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Literary Productions

Hannah Whitall Smith

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1983

## **Box 10\_9 (Literary Productions--Memoirs- Autobiography-1847)**

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I will begin my Autobiography with some extracts from a journal ~~was~~ commenced when I was fifteen years old when I first conceived the idea of telling the story of my life. It was in 1847, and opened as follows —

Preface.

Last evening as I was sitting in the parlor hearing (I cannot say listening to) my father reading, an idea struck me, and I immediately determined to write a short account of my own life down to the present time (I am 15 years old). I believe authors generally in writing books give their reasons and make apologies for writing, in a preface, and as I want to do everything according to rule I suppose I must write one. So to begin, in the first place I am very fond of making up tales or building air castles, and this I think will be a very interesting subject to employ my leisure moments when I am sewing, walking or alone, and then I do not know but what some day I may be a Minister, and, as their lives are generally written, I think it is not at all improbable that mine may be, so I leave this record of my childhood, and hope it will be published entire, for the account of their childhood and youth is the only part of a minister's journal I ever found interesting. And lastly I have observed that old people always, (with one exception,

my old

Grandmother, make out that they were so good in their youth and so industrious and sedate, that either the last generation was a generation of grandmothers and old maiden aunts from the cradle, or else they are strangely forgetful. Now I know that I am neither good, industrious nor sedate, neither are my friends, and I think if the world goes on becoming as much worse every generation as we are than our seniors <sup>say they were</sup>, there will soon be an end to all good. However, as I sometimes think that perhaps it is only one of the weaknesses of old age, I write this as a record of the follies of my youth, and with this before me I can never say "I was so good and industrious and sedate when I was young."

But I will follow the commandment "Do as you would be done by" and cut my preface off short, for I cannot bear to read prefaces, (that is the reason that I don't like to read out to old people they always want to hear them), and I judge that all my readers are of the same opinion. But before I close I hope I may be allowed to say that the irregularities in the early part of my work must be excused, as I recollect the incidents, but not when they



happened; and also I beg of you who may at this moment be inclined to laugh and pronounce me a "regular simpleton" to call to mind that people always find out those faults soonest which are most conspicuous in themselves, so beware, especially, if there are any standers by, lest they think you yourselves are the simpletons. But I do not wish to tire you so adieu.

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My father John Mickle Whitall (he is a very fine man I can tell you ) was born at Woodbury New Jersey, and for several years followed the sea, but left it and entered into ~~the~~ ~~business~~ business, when he married my lovely mother, Mary Tatum, also a native of Woodbury. I was the first pledge of their love, and was born in 1832, when they had been married between 18 months and two years. They were then boarding at my father's sister's who kept school in a large old fashioned house at the corner of Seventh and Race<sup>St.</sup>. I was named Hannah, after my mother's mother, and <sup>also after</sup> one of my aunts, and oh ! I was loved and carressed-I was the

first child in the family, which consisted of my father, uncle Franklin, two old maid aunts, Hannah and Sally, and a younger one, Elisabeth, who might have been between 23 and 4. There was nothing to good for me. The moment I began to cry one auntie ran one way, the other another, while <sup>my</sup> father would dance me up and down, and my mother <sup>would</sup> say "there darling, don't cry lovely little pet, don't cry, and mamma will give it its dinner" Oh ! it was an important place I filled the first year of my life. It was well it did not last, or, bad as I am, I am afraid I would have been still worse. As soon as I was beginning to be old enough to understand that every one looked lovingly upon me, and that I was <sup>person,</sup> a very important <sup>a</sup> little sister was born, when I was exactly 13 months old. She was named Sallie. She was not made as much fuss over as I was, for, besides my being the eldest, our parents had in the meanwhile moved to Ninth street, and commenced keeping house, and there were not so many to make a fuss over her. When I was about three a little brother James was born, and I commenced going to school. I now commence to write from memory; the former part of this was told me. Almost the

first thing I remember was one afternoon I was playing in the nursery, when I fell against the stove and burned myself very badly, it seemed to be a long time getting well, and I went to my mother's stepmother's in the country to recruit. It seemed to me then as if I stayed there a year, but it could not have been, for I have no recollection of any summer, it was all cold dreary winter, as dreary within as without, for my grandmother was very particular, and my childish ~~naughty~~ ways disturbed her a good deal, and I received many a scolding and punishment, which of course I thought very unjust. Not one pleasant thought with regard to that visit comes up through this long vista of years. **The** thing I remember most distinctly was her making me give some of the candies my dear father sent me, to her<sup>self</sup> and a young woman who was staying there, I know I did not fancy it one bit, and I resolved that when I was 18 (that very advanced age) I would not give her a taste of anything. Oh ! how delighted I was when I received a summons to go home, and welcome the arrival of a little sister Mary, who was born when I was about four. After my return my sister

