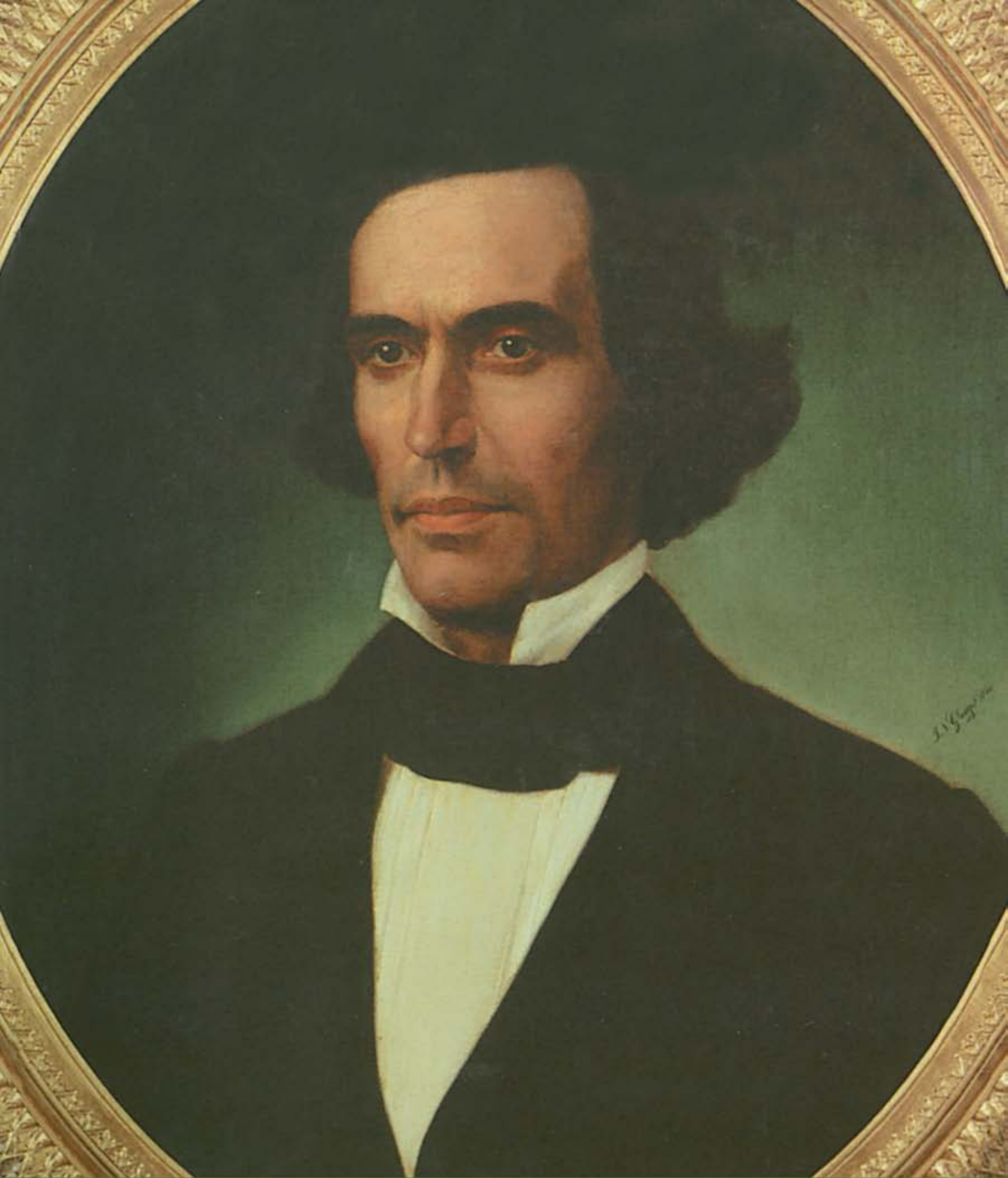

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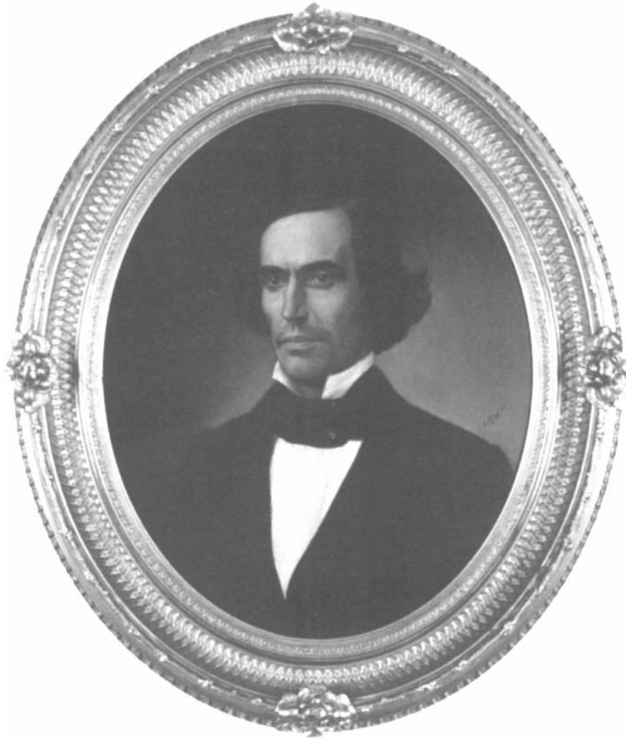

Thomas Mellon and His Times

THOMAS MELLON

Foreword by David McCullough
Preface to the Second Edition by Paul Mellon
Edited by Mary Louise Briscoe

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Foreword

David McCullough

IT IS ONLY AT THE LAST, in the final chapter of this remarkable autobiography, that its author gets around to telling us what he looks like—his height, weight, color of eyes, and so forth—and it is a tribute to the book he has written that by then such details seem hardly necessary. For we *know* this man, so vivid, so unmistakable is his point of view, so distinctive is the voice of the storyteller. We would recognize him at once were he to walk into a room, no matter his height or the color of his eyes.

There he would stand in his seventy-third year, as he was in 1885 when he finished the book—Thomas Mellon of Pittsburgh, founding father of Mellon Bank, unbending, unblinking, a gentleman of the old school in stiff collar and frock coat, and clearly not one of "festive disposition," as he would say.

"I have for many years been rated as a millionaire, and perhaps justly so," he also modestly observes near the close of his story. In the dollar of the day that meant vastly more than it does now, and one feels this too would show, though in his bearing only, never in any kind of "display." The Judge, as he was known, deplored display.

He is well worth our time and interest, this starchy old Presbyterian, quite as much now as when he took up his pen for the exclusive benefit of family and a select circle of friends. We enter in these pages a time and an America more distant and different than perhaps we can ever know. A contemporary of Abraham Lincoln, he is the immigrant farm boy from a place called Poverty Point, Pennsylvania—an eager, earnest book-reader and rail-splitter like Lincoln, who at age seventeen suddenly takes command of his destiny, throws down his ax, and runs ten miles to stop his father from buying a farm for him and thereby fixing a life for him that he doesn't want. The whole episode, like the name "Poverty Point," could be from a Victorian novel, or a scene in an old Henry Fonda movie, except that it is entirely real, and, as he writes,

"my feet were light under the circumstances." His outlook has been transformed, his ambition focused by the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* and like that classic work, this his own life-rendering bears down mightily on such virtues as industry and thrift as the sure paths to success.

The story he unfolds is amazing. He himself is amazing, in his irrepressible earnestness, candor, his observations on life and especially on life and work. Indeed, if there is a prevailing theme for Thomas Mellon, it is work—hard, persevering, everlasting work—from farm to college to the practice of law to service on the bench to banking, and the overall deadly serious business of not just making money but *keeping* it. The whole objective is "to work oneself up in the world," with accent on the verb. And whatever he undertakes, it is "with all my might."

The reader is treated to no end of opinion, and the bias of the social commentary expressed is at times appalling by our standards. He loathes Irish Catholics, socialism, Mormon missionaries, not to say the general "rowdyism and rudeness" of the common American democracy. Poverty, he writes, is a "misfortune to the weaklings who are without courage or ability to overcome it." The "poor Indians" have "gone down" because "stupidity and ignorance always suffer."

Nor is he ever short on advice, on everything from how to pick a lawyer to the control of the passions. In the choosing of a wife, he instructs, character, temper, disposition, taste, and something called "inclination" must be "ascertained with certainty and considered carefully," while ancestry, health, and "position" should be allowed their due weight. As for physical beauty, romance, love, such influences are to be regarded as dubious at best.

