The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt

'One of the most esteemed women in the world, the object of almost universal respect'
New York Times

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Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962) was perhaps the world's greatest humanitarian. First Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights, politician and diplomat, committed feminist, activist, First Lady of the United States (1933–45) and prolific writer, she was called "the object of almost universal respect" in her *New York Times* obituary.

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Eleanor Roosevelt

ZED

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I dedicate this book to all those who will be spared reading the three volumes of my autobiography and who may find this easier and pleasanter to read.

As I look through it, I think it gives some insight into the life and times in which my husband and I lived, and anything which adds to future understanding I hope will have value.

E.R.

Contents

I want to say in this book a special word of thanks to Miss Elinore Denniston. I could not have done, alone, the long and tedious job of cutting that was necessary to abbreviate the three volumes into one nor have added the parts which seemed necessary for a better understanding and for bringing the volume up to date.

Miss Denniston is a most patient, capable, and helpful co-worker. Without her this volume could never have been produced. I thank her warmly and express here my deep appreciation and pleasure in working with her at all times.

E.R.

Preface

This is both an abbreviated and an augmented edition of my autobiography. Abbreviated because, as far as possible, material of only passing interest has been eliminated; augmented by the addition of new material that brings the book up to date. When I first embarked on the story of my life the chief problem I faced was to decide what to put in. Now, in preparing this shorter version, I have had to decide what to leave out. In both cases, the major difficulty lay in trying to see myself and my activities and what happened to me within the framework of a larger picture. It is not easy to attain this kind of perspective because, for me, as for almost everyone, I think, the things that mattered most have not been the big important things but the small personal things.

No one, it seems to me, can really see his own life clearly any more than he can see himself, as his friends or enemies can, from all sides. It is a moral as well as a physical impossibility. The most one can achieve is to try to be as honest as possible.

What my purpose has been I indicated at the end of *This Is My Story.*

It occurs to me to wonder why anyone should have the courage or, as so many people probably think, the vanity to write an autobiography.

In analyzing my own reasons I think I had two objectives: One was to give a picture, if possible, of the world in which I grew up and which today is changed in many ways. The other, to give as truthful a picture as possible of a human being. A real picture of any human being is interesting in itself, and it is especially interesting when we can follow the play of other personalities upon that human being

and perhaps get a picture of a group of people and of the influence on them of the period in which they lived. The great difference between the world of the 1880s and today seems to me to be in the extraordinary speeding up of our physical surroundings.

I was for many years a sounding board for the teachings and influence of my immediate surroundings. The ability to think for myself did not develop until I was well on in life and therefore no real personality developed in my early youth. This will not be so of young people of today; they must become individuals responsible for themselves at a much earlier age because of the conditions in which they find themselves in their everyday lives. The world of my grandmother was a world of well-ordered custom and habit, more or less slow to change. The world of today accepts something new overnight and in two years it has become the old and established custom and we have almost forgotten it was ever new.

The reason that fiction is more interesting than any other form of literature to those of us who like to study people is that in fiction the author can really tell the truth without hurting anyone and without humiliating himself too much. He can reveal what he has learned through observation and experience of the inner workings of the souls of men. In an autobiography this is hard to do, try as you will. The more honest you are about yourself and others, however, the more valuable what you have written will be in the future as a picture of the people and their problems during the period covered by the autobiography.

Every individual as he goes through life has different problems and reacts differently to the same circumstances. Different individuals see and feel the same things in different ways, something in them colors the world and their lives. Their experiences and their lessons will be different in each individual case.

To me, who dreamed so much as a child, who made a dream-world in which I was the heroine of an unending story, the lives of the people around me have continued to have a certain storybook

quality. I learned something which has stood me in good stead many times—the most important thing in any relationship is not what you get but what you give.

My Hall family were typical, I think, of the early 1900s. Somewhere in the background there were people who had worked with their hands and with their heads and worked hard, but the need was no longer there and at that time the material conditions of life seemed stable.

My grandfather Hall typified the group, in his generation, that had reached a goal. He was a gentleman of leisure and enjoyed using his brains. He liked to have the stimulation of intelligent companionship but he did not feel the need to work. In his children many of the qualities of the hardfisted, hardheaded ancestors had faded away, but their world was not so stable as they thought and their money began to slip through their fingers. Today, two generations later, the world has changed so much that many of the younger members of the family have to begin again at scratch and it is interesting to see that, with necessity, many of them develop the same abilities that existed in the working forebears.

This cycle, which I have watched in my family, is one reason why, in our country, it always amuses me when any one group of people take it for granted that, because they have been privileged for a generation or two, they are set apart in any way from the man or woman who is working in order to keep the wolf from the door. It is only luck and a little temporary veneer and before long the wheels may turn and one and all must fall back on whatever basic quality they have.

This idea would never have occurred to my grandmother, for to her the world seemed more or less permanently fixed, but to us today it is a mere platitude and our children and grandchildren accept it without turning a hair.

On the other side of my family, of course, many people whom I have mentioned will be described far better and more fully by other

people, except in the case of my father, whose short and happy early life was so tragically ended. With him I have a curious feeling that as long as he remains to me the vivid, living person that he is, he will, after the manner of the people in *The Blue Bird*, be alive and continue to exert his influence, which was always a gentle, kindly one.

The more the world speeds up the more it seems necessary that we should learn to pick out of the past the things that we feel were important and beautiful then. One of these things was a quality of tranquillity in people, which you rarely meet today. Perhaps one must have certain periods of life lived in more or less tranquil surroundings in order to attain that particular quality. I read not long ago in David Grayson's *The Countryman's Year* these words: "Back of tranquillity lies always conquered unhappiness." That may be so, but perhaps these grandparents of ours found it a little easier to conquer unhappiness because their lives were not lived at high tension so constantly. Certainly all of us must conquer some unhappiness in our lives.

Autobiographies are, after all, useful only as the lives you read about and analyze may suggest to you something that you may find useful in your own journey through life. I do not expect, of course, that anyone will find exactly the same experiences or the same mistakes or the same gratifications that I have found, but perhaps my very foolishness may be helpful! The mistakes I made when my children were young may give some help or some consolation to some troubled and groping mother. Because of one's timidity one sometimes is more severe with the children, or more irritated at trifles, and one feels the necessity to prove one's power over the only defenseless thing in sight.

We all of us owe, I imagine, far more than we realize to our friends as well as to the members of our family. I know that in my own case my friends are responsible for much that I have become and without them there are many things which would have remained closed books to me.

From the time of my marriage, the life I lived seems more closely allied with the life that all of us know today. It was colorful, active and interesting. The lessons learned were those of adaptability and adjustment and finally of self-reliance and developing into an individual as every human being must.

I have sketched briefly the short trip to Europe after World War I, and yet I think that trip had far-reaching consequences for me. I had known Europe and particularly France, with its neat and patterned countryside, fairly well. The picture of desolation fostered in me an undying hate of war which was not definitely formulated before that time. The conviction of the uselessness of war as a means of finding any final solution to international difficulties grew stronger and stronger as I listened to people talk. I said little about it at the time but the impression was so strong that instead of fading out of my memory it has become more deeply etched upon it year by year.