and self commenced going to school pretty regularly, and with that commenced our troubles. "What use was there anyhow", we would say over and over again, enforcing our words with stamps of the feet and frowning brows, "what use was there anyhow in going to school? It did not do a single bit of good, (I fear the school was not to blame but the scholars,) it was really a shame to send children to school, and, of all children, it was almost wicked we thought to send us; perhaps other children could possibly bear it and live under it, but we could not, and we predicted our early deaths, and then <sup>"our"</sup> father and mother will be sorry, we said, and <sup>"will"</sup> wished they had never sent us, and then such a cross teacher! Of course, as is the case with all children, our teacher was the crossiest ever was, and to plague her, (tho' we were very careful never to let her know it,) we called her Fox, her name <sup>being</sup> ~~was~~ Cox. We would walk up and down the yard talking greivances untill we thought we could bear it no longer. But still there was one pleasure in going to school, and oh ! how delightful it was. On our way to and from school we used to stop at our aunts, who never failed to have something nice to



give us, some cake, pie or pudding and if they had none of these a penny or two to buy something, indeed they were very lovely, and yet they were teachers ! how ~~we~~ <sup>this</sup> used to puzzle our little brains ! one of them, Aunt Sallie, was sick, and we often shared with her the dainties which she as a sick person received from her friends, I think we without exception must have had two of the nicest aunties that ever lived."

I will interrupt the extracts from my Diary here just to say that on looking back now over my life, I can only repeat the same thing. They were, as I remember them, ~~the most~~ <sup>the most</sup> lovely and delightful aunties that could be conceived of. They lived in a large house, and had what we considered grand and stately ways, and they seemed to us like Queens; but they were at the same time so devoted to us, and so overflowing with kindnesses towards us, that ~~it was~~ to be with them was as delicious to us as to be in the company of angels. ~~And yet~~

I now return to my Diary -

As with years aunt Hannah's many kindnesses (for aunt Sallie is dead) have every year increased, I often think I cannot be too grateful for such blessings. So, in spite of our predictions to the contrary, we lived and grew, and oh! we used to have such fun ! real regular fun it was : fun that makes itself seen and



that ever lived."

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our noisy play, and, after earnest consultation together, we would go with mysterious looks into the Bathroom, shut the door to very carefully, and, while some of us ranged ourselves in a circle on the floor, another would go get the doll and some crackery and then we <sup>would</sup> commence. Each <sup>one</sup> would chew a great mouthful of cracker and stick it on ~~her~~ <sup>the doll's</sup> mouth and then we would shake the poor doll, until, amid peals of laughter, the cracker would drop off, and then we pretended she had swallowed <sup>it.</sup> This was a very favorite pastime with us, but one day, sad to relate, our sport was cut short by the doll's head dropping off, exhausted by its numberless shakings. Oh! how we were frightened. We jumped up, and, taking the poor fated doll and its head, we stuffed them into a drawer under several things, and made our escape. ~~Oh~~ What merry creatures we were, we made such a noise laughing and screaming and romping that the Yearly meeting week in spring when all young friends, - (embryo ministers elders and "dear old friends") go out of town was alike joyful to our nurses as to us, they rejoiced that now for once they could have a little quiet, while we, we thought only of the nice green fields and beautiful tall trees where we might play all day if we pleased, and the sweet flowers peeping up from the



green grass with their smiling faces as if to welcome us to the country, oh how we enjoyed it in prospect we would look forward to it thro' a long vista of days and weeks, counting even the hours or minutes, and hailing each eve with pleasure as it brought us one day nearer the long looked for time, at last it would come and was any one more happy than we were on the morning of the day we were going, our little hearts would go pit a pat for joy, and we would run about screaming "oh! I am going to the country to day oh! I am going to the dear darling country to day", and then would come earnest and grave consultations "Does thee think it will rain to day ? Does thee think, mother, that they will come for us ? I know we won't get to go ?" And then the parting moments, we did feel a little sad then, but it was soon over, and we would ride along, laughing merrily, and ready to jump out of the carriage for joy at the sight of dear little white lambs skipping over the bright green grass, and the mooly cows who we were told gave us nice good milk to drink. We could hardly contain our joy, How we pitied the poor old people, (for I called all grown up people old), who had to go to meeting day after day a whole



