory, Imagination, Instinct, Emotion, Social Conduct; I became an acute analyst of the feelings and emotions that I had felt so deeply, but was now able to pigeon-hole under this, that, or the other phenomena of Sensation, Perception, Inhibition, or whatnot.

I learned that blue is all the bluer for having followed its complement, yellow; that black was the absence of white, in a way; and that everything is relative. With this knowledge came the realization that at last I had Life by the neck, and could have the freedom for which I had always longed, no matter in what circumstances I should happen to find myself. Later I learned what a truly Sophomoric attitude this one was.

I was disappointed in Journalism, in which I enrolled for more writing experience, and dropped the course in the middle of the semester. Kansas is noted for her big newspaper men, but the journalistic department at the state university does not by any means turn out Bill Whites nor Henry Allens.
I was very unhappy in the pseudo-professional atmosphere of this department; only one professor here interested me,--an old journalist from the east, who also wrote short stories. He told me I was not taking my work seriously, so I dropped the course, regretting the time I had wasted upon it. The only thing I recall having reported, was a lecture of one of the Tolstoys, a relative to the author, who spoke at our convocation.

In the midst of this rather dissatisfied existence, came the declaration of war upon Germany. All was confusion now, and I looked forward to the time when school would be out, and I would be doing something useful.
III.
WAR...
(Initiation into Service.)

After a night's sleepless ride on the train--and I stayed awake especially to sense the grandeur of the Mississippi--I arrived in a city of smoke and huge iron structures--Chicago. Claribel, in a violet-covered turban, was looking anxiously for me through the iron bars of the waiting room. She kissed me, took me firmly by the arm, and hissed, "Have you got your money pinned to your corset?"

This greeting, and the appearance of the rather commonplace station where we next found ourselves, was not quite my idea of life in a great city, but I was still hopeful.

We walked uptown to Michigan Boulevard,--a flat, windy street. The spring winds came icy-cold from the lake on one side; the other side of the street was built up straight into the air by shops and hotels. Was this all of Chicago? Claribel looked at me again and again, expecting me to be awed by this sight. I had supposed a city to be a place of romance, flowershops, theatres, enormous sky-scrapers, all covered by a haze of romance; but I soon found that my imagination had gone far beyond reality. Truly, there were many people on the Boulevard, but where were the romantic figures I had met in fiction, the faces I had pictured in my mind that would come thronging to meet me as I pushed down through the masses?
The elevated confused me. Claribel explained the meaning of the "Loop" to me in a rumbling undertone, so low that I could understand nothing she said. I felt very ill, and shook from nervousness and exhaustion.

We went to the north side, where she had rented a small apartment. Here we found rich, colorful curtains, crimson-shaded floor lamps, (Ah, how many floor lamps I encountered before I was through with Chicago!)—and an odor which made me think of both cabbage and escaping gas. Yet how different this new room from the barren, sparsely furnished one back in Lewiston, with its meager, stiff chairs, its slender, starched curtains, its dingy wallpaper! Here were great carved rosewood chairs, velvet curtains, deep rugs. We bathed and dressed, and I learned what a smoky city can do to blond hair; mine was a queer ash-brown, which color, I learned, it was likely to remain from now on.

We went to lunch, a very large fish dinner around the corner on Wilson,—more food than we commonly served for a whole meal at home, and costing more than my week's allowance back in those light-housekeeping days of a few months past. The rest of the day we window-shopped, eating an early supper so that I could go to bed early. At home in our room, I wondered if all my days would be filled as full of window-shopping, of fish dinners, of instructions. I looked forward to the office; I felt that my befuddled, dizzy feeling would leave me when once I was at work, clicking at a typewriter.
The next day we fell aboard the elevated to speed south with thousands of other persons to the government offices. Claribel thrust a Tribune in my hands. "You want to fold your paper lengthwise," she instructed, folding a part of her piece to show me how. I did not care especially for the paper—believing like Ruskin, that the newspaper tends to make a sieve of man's mind—and so let the sheet fall into my lap and watched the other passengers. From below us rose the noise of a city awakening to a new day. We whirled by the tops of buildings, through trees, around curves, past other whirling trains, with such a swaying speed that I sickened; when we arrived at the stock yards, the intense, heavy odor of that place quite took my breath away.

From the elevated, we made a mad rush for a surface car, in which we tumbled in pell-mell fashion to ride a few more blocks through those sour, smoky streets surrounding the manufacturing district. We crossed an enormous iron bridge, stopped, unloaded, and ran to the Quartermaster Depot, a make-shift affair in an old building next to a wool refinery. From this building came more disagreeable odors of wool, a hated smell from my childhood, associated in my mind with mutton, sheep, and Christianity in general.
Here I met many men in uniform who all stared at me as something rare and special, being fresh from college. I fell presently into the hands, as his private secretary, of a young man whose lot was to handle shoe contracts. Over this job we became acquainted, and soon were deep in the figuring of how many pairs of lasts, by sizes and widths, were required to last two hundred thousand shoes by a certain given time. The business of the government was running full speed, and manufacturers could not work fast enough to fill the contracts.

All was confusion about us; a large floor of desks, officers, typewriters, scattered papers, competent help was scarce, and as many as six different men from other departments came to me with dictation. I afterwards learned that it was not for my efficiency they came to me; indeed, they probably wondered at my nervous clumsiness in trying to write in shorthand the unfamiliar phrases they dictated. I, who had practiced up to the speed of writing over a hundred words a minute of President Wilson's elegantly-worded messages to Congress, was doing well to write fifty words a minute now. It was my first practical experience, and
the flexibility necessary to a good stenographer was sadly lacking in me. But I could be trusted with the correspondence. Many of the girls, finding they were unable to read their notes after taking them, and afraid of losing their jobs if they admitted this, simply destroyed the original correspondence, and thus relieved themselves altogether from any future responsibility.

The young Jew next to me came to my desk many times to talk—indeed he always had much time to talk and to finger his papers carefully before getting into action. But the older woman a few desks over saw him, overheard our little conversations, which ranged in subject matter from Kosher meat and its significance—we had no Kosher meat in Kansas—to dancing in one's apartment—he invited himself to ours. She investigated the case of this gentleman, who, it appeared, was merely evading the draft; and he was removed from the office.

"This is the first time you have been away from home, isn't it?" she asked, peering into my face.

I told her it was, and rather took her breath away by thanking her for taking care of me. When she found that I was sincere about this last, she said I was a sensible girl; she invited me to eat lunch with her and
told me about the angora kittens she was raising. Later I learned that she had invented a therapeutic lamp, had a rose garden, and did many things. But she did not stay in our office long; she didn't get the promotion she had expected. It was given instead to a young officer, who, they said, previous to the donning of his uniform, had worked on a milk-route somewhere in Indiana.

.....

The place was full of Jews and Catholics.

From this mass again arose a gallant, who came to my rescue. He always gave his dictation to me instead of to his own weak-eyed typist, drew out his letters to a great length, using long, intricately involved sentences, heavily laden with clauses and modifying participle, taking most of the morning for a few letters.