On occasion, the old gentleman can be quite funny, more so than probably he knew and particularly on the subject of matrimony. Describing his own courtship of Miss Negley, he recounts the mounting impatience he felt as with lessons in botany, evenings spent admiring her scrapbooks, she denied him opportunity to express his intentions. But then he adds that at least "she never inflicted music upon me."

It may be said with certainty of Thomas Mellon that they truly don't make them that way anymore, and a great part of the pull of the book,

and reason to applaud this new edition, is the chance to hear him out, to keep company with such a strong, authentic personality from an era characterized by many of like outlook. Once encountered he is not forgotten. And if there is a single most important surprise in store for the reader it is to discover what a wonderfully well written book it is, what a skilled storyteller is at hand.

There is eyewitness history—accounts of Pittsburgh's Great Fire of 1845 and the financial panic of 1873. There are deft sketches of people he knew and of his travels south and abroad. (In the time-honored way of American travelers, he loves to compare what he's seeing to the standard of back home. Hillsides in Ireland look like "our Pittsburgh Southside"; the Thames at London he judges to be about the size of the Monongahela.)

And as with all autobiographies there is much that goes unsaid, much left out, which also reveals something about the author. He tells us notably little about his wife, for example. Were she to walk into a room, we would be hard put to recognize her from the few fragments he provides. It is striking, too, how little he has to say about—of all things—banking. Compared to all he writes about the law and his time on the bench, the advent of Mellon Bank and his part in it adds up to not a lot here, as if that part of the story doesn't much interest him.

There is scarcely a word about the great national figures of the time or the great issues—nothing of Lincoln, nothing of slavery or westward expansion—except as they relate to finance or family enterprises. In writing of the Civil War, his primary distress is over those Mellon "interests at stake in money and property." His only expressed passion on the titanic struggle is over the prospect that any son of his might be fool enough to want to go off and fight in it. He appears to be without sympathy or feeling for the causes at stake. In this, to be sure, he is representative of many of comparable station in society—those who hired substitutes for their sons or for themselves—but he is also the exact antithesis of many others of wealth and prominence. No less a looming figure than John A. Roebling, for example, another immigrant who had "made good" beginning in Western Pennsylvania, ordered his son to enlist exactly because of his own, the father's, passionate love of the Union, his hatred of slavery.

Thomas Mellon hates war, he hates the waste of it, "the humbug-

gery, imbecility and petty tyranny of upstart subordinate officers." He hates taxes. He is outraged over the rising extravagance of government, the rising crime rate, the rising cost of living, the declining quality of education, the decline of moral standards overall, and in much of this he sounds quite in tone with the laments of our own time. An insistent old grouch he may be, yet we find ourselves, again and again, nodding in agreement: "Hollow pretexts now take the place of earnest regard for public good. . . . Professions of reform in party platforms are attendant, but no reform comes of it."

To a major degree his is a dark view of the American chronicle. It is a book shadowed with foreboding and a sense of loss and impoverishment, which is all the more striking, of course, coming from a man of such abundant wealth and high station.

It is with growing fascination that we watch him circle and at last center on the dominating paradox of the very industrial-financial bonanza in which he himself has played a lead part. The famous moneylender, the founder of the great banking house that has so much to do with all that Pittsburgh has become, and thus with the whole rise of industrial America, turns out to be a closet Jeffersonian.

He sees in the advance of the machine and factories and the big city work force the demise of all that he holds dear in American life as once characterized the rural world of his boyhood. Then working people were "individualized" in character and condition. "Small proprietors who own their own tools and work on their own materials are better contented and make better citizens," he insists, recalling the weavers, tinners, wheelwrights, and blacksmiths in and about Poverty Point. Like Jefferson, he sees "a better moral atmosphere" in rural democracy. With the rise of industrialization, the massing of population in big cities, American freedom is at stake. His condemnation of the mill towns growing along the Monongahela beside the giant new Carnegie steel plants, could hardly be more harsh had they been written by a radical reformer of the day:

> And the crowding of men and families of the same occupation together has a demoralizing effect; it dwarfs individuality, reduces all to a common level in a monotonous condition, and creates a caste feeling and discontent with their lot. The stimulus to improvement by the moral effect of associating with others of different occupations and of other conditions is removed. The employ-

> ees and their families in the larger manufacturing and mining establishments are often designated each by his number, and live in numbered tenements, and are all subjected to the same routine, and treated alike: too much like the soldiers of an army or the inmates of a prison.

In truth, he despised the Carnegie mills and all that they and others like them bespoke of the future—he the owner of coal mines and industrial real estate, he the lifelong champion of the creed of Progress. Better that it would all vanish, he seems to be saying. He is like Henry Ford in a later day, who would lament the loss of the America he knew before the advent of the automobile and would spend millions of his automobile fortune to create a facsimile of that older, preindustrial America at Dearborn, Michigan.

This is the paradox we all feel running like a fault line through the American experience.

Even his money and the very solid comforts of his way of life, the great material rewards he has reaped, are worrisome to Thomas Mellon. It is not from a large bank account that he has "derived the most enjoyment," but from the work to attain it, "from the struggles necessary to remove obstacles in my way, and the satisfaction resulting from overcoming such as seemed insuperable." Don't work for the payoff, he is telling us, the work *is* the payoff, the pleasure therein.

He wants wealth for his children, and yet that very wealth, he knows, may have a detrimental effect on them: "It requires a higher nature than the average youth possesses to resist the temptations of wealth and ease." One wonders what his response might have been had he even vaguely imagined the magnitude of industrial productivity and power that would one day be concentrated at Pittsburgh, or the far larger fortune and influence his sons would gather in their time.

Even as it was, even in 1885, more than twenty years before his death, he feels himself "a stranger in a strange land," so dramatically has everything changed.

What sustains him, above all, is love of family, and much of what is most appealing about the book—and about him—is in those portions devoted to his home life. He is truly, as he says, a family man, and in what he writes about his children, his trust in them and they in him, their importance to him, the seriousness with which he takes the responsibility of being their father, there is no mistaking the depth of

his feelings. Those passages recounting the loss of those who died are profoundly moving and the most endearing side of him that he reveals. Here after all is a very human fellow being.

"All through those busy years of professional and judicial labors," he writes, "my heart was in my home; it was there I was happy, and there my feelings centered." It was also, we come to appreciate, why he wrote the book in the first place.

Preface to the Second Edition

Paul Mellon

THIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY of my grandfather was privately printed in 1885 in a limited edition for friends and family only. In his preface, he called it a "memento of affection" and entreated his descendants to "handle and preserve it with care." As one of those descendants, born the year before he died, I have always felt a strong personal interest in my grandfather's life and have treasured his book. I equate his actions with my own decision to reject the life my father hoped *I* would lead—a century after he rejected the life his father hoped he would lead. I have also followed his example by writing my own autobiography—in which I quote extensively from his.

I have always felt that my grandfather's book deserved a wider readership than that represented by his descendants alone, although he himself felt that the book should remain private and admonished against making it available for "sale in the bookstores." It seemed to me that by now it would be a greater act of grandfilial piety to disobey his command than to obey it. By chance, as I was considering how it might be published, I learned that the University of Pittsburgh Press had come to the same conclusion; that is, that it should be made available to a much wider audience. We have combined our forces, and the present volume is the result.

The University of Pittsburgh Press has had a longtime interest in the history of Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania. Thomas Mellon was brought as a child from County Tyrone, in Ulster, to Westmoreland County in the early nineteenth century and grew up to become a prominent citizen of Pittsburgh. His autobiography provides a vivid eyewitness account of the economic life of the city during the period when it was making the transformation from an overgrown village (though still full of marvels for ten-year-old Thomas when he first saw it) to a great world center of industry. He made his own fortune largely

through old-fashioned investments, particularly real estate, but he also contributed to the city's industrial growth. The bank he founded in 1870 was an important source of capital for some of Pittsburgh's early industrialists, notably Henry Clay Frick, who took out a number of loans in order to build coke ovens. Andrew Carnegie was my grandfather's friend and wrote to him praising his book.

Since my grandfather's origins were humble, he provides an abundance of fascinating details about the more mundane aspects of nineteenth-century American life—everything from farming practices to courting customs—which, because they were unremarkable at the time, often went unreported. Such details are precious to the historian and indeed to anyone interested in our nation's past.