week, "It must be dreadful" we said "we will never do it,  
 no indeed"; and I would form strong resolutions to marry  
 a farmer so that I could live in the country and enjoy  
 myself, and truly I did enjoy myself, but still there were  
 some troubles. One of the first Yearly meeting weeks  
 I remember I spent with my little sister Mary at uncle  
 Josiah's, the first night we had a severe trial, my little  
 sister took something up in her fingers at table and uncle  
 J. said "fingers were made before forks were they not "  
 poor little Poll she began to cry and I could hardly contain  
 my anger but I vented it afterwards by telling her when we  
 were alone that "it was real impolite it was so", and that  
 some day I would pay them for it when I grew up, and at  
 last I succeeded in comforting her, Besides ourselves  
 there was staying there that week a boy rather older than  
 me named Edward Sharpless and also cousin Charlie, uncle  
 J's son, what a trouble we must have been, cousin Lizzie  
 and Annie were the housekeepers, (their mother was dead)  
 or rather cousin Lizzie was, for cousin Annie had I believe  
 the spinal disease, and used to lie abed all the time and  
 make us Jackstraws. Well cousin Lizzie had the care of us

and she promised us an egg every time we found a dozen, so we were very eager in our search and were generally successful. But once we hunted all over barn, hen house, and haymow, and could only find six; what to do we did not know, we could not do without our egg, and we did not expect they would let us have it unless we found our dozen. At last, after long deliberation, Sambo, a colored boy, proposed that we should take six out of the cellar. We all consented, and after making Charlie promise never to tell, for he was a little bit of a tell tale, we took them <sup>and</sup> ~~and then~~ went in. After eating our egg, we went into the parlor, where Charlie, after a little fumbling about, brought out to our great dismay "Sisters we did not find all those eggs, we took six out of the cellar" oh! charlie! charlie! I tremble for thee as I write, and think how we vowed in our minds never never to forgive him. We would rather have gone without eggs to the end of our lives than to have <sup>had</sup> them know how meanly we had acted; but it was told, and we had to listen with all the patience we could to something, either a lecture, or a scolding, or a talking to. I do not know which, as I cannot remember, but, judging from

them now they are so very lovely, that I think it could not have been very bad. We did not say anything, but, when we went out, poor Charlie had to suffer, and he repented many a time having told it. I was very hoydenish, and used to spend the whole day in the barn with the boys, playing on the hay mows; Edward Sharpless and I took quite a fancy to each other, in our young hearts the spark of love was first kindled, & each day it grew brighter, until at last it burst into a flame, which for a short season blazed with intense brightness. We would walk up and down, talking love, and at last concluded we might as well call each other husband and wife, and promised to marry when we grew up.

Well do I remember the hours we have spent together in the broiling hot sun on the top of a hay stack, holding "converse sweet", or, what ~~we~~ thought was still better, pretending we were hens, and collecting oak balls, which we called eggs, and on which we would sit, every now and then jumping up & exclaiming "Oh! just see how many eggs I've laid"! And then the merry rides on the hay carts together, and the walks on the hills, which we would take, whenever we could get out of sight, and hearing of our cousins, and the times



we would have in the evening trying to hide so that we need not go to bed, for like all children we thought bed in the evening was a dreadful place, almost as bad as school, (bed in the morning was very different). At last the time came for us to go home, how sorry we were, but still there was one comfort, we would get some of the "Yearly Meeting "goodies".

Another yearly meeting week I remember spending at an uncle's at Wilmington with my brother James <sup>who was</sup> about three years younger than myself. That week I cannot look back to with pleasure. Uncle John was a widower, with three children, a girl of my name and age, and two boys older. Uncle John was cross, and we thought then always finding fault, tho' I suppose the truth was we were very mischievous.

Indeed we must have been, for I remember we three, that is my cousin, brother and self, went to her baby house the first day we were there, and taking out all her toys, we laid them in a row on the floor, and went deliberately to work to walk over them. Of course we made great havoc, we jumped and stamped with all our little strength, and there was not one thing left whole. After we were done we contemplated our work of devastation with a very self-satisfied

air, and proceeded to clean up our dirt. My brother and myself were very unhappy, and we took no pains to conceal it, we were in continual fear of a scolding. If we spilt a little water on ourselves we would run and hide until it was dry, and we were dreadfully afraid to ask for anything to eat. But uncle John has changed <sup>now. He</sup> ~~he~~ has married a lovely woman, and has no signs of the cross widower he once was, I love him dearly now. Once I remember his giving us something, we were sitting on the steps crying to go home, when uncle John saw us, and going to a closet he took two saucers and putting some preserves in them gave them to us, telling us not "to cry". But preserves, dearly as we loved them, were not enough to make us happy, and I said to my brother "He thinks he is going to make us stop crying, but he ain't is he?" "No indeed," replied Jim, and we were still more sullen than before. How pleasant home was, and how much dearer, if that could be, our darling father and mother, after such a week as that."

*My first attempt at an Autobiography ended with this. ~~And~~*

*The next volume ~~of~~ was written in 1848 and opened as follows.*

*( See volume I, 1848 + 1849 )*

Sixteen years of my life have passed, and, as I look back, at the bright and happy days of my childhood, and at the quieter but more earnest enjoyments of my youth, my heart falls almost bursting with gratitude to my kind and gracious Creator who has filled my cup of joy almost to overflowing. Truly my life has been one fair scene of sunshine and of flowers.