"You must have read the Bible a great deal," I once said to him, thinking of his long-winded style, when he had finished one of his long-drawn out rhythmic compositions. He smiled at my comment, flattered almost beyond self-control. He said he made his letters long that he might have the pleasure of my company. The other girls said they did not see how I could stand to have him about; his uniform was always wrinkled and smelled of mice.
He brought candy to me, a procedure sneered at by my immediate supervisor. And poetry:

Here's to the girl with golden hair,
Whose lips I'd kiss but I don't dare,
Who smiles on all but doesn't care,
For anyone when I am there.

This quite overcame me when I found it in my drawer among my letterheads and erasers, and my blushes over it were soon discovered by the man at the next desk. ".....This isn't spring, you know," he said, among other things. And when the little Jew had turned his back, the other would calmly say, "In Kentucky, they put niggers and Jews in the same class."

"But I am from Kansas," I said, determined to give all people an equal chance without showing prejudice. I (See page 53).
told him of the negroes I had gone to school with; of the refugees who had come to Kansas during the Civil War; of the Jewish instructor I had had in the university.

But he only looked at me with his blue eyes, and said nothing further.

There was another man who sometimes brought his dictation,—a tall, shy fellow from Kansas City, who blushed terribly if a girl looked at him. When I asked him how to spell corset-jean, a word I was in doubt of and which I thought had better be verified if the wire I was writing were going to Washington,—he came across and spelled it; but I saw that he was terribly confused at the tittering going on back of us. Generally, I noted, the farther west one came from the more serious he was about his work. Westerners, I told myself, were more businesslike, had less time for foolishness than the easterner and southerner I saw at work.

This Brown from Kansas City was unapproachable; he took lunch where we did, but sat continually with his head over his place at the table, lining off a sentence now and then in army slang. "He "rated" an extra piece of pie, or he didn't "rate" one; he was "A.W.O.L."; his alarm clock sang reveille to him every morning; he was very shy and was in the Quartermaster, which he called the Yiddish Army, because of weak eyes.
WAR
(The Government Building and Surroundings.)

When they completed the large new building a few blocks west and nearer the yards, we moved there. Bubbly Creek flowed through the yards behind our building,—Bubbly Creek, that never to be forgotten brooklet. It was a small creek filled with muddy water, coated over with a dry, thick substance clogged to inaction by chunks of mouldy debris, slowly moving in circles, forming whirlpools of greyish foam. These sent up at regular intervals bubbles, snapping through the seething surface, and giving off an offensive odor of rotted vegetation and flesh. Once we saw a dead policeman in the stream, in his blue uniform, one arm hacked off at the shoulder, bobbing about aimlessly in the undulating mass.

The contents of the water, never moving in any definite direction, seemed to circle and slowly sink, only to be belched up again and come to a standstill at the surface. From this boiling, bubbling stench rose an odor so thick and loathsome that one whiff of it took the breath and left the body weak and trembling. Daily we passed over the bridge that crossed this creek, and up to our building,—a scant quartermile up the railway tracks.

In striking contrast to its surroundings stood the government building, a large square red brick structure,
with many clean windows and white doors. At one corner floated the stars and stripes,—a bright flag, rising far above and fluttering carelessly in the putrid breeze that was wafted in from the yards a few blocks away. Above the main central entrance of this building, a large Quarter-master emblem shone out,—the sword, the key and the wheel in a newly-painted creamy white. To the east nestled a block of bungalows within a high cement wall. To the north, block after block of small houses,—the residences of the Polish people.

The Polish community consisted of children, women, a few men, saloons, grocery stores, a church, and row after row of little houses much alike in structure and appearance. As one passed along its streets, one thing was particularly noticeable—the children. The street was filled to overflowing with children,—small, yellow-skinned, ragged, their thin yellow hair drawn tight back from their flat faces. On the doorsteps lazily watching them, sat the women, drab and yellow-grey, nursing their babies.

The two-story houses were built below the street level, the first story like a basement with steps leading up to the street, each house thereby accommodating two families. The windows were filled with plants, little Christmas trees, candles, Kewpies, crosses,—every third house supporting a sign of "Midwife," above the door.
Each corner had a saloon,—once a prosperous busy place, from the appearance of the worn doorway,—or a grocery store, its small window filled with stale-looking boxed cookies, sausages hanging up in rounds, bottled drinks, and huge loaves of rye bread. From down the street came chimes of the church bell, and the children renewed their playing after a momentary pause of reverence, calling to each other more loudly in queer foreign tongue.

No sunshine here, and no shade trees; only the thick yellow-green vaporious air that came from the yards and enveloped the whole settlement. It seemed to me that the poisonous mist had entered their very souls, and had helped to make their faces drab and meaningless.

This scene symbolized to a degree all I had known of Chicago, and when I went to my room at night after work, and looked at myself in the mirror, I thought I, too, was growing colorless and stupid like the Pollocks. But I did not greatly care; I had lost my individuality to the extent that I refused to identify my former self with what I was now becoming.
The attitude of passivity, so carefully nourished during my college days, took precedence now, and was, in these surroundings, my greatest foe. My personality was submerged altogether. Like a slave I went each day to the office in my now grimy suit, shiny in the seat, stained with the droppings of many hastily eaten lunches.

We had no vacations at first, though the government, under normal conditions, allowed thirty days leave with pay, thirty days sick leave. There was no time off for dental work—this was not considered necessary. When we were too ill to work, we were forced to stay in our rooms the entire day, bringing a signed statement the next day, swearing that we had remained in our rooms. When we wanted a day off for very necessary shopping, we had to make official request for the same, a long paper signed by all the officers of our department—endless red tape. And rather than go through with these proceedings for a little time, most of the girls worked day in, day out. Again, some seemed to have a "stand in" with their supervisor, and had no trouble getting leave; no trouble getting a bonus. Twice girls around me all drew a bonus, but I never received one. I did my work well, but it is true that I did not go and hang around the neck of some second lieutenant, or toady to our supervisor. "The more you work in this place, the less they appreciate you,"
someone said, and it seemed to be true.

So I sat day in, day out, working—a wheel in this great machine the government, which in time grew all the more inefficient, perhaps, for its wilful neglect of some particular cog. Our badges, too, kept us aware that we were mere pieces of machinery in this mighty scheme of things.

There was the time clock; if we were one minute late, a day's wages were docked. There was the cafeteria downstairs, at which everyone had to eat lunch or go without. The candy from this place always made me very sleepy,—dulled my feelings for the entire afternoon. The meat they served here,—but I shall not talk of that. I do not, by too harshly criticizing the methods of war, wish to dim the golden star that shines on some mother's breast for a son fallen in battle.
Newspapers as well as conversation, were not allowed at the office, and what snatches of news from the front we could get, we made the most of. In the cars it was impossible to hold, much less read, a newspaper. Rumor said that the Germans were as good as done, near as they had formerly come to Paris. I measured by own progress with the progress and success of America in the war. On the days when Germany got the worst of it, I seemed to get the better of my circumstances. After all, we were living under stricter compulsion than ever was the condition, probably, in Germany. If their poison gas was any worse than the odor that came into our windows, I didn't want to smell it; if military discipline was any sterner than in our own office, I should have to see it.