Thomas Mellon lived a very long life. He was born in 1813, before the battle of Waterloo and not long after the founding of our republic, and lived until 1908. He came to America when James Monroe was president and almost outlived the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. As he himself was aware, America altered tremendously during the long period in which he lived, and he devoted a fascinating chapter of his book to describing some of the changes he had witnessed. I have always been impressed by the great surge in the speed and ease of travel that he describes. His emigrant's voyage from Ireland to Saint John, New Brunswick, took "a trifle over twelve weeks." It took another two weeks from New Brunswick to Baltimore by sail, and then a further three weeks to travel—by Conestoga wagon—to the still largely unpopulated Westmoreland County. When in his old age he made a sentimental journey to Ireland in 1882, his trip, now by steamship, took only nine days—fewer days than his first transatlantic journey had taken weeks. And even this was not the end of the wonders he witnessed. During his lifetime he saw the invention of the telephone, electric lighting, the automobile, and human flight, and as well witnessed the full flowering of travel by rail.

In the pages of his autobiography my grandfather stands out, I think, as a vivid personality. He was a man of strong feelings and firm opinions, salted by occasional glints of wry humor. There is proof, moreover, that he was capable of second thoughts. Early copies of the book contained a chapter on "vexatious litigations," in which he provided perhaps not entirely objective accounts of some of his legal

battles. Apparently he thought better of such frankness, for in later copies the chapter was eliminated (but largely restored here). In our more enlightened times, some of his prejudices will surely (and rightly) seem unattractive and bigoted. On the other hand, his views on American political life at that period may strike many readers as particularly apropos of our own.

Thomas Mellon said that the turning point of his young life came after reading the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, undoubtedly the first great American autobiography. This book is thus a literary descendant of Franklin's, and I trust will not be found unworthy of its ancestor.

Introduction

Mary Louise Briscoe

IN 1823, when Thomas Mellon was ten years old, he walked to Pittsburgh from his father's small farm outside the city, near the present-day Murrysville-Export area. A neighbor who accompanied him part of the way told the boy that he would "see more there in a day than at Poverty Point in a lifetime." Once in the city, young Thomas understood. He later recalled viewing the mansion of Jacob Negley and other holdings of this great landowner: "The whole scene . . . impressed me with an idea of wealth and magnificence I had before no conception of. . . . [The thought occurred to me] whether I might not one day attain in some degree such wealth, and an equality with such great people."

Highly intelligent, ambitious, and living in a time of unparalleled economic growth in the United States, Thomas Mellon (1813–1908) far more than achieved his childhood goal. When he died at the age of ninety-five, he was an almost mythic figure in the legal and financial history of Pittsburgh. History would show him to be the founder of a family that was to have great influence on the national and international economy and the worlds of art and philanthropy. In 1936, only twenty-eight years after his death, the Mellons were considered one of the four wealthiest families in the United States—along with the Rockefellers, DuPonts, and Fords.

His surviving sons included Andrew W. Mellon, secretary of the treasury under presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover and founder of the National Gallery of Art, and Richard Beatty Mellon, who became president of Mellon Bank. One of his grandsons, William Larimer Mellon, was the prime organizer of Gulf Oil Corporation. Another, Richard King Mellon, was the major force in the urban renaissance of industrial Pittsburgh after the Second World War. A third grandson, Paul Mellon, is a great collector and benefactor of art museums and other institutions.

Thomas Mellon's newspaper obituaries reflected a reverence for his accomplishments as well as a sense of disbelief that he was gone. His prominence as an immigrant from a farm in Ulster who had become a successful lawyer, judge, banker, landowner, coal operator, financier, and civic leader—as well as his longevity—had by 1908 transformed him into an institution rather than an individual. Perhaps he knew that he had outlived his time. When he privately printed his autobiography *Thomas Mellon and His Times* in 1885, he wrote: "To the general public which surrounds me now, I am a stranger in a strange land." He was to live twenty-three more years.

Thomas Mellon and His Times is unique among the very few accounts written by the great American entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century. This man who was gifted with ambition and the fiscal judgment to match it also turned out to be an excellent writer with a keen sense of narrative, an occasionally wintry sense of humor, and a dead-honest view of himself and his family. One need not always like him to respect his striking ability as an autobiographer, especially in this age of ghost-writing and self-congratulatory personal accounts.

Thomas was very clear that his autobiography was "for his family and descendants exclusively," as the original title page notes. In the preface, he writes that the book contains "nothing which it concerns the public to know, and much which if writing for it I would have omitted." But he did not hesitate to give the book to friends and business associates. When Andrew Carnegie received an inscribed copy, he responded with characteristic charm, as well as his appreciation of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography and his own ambitions as a writer: "Is it not a remarkable coincidence that Franklin should have inspired you to write it. If I can make the third in the trio, you will be right in the prediction as to the time I shall be remembered."[1] In 1920, Carnegie's autobiography was published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Others, especially Thomas's wife and sons, were not initially so enthusiastic. There are stories that Andrew and Richard attempted to retrieve some of the copies their father had distributed, apparently hoping to keep family matters within the family.[2] If the stories are true, perhaps their father's directness disturbed his sons. He admitted—indeed castigated himself—that he had failed to anticipate the Panic of 1873 and overextended the new family bank.

Thomas is always careful not to credit either himself or any member of his family with too many virtues, which may not have pleased his children. For example, after observing that his sons Thomas and James had accumulated between them $100,000 by the time they were twenty-one years old, he cautions: "I do not wish it understood, however, that the remarkable success of those two boys at such an early age was due to great talent or extraordinary abilities." Whatever his son Andrew's concern may have been, he seems to have overcome it by 1900 when he gave a copy to his prospective father-in-law, Alexander McMullen, an Englishman who was somewhat perplexed by Thomas Mellon's impersonal account of his courtship of Sarah Jane Negley, and who told his wife that "the Mellons must be a strange family."[3] Years later, when Andrew was secretary of the treasury, he had a standing offer of twenty-five dollars for stray copies, not to suppress the book, he said, but because it had become one of his favorite presents for special friends, including President Calvin Coolidge on his retirement in 1929.[4]

For Thomas Mellon, an extremely private man, the autobiography was intended to serve an educational purpose. In his preface he writes of wanting to present his thoughts and feelings, his views and methods, his accomplishments and failures, a sense of his identity that would be more than "the outward and changeable husk or envelope in which he was contained." He hopes that his family and descendants will be able to learn from his experience. "It may," he writes, "serve to impress on [them] the truth of that important rule of life which demands labor, conflict, perseverance, and self-denial to produce a character and accomplish purposes worth striving for."

As a farm boy of fourteen Thomas had first read the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin which, readers of this book will discover, became one of the most important influences in his life. In 1871, when Thomas Mellon erected the first building that would house T. Mellon and Sons' Bank at 512-514 Smithfield Street, a life-sized cast-iron statue of Benjamin Franklin was placed above the main entrance to the four-story building. It remained there until a new building was erected on the same site in 1924, a visual reminder of Franklin's influence on the bank's founder and the values that he hoped to represent in his business.[5] Mellon often advised young men to pattern their lives after

Franklin, and at one point had a private edition of one thousand volumes of Franklin's autobiography printed so that he could personally distribute them. William Larimer Mellon, who received a copy from his grandfather on his twenty-first birthday, remembers that Franklin's name was frequently on Thomas Mellon's lips: "The boys in our family literally were brought up on Franklin. . . . Franklin became a sort of genie of the Mellon family. I cannot exaggerate this influence."[6]

Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, published twenty-five years before Thomas Mellon arrived in western Pennsylvania, had become widely read among the literate public in America and England, one of the first life stories to attain such prominence. Franklin's work is a narrative of success, self-improvement, and public service in which he ultimately associates his personal identity and development with that of the young nation he served. He envisioned his autobiography as a work that would encourage "more writings of the same kind . . . and [induce] more men to spend lives fit to be written." Like all of Franklin's projects, it was intended to influence the development of the new American nation.[7]

Thomas Mellon's audience was more modestly defined, but his autobiographical impulse was nonetheless quite similar to Franklin's. His narrative voice is that of a thoughtful, confident, practical man who has earned a certain authority by virtue of his experience, yet is candid about his mistakes and can recall with ease the simple pleasures of his childhood, the great fun of schoolboy pranks, or the anxieties of adolescence. His work resonates with Protestant morality combined with a rich sentiment for the land and family values that is characteristic of his Scotch-Irish Presbyterian background. As Paul Mellon has written, his grandfather's writings "convey an engaging quality of self-examination mixed with fierce puritanism."[8] Although he had little interest in formal religion, he followed his wife's wishes when she gathered her somewhat reluctant family into the carriage on Sunday mornings to drive to services, and until they died Thomas and Sarah Jane, like their older sons, were leading supporters of the East Liberty Presbyterian Church, which was on the same site as the first log church in Negleystown built by Sarah Jane's father, Jacob Negley.