This might seem a very roscate view to take of one's life, ~~but on~~ ~~look~~ and might be set down to the glamour that youth casts over everything. But on looking back now ~~at the~~ when over sixty years have passed, I can still say the same.



(2)

M Y C H I L D R E N.

## MY CHILDREN.

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My children have been the joy of my life. I cannot imagine more exquisite bliss than comes to one sometimes in the possession and companionship of a child. To me there have been moments, especially when my children were small and there were no dividing interests, that have seemed more like what the bliss of heaven must be than anything else I can conceive of; and I think this feeling has taught me more of what God's feeling towards His children must be than anything else in the universe. If I, a human being with limited capacity, can find such joy in my children, what must God, with His infinite heart of love, feel toward His ! I believe that most of my ideas of the love and goodness of God have come from my own experience as a Mother because I could not conceive that God would create me with a greater capacity for love and self-sacrifice than He had Himself ; and I have always been able to answer every doubt that may have arisen in my mind as to the extent and quality of the love of God by simply.

looking at my own feelings as a Mother. I cannot understand the possibility of selfishness on the Mother's part coming in to her relation to her children.' It seems to me a Mother who can be selfish and think of her own comfort and her own welfare before that of her children is an abnormal Mother who fails in the very highest duty of motherhood. If one looks at what we call the lower creation one will see that every animal teaches us this supreme duty of self-sacrifice on the part of the mother who in all instances will suffer herself to be killed rather than that harm should come to her offspring. I speak of self-sacrifice, but in my opinion it ought not to be called sacrifice, and any true Mother<sup>who</sup> knows the reality of motherhood would scorn the idea that the care of her children involved self-sacrifice on her part : the sacrifice would be if she could not care for them, not that she can. I know no more fallacious line of argument than that which is founded upon the idea that children ought to be grateful for the self-sacrifice on the Mother's part. Her claim to love and consideration on the part of her children depends altogether to my mind upon how true a Mother she has been



in the sense I describe ; and I believe that thousands of disappointed Mothers who have not received the gratitude and consideration they would like have only themselves to thank for having demanded it instead of having won it ; and all this has taught me to understand God's feelings towards us : that self sacrifice on the part of Christ was simply the absolutely necessary expression of His love for us, and that the amazing thing would have been not that He did it, but if He had not done it. The duty of the Creator toward the thing created is to my thinking infinitely greater than the duty of the thing created toward the creator; and I have long felt that George Macdonald was right when he put in one of his books the following epitaph, as being found in a churchyard : - "O Thou who didst the serpent make for any of his children : Our pardon give and pardon take.." only the good ones We talk a great deal about the awfulness of our sins against God, but what about the awfulness of our own fate in being made sinners. Would not any of us infinitely rather that a sin was committed against us than that we ourselves should commit a sin against any body else ? Is

it not a more dreadful thing to be made a sinner than to be sinned against ? And since by one man sin entered into the world is it not the absolute and inevitable outcome of this that the God who planned the disaster should also have planned that since by one man sin came, by one man redemption should come, and that the remedy should equal the disease ? Have we not sometimes seen mothers whose children were suffering from some inherited disease, or some inherited bad tendency, thankful to lay down their lives in self-sacrifice for the child if only by this means they may in any way be able to atone for the harm they have done in bringing the child into the world under such sad conditions ; and could God do less ?

Since I had a sight of the mother heart of God, I have never been able to feel the slightest anxiety for any of His children ; and by His children I do not mean only the good ones but I mean the bad ones just as much. In fact is it not true that the Good Shepherd leaves the ninety and nine good sheep in order to go out into the wilderness to find the one naughty sheep that is lost ? And that very word 'lost', viewed in the light of motherhood, has really a

blessed meaning : for nothing can be lost, that is not owned somewhere, and if a person is a lost sinner it only means that they are owned by somebody and that that somebody is bound to be out looking for them, so that the word 'lost' contains in itself the strongest proof of ownership that one could desire. Who can imagine a mother with a lost child ever having a ray of comfort until the child is found, and who can imagine God being more indifferent than a mother ? In fact I believe that all the problems of the spiritual life which are often so distressing to conscientious souls would vanish, like mist before the rising sun if the full blaze of the mother heart of God should be turned upon them.