Then one day a sparrow flew into our office and fluttered about the skylights. "A bird," I said to the little Irish girl who sat behind me, and whose eyes now bulged out whenever I started to offer a bit of philosophy, "is a sign of good luck." She hissed, and went on turning her stock record cards over. "Some more of your ideas," she said contemptuously, yet encouragingly, for she loved to dispute the radical remarks I hurled at her when no one was watching us.
"That is the way they adopted Christianity," I told her, suddenly recalling what little I had learned from that storm old professor in English History; and if his eye ever chances to fall upon this page, I hope he will give me credit for furthering his teaching. "When they were about to decide what religion to adopt, a sparrow flew through the room, and one of the men said, 'Our lives are like the flight of that bird, out of the darkness into day, and then into night again, we know not where it goes.' And so they adopted Christianity because it promised eternal life."

She looked askance at me, as though I were going insane; surely I could not now be trying to tease her about her religion,—she was a strict Catholic, and very sensitive about it. So she said, "Why don't you come to a dance down at Theresa's some night?" Mac's way of forgetting trouble, ending dispute, avoiding controversy was to go to a dance.

But a few days later, and I felt a direct outcome of the little bird's visit, the whistles of the city, of the world, it seemed, broke suddenly into song,—a steady stream of blaring music, declaring that the world was at peace, the armistice was signed and the war had ceased. We rushed to the windows to look out upon the smoking world about us,—a world now somehow significant in its crudity,
its mad rushing about, its ill manners, its youth and boistriousness, its dirt, ill smells, steaming chimneys, puffing trains, grey buildings bulking up far on the horizon.

I turned to the grey-haired man beside me, who stood weakly trembling at this miracle, for which we had all been intensively working for long weary months, now realized too suddenly. The news was a shock. Many girls broke down, fainted, and had to be taken from the room; others began singing weakly, "Nearer My God, to Thee." I looked askance at this group for letting go their emotions in this weak fashion. In the distance out of the dim smoke rose the cross of a Catholic church; tears came to my eyes from sympathy for the others, the hysterical fainting women about me, the singing ones whose voices quavered pitifully. I distinctly noted that I experienced no thrill of joy. There was no victory for me. I had no hope in a foreign land whose return I awaited; life stretched ahead of me as perplexing and as persistent as ever.

At noon we all ran excitedly to Swift's for lunch—a place where good ham was served, and where they had stick candy in glass jars. For this lunch I celebrated by eating two desserts—a large piece of cherry pie and a prune whip with high meringue—the only means I had of showing my individual feelings. Returning to the office, we discovered that the report was false—the armistice had not been signed.
But we did not settle down to work, for we all knew peace would come soon. On Friday, indeed, the whistles blew again, and this time we celebrated in earnest. Downtown the streets were brimming with half-mad people, who streamed wildly back and forth up and down the streets, blowing whistles, beating drums, tin dish pans, shouting boisterously, waving ticklers into each other’s faces; over all this the steady blaring of all the whistles of the city blended in a wild discord of relief, craze, uncontrollable joy.

We made our way over to State Street where we waited for a car that never came. Claribel, who was just recovering from a siege of boils, had her face still swathed in an enormous bandage. She, too, was not joyful, but still she kept repeating over and over, her dazed eyes fixed on the tops of the buildings: "This means a lot to people all over the world, do you know it? People everywhere who have been fighting, and who are starving to death and sacrificing their lives in battle, everybody will be awful glad." I stood beside her dumbly, still looking in vain for a car. All about us lay drunken men, silly, hysterical women who looked like fish,—wounded, half-crazed animals as they staggered about in the gutters. We ran for the L station, the scene about us become too nauseating to withstand. On the train, Claribel pushed her way to me, who was hanging on a strap, and started in, in a heavy, serious, preaching tone:
This is a day that will go down in history—the end of the war—the world war, the first world war we have ever had.... She squinted her good eye,—the other was bandaged tightly,—over the realization of what she had just said. Her plain sailor hat with its winding veil, was pulled askew; her blue suit, now nearly frayed at cuff, at shoulder, at hem, and baggy at seat, elbow, knee, symbolized to a degree the war worker who had kept determinedly on until a victory was arrived at.

"Yes," she was still saying, when I again tuned in on her conversation, "Lots of people will be glad of this; people who are overseas and people at home will be glad...you may think you are giving up lots at this time, but someday you will remember these things—the dirty foreigners and Jews, and be proud of it; you are doing something for your country...." She sniffed in satisfaction over her own philosophy, for I was too tired to respond. A heavy man's shoe covered her pump, and this somewhat subdued her.

In our room I could not think, much less compose letters home; when we went to bed, the maddening whistles still rang dully, persistently in our ears,—a weary victory, indeed.
At the office everyone drew off to a corner and asked, "How much longer do you think our jobs will last?"

The mad rush of war was over, but the soldiers still had to be supplied. Work came with a greater force than ever; papers half finished were dragged out of files to be verified. Our relatives about the city, when we visited them on Sundays, asked carefully about the work in the offices—when would we be through? "Do you still deal out buttons, sixteen ligne?" my fat cousin Louie asked.

"A different kind of button now," I told him; for the discharge buttons had come—those little gold and silver stars, gold for service; silver, overseas and wounded, which the ex-soldier prized so highly and which cost the government a cent and a half each.

In my aunt's cheerful dining room we would have supper,—rye bread and butter, cheese, coffee, jelly, coffee-cake, angel food. Claribel and I ate fast at these times; for it was better manners to keep with the crowd, and we did not often see such food. My cousin Louie ate rapidly, handling his silver with swift dexterity. A sort of race it seemed, as to which of us should finish sooner. Click! Went his cup upon his saucer, and he had passed it for more coffee. He teased Claribel for eating so much Deutche-Kuchen; poked (see next page)
fun at the government's way of doing business, related some extravagance of the army, some scandal of the navy, looking at us with a queer quirk in his eyebrow as though we, being in the service, were responsible for these things. I had a new dress now, a gold-colored taffeta with much colored embroidery upon it, which matched my hair and which called forth the comment when I wore it one day at the office: "Where's the parade?" Nevertheless, I enjoyed it; its full skirt was a relief after my narrow binding suit. I would spread myself on my aunt's easy couch; think how nice it would be to marry, to have a house like that of my aunt, a cheerful dining room, a stove which grew hot and cold by turns in a human sort of way. The radiator we had in our room was always cold or leaky.

There was also a cousin Sadie, a young blond widow whose flutterings about as a social butterfly relieved the life of business which circumstances had forced her to adopt. Whenever we went to her house we were introduced to many people.