In *This Is My Story* I covered my early years, the vanishing world in which I grew up, the influences and the values that dominated that era.

In *This I Remember* I dealt with a broader and more vital period, concerned for the most part with my husband's political life during one of the most dramatic and eventful times in history, and with the gradual broadening of my own activities.

In *On My Own* I tried to give some picture of the changing world as I have seen it during recent years and of the various jobs into which I plunged in the hope that, by building international understanding and co-operation, we could hold at bay the ugly stupidity of war and learn to substitute for it, however slowly or painfully—or reluctantly—an era of brotherhood.

In the final part of this book, *The Search for Understanding*, I have added new material, covering the past few years. They have been busy years, with every half hour of every day filled and with my working day often extending from eight in the morning until

well past midnight. These crowded hours have been interesting and stimulating. They have, I hope, been useful. They have, at least, been lived to the hilt.

In the long run an autobiography is valuable only if it accomplishes one of two things, or preferably both. It may help to preserve, through the eyes of an individual, a record of a way of life that has vanished, or of people who were historically important in their own era, and so add, even minutely, to our understanding of the background. Or, in a more personal way, it may help other people to solve their problems. There is nothing particularly interesting about one's life story unless people can say as they read it, "Why, this is like what I have been through. Perhaps, after all, there is a way to work it out."

Let me hasten to say that I do not suggest that my solutions should or could prove a guide to anyone. About the only value the story of my life may have is to show that one can, even without any particular gifts, overcome obstacles that seem insurmountable if one is willing to face the fact that they must be overcome; that, in spite of timidity and fear, in spite of a lack of special talents, one can find a way to live widely and fully.

Perhaps the most important thing that has come out of my life is the discovery that if you prepare yourself at every point as well as you can, with whatever means you may have, however meager they may seem, you will be able to grasp opportunity for broader experience when it appears. Without preparation you cannot do it. The fatal thing is the rejection. Life was meant to be lived, and curiosity must be kept alive. One must never, for whatever reason, turn his back on life.

E.R.
Hyde Park
December, 1960

Eleanor adored her father, who battled addiction for years and died at thirty-four. His devotion to her offset her mother's aloofness.

Eleanor blossomed at Allenswood Academy, where the headmistress, Marie Souvestre, challenged her intellect, inspired confidence, and encouraged independence.

Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt in Hyde Park, NY during 1906.

Eleanor, Marion Dickerman, and Nancy Cook were partners in Democratic politics, reform and activist movements, business and co-owners of Val-Kill Cottage.

Eleanor prepares to address the press after visiting the Arthurdale, West Virginia, homestead, her favorite New Deal program.

Eleanor began her political career by training women to be effective advocates. In 1936, she worked behind the scenes to ensure that women voted in increased numbers.

Eleanor admired young leaders. She often convened youth leadership summits and listened intently when these young people expressed their ideas, hopes, and concerns.

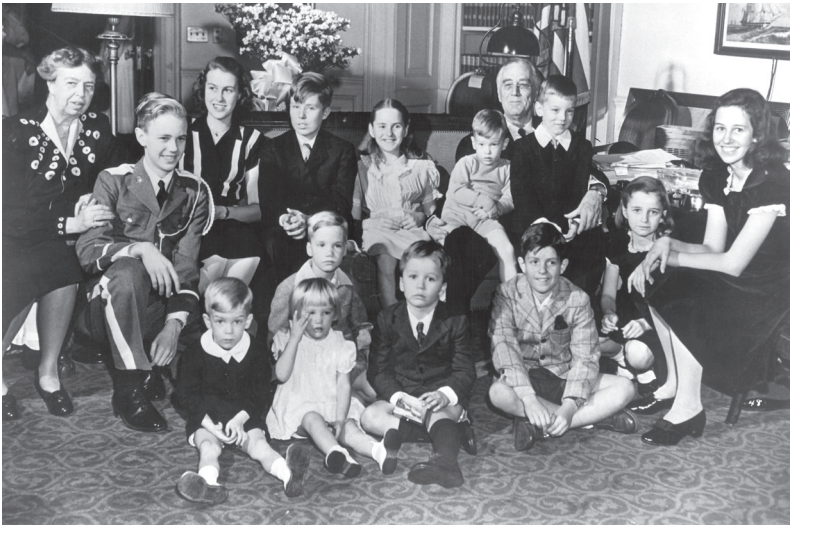
Eleanor believed that drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the most important work she ever undertook.

After FDR died, Eleanor transformed Val-Kill Cottage into the home, office, and retreat she had always wanted.

Eleanor and Marian Anderson united to combat segregation in Washington, DC, and promote human rights around the world.

Eleanor and John Kennedy initially had a tense relationship. Yet they united to appoint women to senior positions in his administration.

Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt with their thirteen grandchildren in the White House study on January 20, 1945. Front row (left to right): Christopher Roosevelt, Anne Sturgis Roosevelt, John Boettiger, Elliott Roosevelt, Jr., and Sara Delano Roosevelt (sitting in chair). Second row (left to right): Curtis Boettiger, Haven Clark Roosevelt, and Kate Roosevelt. Back row (left to right): Eleanor Roosevelt, Anna Eleanor Boettiger, William Donner Roosevelt, Ruth Chandler Roosevelt, David Boynton Roosevelt (on FDR's lap), Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Franklin D. Roosevelt III (on FDR's lap).



A photograph of Eleanor taken by Franklin D. Roosevelt on their honeymoon in Venice, Italy on July 7, 1905.

Eleanor Roosevelt receiving the Mary McLeod Bethune Human Rights Award from Dorothy Height, President of the National Council of Negro Women, at the Council's Silver Anniversary Dinner on November 12, 1960.

Eleanor Roosevelt addressing the United Nations General Assembly in July 1947.

Part I
This Is My Story

1
Memories of My Childhood

My mother was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. Her father, my grandfather Hall, never engaged in business. He lived on what his father and mother gave him.

He had a house in New York City at 11 West Thirty-seventh Street, and he built another on the Hudson River about five miles above the village of Tivoli, on land which was part of the old Chancellor Livingston estate. My grandmother's mother was a Miss Livingston, and so we were related to the Livingstons, the Clarksons, the DePeysters, who lived in the various houses up and down the River Road.

My grandfather Hall's great interest was in the study of theology, and in his library were a number of books dealing with religion. Most of them were of little interest to me as a child, but the Bible, illustrated by Doré, occupied many hours—and gave me many nightmares!

My grandmother Hall, who had been a Miss Ludlow, a beauty and a belle, was treated like a cherished but somewhat spoiled child. She was expected to bring children into the world and seven children were born, but she was not expected to bring them up. My grandfather told her nothing about business, not even how to draw a check, and died without a will, leaving her with six children under seventeen years of age, a responsibility for which she was totally unprepared.

The two eldest children, my mother and Tissie—whose real name was Elizabeth and who later became Mrs. Stanley Mortimer

—bore the marks of their father's upbringing. They were deeply religious; they had been taught to use their minds in the ways that my grandfather thought suitable for girls. He disciplined them well. In the country they walked several times a day from the house to the main road with a stick across their backs in the crook of their elbows to improve their carriage. He was a severe judge of what they read and wrote and how they expressed themselves, and held them to the highest standards of conduct. The result was strength of character, with definite ideas of right and wrong, and a certain rigidity in conforming to a conventional pattern, which had been put before them as the only proper existence for a lady.