same thing would be true of them. Long life is not  
 a desirable thing after the faculties begin to fail,  
 but if it must be endured, we old people must make  
 it as pleasant for the people around us as possible  
 and as comfortable for ourselves, and we can only do  
 this by the plans I have suggested. We must not be  
 burdens upon them, we must not demand anything, and  
 we must be so delightful, if we possibly can be, - at  
 any rate we must try - that they will feel us to be  
 sympathisers and not hinderers, and be able to live  
 their lives with a sense of our approval, instead of  
 our disapproval. Moreover, I think every old person  
 ought to provide themselves with some occupation for  
 their old age, that they can carry on without inter-  
 fering with the occupations of the young. I would  
 suggest making scrap-books, knitting, playing patience,  
 and a willingness to look on and enjoy without partici-  
 pating in the pursuits of the young, ~~without what I call~~  
 listening to <sup>what I call</sup> their clash-ma-clavers, and holding their ~~own~~  
 tongues where they cannot approve. Also they must  
 cultivate contentment in being alone and leaving the

younger generation to have their intercourse and discussions without oversight. It is a fatal trait in an old person to insist on the companionship of the young. It stands to reason that young people must want associates of their own age, and many a parent makes himself an utter burden upon his children by always insisting on their companionship. I remember a lady who was telling me about what a devoted Mother she had. I had my own suspicions about the devotion of that Mother, so I said, "Tell me exactly how she shows this wonderful love." "Well," she said, "we live in the country about two miles from the village <sup>where</sup> all my friends live ~~in~~ and it used to be the greatest joy of my life to go off to spend an afternoon with these friends ; but whenever I went my Mother upon my return would say she had been lying on the sofa crying all the afternoon because she felt so lonely; and as a consequence, since my Mother loved me so much, I scarcely ever felt I ought to go and leave her." I said "Do you call that love ?" I call it selfishness. No love is true love unless it can be contented to do without the presence of its object, if that absence adds to its

*object's happiness. George MacDonald says  
that the truest mark of real love is that it is willing*

WHAT I HAVE DISCOVERED WITH REGARD TO THE  
RELATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND  
CHILDREN:

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I have, I believe, naturally a very strong maternal instinct, and consequently have had my eyes specially opened to the rights of children and to the responsibilities of parents. All that I have said with regard to the responsibility of <sup>the</sup> Creator on the part of God applies, though of course necessarily in a lesser degree, to the responsibility of parents. If you bring children into the world, you are bound by the merest elements of duty to do your best for those children in every possible way. You are bound to make them happy; you are bound to give them the fullest possible chance in life; you are bound to sacrifice yourself for their good always and everywhere. The responsibilities of ownership are nowhere so profound as in the case of parents and children, and yet I have discovered that as a general thing it is put the other way, and the duties of the children towards their parents are dwelt upon, to the exclusion of the responsibilities of the parents towards their



children. Children are taught that they owe them so much, whereas to my mind it is parents who owe the children, and not the greatest sacrifices they can make can ever fully repay that parental debt. The outcome of this line of thought has made me very sensitive to the rights and the wrongs of children, and I am convinced that for the most part children are treated in an uncomprehending, foolish fashion that is the cause of most, if not all, of childish naughtiness. I am convinced that children are naturally good, unless there is something abnormal in their inheritance, and that their naughtiness is generally the fault of the grown-up people around them. If children were treated with the same consideration and politeness with which grown-up people treat each other, they would respond with the same politeness and consideration <sup>towards their elders,</sup> and the relations between parents and children would be as pleasant and harmonious as the relations between sensible, grown-up, well-behaved people. (See my book on "Educate our Mothers").

Nothing can minimize the responsibilities of creation, either in God towards his creatures, or in parents towards their children, and to come to a realisation of these responsibilities alters one's whole relation to God, and one's

whole relation to one's children. As regards God, it gives one perfect ease and rest of mind, and takes all anxiety out of one's life. As regards children, it gives one absolute unlimited sympathy and comprehension and consideration and self-forgetfulness; and, in proportion as one believes in a good God, so one becomes a good mother, and vice versa, as one is a good mother, so one comes to believe in a good God. And just as God has given to us as a part of our divine heritage a certain independence of spirit which has its dangers but has also its grand possibilities in the choice between good and evil, so must we give our children a similar independence of spirit, realising that they are individual human beings as much as we are ourselves, and that they have as good a right to a free development of their individuality as we have to a free development of our own. <sup>myself</sup> ~~And~~ I believe that there is nothing that so helps children to be really good as this permission to be themselves.