"These are my cousins from the country," she would say. And though our lives, especially since we had come to the city, had been far more varied and cosmopolitan than hers, she still clung to this childish attitude of placing us aside as something different, something a little queer and odd and remote from common experience. Most of all she affected this attitude,
perhaps, because of the youngish man she was trying to capture. He came to her house for meals many times, and she guarded him carefully from any too intimate approach by either of us. In the midst of our conversation, she would turn to us suddenly and say, "And how many eggs do you get now? And how did Aunt Lizzie say the wheat turned out this year?" This young man had been overseas, and could have told us something of warfare on the front, had it not been for Sadie's new white satin skirt, which she had to show from the bed-room door, the discussion of her latest Eastern Star party, and the price of eggs out in Kansas.

Most pleasant were our visits when this young man was absent, when Sadie would go into one of her talking streaks and tell us tales of our ancestors, which she partly made up as she went along; of our grandmother who had come to this country with lots of gold around her waist underneath her clothing; of our grandfather who had moved his family to America to escape militarism; of the artists in our family,—each brother or sister had had one child who had artistic ability; of our cousin who had had a wine shop downtown with life-sized figures all over his walls, painted there by himself; he was long dead now.

We enjoyed the hospitality of Sadie's sister, with whom she stayed; the brother-in-law kept downstairs
doing a special job of tailoring for someone. I once descended to see him at work,—a little withered man whose nose almost touched his chin, a little Rumpelstiltskin,—and marvelled at his dexterity. I had never seen a man sewing garments. I tried to fancy Randolph with a needle,—Randolph who even had to have the women folk sew up his canvas at harvest time.

There was another cousin on the North side,—Hattie, a large pink jolly woman who did her hair high, wore diamonds in her ears, whose little fat laughing eyes peeped out of her powdered puffs of cheeks. She was tolerant of Claribel's effusive flattery. Her hospitality was sincere, for she was very unhappy at times.

I noticed a copy of *Science and Health* on her richly embroidered table scarf,—something new for her, this book; and I noticed, too, that she always had to straighten her shoulders whenever Robert, her soldier-son, was mentioned. Her husband, Henry, was a tall prematurely white-haired man with pink face, a fresh blue suit, a cigar, a smile for those who did not stir up memories of his son, who was at the front. Out of a sudden calmness he would burst into a storm of bitterness about the war, about Robert, who did not even get the baskets of candy and fruit sent him at camp, the letters they sent him overseas. Henry muttered curses at the government, at the profiteers.
"The profiteers of America and England brought on this war! Dogs!" He would fume until more company would arrive, and the men would take him off to play billiards and smoke. He was making money hand over fist at his hardware store; each accumulated dollar made the war rankle within him like an ugly sore, making him sulky, his Sundays unbearable.

At Hattie's house there were many silver coffee pots, many pink roses on the table, and before we finished the meal, many glasses of beer and wine. I, who had come from Kansas and had never seen a bottle of beer, drank three of these on the first visit,—for awhile forgot the troubles I had, forgot the monotony of our present existence, forgot the dull work at the office.

Hattie's oysters, her little sharp, bitey pickles, her hot potato salad out of which came the intimate and intoxicating aroma of an old-fashioned German dinner, her gravy tinged with garlic, sent Claribel into raptures.

"Then you die, I'm going to marry Henry!" she would say to Hattie, after her second glass of wine. The wine was heated, and I heard myself saying, "Come out to Kansas to visit us." Claribel turned a suspicious eye upon me, for I was limbering up a great deal for me. Usually when we visited, she had to tell me not to be like the paper on the wall.
Hattie beamed upon me: "I remember when I visited Uncle Julius in Kansas; Aunt Lizzie put some cream on my knee where I had scratched it, and I licked it off—we don't have cream like that here!" This cream incident was the only memory she had retained of her early visit to Kansas, and she recounted it a number of times.

"And where is Randolph now?" Henry would ask, cutting in upon the hilarity, -flinging the war into the face of this good time, these good times which might have gone on forever had it not been for the profiteers.....

"Do you know history?" he once furtively whispered to me in a secluded corner. "You have gone to school..." he went on without my answer, "You know history." His appeal for sympathy was pathetic, and as I looked into his anxious eyes, I told him I did know history, and that most Americans did not. This fixed a common bond of understanding between us, and he went off to the kitchen to bring me another glass of wine.

.................

There were many other cousins, most of whom we had met at a funeral at Shermerville. There we had all sat at a long board in the basement of the church, and eaten fast
and greedily many cakes, many glasses of jam and jelly, fried chicken, baked ham, smoked fish, all in fine disregard for the lately entombed just outside in the churchyard. They made a great fuss over us—these were Uncle Julius's children from out west—from Kansas.

As I noted their extreme, almost pathetic clannishness, for they were now drawn closer together on account of the war—their loyalty to each other. I thought of our own family at home. How differently Uncle Julius's family might have turned out had it been within this friendly circle! But for some reason, my father had moved away from all of this; had moved away from the pink-rose dinners, the heated wine and delicious oysters swimming in catsup—had left the solicitous affection of sisters—the painted walls of that artist relative who had died long since.

As we rose from that long table and moved outside, I looked at my cousins. They were agreeable little girls with smiling round faces, glasses, carefully made silk dresses, tatting on their handkerchieves. They were protected by and obedient to, their parents, those substantial-looking men with good shoes and sweet-smelling cigars, those motherly women with curled hair, black silk dresses, who stood behind them displaying their charms, their goodness. I glanced at Claribel, tall, her body twisted at that moment into a pose that was clearly pose for the sake of
displaying the long lines of her suit, her long limbs.
Her face was slightly tired and old from so many
passions which had all left their mark clearly there,—
pride, hatred, disdain, sensuousness. She loomed above
these cousins in size, in weight; her colorful personality,
ever so clearly marked to me before, made them look
like putty; her arrogance of form and manner accentuated
their meekness.

"You look more like these people than I do," she
said to me under her breath, before starting across
the lawn to meet another cousin in naval uniform. I
stood about passively in my gold-colored dress, a trifle
lonely as I did not understand a word of the German
being spoken about me, even fluently so, among the
younger ones. So I stood about in my gold-colored dress,
took off my black velvet hat the better to display my
light hair,—and incidentally to take advantage of this
wonderful sunshine which was a stranger in the city.

As I stood there I gloried in my golden hair, my
pink cheeks, my calm eyes: I could not speak German, but I
had these. And my Teutonic features seemed to pacify the
people about me,—people who had been hounded into buying,
not asked to, buy, Liberty Bonds; people who had had to
"keep their mouths shut" while trying to analyze the war situation; people who had seen themselves and their parent country cartooned in the newspapers until they would no longer pick up a paper; people who had walked the streets, half-crazed when reproached for not being one hundred per cent Americans—for disloyalty to America when at that moment their sons were being blown to pieces overseas. All these things and many more they had been subjected to.....I stood in the sun and displayed my golden hair.....

Goethe's statue in the park had been bespattered with yellow paint,—yellow, the color of disloyalty; German, that hateful language, had been erased from the curricula of the schools......"Hattie," Henry would ask when they had received no blue-lined letter for many days, "Would you like to go to the opera?" But there was no opera; Hattie did not care for the other music, the American-made jazz......"Bring me some kraut for dinner," Annie begged of her husband, not liking to go down to the little grocery store at the corner. "'Sauerkraut! Sauerkraut!'" her husband would shout loud enough to be heard a block away.  "They call it slaw now, 'cabbage slaw'; they can't say 'Sauerkraut' any more!