The theme of education is strong throughout his narrative, for it was his own education, much of it informal, that enabled Mellon to

make his decision at the age of seventeen to leave the family farm in Westmoreland County for a new and different life in Pittsburgh. He credits much of what he learned to those lessons of hardship and survival that he derived from the struggles of his immigrant family.[9] His early formal schooling was limited to those few months each year when he was not needed to help with the farm work, but he read widely, encouraged by his mother and by his Uncle Thomas—so affectionately described in the family history section, chapter 3—who sent him trunkloads of books and periodicals from Philadelphia. When he began thinking of giving up farm life and going to college, he wrote to Uncle Thomas about his uncertain future, making it clear that this break in family tradition was extraordinarily difficult for him. "Strange and unreasonable as it may seem," he wrote, "there are some of my relations who care not how soon I might fail in this undertaking."[10] Among his own siblings—three sisters and one brother—only Thomas Mellon would master the difficult transition from an agrarian to an industrial society, straining to apply the values of family life on a farm which he firmly believed in.

Thomas Mellon's grandfather Archibald had immigrated to western Pennsylvania in 1816, the same year that Pittsburgh was incorporated as a city. It had a population of 6,000 (10,000 including the suburbs of Birmingham, Allegheny, Bayardstown, and Lawrenceville), with 960 houses, eight churches, three banks, three market houses, a Masonic Hall, a courthouse, and a jail. When Thomas Mellon and his parents arrived in Westmoreland County in 1818, the Pennsylvania Road had been completed to Pittsburgh and the National Road to Wheeling, West Virginia. By 1828, when Mellon was studying at County Academy of Greensburg, Pittsburgh was already a smokey industrial city of the steamship era at the hub of commerce going upstream as well as down.

The mid-nineteenth century was an exciting and volatile period in Pittsburgh. Other entrepreneurs, younger than Thomas, had their beginnings then. Thirteen-year-old Andrew Carnegie arrived from Scotland in 1848, working his first job as a bobbin-boy in a cotton factory at $1.20 per week. In 1852 eight-year-old Henry John Heinz began to sell radishes and other surplus vegetables from the family garden and by 1869 was marketing horseradish he grew in a tiny plot on the banks

of the Allegheny River in Sharpsburg. In 1859 Edwin L. Drake discovered oil in Titusville and by 1871 Pittsburgh had sixty petroleum refineries that produced 36,000 barrels a day. George Westinghouse, still a boy in upper New York State during the 1850s, would by 1869 receive a patent for the air-brake that would transform the railroad industry. Henry Clay Frick was born in 1849, and when he was twenty-one, he would receive a $10,000 loan from T. Mellon and Sons' Bank which enabled him to buy coal land near Connellsville and build fifty beehive coke ovens.

By early 1873 there were ninety organized banks and about a dozen private banks in the city, almost half of which went out of business during the Panic of 1873. Thomas Mellon opened his bank three years before the crisis, but it survived, and he went on to establish his sons in the careers that would eventually develop one of the greatest family fortunes in America.

Convinced of the moral value of work, Mellon admits he had little time for pleasure or social amenities before his marriage, but he takes pains to describe himself as a man in whom "the tender passion and love of children and domestic life was always strong." Although chapter 12 gives a rather businesslike description of his courtship of Sarah Jane Negley, his early letters reveal that there was a time in his life when he had a more romantic view of female society. At twenty-one, he writes freely to his friend John Coon about a number of girls, "the sweet creatures," and in another letter he notes it is valuable to be in the social company of women because it helps to refine a man's character.[11] One can only speculate about the change in his view during the next nine years, but by the age of thirty he had decided that marriage should come first, love second. Although Sarah Jane does not figure prominently in his book, she looms large in the background of Mellon's life. Theirs was a Victorian marriage, American style.

The fact that the young Mellons took the honeymoon described in chapter 13 may in itself reveal more about them than the absence of detail about their courtship and marriage, for it was in many ways a grand adventure. While Thomas Mellon was not a man to discuss his personal feelings, travel did excite him, and those passages describing such adventures are among the most interesting in his narrative, with a surprising and often sensual feeling for the landscape around him.

In recalling his honeymoon, Thomas Mellon vividly portrays travel conditions in the early nineteenth century. While it is difficult to imagine him sleeping on an eighteen-inch plank in the common room of a canal boat, it is important to remember that the young married couple was traveling on the best accommodations available for cross-country journeys in their time. And they traveled alone in a time when wedding trips were typically family affairs on which the newlyweds, accompanied by a mother, sisters, or cousins, went to visit relatives who had been unable to attend the ceremony. Private romantic honeymoons did not become popular with Americans until mid-century, when travel for pleasure became more accessible.

Thomas was a devoted and intense father, and his children were the center of his life. Concerned for their education, he built a one-room schoolhouse on the family estate so that he would have more direct control over their instruction. As his sons grew, he watched carefully to identify their strengths and encourage their individual development. Just as his father had taught him to plough and split rails, so he taught his sons basic entrepreneurial skills when each was in his early teens. Although Mellon had to rely on his college education to improve his life, he did not think it necessarily appropriate for his children, and none of them earned college degrees. Only James Ross and Andrew attended college, James Ross at Canonsburg Academy for one year, and Andrew at Western University for three. Family history differs about why Andrew left Western three months before graduation when he was only seventeen, either because of his health or because he was more interested in working full-time at the bank with his father.

The passages in which Thomas describes the illness and deaths of his three young children are the most emotional in the book, and they reveal the depth of his feeling. He was agonized to watch his only daughters, Emma and Rebecca, die in early childhood of heart disease and dysentery, but it was to the death of his son Selwyn that he was never reconciled. The boy contracted diphtheria at the age of nine and lingered for eight days before dying. Years later Thomas wrote that "Time has brought me consolation in all other deaths but this: for Selwyn I cannot be comforted." During their long lives, Thomas and Sarah Jane lived to see two more of their eight children die, both after the period covered by *Thomas Mellon and His Times:* George in 1887

and Thomas Alexander in 1899. Andrew, James, and Richard lived into the 1930s.

The home at 401 Negley Avenue was the real and symbolic center of family life for the Mellons. James Ross Mellon recalled:

> Our home was happy and I cannot recall in all my young life of any discord between my mother and father. They were always quiet and kind to the children; always finding some work for us to do, and remunerating us in some way for all we did for them. In their last days I recall seeing them sitting one at each side of the fire-place in the evenings like two doves, quiet and loveable.[12]

William Larimer Mellon describes his grandmother as a warm, caring woman who spent a great deal of her time on church and charity work and controlled the household through her wrathful housekeeper, Mrs. Cox, an excellent cook who smoked a clay pipe and seems to have intimidated every family member except Thomas himself. But it was Sarah Jane who baked the weekly bread every Saturday and loved to have all her boys, with their families in later years, come for dinner on Sundays and holidays.

When Thomas Mellon retired as judge in 1869 after a decade on the Court of Common Pleas, he was already a wealthy man and his two older sons were well established in business. The 1860s brought industrial prosperity to Pittsburgh, when the population reached 86,000, real estate value more than doubled, and the production of glass, iron, and steel accelerated at an astonishing rate. Yet in the early days of the Civil War, there was little business in court, so Mellon used the time to take pleasure in reading—older writers such as Bacon, Descartes, Berkeley, Locke, and Hume, and the new and controversial works by Darwin, Spencer, Wallace, Huxley, and Argyle, among others. After serving his ten-year term, he declined reelection and was anxious to get more involved in business opportunities that the booming prosperity of Pittsburgh had helped to make possible: "One had only to buy anything and wait, to sell at a profit: sometimes, as in real estate for instance, at a very large profit in a short time."

The judge opened T. Mellon and Sons' Bank in a rented room in 1870; Andrew was then fourteen, Richard eleven, and George nine, hardly of age to be involved in the business venture. Andrew, however, still a student at Western University in 1870, went to the bank with his

father every morning, his job being to help a trusted employee unlock the safe at the start of the business day. Andrew's assignment was typical of his caring father, who encouraged his sons to develop independently from their earliest years according to their individual talents in education as well as in business.

The patriarch of the Mellon clan officially retired from active business at T. Mellon and Sons' Bank in 1882 at the age of sixty-nine, passing the responsibility for management of the bank on to his son Andrew, who was then twenty-seven. Mellon kept an office in the bank where he went daily to look after his other business affairs, which included keeping an eye on his sons George and Richard who at age twenty-two and twenty-four had established the Mellon Brothers Bank in Bismarck in the Dakota territory.