Suddenly the strong hand was removed, and the two boys and the two younger girls knew no discipline, for how could a woman who had never been treated as anything but a grown-up child suddenly assume the burden of training a family?

I have been told that my mother, for the first year or so after my grandfather died, was the guiding spirit of the household, but at nineteen she was married to my father.

My mother belonged to that New York City society which thought itself all-important. Old Mr. Peter Marié, who gave choice parties and whose approval stamped young girls and young matrons a success, called my mother a queen, and bowed before her charm and beauty, and to her this was important.

In that society you were kind to the poor, you did not neglect your philanthropic duties, you assisted the hospitals and did something for the needy. You accepted invitations to dine and to dance with the right people only, you lived where you would be in their midst. You thought seriously about your children's education, you read the books that everybody read, you were familiar with good literature. In short, you conformed to the conventional pattern.

My father, Elliott Roosevelt, charming, good-looking, loved by all who came in contact with him, had a background and upbringing which were alien to my mother's pattern. He had a

physical weakness which he himself probably never quite understood. As a boy of about fifteen he left St. Paul's School after one year, because of illness, and went out to Texas. He made friends with the officers at Fort McKavit, a frontier fort, and stayed with them, hunting game and scouting in search of hostile Indians. He loved the life and was a natural sportsman, a good shot and a good rider. I think the life left an indelible impression on him. The illness left its mark on him too, on those inner reserves of strength which we all have to call on at times in our lives. He returned to his family in New York apparently well and strong.

My grandfather Roosevelt died before my father was twenty-one and while his older brother, Theodore, later to be President of the United States, fought his way to health from an asthmatic childhood and went to Harvard College, Elliott, with the consent of an indulgent mother and two adoring sisters, took part of his inheritance and went around the world. He hunted in India when few people from this country had done anything of the kind.

My father returned from his trip for the wedding of his little sister, Corinne, to his friend, Douglas Robinson. Then he married Anna Hall, and tragedy and happiness came walking on each other's heels.

He adored my mother and she was devoted to him, but always in a more reserved and less spontaneous way. I doubt that the background of their respective family lives could have been more different. His family was not so much concerned with Society (spelled with a big S) as with people, and these people included the newsboys from the streets of New York and the cripples whom Dr. Schaefer, one of the most noted early orthopedic surgeons, was trying to cure.

My father's mother and his brother Theodore's young wife, Alice Lee, died within a few days of each other. The latter left only a little Alice to console the sorrowing young father. My father felt these losses deeply. Very soon, however, in October, 1884, I came

into the world, and from all accounts I must have been a more wrinkled and less attractive baby than the average—but to him I was a miracle from Heaven.

I was a shy, solemn child even at the age of two, and I am sure that even when I danced I never smiled. My earliest recollections are of being dressed up and allowed to come down to dance for a group of gentlemen who applauded and laughed as I pirouetted before them. Finally, my father would pick me up and hold me high in the air. He dominated my life as long as he lived, and was the love of my life for many years after he died.

With my father I was perfectly happy. There is still a woodeny painting of a solemn child, a straight bang across her forehead, with an uplifted finger and an admonishing attitude, which he always enjoyed and referred to as "Little Nell scolding Elliott." We had a country house at Hempstead, Long Island, so that he could hunt and play polo. He loved horses and dogs, and we always had both. During this time he was in business, and, added to the work and the sports, the gay and popular young couple lived a busy social life. He was the center of my world and all around him loved him.

Whether it was some weakness from his early years which the strain of the life he was living accentuated, whether it was the pain he endured from a broken leg which had to be set, rebroken and reset, I do not know. My father began to drink, and for my mother and his brother Theodore and his sisters began the period of harrowing anxiety which was to last until his death in 1894.

My father and mother, my little brother and I went to Italy for the winter of 1890 as the first step in the fight for his health and power of self-control. I remember my father acting as gondolier, taking me out on the Venice canals, singing with the other boatmen, to my intense joy. I loved his voice and, above all, I loved the way he treated me. He called me "Little Nell," after the Little Nell in Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop*, and I never doubted that I stood first in his heart.

He could, however, be annoyed with me, particularly when I disappointed him in such things as physical courage, and this, unfortunately, I did quite often. We went to Sorrento and I was given a donkey so I could ride over the beautiful roads. One day the others overtook me and offered to let me go with them, but at the first steep descent which they slid down I turned pale, and preferred to stay on the high road. I can remember still the tone of disapproval in my father's voice, though his words of reproof have long since faded away.

I remember my trip to Vesuvius with my father and the throwing of pennies, which were returned to us encased in lava, and then the endless trip down. I suppose there was some block in the traffic, but I can remember only my utter weariness and my effort to bear it without tears so that my father would not be displeased.

My mother took a house in Neuilly, outside of Paris, and settled down for several months, as another baby was expected the end of June. My father entered a sanitarium while his older sister, Anna, our Auntie Bye, came to stay with my mother. It was decided to send me to a convent to learn French and to have me out of the way when the baby arrived.

The convent experience was an unhappy one. I was not yet six years old, and I must have been very sensitive, with an inordinate desire for affection and praise, perhaps brought on by the fact that I was conscious of my plain looks and lack of manners. My mother was troubled by my lack of beauty, and I knew it as a child senses these things. She tried hard to bring me up well so that my manners would compensate for my looks, but her efforts only made me more keenly conscious of my shortcomings.

The little girls of my age in the convent could hardly be expected to take much interest in a child who did not speak their language and did not belong to their religion. They had a little shrine of their own and often worked hard beautifying it. I longed to be allowed to join them, but was always kept on the outside and wandered by myself in the walled-in garden.

Finally, I fell a prey to temptation. One of the girls swallowed a penny. Every attention was given her, she was the center of everybody's interest. I longed to be in her place. One day I went to one of the sisters and told her that I had swallowed a penny. It must have been evident that my story was not true, so they sent for my mother. She took me away in disgrace. Understanding as I do now my mother's character, I realize how terrible it must have seemed to her to have a child who would lie.

I remember the drive home as one of utter misery, for I could bear swift punishment far better than long scoldings. I could cheerfully lie any time to escape a scolding, whereas if I had known that I would simply be put to bed or be spanked I probably would have told the truth.

This habit of lying stayed with me for years. My mother did not understand that a child may lie from fear; I myself never understood it until I reached the age when I realized that there was nothing to fear.

My father had come home for the baby's arrival, and I am sorry to say he was causing a great deal of anxiety, but he was the only person who did not treat me as a criminal!

The baby, my brother Hall, was several weeks old when we sailed for home, leaving my father in a sanitarium in France, where his brother, Theodore, had to go and get him later on.

We lived that winter without my father. I slept in my mother's room, and remember the thrill of watching her dress to go out in the evenings. She looked so beautiful I was grateful to be allowed to touch her dress or her jewels or anything that was part of the vision which I admired inordinately.

Those summers, while my father was away trying to rehabilitate himself, we spent largely with my grandmother at her Tivoli house, which later was to become home to both my brother Hall and me.