"They say he has the Kaiser's picture above his bed in the bedroom"—detectives were there to investigate and had to use force to get into the house; they had cursed when they had found no picture; each enlarged picture with anything like a beard was carefully examined;
it was "unpatriotic" to have a German Bible in sight....

The *Marseillaise* being played at the cafeteria; all rising but me, who sat complacently eating noodles while the others turned to stare at me and a deaf old man in the corner,...I stood in the sun and displayed my golden hair,...Randolph was rotting in a camp in the west from empyema, forced to train on the rifle range in the rain two weeks without proper care; when his company left for overseas he was deep in delirium, almost dead from disappointment.

"Well, Frenchy," Claribel was saying at my elbow, "We'll have to start home. I have vamped a fellow over here who will take us to Evanston and from there we can take the train to Chicago."

We had a long cold ride. I sitting in the back seat with the cousin's wife, who asked me in tense whispers about my father's death; for since so many of her relatives had adopted Christian Science, this woman spoke of death and disease as though she were committing some grave error, some breach of social etiquette. Tears wet her cheeks as we rode on through the suburbs: "If I should die tomorrow, my neighbors would not do for me what Martha (the dead woman) had done for her today,—such beautiful flowers, such a nice burial. In Evanston they are so cold, so cold!" She wept on, but carefully watched
Claribel and her husband on the front seat. "You should be glad that you have regular work, regular hours; one is much happier that way."
WAR
(Companions)

That winter I nearly died with the flu, that epidemic which swept the country leaving the grave yards fat in its wake, the streets full of men who walked as ghosts, sparse of hair and limb, with glassy eyes staring unconsciously ahead.

I was sent home from the office, and in our dark bedroom my struggle took place. Often Claribel would come to the door and say, "When you get better, we can go to the Christian Science church, and that will make you feel better."

"Shut up and open the window," I would shout at her, exasperated beyond control. "You make me sick." In her absence I would creep from my bed to the window to watch some stately funeral procession go down the boulevard. How I envied those lying in the hearse! But I did not die; I rose again from my bed.

"How well rested you look!" they said at the office; and I set about filling requisitions for cotton cloth, white, 40-inch width, for the Great Lakes Training Station, cloth to wrap the bodies of the sailors who were dying like flies of the flu. The high temperature which returned each afternoon made me work the harder on these orders; the strain of making
them out, left me sleepless. In my restless dreams I juggled with figures, fractions,—I who had once scorned mathematics as something I could not afford to waste my time on. As the prices of materials changed constantly, we had to find our own standards, which was not always easy to do. And often in moments of uncertainty, from out of the past came to me the voice of my old white-haired be-whiskered high school principal, "Pap," saying, "Law sakes, honey! Use your judgment!" which had always been his slogan and advice to us whenever we had wavered. I worked especially hard so that my attention would be taken as much as possible from my surroundings, which, to my mind, had become unbelievably immoral.

For my innocent eyes had been suddenly unveiled. The frankest chapters of a Freudian psychology were mild compared with the conversation which was thrown back and forth between the men and girls about me. Next to me sat a little Italian, a shy, effeminate appearing boy, whose stock of phrases was rare,—phrases that had not a double meaning, but a treble, quadruple meaning. Eddie, though only a lad of eighteen, knew all about women; his gentle, understanding eye more than once travelled over in my direction. When I wistfully smiled at him, he would take out another cigarette and say, "You have been disappointed in love sometime."
Or, "Well, if you've never been in love, I'll say those boys out in Kansas are awfully slow." Everyday he worried about me and my past, and would often say sadly: "Well, still waters run deep!"

"What do you think of her?" he would ask me, pointing to the "five dollar girl," a blond girl with clear white skin, beautiful except for a deep scar on her neck, and who, rumor said, was the common property of the officers, and sneered at for her very cheapness by them.

Another girl, or rather woman, for she bordered close to forty, came into my consciousness in these distrustful moments when I regarded my companions in perspective from my puritanical point of view—a large woman, aristocratic in bearing. The chief clerk paid her marked attentions; rumor said that he had offered her a thousand dollars to become his common law wife, but that she had refused. Someone had found her in the washroom crying aloud in great shrieks, because he had slipped her across the cheek in front of the whole office force.

She was fascinating to me; her tiny feet, of which she was immesurably proud, were shod in black satin, hand-made pumps, sparkling with jewels; her black crepe dresses supported many falling panels of beaded georgette
and heavy lace. But most pathetic of all, and the thing which set her apart from the others, was her tightly corseted figure, an hour-glass form with expansive bosom, tiny waist, and resultant large and stiffly managed hips. As she stepped across the floor, she wabbled from side to side on her tiny high-heeled pumps like a great fat goose. In contrast to her voluptuous figure, this woman's face was dry, shrunken, her thin hair was drawn back rather unattractively from her receding forehead.

"She doesn't earn the money she gets here,—why don't she let some poor girl have her place?" Mae said again and again. To me, the greatest surprise about her was her voice when she came to speak to me; it was soft, melodious, liquid,—like a nightingale's.

There were girls who appeared in fur coats, who, Mae said, could not afford fur coats. Our kind-hearted captain, an old Frenchman with a lifetime of army experience, used to come down the aisles between the desks when a new fur coat made its debut, his face screwed up and a sardonic smile across his nose, delivering lectures on getting things "on time." "Don't buy clothes you can't pay for, girls," he would warn, setting his chin near his fat belt, his little grey-blue eyes peeping out like Chu-Chin-Chow's.
"I paid one hundred and twenty-five dollars for a plain crepe dress for my wife yesterday, and I don't see how you girls can live on your hundred dollar salaries,—I don't see how you do it!" He shook his head again over the high prices,—over that simple cotton crepe dress his wife paid over a hundred dollars for.

The young officer in charge of our department, a bleary-eyed Irishman with red bloated face, often stood looking over the girls in his section, and talked about his "harem." Time and again he had rearranged the wording in the letters I wrote, changing my correct grammatical constructions to incorrect ones, handing them back to me to show his superiority. As I was extremely sensitive on this point, his attitude incensed me.

"They sure kept the peaches in Washington and sent the prunes here," he would say, looking dully into my face. My contempt for him would not allow me to answer.

"He is a Catholic," I said to Mae, "I suppose if I was a Catholic, he would give me ice-cream cones and raise my salary every five minutes!" I expressed my opinion of clannishness, especially in business.

"Well, why don't you Protestants organize, and protect each other?" she would ask; and I wondered why all people couldn't have consciences of their own, instead of hiding behind some priest's lace-curtain.
"I suppose the priest is not letting you read the newspapers yet," I said to her. Mae called me a dumb German atheist, and let fall, as her final curse, the hope that I would sometime marry an Irishman and have to live with him all my life. I liked her very much after that, and we got on better.