Eight years later, in 1890 on February 3, the birthday they shared, Thomas and Sarah Jane placed by indenture all their real property in Andrew's hands, and this was followed over the years by their personal property. He, in turn, executed "A Declaration of Trust" indicating that his purpose as sole owner was to manage the estate in consultation with his three brothers.[13] In a long memorandum dated August 25, 1898, Thomas explained that he had only acquired wealth for the independence it offered. Now he was parting with it, "until nature should grant me the final divorce," for the same reason: "to promote my freedom from the care and responsibility [of] retaining it." He did so with "full confidence in the sound judgment and other good qualities of our children." Whatever the actual value of the judge's assets, the appraised value of property belonging to the judge and his wife at the time was $2,457,548—or approximately seventy million in today's dollars.[14]

The judge, realistic as always, would have been aware of the perils of his age—he was eighty-eight—and obviously intended that this transfer would guarantee flexibility of action concerning the Mellon assets, thereby promoting the interests of the family. "There was something reminiscent of the Biblical patriarchs in Grandfather's deep feelings of obligation toward the members of his family," writes William Larimer Mellon, "and in his anxiety to set all his sons on their courses in life, establishing each one somewhat farther along the way than his own bleak start." Although Thomas was a demanding father and scrutinized his sons closely, he had a deep pride in their accomplishments. On Christmas Day, 1878, he wrote to them: "I wish to give you all some

acknowledgment of the great pleasure and satisfaction it affords a father to see his children well doing and agreeable. It is my greatest happiness, and repays all the labor and care of my life."[15]

Although much has been written about the Mellon family, Thomas's son Andrew is the one best remembered for his entrepreneurial genius in Pittsburgh's financial and industrial growth and his influence on the national and international economy. Writers and historians have been fascinated by the powerful wealth of the Mellon empire and the impact of it on family members, on Pittsburgh, and on American history and culture at large. Histories of the entire family by Burton Hersh and David Koskoff devote only a chapter to the life of Thomas Mellon,[16] and because there is no biography, most of what we know of him is available only in this previously unpublished autobiography, a scattering of family letters, and those memories of the man and his legend recorded in the early twentieth century by family members and associates.[17] *Thomas Mellon and His Times* is thus an invaluable source on the life of the powerful and respected patriarch, but it is also a rare, lively, candid, and rich memoir of a self-made nineteenth-century entrepreneur, a man who came to this country as a five-year-old Ulster emigrant and lived through the years of America's rise from a frontier to an industrial power.

Editorial Note: All spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in the original text have been retained in this edition. The original edition was divided into two parts: Part I, "Family History," and Part II, "Autobiography," which have been reversed in this edition for ease of reading. Some passages have been omitted in several chapters, primarily in the family history section, including much of a legendary account of the origin of Ireland and its inhabitants starting with Noah and the Scythians, a portion of his animadversions on the character, religion, and living habits of those he refers to as "the Celtic Irish," and several sections that merely repeat points often made elsewhere in the text. We trust we have retained enough on these subjects to give a candid account of Thomas Mellon's beliefs and prejudices, which show him to be a thoroughgoing representative of his time, place, and heritage.

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Some Events in the Life and Times of Thomas Mellon

1813	Born at Camp Hill Cottage in Omagh, County Tyrone, Ireland on February 3
1816	Grandfather Archibald Mellon emigrated to Western Pennsylvania Pittsburgh incorporated as a city, population 6,000
1818	Immigrated with parents to Poverty Point, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania First bridge spanning Pittsburgh's three rivers built on Smithfield Street
1819	The Panic of 1819
1823	First visit to Pittsburgh, for which he traveled 42 miles round-trip on foot
1825	Erie Canal opened
1827	Read Franklin's autobiography
1828	Studied during winter months at County Academy of Greensburg
1830	Decided to reject farm life, declining to accept the farm property his father was about to buy him
1832	Studied for two years at Tranquil Retreat Academy in Monroeville, boarding at school and walking home for weekends

1833	Parents moved to farm near Monroeville
1837	Graduated from Western University
1838	Taught Latin at Western University for several months; began studying law in the office of Judge Charles Shaler; appointed assistant deputy prothonotary in March; admitted to the bar December 15
1839	Opened law office in Pittsburgh at Fifth and Market in June
1843	After brief courtship, married Sarah Jane Negley on August 22
1844	Son Thomas Alexander born
1845	The Great Fire of Pittsburgh
1846	Son James Ross born
1847	Daughter Sarah Emma born
1850	Built family home at 401 Negley Death of his daughter, Sarah Emma
1851	Daughter Annie Rebecca born
1852	Death of his daughter, Annie Rebecca The Pennsylvania Railroad opened from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, November 29
1853	Son Samuel Selwyn born
1855	Son Andrew William born
1858	Son Richard Beatty born
1859	Elected Judge, Court of Common Pleas Edwin L. Drake established the first oil well in Titusville

	Andrew Carnegie, age 24, was promoted to his first management position, head of the Pittsburgh division of the Pennsylvania Railroad
1860	Son George Negley born
1862	Death of his son, Samuel Selwyn
1869	Decided not to seek reelection as judge; returned to private business George Westinghouse organized Westinghouse Air Brake Company to manufacture air brakes for steam railways
1870	Opened first bank in January
1871	Purchased 512–514 Smithfield Street for T. Mellon and Sons' Bank Loaned $10,000 to Henry Clay Frick to buy coal fields and establish his first coke ovens
1873	The Crash of 1873
1874	Andrew Carnegie introduced the Bessemer process for making steel in Pittsburgh, erecting the Edgar Thomson Steel Works in Braddock
1877	Purchased the failing Ligonier Valley Railroad, putting sons Richard and Thomas in charge of development
1880	Elected to Select Council of Pittsburgh, serving until 1887
1882	Officially retired from active business, leaving Andrew as bank manager; traveled to Ireland, Scotland, and England with son George, visiting family home in Camp Hill, Robert Burns country, London
1885	Completed autobiography on August 22, his forty-second wedding anniversary

1887	Richard joined Andrew in management of the bank Death of his son, George
1890	With Sarah Jane, transferred all real property to Andrew
1890–1895	Lived in Kansas City intermittently for five years, starting new business ventures, and left Sarah Jane in Pittsburgh
1892	The Homestead Steel Strike
1899	Death of his son, Thomas Alexander
1908	Died on his birthday, February 3
1909	Death of Sarah Jane, January 19

Thomas Mellon
and His Times

Preface to the First Edition

IS A KNOWLEDGE of our ancestors of any use to us? Is there any benefit to be derived from knowing their character and habits, and what manner of men they were of? We may have inherited no worldly possessions from them, but never can ignore the legacies of good or bad qualities they are sure to have left us by heredity. To what extent in this way may not the shading of our mental, moral, and physical character and habits be due to them? In what proportions have our different ancestors contributed to our make up? Science teaches that we are but reproductions of those going before us: each individual but a new edition of a work published long ago, with some slight modifications—additions or subtractions, improving or impairing the original text. Some of our inherited qualities may be very good, others very bad; some should be cultivated, others repressed: and if we knew just how we came by them, and how they cropped out or were manifested in our predecessors, we might deal with them all the more intelligently.

The natural affection for ancestors, and for pictures of remote ancestors, may therefore be a wise provision. But in this direction we can obtain little assistance from a family portrait. An old picture may be a very poor likeness of the original, and at best can show nothing of his true character or qualities; but still natural affection clings to it, and imagination supplies those traits we would flatter in ourselves. How much more satisfactory would it not be if we could have a true representation of our ancestor's course through life from first to last, as in a panorama: showing his thoughts and actions, his good and bad qualities, what were his feelings on trying occasions; how he bore prosperity or adversity; what were his views on the current affairs of his day; what

his motives and methods, and what he accomplished or wherein he failed; how he performed his duties as a citizen and fulfilled his domestic relations. Such a picture would bring him home to us in his working clothes, and reveal the hidden ties between his nature and our own. It would represent to us that identity which through life he regarded as himself, and not a mere presentation of the outward and changeable husk or envelope in which he was contained, and through which it is never easy to read the contents.

I was thus led to reflect whether such a picture was possible. The nearest approach to it would be a true narrative of the ancestor's life, written by himself; no other could do the work so well, as no other could know the facts and circumstances so accurately.