I have great faith in praise as one of the chief elements of training children : recognise the good in the child and cultivate that, and ignore as far as possible

whatever may seem to be evil~ Do not scold for disobedience, but praise for obedience, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> such is the law of mind by which we always like to do the thing for which we are praised, obedience will become sooner or later the settled habit of the child and disobedience the exception? My friend, Miss Willard, always said that an angel and a fiend resided in every bosom, and that her mission in life was to appeal to the angel and to ignore the fiend, and by this means she succeeded more than almost any one I ever knew in eliminating the evil and in bringing out into active exercise the good in every one she met. I knew a family with two sons, one of them, being the oldest, received all the stored-up scoldings of the parents' life-time in their earnest, but mistaken, desire to do the best they could for him. The other was the youngest, who came after a large family of children, ~~and~~ when experience and wisdom had very much modified their views, and he was brought up on praise~ The result in the case of the elder one was disastrous in the fact that the worst in his nature was brought out, while in the younger one the best was brought out, and he grew up almost without a fault~



Another thing about children is that they ought to be taught from the very beginning that God loves them and is on their side. The common way used to be to teach children that they were naughty little wretches, and that God couldn't love them unless there was some change. They were made to feel outside, as if they were goats and not sheep, and as if the eye of an angry God was upon them continually. People would say, God does not love you when you are naughty, ~~and then~~ <sup>while</sup> when ~~the~~ <sup>the same</sup> children grow up they have to learn that God does love them when they are naughty, although He does not love their naughty. And I believe that a great proportion of <sup>the</sup> wrong views of God that are current at the present day result from this false teaching to the children of the last generation. They get it so ingrained into them that God is against them, or angry with them, that they can not get rid of the idea, and find it impossible to believe in a God of love and tenderness.

## Self sacrifice -

(8)

In ordering one's life, the first thing is to secure absolute independence; nothing short of this can possibly be comfortable (See Philosophy about Liberty).

My theory of life is that nothing ought to be forced or put on, but that everything ought to spring from an interior source. I never believed in doing what you did not want to do, for it always has seemed to me that such things were sure to be badly done; that just as instinct leads animals to eat the thing that is most wholesome for them, so I believe instinct will generally lead people into the paths, physically, mentally and spiritually that they are most fitted for.

That when we force our inclinations, we are going in a path that is not the path best suited to us, and therefore are almost sure to make a failure. When I became a Christian, I found the warrant for this in the teaching that God works in us to will and to do. Most people think only of the latter part of that, to do, and have an idea that if they do things that are contrary to their natural inclinations they are likely to be doing things that are of divine origin ; and, consequently, there is a jar in life between inclination and duty. My theory is that inclination and duty go together in every rightly balanced mind, and that if God wants us to do anything, He works in us first to will to do that thing, which simply means that we want to do it. People talk about taking up the cross, and make a great point of it in the Christian life, seeming to think that everything that is a cross must be right because it is a cross. My idea of the cross is that it is not living in misery, but actual dying : to kill self does not mean to set self on a pinnacle and go around it sticking needles into every sensitive part, but it means to be done with self, to throw it aside, to cast it



behind your back, to pay no attention to it, to reckon it as a thing that has no part in your life. When God works in you to will He gets hold of the master-spring of your nature, for when you will to do a thing, it is always easy to do that thing, no matter how many trials and obstacles may attend it. We often say "My will is set on so and so, and in spite of everything trying to hinder I am determined to do it." We all know that the only way to manage cross-grained people is to make them want the thing themselves : if we demand it, they are sure to oppose: if they themselves propose it, it is sure to go. And this to my mind is the way God manages us : His demands arouse opposition, but if He gets possession of our will and works it in the direction that He wishes us to go, He can be certain of success.

I think there is a great deal in the Catholic teaching regarding vocations. If a person feels a real inclination toward a thing, that, to my mind, is generally a sign that that is the thing for him to do. We Quakers

have the expression that the light shines on the path, where the Lord would have us walk, and it is a Quaker tradition that you never ought to walk in any path, that looks dark. For myself I have always decided points of duty by doing the thing I most wanted to do, and leaving undone the thing for which I had a distaste. I do not mean by this a surface wanting, or a surface distaste : I mean the deep-down desire of my will, which very often is contradicted by a surface distaste to the thing, but which really expresses what my real ego wants. For instance, I want, we will say, to take a long journey to attain some object. I may feel a great distaste to the journey, to the time it takes, to the money it ~~uses~~<sup>costs</sup>, and to the fatigue involved, but if I at the bottom really want to attain that object, I will ignore all the surface objections, and, as Paul says, "Count them but dung" that I may win the thing I am after. I believe therefore that taking up the cross means that you die to all your surface distastes and are alive only to the deep-down desire of your soul. A girl may be a great flirt, but when she finally has a

true lover her desire for flirtation is dead, she takes up the cross - or in other words she is dead-to flirtation because she no longer wants to do it. An Alpine climber takes up terrible crosses in the way of bodily exposure and suffering, but he wants to climb, and therefore he looks upon these as of no account. When I was a child, I thought grown-up people took up their cross to play, that they wanted to play as much as I did, but that duty compelled them to give it up. I found when I was grown up myself that the reason that I took up the cross to play was because I did not want to play any more : I had lost the taste for play. And I believe that the true secret of a harmonious and successful life in spiritual affairs and in earthly affairs as well is to have the will set on the right thing and to want to do it, and ~~that~~ whenever you do not want to do a thing you ought either to refuse to do that thing, or to wait until the desire comes. In planning the lives of children I am very sure that it is of the greatest importance to find out what the children like best and, as far as