Many times I looked at Mae, and many times she glanced at me with her large blue eyes which sparkled now with mischief, now with tearful wistfulness. From her I got most of the gossip I heard. She knew more about the status, -- financial, moral, social, of any of us than did even perhaps the chief clerk; she knew about the Irish situation and the next war we would have with England.

"Do you know that all the wealth of the world is going to be gathered up by the Jews all over this country, and taken to Palestine, and they are going to live there together?" she would ask me.

I could not imagine such a society myself, as one composed entirely of Jews, and told her so. "They would not have anyone to pick on," I maintained. "There is about as much to that as there is to that story about all the basements of the Catholic churches in this country being filled with ammunition, waiting for the next religious war." I was not so much worried about religious wars and wars with England as I was with the war at home.
I shook myself to come to attention as the singing bell rang. For every day at the office we sang—a compulsory matter which took us from our desks fifteen minutes every morning. In one room we congregated to learn popular songs. Our new captain,—with rather blank face, cast-iron features, a hard chin, a stiff uniform—stood up on a desk to direct us,—some several hundred working people, who leaned heavily and languidly against poles, desks, chairs, anything for support. With his stiff arms making straight mechanical beats in the air—and no one can know how graceful a skilled director is until he has seen an unskilled one—he went through the process with a determination which was surprising. I doubt if he suspected the ridiculous figure he cut as he bent forward with flushed face, glaring eyes, his coat sticking awkwardly out behind, screaming loudly—for he had no singing voice!—

Pip, pip, toot toot, Good-bye—ee,
Toodle-oo, toodle-oo, toodle-oo,
Ta-ta, old bean; ching, ching, old thing,
Chuck-a-boo, chuck-a-boo, chuck-a-boo;
Our parting brings me sorrow
I hate to say adieu,
So I'll sing ting-a-ling old "tin of fruit"
Cher-i-o, cheer-i-o to you!
This and others which appeared on our memeographed sheets, astounded me; but the others took them as they took many other strange things in this place,—as a matter of course. At times the captain's brows would wrinkle to accommodate his gruff voice to the sentimental ballads we sang.

You'll never know how much I miss you,
You'll never know how much I care.
There'll come a time when you'll feel lonely,
You'll want me only your love to share,
You'll never know you miss the sunshine,
Till clouds will hide the skies of blue
You'll never know what a broken heart means,
You'll never know till you're lonesome too!

"Till you're lonesome too...." the captain would groan out, his breath and patience almost gone; for leading the singing was compulsory too.

And Mae used to look tenderly at me, as though she were afraid the song might stir up something hidden in me, when we sang,

"You're a million miles from nowhere,
when you're one little mile from home."

(Mae had never lived in Kansas.)

And "The Old Fashioned Garden" always made some eye me suspiciously; for they all thought I had a lover hiding away somewhere, a romantic figure who had perhaps been killed in the war. I had learned to tolerate that old slogan of Eddie's, "Still waters run deep," when it was said to me a dozen times, with sure regularity.
And there were pretty songs, too; and songs which brought out the harmony of those voices well:

Oh how I want you dear old pal of mine,
Each day and night I pray you're always mine,
Sweetheart, may God bless you,
Angel hands caress you,
While sweet dreams rest you
Dear old pal of mine...

A favorite of mine they sang: and I wondered sometimes if someday the brown and golden leaves of autumn would not fall gently into a mellower life than this grotesque one I now knew:

The bells of St. Mary's,
Ah, hear they are calling
The young loves, the true loves
Who come from the sea;
And so my beloved,
When red leaves are falling,
The love bells shall ring out, ring out
For you and me.

But the next moment they would switch off onto,

Oh, by Gee, by gosh, by gum, by Jove
Oh, by jingo, won't you hear our love,—
We will build for you a hut,
You will be our favorite nut...

These stiff, chopped-off little jerks, I hated and refused to sing. But if one sat at his desk during this singing period, he was looked upon with much disdain and suspicion by the officers.
IV.
RETURN.

On our brief vacations we went home,—short trips through the peaceful houses and farm lands of southern Illinois. On the first return, they hardly knew me: I had grown almost a foot taller and was stouter.

"Everybody asks her where she gets her pretty pink cheeks," Claribel said in a mimicking baby voice. And my mother, distinctly pleased with my appearance, said, patting me on the back, "You must not work as hard as you say in your letters."

"We have to be there every day, though," I replied, bolting for the kitchen. As in the dining room, everything there was the same,—the woodbox, the cupboard, the waterbucket, the sink. In the cupboard, I found a large dish of cold boiled potatoes,—potatoes which Randolph would have eaten had he been at home, but which Hermann scorned because of his strict diet of fruit and whole-wheat bread. The flour substitutes had ruined his digestion; Ellen said everytime they put pickles on the table, he would take them to the kitchen and dump the dishful into the waste bucket with such force that it splashed up the floor for feet around.

The wood piles in the back yard looked the same; the chicken houses; Randolph's bird house on its slender pole, beckoning the wandering, chattering swallows.
In the front yard flowers, great yellow jonquils were
blooming in a bed half hidden by buffalo grass beside the
honey-suckle bush: the ground had been covered with
snow when we left the city.

At the table as Hermann asked questions about
our work, my mother sat with her eyes on her plate,
hardly eating. She glanced many times out of the window
toward the barn, the yellow straw stack, the path leading
up to the granary; half expecting to discover Randolph's
familiar figure ambling up toward the house.

Another few days, and we would speed back to
our work, hardly conscious that we had had a vacation.
But besides work, there were other things now. Trips
to the Great Lakes to see the parades and hear the band
play; trips to Ravenna to hear the singers, plays;
and best of all, opera.

In the great auditorium I found much pleasure.
Above the stage, which was a tiny square below us, and at
which I never tired of looking, was spread out in colors a
slow pageant of time, starting with the pioneer, the
hunter, the sailor, the monk, the reaper and sower,
brought up from the other end by the painter, the dancer,
the philosopher, other long-robed figures, and joined
together by a great central profusion of sages, dancers,
players of harps and banjos, children, cherubim, over
which happy birds circled. Over all of this and through the
the flowers and circling birds was written a long inscription: all I could ever spell out from our high gallery was "The Utterance of Life is a Song."

On the right wall stood a great dim picture of spring full of tall tenderly leafing trees and brooks, an old man halting to behold in the distance through the mist, a maiden. On the opposite side stood a picture of winter, giant tree trunks reaching up to a cold grey sky, the ground covered with snow, one tree broken abruptly over. Below this was inscribed,

"A great spirit has passed beyond the tomb
And there awaits the requiem of winter snows."

Below us tier after tier of heads and aisles through which tiny people hurried as water flows in its provided channel. About us dark foreign faces and strange speech. Below, far below, their bare white shoulders covered with jewels, elaborately gowned women pushed their way to their seats, followed by their shiny-headed, black-coated men.

"Cannie! Can'ies!" shouted the boys in the aisles. At first I thought cannies a new variety of chocolates, but decided differently when I saw their exposed wares.

"Libretto! Libretto!" shouted the "cannie" boys, hurring about before the lights went off. I turned to the stage now, for the house was dark. The heads about
us had stopped wagging and all those dark glowing eyes were fixed upon the tiny stage miles below. The next few hours I knew practically nothing.