Besides the utility and pleasure such a picture would afford, however poorly executed, there is another consideration in its favor. Every one who has spent a long and active life in varied pursuits must have had many experiences which rightly or wrongly he conceives would be beneficial to those coming after him to know. His better judgment may tell him it is useless, as it is seldom any one recalls another's experience when the occasion for it arises—the magnetic needle to guide each man's course must be within himself; but still it is a natural desire to give others the benefit of what we know. And when the time approaches for closing the book of all our experience, we may imagine ourselves still anxious for a few last words with those dearest to us. Might it not therefore be the preferable course to put into some lasting form beforehand all we may deem worth saying, rather than leave it to the hurry and confusion of the final parting?

At first I scarcely hoped to ever have the leisure to attempt anything of the kind in my own case; but still the inclination led me to try, and to make notes and procure materials from time to time as best I could. And at last the desired opportunity came. In the evening of life, with a competence for all reasonable wants, and sons both able and willing to manage my affairs as well as I could myself, further necessity for constant attention to business details was removed, and the following pages are the result. They have been prepared in the hours and half hours snatched from business for a period of over a year past: a rather desultory method of composition, which will account for incidental irregularities of style; but they contain nothing which it concerns the public to know, and much which if writing for it I would have omitted.

And besides the purposes previously indicated, I cherish the hope that, should an old copy of the book happen to fall into the hands of some poor little boy among my descendants in the distant future, who, inheriting a share of my spirit and energy, may be desirous of bettering his condition, it may tend to encourage and sustain his commendable ambition. It may show him that industry and perseverance will overcome what without them would be insuperable; and that the more insurmountable the obstacles in his way, the greater will be his satisfaction in overcoming them. It may serve to impress on him the truth of that important rule of life which demands labor, conflict, perseverance and self-denial to produce a character and accomplish purposes worth striving for. And it may tend to assure him that such a course carries with it more real satisfaction and pleasure than a life of ease and self-indulgence.

It may also not be amiss here to remind others of my descendants that whilst family pride founded on ancestry, without good qualities in themselves to sustain it, is a sure sign of weakness and degeneracy: yet just enough such pride to produce self-respect, in connection with average good qualities, is a valuable preservative against low associations and bad habits.

And finally, let me entreat those of my descendants into whose hands this memento of affection may fall, to handle and preserve it with care, remembering that it is committed to them for safe-keeping not only for themselves but for their descendants likewise, and that it will not be for sale in the bookstores, nor any new edition published; and remembering also what satisfaction it may afford a descendant of theirs and mine, many generations hence, to read the history of one of his remote ancestors as related by the ancestor himself. I advise this not on account of any intrinsic merit in the book itself, but because it may in time become a valued ancestral relic, and for that reason its defects be overlooked for the sake of the author.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn,
good and evil together."

Chapter 1

Childhood

I WAS BORN IN 1813, on the 3d of February, at the Camp Hill Cottage on my father's farm, Lower Castletown, parish of Cappaigh, county Tyrone, Ireland.[1] The small farm of twenty-three acres on which the cottage stands was a part of my grandfather's larger farm, which he cut off and allotted to my father in view of his approaching marriage. The cottage itself was built by my father with the assistance of his brother Archy, chiefly by the labor of their own hands. It is a nice little place on the bank of the river Strule, about a half mile below Cappaigh bridge. The river here is about two hundred feet wide, and after receiving Cappaigh Burn and the Morn and Derg waters, empties into Lough Foyle at Londonderry, some twenty miles below our place. It was here I first saw the light, and where I remained till in my fifth year; and what has ever seemed strange to me is the fact that its picture has always remained fresh in my mind, with all its details of location and scenery. So much so that when my son James visited Ireland fifty-six years after I left it, I was able to give him a plot and description of it so correct that he recognized it at sight; and when I revisited it myself in 1882, sixty-four years after I had left it, there was not the slightest correction to be made in my mental map. It was all there in every particular, as I had seen it when a child and still remembered it, except the spring well on the croft brae, which it surprised me not to find until the owner of the place informed me he had displaced it by subdrainage to improve the land for cultivation.

The vivid and permanent impression which that place and its surroundings made upon my mind at so early a period affords me an interesting subject of speculation. Why is it, a memory not very tena-

cious in other respects in after life should receive such clear impressions, even to the minutest details of form and landscape, at so early a period, and retain them fresh and unimpaired ever afterwards? It must not only be true, as metaphysicians teach, that we learn more in the first five years of life than in any ten years afterwards, but also that we retain whatever we learn in those five years incomparably better than anything we learn at a later date. There is this about it, perhaps: the fact of the objects being all fresh in my mind, and at once permanently cut off from view afterwards, may have acted in a manner to preserve the impression distinct and unconfused, similar to the effect of closing the camera suddenly on receiving the impression on the metallic plate.

I remember also many incidents of my early Irish life quite clearly.

On one occasion, when my father and mother went to the neighboring market town, they left me and the dog to keep house, giving me strict orders to remain inside with the door bolted, and to let no one in on any account; and after seeing that I had bolted it securely on the inside, they left to return at noon. Beggars were numerous at the time, mostly thieves—tramps we call them here. It was a bright summer day, but gloomy in the house. I stood the solitary confinement very well for a while, but at length hours seemed to stretch out into days, and I saw from the window a plaything which I coveted greatly, and the longer I looked the more I desired to have it. There could be no harm in opening the door just long enough to run out and get it. No tramps were in sight. My good resolution was unable to resist the temptation. I disobeyed commands and fell from duty. I remember the trepidation of heart to this day with which I drew the bolt and peeped out to see that the coast was clear. Then I made the plunge, secured the coveted object, and turned to re-enter; but there an entirely unexpected obstacle presented itself. It was my first experience of the truth that "the way of the transgressor is hard." The dog which was shut up with me had a stricter sense of duty, even if his discretion was poor. He was a remarkably sagacious and faithful watch dog, such as were highly prized at that time, robbery in the neighborhood being of almost nightly occurrence. What stock he was of I cannot say; all that I remember is that he was greatly valued by my father. He had been shut up with me as a reserve force against tramps; and, as my misfortune proved, was literally faithful to his trust, and no respecter of persons. He would not let me recross the threshold, nor come outside himself.

The dog and I had always been the best of friends; he had been my constant companion in the hunt after water rats, and, according to report, had once saved my life by dragging me out of a ditch filled with water into which I had stumbled. At first I was indignant, but found threats useless. Then I tried coaxing; but after exhausting all manner of blandishments upon him he was still inexorable. There he stood in the centre of the doorway with his fore feet on the sill, showing his teeth and growling vigorously at every effort on my part to enter. This performance went on till I became desperate. Tramps might appear any moment or, what was nearly as bad, the time was approaching for the return of my parents who might thus find me unfaithful to my charge. I well remember how this thought tormented me; and in desperation, like the old man in the fable, I resolved to try what virtue there was in stones, hurling them at him with all the force and rapidity I could muster. But all to no purpose: what blows he could not dodge he received with patience, but did not flinch a jot. At last one went wide of the mark and smashed through a pane of glass in the front window. This capped the climax of my distress. I remembered no more, but when my parents returned they found the dog at his post in the open doorway, holding the fort; and found me lying asleep in the front yard near by, with my face all smeared with tears and dust.

I remember another rather ludicrous occurrence in which I figured shortly afterwards. Mark Mellon, a neighbor and relative, called to complain about our cattle breaking into his oats field. Mark was very negligent about repairing fences, but quite ready to complain of trespass. My father was not at home; and when he and my mother got into a heated altercation, I hastened to the back room where my father kept his arms and uniform—he was an officer in a local militia company at the time—and, taking his sword from where it stood behind the door, I ran out and in great excitement presented it to my mother. This circumstance changed the contention into merriment, and they parted in good humor.

I also well remember numerous visits to my grandfather's place a very short distance down the lane, and the good times I had with my uncles and aunts there; and the tribulations and conflicts I was often involved in with a flock of geese belonging to a family who lived on the way between the two places. I always supplied myself with a long rod or brush; but at hatching time, and when the goslings were young and

the geese cross, the ganders were often too bold to respect my switch, and if they attacked me there was nothing for it but to run till I could procure some one to escort me past them.

But the time came when my grandparents and the residue of the family, excepting my father, concluded to follow those who had gone before to America. I remember well the procession on the occasion of their departure. They had sold the farm and farm stock—all except such household goods as were packed to take along—and their neighbors and friends were on hand to see them off and bid them farewell. The jaunting car with the female portion of the family going before, and the carts with the goods following, then a long escort on foot, resembled a funeral procession more than anything else, and was pretty much the same in feeling. At the top of a hill on the road, about a mile distant, was the place of parting. That was the last point from which the old homestead could be seen: a homestead which had sheltered the family and their ancestors for so many generations. It was sad to look back upon it for the last time. After a great deal of tear shedding and hand shaking, and good wishes and blessings, the kind hearted crowd turned homeward, and the little emigrant party continued their solitary way onward with sad hearts.