possible, to prepare them for carrying out their own natural bent. We understand this in glaring instances, such as a child with a decided bent for music being forced to devote himself to mathematics, or vice-versa; and we all know of many careers which might have been most valuable, spoiled from this thwarting of the natural bent. Some people might think that this gives an opportunity for a great deal of wickedness, but my own opinion is that, except in abnormal cases, the natural bent of everybody is toward good, and that a large part of the crookedness and the ugliness of people is not inborn, but caused by those around them, by bad training or misunderstanding ; and, as I say in my book on the education of Mothers, I believe, more often than not, it ought to be the Mothers, or the governesses, or the nurses who are punished and stood in the corner than the children themselves. When Christ says that His yoke is easy, I think He really means it is easy and that it is only ignorance and misunderstanding of Christians that makes it seem hard. I never shall forget a dear Christian girl who came to me once in great

distress of mind because she said she could not help thinking that Christ had told an untruth, when He said His yoke was easy, for she herself had found it so awfully hard. She had got the idea that everything she wanted to do was wicked, and that everything she did not want to do was right, and as a consequence she was wrecking all the joy and comfort of her life by continually thwarting her inclinations and violating her true instincts. She loved to paint, and because she loved it she thought it was wicked ; and whenever she painted a picture she did it as if she were committing a sin, and when it was done felt obliged, as a penance, to burn it up. No wonder she thought the yoke of Christ was hard. I am sorry to say that at the time she told me all this I too, against my common-sense, had imbibed the idea that true religion consisted in doing everything I did not want to do, and was trying my best to be an ascetic after this mistaken pattern.

The subject of self-sacrifice and unselfishness would come in here. I do not believe in unqualified, unreasoning self-sacrifice. I believe with George Macdonald that we must be as willing to have others make

sacrifices for us, as we are to make sacrifices for them, and very often with conscientious people, especially young women, a present ease of mind is obtained by an act of self-sacrifice which ~~ruins~~ all future life. I think this is especially the case with daughters at home : it seems to be the conventional idea that daughters at home ought to be always on tap and ready to sacrifice themselves to every whim of their parents. It seems many times easier to do this than to stand out for an independent life, but in the end it is really a greater unkindness to the parents than a present assertion of independence would be : for in the latter case often that very independence brings into the parents' <sup>lives</sup> ~~life~~ interests and pleasures that would otherwise never come to them. I would say, therefore, to any one with this impulse towards self-sacrifice and yet with a strong inclination after something that seems to oppose it, "Do not make up your mind until you have weighed the subject all round and reckoned which is of the more lasting importance." I knew, for instance, of a young girl who had a very strong set in the



direction of being thoroughly educated. She lived in a conservative circle where the whole trend of thought was that it was more important for girls to attend to home duties than to get an education. She insisted on the education at the cost of many tears and many revilings, and was considered a monster of selfishness; but, in the end, this very education was the greatest blessing to the father and mother who had opposed it, and brought into their lives their chiefest interests and pleasures, as well as social success and many advantages. Had she given way from an impulse of self-sacrifice, her life would have been wasted, she would have been miserable herself, and her family would have lost incalculably. This is only an illustration of what I mean. Where there is a strong vocation in any direction, I believe it ought to be carried out ; and all the old people, if they had their own true interest at heart, would help it. If they are too short-sighted to see this, then it must be carried out in spite of them. The permanent good is always of far more value than the present ease of self-sacrifice and ought always to be considered.

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## GROWING OLD.

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I have <sup>many</sup> ~~great~~ theories about the right way to grow old. When I was young, old people were awfully in my way, simply because they always would interfere with the next generation. They seemed to have no comprehension of the fact that each generation has its own way of looking at things, and must carry out its work in its own fashion, and they were consequently always insisting that their experiences warranted them in insisting on the next generation adopting their ideas and working according to their style. There is nothing more fallacious, in my opinion, than going by experience, because you always break out in a fresh place where the experience doesn't fit in : for one generation to go by the experience of the generation before is more or less fatal. Fortunately, my father and mother, especially my father, was a man of such a young mind that while I was young he recognised the right of each generation to guide its own life, and he would always



say, when any question came up involving the difference of view between the two generations, "She's forty, let her decide for herself !"