"...Celeste Aida...
Celeste Aida...

"Pretty, isn't it?" Claribel would be wiping her nose noisily with a wadded up handkerchief in defiance of the glances thrown at her from these spell-bound dark eyes about us.

"...Celeste Aida...

The lights on again, Claribel would bury her head in my libretto, not caring to be stared at by those puzzled faces turned in her direction. I suppose these Italians wondered why two white-skinned women with such queenly bearing were not downstairs gowned in evening dresses and jewels, their shoulders clad in tulle or rich evening wraps. "You are some Olga to be sitting up here," she said, looking at my tow head for relief. As a matter of fact, Claribel never enjoyed opera; for the moment tragedy stalked across the stage reading weird numbers, she was unable to bear the loneliness of this emotion, and became self-conscious.

Aphrodite we saw; and Bacchus. And for weeks later Claribel discussed with Mrs. Tusset, (at our boarding house), the probability of Venus appearing naked on the stage, as many had contended she had.
"I saw the creases in her flesh," said Mrs. Tusset, stoutly as she stood in the doorway, leaving her pancakes a moment. The men had not yet come up for breakfast.

But Venus standing like a maiden washed up by the sea, silent and chaste, had not so concerned me as had the chorus who danced for the King,—those scantily clad limbs flashing in and out between mere ribbons of skirts. With a distinct thrill of pleasure I saw each round little body painted to look like a human face,—the breasts as eyes, the blackened arms against the sides as hair, an artificial nose and mouth put in its proper place,—round little bellies jiggling up and down with the music like so many little fat cheeks.

Again flashed across my memory a great staircase full of dancing maidens, descending and met by a carrolling, gamboling bevy of youths; the maidens came down half falling, half sliding, half leaping, their hands and feet clapping together in a mad unison with the clapping music which panted, screamed, to throw them into another round of exaltation of wild joy. One dancer in a green skirt met her partner, bowed her head backward until it met the lips of her stooping lover almost at the floor. Happy abandon!"
The fragrance, the intoxication, of this
memory faded around the round perspiring face, the
horrid eyes of Mrs. Tusset. "They ought to be
arrested. Why in my day young people would have been
ashamed to look at a thing like that if the law did
have the indecency to allow it to be shown. I can't
imagine what the world is coming to!"

"I liked it!" I said, bravely eating at my
pancake. She stared at me, shoved her glasses closer
to her moist eyes and went on, "Well, when I was young,
no girl would have talked that way. In Maryland where
I came from when a baby was born at a certain house,
no men folks would have dreamt of coming close to that
house for two weeks afterwards!"

When Mrs. Tusset came from the kitchen and
instructed us how to vote in the coming election, the
attractiveness of our boarding house faded somewhat; and
often Claribel said we must move to the north side.

But there was our gymnasium near where we lived,
and we did not wish to leave that. Mr. Dillenbeck teased
us a great deal about the Rabbi when we went over
to the Jewish social center and did exercises on their
spacious floors. And once when I went to their church,
it seemed to me that everyone turned to stare at me; I
suppose they wondered how a Swede got mixed up with their
numbers.
With many little dark-skinned girls we raced and trotted about the gymnasium floor, directed by our man-instructor, to music jingled out by the piano. It brought back school days to me, but it did not bring back the old familiar faces. Among these girls I always felt a little uncertain; some of them were strong as men, and I could not play basket-ball with them because I was afraid. However I could hoist myself up on my back with my legs sticking straight up and hold the pose longer than any of them. "Anybody who can do that," said our teacher one time, rolling his eyes about the floor to the others who had sunk back into position, "can eat brass tacks." He wiped his brow with an enormous handkerchief before putting us through another series of stunts. On the side-lines stood show-men, who sometimes came down to look over the group looking for girls who would do to fill in for choruses, and at these our trainer often shook his head playfully, as though we had the best of him. We had rather nice times in this gymnasium.

**********

Once we all marched in a parade,—a parade for war workers, and I wore an overseas cap which they gave me to put on. We were four hours in starting, and our feet so bruised by the cobblestones we marched over that we couldn't put our shoes on the next morning.
Many times we went downtown to see the returning soldiers,--a time when we realized suddenly how good it was to see a young man again. Usually when the returned soldiers marched, it rained; and the heroes of the great war, stooped at shoulder, with faces flattened and stolid underneath their flat overseas lids, which made them look more than ever like little brown steel machines, would set out clack! clack! down the street in the rain, great rows and squares and blocks of them and more still coming. Their heavy shoes struck the pavement with a very certain thud, their jaws, squared in disregard of the cheering multitudes along the lines.

It relieved me to see the return of the troops; it seemed ages since I had seen so many young men; and the mere sight of them was cheering. All we had had for the past few years at home were old men and the questionables in the war depot. As at home we had heard the town band going to the station to see the boys off, we now heard the band, the bass drum and the fife playing the same tunes as they had on that other occasion, going to the depots to welcome the boys back. Here came their leaders, proud set figures erect on prancing horses, the stars and stripes floating calmly along, insensible
of the cheers, the shouts, the waving hats, the great hotels looming above them. Now down past the puffing trains on the lake-front, past the grand-stand, past the Art Institute, came the merry fife trilling, the bass drum thudding to meet and lift in the hearts of the spectators the waves of emotion that flooded through their breasts.

Oh where and oh where
Is your Highland laddie gone?
Oh where and oh where
Is your Highland laddie gone?
He's gone to fight the foe
For King George upon the throne;
And it's oh, in my heart
That I wish him safe at home!

Farther down the streets the band ahead would send back:

Maxwelton's braes are bonnie
When early falls the dew,
And 'twas there that Annie Laurie
Gave me her promise true.

And again from the first band:

What clothes, in what clothes
Is your Highland laddie clad?
What clothes, in what clothes
Is your Highland laddie clad?

We would stand helpless and tearful before this great sweep of emotion and enthusiasm; conscious for the first time perhaps, if at all, of our small part in the war, a very ineffectual part. I craned my neck to see their shoes. Yes, they were wearing heavy marching shoes, with great cleats, the first I had seen of this model, though I had ordered many from the warehouse.
They must now be wearing shirts, O.D., Wool, sizes anywhere from 36 to 42. I felt a sudden responsibility, a pride, in my small part of the world war.

At the office, Eddie looked at my art magazines, and would ask about my new job downtown; for, after a summer of wires to and from Washington concerning it, I had at last effected a transfer downtown to the Prohibition Department.

"Well, you are from Kansas; you ought to be happy now that they have prohibition," said Eddie. And when I was finally ready to leave, I heard it whispered about that our captain, who had been unwilling to release me, had made a bargain by trading me off to the other department for a case of good whiskey.

As we all sat waiting for the closing bell, I looked over the great room—full of people, every type imaginable represented, wondering where I should see them all again. "Take your little flag with you," said Mae, who looked at me sitting behind my name plate and flag as though she were sorry it were for the last time.