The Scotch-Irish, as well as the Celts, are an exceedingly tender hearted people. The occasion of whole families emigrating to America in those days was frequent. It was regarded as a final parting—as much so indeed as could be effected by death, as no return was expected; and on such occasions the whole country round about assembled to bid the departing ones godspeed and farewell, which always produced an outburst of emotion on both sides. They so much resembled funerals that they were called "living wakes," to distinguish them from the other class.

My parents and I were with the returning crowd: they with sad hearts, I without any due appreciation of the gravity of the occasion. Uncle Samuel and my father alone of the family now remained behind. My father was regarded as provided for; comfortably fixed or comparatively so as to his neighbors. He had a wife and child to care for, and it was deemed best for him not to give up certainty for hope, or incur the risks of emigration to seek his fortune in the New World. Samuel remained behind only to settle up some business which could not be closed in time to accompany the others; but he expected to be able to

leave also in a few months. Then none but my father would remain. It was not the rule for families in affluent circumstances to emigrate, or for any one reasonably provided for to do so. Whilst my grandfather was in comfortable circumstances so long as his family remained single and under his own roof, yet they were too numerous to give each a start in the world for a new family. Armour, the oldest son, had already married and would have been given the Camp Hill farm instead of my father, but he married against the will of his parents; and although the lady was respectable there was a slight unpleasantness which induced him to leave with his young wife to join his uncle John in America. He did not find his uncle in Westmoreland county where he expected to meet him; but he remained there, and almost the entire family followed and settled in the same neighborhood some years afterwards, as heretofore related.[2]

People born and raised in the New World can hardly realize in imagination the conditions of life in the Old. In the New World hitherto young people may marry with little or no provision or calculation for the support of a family. If without property or income, the opportunities for employment and for procuring the means of living are so abundant that they can ignore the fear of starvation and want; but it is not so in the old country. There the wages of labor are so low, and opportunities of remunerative employment so scarce, that to maintain a wife and children on the ordinary wages of a laborer or mechanic is hardly possible; and to rise above a laborer's condition is equally difficult. Among the middle classes, farms are divided into the smallest portions which will produce the necessaries of life of the cheapest kind under rigid economy; and without such a farm, or some business equally lucrative, a man who would marry without means to emigrate would have want and starvation staring him in the face.

But returning to my life in Ireland: Although it was a settled point when my grandparents left that we should remain permanently at the old place, my father soon began to entertain thoughts of following his family. Letters from America were eagerly looked for, and gazetteers and books of geography descriptive of the country and its resources eagerly read. I well remember the long winter nights which were spent by my parents perusing and discussing descriptions of different parts of America, and the products of the land, and opportunities for bettering the condition of settlers there. In the course of two years they had

fully made up their minds to leave. Then came much talk and consultation about selling the farm, and disposing of the stock and settling up affairs. It all resulted in the aggregation of about two hundred guineas in gold coin, equal to one thousand dollars. These were carefully stitched in a belt which my mother fastened around her waist, with which to sink or swim as the case might be in our voyage over the stormy sea. At last there was a busy time of preparation. My uncle Joe Wauchob came over from Kinkitt and took me away with him on his return home. He was to meet my parents with me at an appointed time and place on their way to Derry. I rode behind him on his horse, and I remember it was very rough, as he dashed along rapidly; but he stopped at a public house in Newtonstewart, where he partook of some refreshments, and from there rode home harder than ever. It was all I could do to keep my seat by holding on to him; and, as a safeguard perhaps, he kept hold of me by the arm. It was a Tam O'Shanter ride,[3] and I must have been badly scared and shaken up when we arrived at his house because my aunt took him to task for treating the child so roughly, as she said; which he excused as being the right thing to accustom the lad to hardships. I remained there about two weeks and had a good time frolicking with my cousin John and his sister Elinor, about my own age. In a spirit of mischief we made frequent excursions across the cotter's potato garden, which annoyed him greatly; but he ended our sport by seizing and imprisoning us under a creel. The punishment subdued us. A creel is a large, square basket, holding a cart load of farm vegetables or other matter, and used as a cart or car bed.

The appointed day arrived however, and I was delivered over to my parents as agreed on. I remember very well our journey to Derry, which we entered by the bridge across the Foyle. We were to go aboard ship the next day but were prevented by an event of a serious nature. My father's trouble and worriment incident to the settlement of affairs and the labor of packing up and preparing to leave, had brought on a fever which did not develop until after we arrived in Derry. For a few days he had complained of pains in his limbs, and a ringing sound in his ears; but on the day we were to go on board a high fever had set in, and the ship's surgeon excluded him on the ground of illness. This was a serious disappointment; but not so serious as our apprehensions regarding the illness. Our means were not such as to justify the expense of costly board or lodging and medical treatment; and indeed, my

father had become so ill that a hotel or boarding house would not have cared to admit him. The physician pronounced it a dangerous and probably a protracted attack.

My mother was equal to the emergency however; I remember going with her from place to place until she found two suitable upstairs rooms which she engaged as lodging rooms. She then had her baggage removed, and bedding unpacked and adjusted; and had my father conveyed from the lodging house where we had stopped, and placed as comfortably as circumstances would allow in this new temporary home in Derry. She then procured an attentive and skillful physician recommended by Mr. Buchanan, the owner of the vessel in which we had taken passage. This Buchanan was the uncle of the late President of the United States of that name. Here my father lay in a helpless and at last almost hopeless condition for nearly four weeks. But the physician's care, and my mother's nursing, finally brought him through. At one time he was so low that the physician gave him up, and my mother wrote a letter to his father's family in America, informing them of our distress and asking their advice: whether in case of his death they would advise her to go on with me and join them, or to return to her own people at Kinkitt. The turn came however and he began to convalesce; and I remember, after he was able to walk out of doors with a cane, his usual stroll with me by the hand was along the top of Derry walls, where I thought it very strange to be able to look down into the chimney tops. And I remember of our examining Roaring Meg, and the other celebrated old guns which had done such execution in the siege of Derry.[4] Derry must have been supplied with hydrants at that time much resembling those in present use, as I was greatly surprised at one which stood on the pavement near our lodging house. There was a pool of water at and around its base, which was the only supply visible to me; and how so large a supply of water could be obtained from so small a source, and why the water of its own accord flowed up and out of the spout, were mysteries which excited my curiosity. I remember very well also the appearance of an old woman who sat at the open gate of the city wall, beside a stand of candies and sea *dulce*.[5] Her table afforded an irresistible temptation to my scarce half-pennies.

But time wore on, and at last we were in condition to embark, and did so in one of the same line of ships. Our destination was St. Johns, New Brunswick. England at that time was in no friendly mood towards

the United States, and would clear no ships except to ports in her own dominions. We were a trifle over twelve weeks on the voyage, many instances of which I remember but they are not worth relating now.

All I remember of St. Johns is seeing fields covered with fish split open to dry. And here I first saw and tasted the cucumber, and saw negroes.

We soon obtained passage in a coasting vessel and reshipped for Baltimore, which we reached in about two weeks. The day we arrived in the bay below Baltimore was exceedingly hot to our fresh experience, as nothing like it ever prevails in Ireland. We were quarantined there for a whole tedious, hot day; and, while lying there, my father with others went on shore in the ship's yawl and brought back a lot of fine, red, ripe peaches. This was our first taste of the peach; and, whilst agreeable, the flavor was remarkably strange to my palate, such as I shall never forget; but it lost its novelty afterwards.

At last we landed in Baltimore at Fell's Point, on or about the 1st of October, 1818; and here I may regard my childhood as ended, and boyhood commenced.

Chapter II

Boyhood

I REMEMBER BUT LITTLE of Baltimore on the occasion of our arrival there. We remained but a day or two. The weather was hot and disagreeable to unacclimated comers such as we were, and we left as soon as transportation could be procured for ourselves and baggage. Here we parted with our particular friends the Galeys, who had been our neighbors at home and our companions on the voyage, Denny and Peggy, and their son Robert. Robert was of my age, and my playfellow on the ship; and twenty-five years afterward we were thrown together again on life's journey, and have been constant friends ever since. Mr. Galey obtained immediate employment from a widow lady of Maryland to superintend her plantation, and we separated, they for their Maryland home, and we for the backwoods of Western Pennsylvania—such it was then considered.