My father sent us one of his horses, an old hunter which my mother used to drive, and I remember driving with her. Even more

vividly do I remember the times when I was sent down to visit my great-aunt, Mrs. Ludlow, whose house was next to ours but nearer the river and quite out of sight, for no house along that part of the river was really close to any other.

Mrs. Ludlow was handsome, sure of herself, and an excellent housekeeper. On one memorable occasion she set to work to find out what I knew. Alas and alack, I could not even read! The next day and every day that summer she sent her companion, Madeleine, to give me lessons in reading. Then she found out that I could not sew or cook and knew nothing of the things a girl should know. I think I was six.

I surmise that my mother was roundly taken to task, for after that Madeleine became a great factor in my life and began to teach me to sew.

I still slept in my mother's room, and every morning I had to repeat to her some verses which I had learned in the Old or the New Testament. I wish I could remember today all the verses I learned by heart that summer.

Sometimes I woke up when my mother and her sisters were talking at bedtime, and many a conversation not meant for my ears was listened to with great avidity. I acquired a strange and garbled idea of the troubles around me. Something was wrong with my father and from my point of view nothing could be wrong with him.

If people only realized what a war goes on in a child's mind and heart in a situation of this kind, I think they would try to explain more than they do, but nobody told me anything.

We moved back to New York, the autumn that I was seven, to a house which my mother had bought and put in order on East 61st Street, two blocks from Auntie Bye, who lived at Madison Avenue and East 62nd Street. She had Uncle Ted's little girl, Alice, with her a great deal, and that winter our first real acquaintance began. Already she seemed much older and cleverer, and while I admired

her I was always a little afraid of her, and this was so even when we were grown and she was the "Princess Alice" in the White House.

That winter we began a friendship with young Robert Munro-Ferguson, a young man sent over from England by an elder brother to make his way in the world. My father and mother had known the elder brother, Ronald (later Lord Novar), and so had Auntie Bye. The boy was taken into her house, given a start in Douglas Robinson's office, and became a dear and close friend to the entire family.

My mother always had the three children with her for a time in the late afternoon. My little brother Ellie adored her, and was so good he never had to be reproved. The baby Hall was always called Josh and was too small to do anything but sit upon her lap contentedly. I felt a curious barrier between myself and these three. My mother made a great effort; she would read to me and have me read to her, she would have me recite my poems, she would keep me after the boys had gone to bed, and still I can remember standing in the door, often with my finger in my mouth, and I can see the look in her eyes and hear the tone of her voice as she said, "Come in, Granny." If a visitor was there she might turn and say, "She is such a funny child, so old-fashioned that we always call her 'Granny.'" I wanted to sink through the floor in shame.

Suddenly everything was changed! We children were sent out of the house. I went to stay with my godmother, Mrs. Henry Parish, and the boys went to my mother's aunt, Mrs. Ludlow. My grandmother left her own house and family to nurse my mother, for she had diphtheria and there was then no antitoxin. My father was sent for, but came too late from his exile in Virginia. Diphtheria went fast in those days.

I can remember standing by a window when Cousin Susie (Mrs. Parish) told me that my mother was dead. This was on December 7, 1892. Death meant nothing to me, and one fact

wiped out everything else. My father was back and I would see him soon.

Later I knew what a tragedy of utter defeat this meant for him. No hope now of ever wiping out the sorrowful years he had brought upon my mother—and she had left her mother as guardian for her children. He had no wife, no children, no hope.

Finally it was arranged that we children were to live with my grandmother Hall. I realize now what that must have meant in dislocation of her household, and I marvel at the sweetness of my two uncles and the two aunts who were still at home, for never by word or deed did any of them make us feel that we were not in our own house.

After we were installed, my father came to see me, and I remember going down into the high-ceilinged, dim library on the first floor of the house in West 37th Street. He sat in a big chair. He was dressed all in black, looking very sad. He held out his arms and gathered me to him. In a little while he began to talk, to explain to me that my mother was gone, that she had been all the world to him, and now he had only my brothers and myself, that my brothers were very young and that he and I must keep close together. Someday I would make a home for him again, we would travel together and do many things which he painted as interesting and pleasant, to be looked forward to in the future.

Somehow it was always he and I. I did not understand whether my brothers were to be our children or whether he felt that they would be going to a school and later be independent.

There started that day a feeling which never left me, that he and I were very close and someday would have a life of our own together. He told me to write to him often, to be a good girl, not to give any trouble, to study hard, to grow up into a woman he could be proud of, and he would come to see me whenever it was possible.

When he left I was all alone to keep our secret of mutual understanding and to adjust myself to my new existence.

The two little boys had a room with Madeleine and I had a little hall bedroom next to them. I was old enough to look after myself, except that my hair had to be brushed at night. Of course, someone had to be engaged to take me out, to and from classes, and to whatever I did in the afternoons. I had governesses, French maids, German maids. I walked them all off their feet. They always tried to talk to me, and I wished to be left alone to live in a dreamworld in which I was the heroine and my father the hero. Into this world I withdrew as soon as I went to bed and as soon as I woke in the morning, and all the time I was walking or when anyone bored me.

I was a healthy child, but now and then in winter I would have a sore throat and tonsillitis, so cold baths were decreed as a daily morning routine—and how I cheated on those baths! Madeleine could not always follow me up, and more hot water went into them than would have been considered beneficial had anyone supervised me.

My grandmother laid great stress on certain things in education. I must learn French. My father wished me to be musical. I worked at music until I was eighteen, but no one ever trained my ear! Through listening to my aunt Pussie play I did gain an emotional appreciation of music. She was a fascinating and lovely creature and her playing was one of the unforgettable joys of my childhood.

I would have given anything to be a singer. I felt that one could give a great deal of pleasure and, yes, receive attention and admiration! Attention and admiration were the things through all my childhood which I wanted, because I was made to feel so conscious of the fact that nothing about me would attract attention or would bring me admiration.

As I look back on that household in the 37th Street house, I realize how differently life was lived in the New York of those days, both in its houses and in its streets. There were a number of large and beautiful homes, most of them on Fifth Avenue. Madison Square was still almost entirely residential, and from 14th Street to 23rd Street was the shopping district.

In the streets there were no motorcars. Beautiful horses and smart carriages took their place. Horse-drawn stages labored up Fifth Avenue and horse-drawn streetcars ran on other avenues and crosstown streets; cabs and hansoms were the taxis of those days.

Our old-fashioned, brownstone house was much like all the other houses in the side streets, fairly large and comfortable, with high ceilings, a dark basement, and inadequate servants' quarters with working conditions which no one with any social conscience would tolerate today. The laundry had one little window opening on the back yard and, of course, we had no electric light. We were modern in that we had gas!

The servants' room lacked ventilation and comfortable furnishings. Their bathroom was in the cellar, so each one had a basin and a pitcher in a tiny bedroom.

Our household consisted of a cook, a butler, a housemaid—who was maid as well to my young aunts—and a laundress. The family consisted of my grandmother, Pussie and Maude, who had been the baby of the family until our arrival, Vallie, my older uncle, and, for brief periods, Eddie, who was some two years younger. Eddie had a roving foot and took at least one long trip to Africa which I remember.