But I straightened the little stick that held the cheap cotton bit of red, white and blue, and left the colors there flying over my name.
RETURN
(The Art Institute)

Our boarding house was not for me, so I sought another place where the company, even if it was not of the stiffest respectability, was at least congenial.

We were a carefree lot, somehow realizing that our lives were even less than puffs of wind, compared with those of these ancient Greeks and Romans with whom we held company in the galleries of this great building. Rigid and white they were, and yet more expressive and serene than we, who joked about them, walking calmly underneath, between and around their overhanging bodies, which projected in varying dramatic and noble poses.

A good many foreigners came to study here, a thing which made the place more fascinating to me. I had always had a weakness for the dark, bright foreigner, wherever I had met him, perhaps most of all because we had none at home. Everybody there was pale, sandy, or a neutral brown, and very neutral as to disposition and enthusiasm. The foreign spelled romance to me, and I explored each one of these students as though he were a new untrodden piece of ground. I a pioneer, who had no object of discovery in mind except the satisfaction of my own pleasure.
There was John, the Italian, with heavy black hair, a flat nose and low forehead. He operated an elevator somewhere during the day. He was modest about his drawings, yet fearfully proud of the excellent trees he had sketched from the window of the L. There was the tall, slender youth, who called himself "Hawk," and then laughed enormously when I called him "Mr. Hawk." He hung about a great deal, always threatening to quit school and go to work; he was wasting his time here, he argued, and not learning anything. He produced something about once a week, and this picture pale with long slender lines and no shadows whatever. He wanted to be an architect, a plan which our teacher never paid the slightest attention to, for each one of his students came to him with a different story. One saw himself a cartoonist, another a sculptor, another a landscape painter, another a designer, or a commercial artist.

His place was to teach us lines and curves; to train out of us those peculiar notions of what we wanted to be someday, and to show us how to get to work and prove how little we knew about the human figure which is the basis of all art. How he scorned our little ambitions—smiled at us while we explained our theories of Art to him, tipped his head this way and that as he looked at us, to sum up our own bodies, faces and hands!
East of all was the Spaniard who had come up from the South to escape the warm climate of his own country, and his reckless, ambitionless life there, which according to himself, was being ruined by drink. How smooth his little pictures! How finished! We all envied him, and yet the teacher did not like his pictures: "Too sweet—too sugary," he would scold. Again the little chubby dark man would try for a rugged effect with pastel; but no matter how dark his background, how many leaves and broken branches he placed on his trees, how many rough mountains grew up in the distance, his figures stood out plump and white and perfect, trailing scarlet oriental garments and veils about them.

In our exhibits on Wednesday evenings, each one of us was represented truly, according to our characters. The shy, awkward boy always painted the fig leaves of his figures green. We all stood back to hide our merriment over this, as the teacher fixed his eye upon him in all sincerity and told him not to try to be too realistic! For in art the nude is perfect, and any attempt to hide its perfection turns it into a naked thing. Even additions to the nude spoil it. My first picture, of Venus, who had been given her proper amount of limbs, and a definite purpose in life, that of being about to get into a blue lake beneath the trees for a swim, had angered him.
"Let your imaginations loose when you come to making compositions!" he shouted at us when he had looked at all our pictures, which we hastily took from the stand and hid in our individual portfolios. "Let your fancy have free play! And don't let your figures grow so stiff and unnatural. These figures are very graceful, and yet most of them in your pictures look very wooden, very wooden!"

He promised us another exhibit on the following week, and left us. We sighed in relief and resolved to do better. Some of them said definitely they were going to quit; they had intended to anyway. Yet on the next school night, we were all back again, sketching with new inspiration fighting warriors from the Parthenon Frieze, horses, serene women carrying baskets of fruit, babies playing with geese, kneeling Venuses, bold Romans with elaborate breastplates,—working them all in together in composition groups, striving for maintenance of curve and pattern in the picture.

I took for the most part figures from the frieze, battling men and kneeling women who sought the protection of one of the fighters, making a group which pleased my teacher. I had done something dramatic, and he called the attention of the whole class to my picture.
"Put life, action, into your pictures! This one tells a story; the lines are carelessly drawn, and yet you feel there is something going on. You need more careful work," he said, handing the sketch back to me. I felt better, and yet I had known that it would have to be only a matter of time before he should find I had something in me stronger and better than the others had. With his stamp of approval upon me, I criticized the drawings of the others freely, when he was not with us, such was my confidence in myself.

Some nights we did not draw at all, but went upstairs to look at the exhibits. Upstairs was a fairy land indeed, leading up by a wide marble staircase lined with palms and ferns into halls and new rooms and yet more rooms in the distance filled with pictures of the world and all ages, painted hundreds of years ago, some of them, by the masters who were still masters undisputed.

Our own teacher had pictures here—pale pink and white snow scenes, an old shed amid half broken down poplar trees, dim, hazy and blue,—delicate and yet requiring distance for true perspective. We looked at these in silent respect. Our own importance, large as it had loomed downstairs in our little exhibits, shrank to nothingness here, evaporated.
There hung the short-skirted Madonna and Child, recently exhibited for the first time and granted first prize. This meant something special to us, for we knew the story of the artist,—how he had almost starved painting it, his wife his model; how his babies, twins, had been born on the very eve of the exhibit; how the blue women of the city had objected to the painting because the Madonna's skirt was too short. Afterwards ten of the friends of the artist came to his studio and each taking a little sketch from the walls, laid down a thousand dollar note and walked away. Wonderful story of fame! Here was romance amongst our very midst.

The Three Marys—one with face wonderfully lighted; the next half in shadow; the third her face downcast all in doubt and darkness. "We shall probably have more religious paintings from now on," said our teacher, who led us about, giving short lectures on those pictures he thought worthy of our notice.

"This interests me especially as it is a new interpretation. You see how different it is from this woman in her correct gown and her gloves about to go out to tea." We passed still lifes, autumn trees, mountains, water scenes, and stopped again before a delicate painting of a woman in her boudoir mending a white garment.

"You can tell a woman painted this picture—it is too smooth, too well-wroked over for the hand of a man—not that it isn't a good picture...but a woman's
always afraid...she will never set things down and let them stand. Now a man will put a chair in one corner, a bed in another, a picture on the wall, and let them stand, no matter how awkwardly placed. But a woman will constantly change things in her picture until it is no longer fresh or original, no longer clear and straightforward...." His glance sought mine, which was rather full of scorn for his opinion. He evidently did not know the modern woman, I thought. I resigned myself until the time when I should have a chance to show him that a woman could be original and would not fear to let things stand as she first placed them.

Our little group was scruffy and dark enough as it progressed from one gallery to the next and gathered before the great splotches of pink, red, blue, green, orange paint, framed and hung upon the walls for pictures. Nevertheless, we were critical, and none of us doubted but that someday there would be at least a few of us great painters.

...........

Reaction to this life came in time: my pictures came to fade, and I saw in their place the printed page, longed to hang the colorful garment of emotion I had woven in this place upon a gaunt stern frame of fact. I decided to return home, and study something very scientific.
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