We had come to Baltimore in preference to New York or Philadelphia, because it was at that time regarded as of easier access from the sea; and as having the advantage of better roads and transportation across the mountains to the Western country. Pittsburgh dealt chiefly with Baltimore then. My father chartered a Conestoga wagon and team: such was the name given to the heavy four horse wagon with long bed and white canvas cover, used in those days for transportation of goods and emigrants between the seaports and the West.[1] The teamster was to carry our baggage and ourselves for a stipulated price from Baltimore to Greensburg, in Westmoreland county. It was a long, tedious trip, mostly over mud roads badly cut up—especially in the mountains, as wagons and teams were very numerous before the introduction of turnpikes or canals. Still, the October weather was fine; the

orchards were numerous, with the ripe, tempting fruit strewing the grass under the trees; and a generous welcome to help ourselves was always easily obtained from the owners. To my young mind the luxuriant vegetation and luscious fruit gave the country the appearance of a paradise. Another wagon and family was in company, destined for Pittsburgh. We slept by night in the wagon; and evening and morning prepared our food at a camp fire by the side of the road, as was then the custom of emigrants. On some occasions in the mountain regions the wagons halted over night where it suited best, regardless of an inn or other stopping place; the driver had a supply of oats on hand, and a horse trough lashed on the rear end of the wagon, and at such times would take his meals with us and spread his mattress under a tree.

We were three weeks on this tedious journey. At last our spirits began to rise as we approached Youngstown, which was near where our friends had settled; and there we received the glad news that my uncles Samuel and Archy were on the road only a mile or so ahead of us, constructing a section of the Greensburg and Stoystown turnpike.[2] It was in the evening; the wagon stopped in the town for the night, and we walked on and soon came in sight of the long board shanty usual for boarding and lodging laborers on public works. As we approached it we saw my grandmother milking a cow before the door, and my grandfather sitting on a log nearby smoking his pipe. When we came up and their attention was attracted, it was at first with bewildered amazement they beheld us, then in joyful recognition. What increased their surprise was that they had only a few days before received my mother's sad letter, which she had written in Derry when the physician had informed her that he had no hope for my father's recovery. Letters traveled slowly in those days, frequently much more so than passengers. Such had been the case in this instance; and at the time my father appeared on the scene his relatives in this country were mourning his death. He appeared to his father and mother, as they expressed it, as one risen from the dead. It was a happy reunion all round.

The Greensburg and Stoystown Turnpike Company had been chartered a year or so before by the legislature, and the construction of the road let to contractors. My uncles Samuel and Archy, impecunious but enterprising as are most young Scotch-Irishmen, had taken two miles of it near the present monastery.[3] Here they had built the shanty already mentioned for their men, and had lodging rooms in one part

of it for themselves; and some thirty or forty laborers, and a proportionate number of carts were at work on the job. It was but five miles from the farm at the Crabtree where my grandfather and his family had settled; and he and my grandmother were in the habit of visiting their boys engaged in making turnpike every week or so with a fresh supply of provisions. It was thus we happened to meet them as we did. We had our goods and baggage unloaded there the next morning after our arrival, and dismissed the team; and, accompanied by grandfather and grandmother, we walked across to the Crabtree place. I have remembered that walk all my life. My parents and grandparents seemed so much to enjoy each other, it was like a walk for pleasure; distance and fatigue were forgotten in the joy of reunion and social conversation. We stopped in a grove of trees by the way and had luncheon. The spot is impressed on my memory ever since. I never pass it that I do not stop to recall the occasion and the parties to it.

Arrived at the old stone mansion house at the Crabtree, my grandfather's new home, now the residence of Captain Cook, there was another surprise and joyful meeting with my aunts Margaret and Annie, and uncle John. Here we remained until the following April. Grandfather and uncle John had not yet taken in their corn and pumpkins, or gathered the apple crop; and my enjoyment was great accompanying them in this work, and riding back and forth in the farm wagon. The only drawbacks to my pleasure were the burs and Spanish needles, which manifested a remarkable facility in getting into my clothes and hair when among the weeds. I was soon taught also to have a wholesome fear of snakes, as this land was not under the protection of either Moses or St. Patrick. These annoyances were new, as nothing of the kind existed in Ireland. Here also I met with Indian corn prepared as food in mush and otherwise, and well remember the sensation of a peculiarly wild flavor or taste which it produced at first, although I soon became very fond of it. Here also, towards the end of March, we encountered the first storm of thunder and lightning I had ever experienced. I had seen lightning and heard thunder in Ireland, but nothing to be compared with this. Atmospheric changes there are so frequent and moderate they do not produce such convulsions as take place here. It was late at night after a warm evening; my father had gone to Greensburg to negotiate with Mr. John Shaeffer, a merchant of that place, for a farm, and had not yet returned; which made the situa-

tion the more alarming, as it appeared to my mother he could not escape with his life, returning through the woods in such a conflict of the elements. The blinding glare of sharp lightning flashes through the uncurtained windows of our bed room, followed by peal after peal of deafening thunder, was a situation truly terrific to my mother and me, who were wholly unaccustomed to such a scene. While it lasted it produced a degree of alarm in both of us which I can never forget. The storm however, like many other threatened disasters, passed over without harm; my father soon returned and we were again happy. It had overtaken him on his way, but he obtained shelter in a vacant school house.

Vegetation in this country seemed to me wilder and more luxuriant, and the crops in some respects more abundant than in Ireland; and in this I think I was correct.

An incident which occurred during this stay at the Crabtree place serves to disclose a prominent feature of my grandfather's character. He was sociable and remarkably pleasant company, and his wit and humor were always attractive to young people whom he could hold in a continual state of mirth and enjoyment. In person he was tall, vigorous and active, but without any disposition to display or boast of his power in that respect. On the occasion in question we were all engaged in sugar making at the sugar camp on the Crabtree meadow; and uncle John, then about twenty, with some other boys had been trying their agility in a foot race from the one end to the other of the meadow, about a quarter of a mile. Uncle John, who much resembled his father in size and appearance, had won the race, and seemed rather elated over his speed of foot. Grandfather however lowered his pretensions by suggesting *he* could beat him over the same course, although then approaching close towards the age of sixty. They started, and grandfather did win by considerable odds.

My father had spent the winter searching for a farm; and had nearly closed for one at Elder's Ridge in Indiana county, but finally purchased from Mr. Shaeffer the John Hill tract on one of the tributary streams of Turtle creek, in Franklin township, about one mile north of the mills then belonging to Duff, now Stork.[4]

It was in the second week of April, 1819, that we journeyed from the Crabtree to our new home, twelve miles distant. This was in the style of a regular flitting. My father had procured a team, three cows, a

wagon and some household furniture; and my grandfather and uncle John accompanying with their team, we set out over as bad roads as that part of Westmoreland county can produce—and in this line Westmoreland county is unsurpassed. When arrived at the top of Duff's hill we halted to rest the teams and take a view of what was to be our future home. There it lay in view, spread out before us; and the sight was not unattractive, surrounded by high hills and stretching up to the top of one of them which had been selected as the best location for an orchard. It presented a cozy and homelike appearance, with its pleasant stream and meadow and the alternation of woodland and clear field; and though in a remote and unfrequented part of the county, the cross roads at the lower end of it removed any undue appearance of solitude. The orchard on its hill top, though half a mile distant, presented a most inviting and cheerful appearance. It was surrounded on three sides by uncleared woodland; but all around the fence and between the apple trees had been set with peach trees which were in full bloom and attracted our special attention, presenting an almost unbroken surface of the bright and beautiful peach blossom.

We soon arrived and took possession. The house had been vacant for some time and was in a dilapidated condition, rather rough and primitive at best: a log cabin of two apartments, with one outside door and two windows; and wooden chimney constructed in the centre with stonelined fireplace, then plastered with clay mortar to the top, to protect the wooden structure from fire. The floor was of puncheons—logs split in two and hewed smooth on the flat side, and laid with that side up; the upper floor or loft composed of a few loose boards, and the roof of lap boards. It was a true specimen of the farm house of its day.

Uncle John returned the next morning, but grandfather remained for a week to assist in putting things in order about the house and barn. Hinges, bolts and latches were all constructed of wood. Besides, many other repairs were needed, and grandfather was very expert with the carpenter tools then in use, namely, the auger, hatchet and saw. Rough and uncouth as was this new residence, it is wonderful how much satisfaction and contentment it afforded us. It was the consummation of our anxious hopes to be again quietly settled in a home of our own. The cares and apprehensions of the great journey were now at an end, we had gained our object; were in possession of a farm seven times larger than the one we had left, which when paid for would be