Into this household I moved with my two little brothers and their nurse.

My grandmother seemed to me a very old lady, though I realize now that she was still quite young. She was relegated almost entirely to her own bedroom. She came downstairs when she had visitors of her own, but the drawing room, with its massive gilt furniture covered with blue damask, was the room in which she saw her guests. Her daughters took possession of the library, which was a large front room where the piano stood and where a large bow window on the street gave more light.

The dining room, in the extension at the back, was quite a bright room, having three windows on the side. Back of that was

the pantry, where I spent considerable time, for the butler, Victor, was kind to me and taught me how to wash dishes and wipe them, though when I broke one he was much displeased. Sometimes when I was in disgrace and sent supperless to bed, he or Kitty, the chambermaid, would smuggle me up something to eat.

The years had changed my grandmother. With her own children she had been chiefly concerned in loving them. Discipline had been my grandfather's part. When he died she still wanted to surround them with the tenderest love, but later on she found that she could not control Vallie or Eddie or Pussie or Maude. She was determined that the grandchildren who were now under her care should have the discipline that her own children had lacked, and we were brought up on the principle that "no" was easier to say than "yes."

Looking back I see that I was always afraid of something: of the dark, of displeasing people, of failure. Anything I accomplished had to be done across a barrier of fear. I remember an incident when I was about thirteen. Pussie was ill with a bad sore throat and she liked me to do things for her, which made me very proud. One night she called me. Everything was dark, and I groped my way to her room. She asked if I would go to the basement and get some ice from the icebox. That meant three flights of stairs; the last one would mean closing the door at the foot of the stairs and being alone in the basement, making my way in pitch-black darkness to that icebox in the back yard!

My knees were trembling, but as between the fear of going and the fear of not being allowed to minister to Pussie when she was ill, and thereby losing an opportunity to be important, I had no choice. I went and returned with the ice, demonstrating again the fact that children value above everything else the opportunity to be really useful to those around them.

Very early I became conscious of the fact that there were people around me who suffered in one way or another. I was five or six

when my father took me to help serve Thanksgiving dinner in one of the newsboys' clubhouses which my grandfather, Theodore Roosevelt, had started. He was also a trustee of the Children's Aid Society for many years. My father explained that many of these ragged little boys had no homes and lived in little wooden shanties in empty lots, or slept in vestibules of houses or public buildings or any place where they could be moderately warm, yet they were independent and earned their own livings.

Every Christmas I was taken by my grandmother to help dress the Christmas tree for the babies' ward in the Post-Graduate Hospital. She was particularly interested in this charity.

Auntie Gracie took us to the Orthopedic Hospital which my grandfather Roosevelt had been instrumental in helping Dr. Newton Schaefer to start and in which the family was deeply interested. There I saw innumerable little children in casts and splints. Some of them lay patiently for months in strange and curious positions. I was particularly interested in them because I had a curvature myself and wore for some time a steel brace which was vastly uncomfortable and prevented my bending over.

Even my uncle Vallie, who at this time was in business in New York, a champion tennis player and a popular young man in society, took me to help dress a Christmas tree for a group of children in a part of New York City which was called "Hell's Kitchen." For many years this was one of New York's poorest and worst sections. I also went with Maude and Pussie to sing at the Bowery Mission, so I was not in ignorance that there were sharp contrasts, even though our lives were blessed with plenty.

Though he was so little with us, my father dominated all this period of my life. Subconsciously I must always have been waiting for his visits. They were irregular, and he rarely sent word before he arrived, but never was I in the house, even in my room two long flights of stairs above the entrance door, that I did not hear his voice the minute he entered the front door. Walking downstairs was far

too slow. I slid down the banisters and usually catapulted into his arms before his hat was hung up.

My father never missed an opportunity for giving us presents, so Christmas was a great day and I still remember one memorable Christmas when I had two stockings, for my grandmother had filled one and my father, who was in New York, brought one on Christmas morning.

One more sorrow came to my father the winter that my mother died. My little brother Ellie never seemed to thrive after my mother's death. Both he and the baby, Josh, got scarlet fever, and I was returned to my cousin Susie and, of course, quarantined.

The baby got well without any complications, but Ellie developed diphtheria and died. My father came to take me out occasionally, but the anxiety over the little boys was too great for him to give me a good deal of his time.

On August 14, 1894, just before I was ten years old, word came that my father had died. My aunts told me, but I simply refused to believe it, and while I wept long and went to bed still weeping I finally went to sleep and began the next day living in my dream-world as usual.

My grandmother decided that we children should not go to the funeral, and so I had no tangible thing to make death real to me. From that time on I knew in my mind that my father was dead, and yet I lived with him more closely, probably, than I had when he was alive.

My father and mother both liked us to see a great deal of Aunt Gracie. She was beloved by all her great-nephews and -nieces. As I remember her now, she was of medium height, slender, with clear-cut features, but always looked fragile and dainty. Ladies wore long dresses in those days, which trailed in the dust unless they were held up, and I seem to remember her generally in the rather tight-fitting bodices of the day, high in the back, square-cut in front and always with an immaculate frill of white lace or plaited linen around the neck.

Often her hands would lie folded in her lap as she told us a story and I, who loved to look at hands even as a child, remember watching them with pleasure. My Saturdays were frequently spent with this sweet and gracious great-aunt. Alice Roosevelt, Teddy Robinson, and I were the three who enjoyed those days the most.

After my father died, these Saturdays with Aunt Gracie were not allowed. My grandmother felt we should be at home as much as possible, and perhaps she feared we might slip away from her control if we were too much with our dynamic Roosevelt relatives.

The next few years were uneventful for me. New York City in winter, with classes and private lessons, and for entertainment occasionally, on a Saturday afternoon, a child or two for supper and play. My grandmother believed in keeping me young and my aunts believed in dressing me in a way which was appropriate to my age but not to my size. I was very tall, very thin and very shy. They dressed me for dancing class and for parties in dresses that were above my knees, when most of the girls my size had them halfway down their legs. All my clothes seem to me now to have been incredibly uncomfortable.

I wore flannels from the 1st of November until the 1st of April, regardless of the temperature, and the flannels went from my neck to my ankles. Of course, the attire included a flannel petticoat and long black stockings. How hot they were! And the high-button or high-laced shoes that went with them and were supposed to keep your ankles slim.

We children stayed at Tivoli in summer now with a nurse and governess, even if the others were away, and there were hot, breathless days when my fingers stuck to the keys as I practiced on the piano but I never left off any garments and, even in summer, we children wore a good many. I would roll my stockings down and then be told that ladies did not show their legs and promptly have to fasten them up again!

The house at Tivoli was big, with high ceilings and a good many rooms, most of them large. My grandfather had furnished it downstairs in a rather formal way. There were some lovely marble mantelpieces and chandeliers for candles. We had neither gas nor electricity. We had lamps, but often went to bed by candlelight. There were some vitrines with lovely little carved ivory pieces, one tiny set of tables and chairs I loved to look at, and also silver ornaments and little china and enameled pieces collected from various parts of the world.

The library was filled with standard sets of books, besides my grandfather's religious books. A good deal of fiction came into the house by way of my young aunts and uncles. It is astonishing how much Dickens, Scott and Thackeray were read and reread, particularly by Eddie.

On the second and third floors there were nine master bedrooms and four double servants' rooms and one single one. These servants' rooms were much better than those in the town house, but no one thought it odd that there was no servants' bathroom.

There were just two bathrooms in this large house, but it never occurred to us that it was an inconvenience or that it really made much work to have to use basins and pitchers in our own rooms.

We children had to take two hot baths a week, though I think my grandmother could still remember the era of the Saturday night baths. I was expected to have a cold sponge every morning.

My grandmother let me follow her about in the early mornings when she was housekeeping, and I carried to the cook the supplies of flour, sugar and coffee that she so carefully weighed out in the storeroom.

Today few servants would be content to cook in the semi-darkness which reigned in that big, old-fashioned kitchen, with a large stone areaway all around it, over which was the piazza, which left only a small space for the light to filter in. The room where the servants ate had one door leading into the areaway. The laundry

was a little better, because there were two doors leading out onto the terrace, and here I spent many hours.

Our wash—and what a wash it was—was done by one woman, Mrs. Overhalse, without the aid of any electric washing machine or irons. She had a washboard and three tubs and a wringer and a little stove on which were all weights of irons. The stove was fed with wood or coal.

Mrs. Overhalse was a cheerful, healthy soul, apparently able to direct her own household, come and wash all day for us, and then go back at night and finish up on her farm. She had a number of children. She taught me to wash and iron, and though I was not allowed to do the finer things, the handkerchiefs, napkins and towels often fell to my lot, and I loved the hours spent with this cheerful woman.

Pussie had an artistic temperament, and there would be days when I would go to Maude for comfort, for Pussie would not speak to anyone. Gradually I came to accept it as part of her character and to be grateful for all the lovely things she did, and wait patiently for the storms to pass.

She took me one summer with my governess to Nantucket Island for a few days—an exciting trip for a child who never went anywhere except up and down the Hudson River. After a few days I think she was bored with us; in any case, she left. The governess did not have enough money to get us home. Pussie was to return, but she forgot all about us. Finally my grandmother was appealed to and sent enough money to pay our bill and get us home.

When my young aunts and uncles were away, I was much alone. This solitude encouraged my habit of taking a book out into the fields or the woods and sitting in a tree or lying under it, completely forgetting the passage of time. No one tried to censor my reading, though occasionally when I happened on a book that I could not understand and asked difficult question before people, the book would disappear. I remember this happened to Dickens' *Bleak House*. I spent days hunting for it.

Certain things my grandmother insisted on. On Sundays I might not read the books that I read on weekdays. I had to teach Sunday school to the coachman's little daughter, giving her verses to learn, hearing her recite them, and then seeing that she learned some hymns and collects and the catechism. In turn, I must do all these things myself and recite to my grandmother.

Every Sunday the big victoria came to the door and we went to church, and my seat usually was the little one facing my grandmother. Unfortunately, the four miles were long, and I was nearly always nauseated before we reached the church, and equally so before we reached home.

I could not play games on Sunday, and we still had a cold supper in the evenings, though we did not live up to the cold meal in the middle of the day that had been my grandfather's rule.

Madeleine did succeed in teaching me to sew. I hemmed endless dish towels and darned endless stockings. Madeleine caused me many tears, for I was desperately afraid of her. I used to enjoy sliding down the moss-grown roof of our icehouse, and got my white drawers completely covered with green. I went to my grandmother before I went to Madeleine, knowing that my grandmother would scold less severely.

I was not supposed to read in bed before breakfast, but as I woke at five practically every morning in summer and was, I am afraid, a self-willed child I used to hide a book under the mattress. Woe to me when Madeleine caught me reading!

I have no recollection now of why she frightened me. As I look back it seems perfectly ludicrous, but I did not even tell my grandmother how much afraid I was until I was nearly fourteen years old, and then I confessed, between sobs, as we were walking in the woods. How silly it all seems today.

A few things I wanted desperately to do in those days. I remember that when I was about twelve Mr. Henry Sloane asked me to go west with his daughter, Jessie. I do not think I ever wanted to do anything

so much in all my life, for I was fond of her and longed to travel. My grandmother was adamant and would not allow me to go. She gave me no reasons. It was sufficient that she did not think it wise. She so often said "no" that I built up a defense of saying I did not want to do things in order to forestall her refusals and keep down my disappointments.

She felt I should learn to dance, and I joined a dancing class at Mr. Dodsworth's. These classes were an institution for many years, and many little boys and girls learned the polka and the waltz standing carefully on the diamond squares of the polished hardwood floor.

My grandmother decided that because of my being tall and probably awkward I should have ballet lessons besides, so I went once a week to a regular ballet teacher on Broadway and learned toe dancing with four or five other girls who were going on the stage and looked forward to the chance of being in the chorus and talked of little else, making me very envious.

I loved it and practiced assiduously, and can still appreciate how much work lies behind some of the dances which look so easy as they are done on the stage.

2
Adolescence

I had grown fond of the theater and Pussie took me to see Duse, the great Italian actress, when she first came to this country. Then she took me to meet her, a thrill which I have never forgotten. Her charm and beauty were all that I had imagined! I was also allowed to see some of Shakespeare's plays and occasionally to go to the opera, but my young aunts and their friends talked all the time of plays which I never went to see. As a result, one winter I committed a crime which weighed heavily on my conscience for a long time.

My grandmother told me to go to a charity bazaar with a friend. To escape my maid, I told her my friend would have her maid with her and that she would bring me home. Instead of going to the bazaar we went to see a play, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, which was being discussed by my elders and which I, at least, did not understand at all. We sat in the peanut gallery and were miserable for fear of seeing someone we knew. We left before the end because we knew we would be late in reaching home. I had to lie and could never confess, which I would gladly have done because of my sense of guilt, but I would have involved the other girl in my trouble.

My grandmother, after my father's death, allowed me less and less contact with his family, the Roosevelts of Oyster Bay, so I saw little of those cousins. I did, however, pay one or two short visits to Aunt Edith and Uncle Ted in summer.

Alice Roosevelt, who was nearest my age, was so much more sophisticated and grown-up that I was in great awe of her. She was better at sports, and my having so few companions of my own age put me at a great disadvantage with other young people.

I remember the first time we went swimming at Oyster Bay. I couldn't swim, and Uncle Ted told me to jump off the dock and try. I was a good deal of a physical coward then, but I did it and came up spluttering and was good-naturedly ducked and became very frightened. Never again would I go out of my depth.

A favorite Sunday afternoon occupation was to go to Cooper's Bluff, a high sandy bluff with a beach below. At high tide the water came almost to its base. Uncle Ted would line us up and take the lead and we would go down holding on to each other until someone fell or the speed became so great that the line broke. In some way we reached the bottom, rolling or running.

I was desperately afraid the first time we did it, but found it was not so bad as I thought, and then we clambered up again, taking a long time to get there as we slid back one foot for every two we went up.

In some ways I remember these visits as a great joy, for I loved chasing through the haystacks in the barn with Uncle Ted after us, and going up to the gunroom on the top floor of the Sagamore House where he would read aloud, chiefly poetry.

Occasionally he took us on a picnic or a camping trip and taught us many valuable lessons. The chief one was to remember that camping was a good way to find out people's characters. Those who were selfish showed it very soon, in that they wanted the best bed or the best food and did not want to do their share of the work.

My brother did more of this than I did, for he was just Quentin Roosevelt's age, and after I went abroad my grandmother let him visit Uncle Ted and Aunt Edith more frequently. My only other contact with my Roosevelt family was during an annual Christmas holiday visit, when my grandmother permitted me to spend a few days with Auntie Corinne.

This was the only time in the year when I ever saw any boys of my own age. To me these parties were more pain than pleasure. The others all knew each other and saw each other often. They

were all much better at winter sports. I rarely coasted and never skated, for my ankles were so weak that when I did get out on the pond my skating was chiefly on those ankles.

I was a poor dancer, and the climax of the party was a dance. What inappropriate dresses I wore—and, worst of all, they were above my knees. I knew, of course, that I was different from all the other girls and if I had not known they were frank in telling me so! I still remember my gratitude at one of these parties to my cousin Franklin Roosevelt when he came and asked me to dance with him.

I must have been a great trial and responsibility to Auntie Corinne, who tried so hard to give every one of us a good time. But what could she do with a niece who was never allowed to see boys in the intervals between these parties and who was dressed like a little girl when she looked like a very grown-up one?

Suddenly life was going to change for me. My grandmother decided that the household had too much gaiety for a girl of fifteen. She remembered that my mother had wanted to send me to Europe for a part of my education. Thus the second period of my life began.

In the autumn of 1899, when I was fifteen, I sailed for England with my aunt, Mrs. Stanley Mortimer, and her family. She took me in her cabin and told me that she was a poor sailor and always went to bed immediately on getting on the boat. I thought this was the proper procedure and followed suit. As a result, I did not enjoy that trip at all, as most of it was spent in my berth, and I arrived in England distinctly wobbly, never having stayed indoors so long before!

I did not know my beautiful Auntie Tissie as well as I knew my two younger aunts, but I was fond of her and she was always kindness itself to me. I think, even then, she felt more at home in Europe and in England than she did in the United States. She had many friends in that little London coterie known as "The Souls." She was one of the people whom the word "exquisite" describes best.

It was decided to send me to Mlle. Souvestre's school, "Allenswood," at a little place called South Fields, not far from Wimbledon Common and a short distance from London. The school was chosen because my father's sister, Mrs. Cowles, had gone to Mlle. Souvestre's school at Les Ruches, outside of Paris, before the Franco-Prussian War. The siege of Paris had been such an ordeal that Mlle. Souvestre left France and moved to England.

The family felt that, as I was to be left alone, it would be pleasanter to know that the headmistress had a personal interest in me. Tissie took me out to see Mlle. Souvestre, and I was left there with the promise that I would spend Christmas with her in London. When she drove away I felt lost and very lonely.

There were a great many rules and the first one was that all had to talk French, and if they used an English word they had to report themselves at the end of the day.

As my first nurse had been a Frenchwoman and I spoke French before I spoke English, it was quite easy for me, but for many of the English girls who had had little French beforehand it was a terrible effort.

On the inside of each bathroom door were pasted the bath rules and I was appalled to find that we had to fight for three baths a week and were limited to ten minutes unless we happened to have the last period, and then perhaps we could sneak another five minutes before "lights out" was sounded!

We had to make our own beds before leaving the room in the morning. When we got out of bed we had to take the bedclothes off and put them on a chair to air. Our rooms were inspected after breakfast and we were marked on neatness and the way we made our beds. Frequently our bureau drawers and closets were examined, and any girl whose bureau drawers were out of order might return to her room to find the entire contents of the drawers dumped on her bed for rearranging. I also saw beds completely stripped and left to be made over again.

The day began with an early breakfast, café au lait, chocolate or milk, rolls and butter. I think eggs were given to those who wanted them.

Mlle. Souvestre, older and white-haired and obliged to take a certain amount of care of her health, never came to breakfast, but we were well watched over by Mlle. Samaia, a dynamic little woman who adored Mlle. Souvestre and waited on her hand and foot, ran all the business end of the school, and gave Italian lessons.

To be in Mlle. Samaia's good graces you had to show practical qualities. The girls who were singled out by her to hold positions of trust were dependable, could usually do almost anything with their hands, and had the ability to manage and lead their fellow students.

It took me a long time to get into her good graces, for I was a good deal of a dreamer and an American, which to her was an unknown quantity.

Mlle. Souvestre, on the contrary, had a soft spot for Americans and liked them as pupils. A number of her pupils became outstanding women. Auntie Bye, for instance, was one of the most interesting women I have ever known.

My grandfather Roosevelt's interest in cripples had first been aroused by the fact that he had consulted many doctors in trying to do something for his eldest daughter, Auntie Bye. She was not exactly a hunchback but she had a curious figure, thick through the shoulders, evidently caused by a curvature of the spine. Her hair was lovely, soft and wavy. Her eyes were deep-set and really beautiful, making you forget the rest of the face.

Auntie Bye had a mind that worked as an able man's mind works. She was full of animation, was always the center of any group she was with, and carried the burden of conversation. When she reached middle age she was already deaf and the arthritis which was finally to cripple her completely was causing her great pain, but never for a minute did her infirmities disturb her spirit. As they increased she simply seemed to become more determined

to rise above them, and her charm and vivid personality made her house, wherever she lived, the meeting place for people from the four corners of the earth.

She had great executive ability, poise and judgment, and her influence was felt not only by her sister and brothers but by all her friends. To the young people with whom she came in contact she was an inspiration and one of the wisest counselors I ever knew. She listened more than she talked, but what she said was worth listening to!

From the start Mlle. Souvestre was interested in me because of her affection for Anna, and day by day I found myself more interested in her. This grew into a warm affection which lasted until her death.

Mlle. Souvestre was short and rather stout, she had snow-white hair. Her head was beautiful, with clear-cut, strong features, a strong face and broad forehead. Her hair grew to a peak in front and waved back in natural waves to a twist at the back of her head. Her eyes looked through you, and she always knew more than she was told.

After breakfast we were all taken for a walk on the common—and you had to have a good excuse to escape that walk! From about November it was cold and fairly foggy, and the fog rose from the ground and penetrated the very marrow of your bones—but still we walked!

At home I had begun to shed some of the underclothes which my grandmother had started me out with in my early youth, but here in England in winter I took to warm flannels again, and while we had central heat, which was unusual, one had positively to sit on the radiator to feel any warmth. There were only a few of us who had grates in our bedrooms, and those of us who had open fires were envied by all the others.

I can remember crowding into the dining room in order to get as near the radiator as possible before we had to sit down. Nearly all the English girls had chilblains on their hands and feet throughout most of the winter.

Classes began immediately on our return from the walks, and each of us had a schedule that ran through the whole day—classes, hours for practice, time for preparation—no idle moments were left to anyone. Immediately after lunch we had two hours for exercises, and most of us played field hockey during the winter months.

I was as awkward as ever at games, and had never seen a game of hockey, but I had to play something, and in time made the first team. I think that day was one of the proudest moments of my life. I realize now it would have been better to have devoted the time which I gave to hockey to learning to play tennis, which would have been more useful to me later on.

When we came in at four o'clock we found on the schoolroom table big slices of bread about half an inch thick, sometimes spread with raspberry jam, more often with plain butter. Those who were delicate were given a glass of milk.

Then we studied until the bell rang, which sent us scurrying to dress for dinner. Fifteen minutes were allowed to change shoes and stockings and dress.

One day a week we did our mending in the period after four P.M.—under supervision, of course—in the school room.

In the evenings we worked again, though occasionally we were allowed to go down to the gym and dance. Most of our lessons were in French, though Miss Strachey, a member of the well-known literary family, gave us classes in Shakespeare; and of course we had German, Latin and music.

Mlle. Souvestre held her history classes in her library, a charming and comfortable room lined with books and filled with flowers, looking out on a wide expanse of lawn, where really beautiful trees gave shade in summer and formed good perches for the rooks and crows in winter.

We sat on little chairs on either side of the fireplace. Mlle. Souvestre carried a long pointer in her hand, and usually a map hung on the wall. She would walk up and down, lecturing to us.

We took notes, but were expected to do a good deal of independent reading and research. We wrote papers on the subjects assigned and labored hard over them. This was the class we enjoyed beyond any other.

A few of us were occasionally invited in the evening to Mlle. Souvestre's study, and those were red-letter days. She had a great gift for reading aloud and she read to us, always in French, poems, plays and stories. If the poems were those she liked, occasionally she read them over two or three times and then demanded that we recite them to her in turn. Here my memory trained at home stood me in good stead, and I found this an exhilarating way to spend an evening.

I did not know that my grandmother and my aunts had written about me before I arrived, so I felt that I was starting a new life, free from all my former sins. This was the first time in my life that my fears left me. If I lived up to the rules and told the truth, there was nothing to fear.

I had a bad habit of biting my nails. In short order that was noticed by Mlle. Samaia, who set out to cure me. It seemed a hopeless task, but one day I was rereading some letters of my father's, which I always carried with me, and I came across one in which he spoke of making the most of one's personal appearance, and from that day forward my nails were allowed to grow.

By the first Christmas holidays I was quite at home and happy in school. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were spent with my Mortimer family at Claridge's Hotel in London. It did not seem right to have a small tree on a table in a hotel. We had always had a big one at home, but Auntie Tissie saw to it that I had a stocking and many gifts, and the day was a happy one, on the whole.

I had been invited to spend a few days with Mrs. Woolryche-Whittemore and her family in the north of England. Her husband was rector of a church at Bridgenorth, in Shropshire, and she had five little girls, one or two about my own age. She was Douglas

Robinson's sister and held closely to her American ties, so that, though I could only be considered a connection by marriage, I was made to feel like a real relative and taken into the family and treated like one of the children. I enjoyed every minute of that visit, which was my first glimpse of English family life.

For breakfast there was food on one of the sideboards in covered dishes with lamps under them to keep the food warm, and everyone helped himself to whatever he found. High tea was served in the schoolroom about four-thirty in the afternoon, and the children's father joined us sometimes and shared our bread and jam and tea and cake. Those who were very hungry could have an egg. Long walks and drives, endless games, and books on hand for any unoccupied moments made life full for the days I stayed there.

I had traveled up alone and was going back alone. There had been a good deal of discussion as to how I was to get over to Paris to see Auntie Tissie once more before she left for Biarritz. I was to live with a French family for the rest of my holiday, in order to study French.

It was finally decided to engage one of the English inventions, a visiting maid, with good references, to travel from London to Paris with me. I had never seen her but I picked her out without any difficulty in the station and went on to Paris.

I really marvel now at my confidence and independence, for I was totally without fear in this new phase of my life. The trip across the Channel was short, and I managed to find myself a windy corner to keep from being ill, but I was glad enough, once through the customs and on French soil, to curl up in the compartment of the train, and drink café au lait poured out of those big cans that were carried up and down the platforms.

We reached Paris in the early hours of the morning. The maid went with me as far as my aunt's hotel. I spent a few hours with her and was then taken over by Mlle. Bertaux. Actually, there

were two Mlles. Bertaux and their mother. They had a simple but comfortable apartment in one of the less fashionable parts of Paris, and this was to be my first glimpse of French family life.

The furniture was stuffed, as I remember it, and was of an entirely nondescript period. There was, of course, no bathroom, but hot water was brought by the *bonne* à *tout faire* mornings and evenings, and a little round tin tub was available if you felt you must have it.

Meals were good, but different from anything I had known. Soups were delicious, and inferior cuts of meat were so well cooked that they were as palatable as our more expensive cuts. A vegetable was a course in itself, and at each place at the table were little glass rests for your knife and fork, which were not taken out with your plate as you finished each course. The household was run with extreme frugality, and yet they lived well. The two Mlles. Bertaux were excellent guides and charming, cultivated women.

The wide avenues, beautiful public buildings and churches, everything combined to make Paris for me the most exciting city I had ever been in. I saw much of it with Mlle. Bertaux on that first visit, but chiefly we did the things that a visitor should do, not the things which, later, came to mean to me the real charm of Paris.

Mlle. Souvestre had arranged that I should go back to England under Mlle. Samaia's care, and after a delightful holiday I went back to school, hoping that I should have another chance to stay with the Bertaux family.

School life itself was uneventful, but in the world outside great excitement reigned. I had hardly been conscious of our Spanish War in 1898, though I had heard a great deal about the sinking of the *Maine* and about Uncle Ted and his Rough Riders. My grandmother and her family lived completely outside the political circles of the day and took little interest in public affairs. But I remember the joy and excitement when Uncle Ted came back and went to Albany as governor of New York.

One read in the papers of scandals and of battles but it was all on a small scale. This war of ours had hardly touched my daily life.

In England, however, the Boer War, which lasted from 1899 to 1902, was of a more serious nature, and the tremendous feeling in the country at large was soon reflected in the school. At first there was great confidence in rapid victory, then months of anxiety and dogged "carrying on" in the face of unexpected and successful resistance from the Boers.

There was a considerable group in England and in other countries that did not believe in the righteousness of the English cause, and Mlle. Souvestre was among this group. She was, however, always fair and she realized that it would be most unfair to the English girls to try to make them think as she did. With them she never discussed the rights and wrongs of the war. Victories were celebrated in the gym and holidays were allowed, but Mlle. Souvestre never took part in any of the demonstrations. She remained in her library, and there she gathered around her the Americans and the other foreign girls. To them she expounded her theories on the rights of the Boers or of small nations in general. Those long talks were interesting, and echoes of them still live in my mind.

I was beginning to make a place for myself in the school, and before long Mlle. Souvestre made me sit opposite her at table. The girl who occupied this place received her nod at the end of the meal and gave the signal, by rising, for the rest of the girls to rise and leave the dining room. This girl was under close supervision, so I acquired certain habits which I have never quite been able to shake off.

Mlle. Souvestre used to say that you need never take more than you wanted, but you had to eat what you took on your plate, and so, sitting opposite her day after day, I learned to eat everything that I took on my plate. There were certain English dishes that I disliked very much; for instance, a dessert called suet pudding. I disliked its looks as much as anything, for it had an uncooked,