But I had an old grandmother who was a living illustration of what I mean : nothing anybody did or thought or said which differed from the ideas in which she had been brought up could by any possibility seem right in her eyes. She thought, for instance, that our father and mother were a great deal too indulgent, and when with us, she spent her time in finding fault with the way they treated us, and in scolding us for the things they allowed us to do. I remember very well one time when they were obliged to be away from home for two or three days and left us in her charge. It seemed to us that she hardly wanted us to breathe, so continually did she scold us for everything we did. It was, "Dont do this", and "Dont do that", and "Dont do the other", from morning to night until our lives became a perfect burden to us : and I remember when we heard our father and mother arriving at home, instead of going down to the door to meet them, and tell them how glad we were to see them, we showed our gladness by running off immediately and doing some

of the things that our grandmother had forbidden us, and going into a bit of the woods where our parents had always allowed us to go but where our grandmother had forbidden us. It looked as though we were not glad to have our parents back, but it really was the greatest expression of gladness that we could have given, for it showed that we had got back our liberty. Our grandmother thought it was a most improper and shocking way for children to receive their parents after a long absence, and showed great want of feeling, but I think our father and mother probably understood the feeling in our hearts, and recognised that the highest expression of love is in the perfect liberty which comes with it. But I have often thought of this as an illustration of how easy it is to misunderstand and attribute wrong motives to what is really, if the truth were known, the greatest possible expression of love and confidence.

Because of this sympathy with the feelings of children in my father and mother, as far as my childhood went I have no recollection of being much bothered with old people, with the exception of this grandmother. This,

however, is rare : as a general thing I have discovered that family ties are the most binding and 'uncomfortable' things in the world, arising from the fact that families feel at liberty to interfere with one another in very uncomfortable ways. The fact that a person is your child, or your brother, or your sister, gives you no liberty to interfere with their independence, which is after all the dearest possession of the human soul.

But when I grew up and began to think for myself, it was different, and old people then became the greatest bugbears of my life, and I used to think that if I could only live in a country where everybody was young, and nobody interfered with anybody else, I should have some chance of really living. I was very receptive of new ideas, and always wanted to try new things, and I remember very well when I first got a sewing machine I had to buy it in secret and hide it in the most inaccessible room in my house, and not let anybody know I had it, because the old people thought it was wicked. I never have been able to know why they objected, but one thing is certain : I was made to feel like a sinner



because I had a sewing machine. In the same way, when I got a cottage organ, I had to hide it from the old people, and had to steel my mind to bear their disapproval and their solemn words of warning, for they seemed to think that sewing machines and cottage organs lay in the direct road to Hell. I remember perfectly well when I first began to go to picture galleries the disapproval of my older Quaker friends was something appalling, and I distinctly remember standing before the statue of Hero and Leander in the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, when I suppose I must have been about eighteen, and feeling that I was making a deliberate choice between going to Heaven and going to Hell, and decided that on the whole I would take the statue and Hell, rather than go to Heaven without seeing the statue.

I had a great deal of opposition and disapproval as to the way I brought up my children and ordered my life, and I was finally obliged to make a declaration of independence. I lived next door to my mother, and I went to her and said, "Now, Mother, we have got to

settle whether we are going to live happy next each other or unhappy. I must live my own life and carry out my ideas. If over everything I do there is to be opposition and quarrelling, I shall move away and go where nobody can know what I do, and keep my life an entire secret. But if, on the other hand, I can be allowed to do what I think right, and regulate my life and my children according to my <sup>own</sup> ideas, without interference, then we can be very happy and harmonious together, and it is better to settle the question once for all than to have this continual disagreement."

My dear mother, who really was devoted to me, and who had only interfered from a feeling of duty, had the unusual sense to see that matters would have to be the way I said, and gave up in a beautiful way all criticism and consented to accept me as I was and make the best of it, and the result was that we were ever after most united and happy together, and she, no longer feeling the responsibility was able really to enjoy the variety and interest brought into her life by my independent doings and sayings, and I was able to tell her everything and make her a sharer in all my interests.

And from this experience of mine, I would advise all grown-up people that have to live together, or near each other, to each one make a declaration of independence, and agree to live their independent lives without interfering with one another. Since I have been in England I have realised the importance of this a great deal more even than I did in America, for I have seen numberless family lives that could have been happy together perfectly ruined by the interference of one with another, especially, I must say, with the interference of Fathers. The fact that fathers hold the purse-strings gives them a sort of power that is very difficult to resist, and there are at this minute in England thousands and thousands of tyrannical fathers who have made the lives of their whole families perfectly miserable. In fact I hardly know a father whose death would not be a great relief to his family, especially to the daughters, because the sons in England are more independent. No father has a right to keep a grown-up daughter in financial dependence ; she ought to be made as financially independent as the sons are made, according



to the means of the father, and ought to have money settled on her and not doled out. And I would advise all young people to insist on their independence. Daughters, especially, are too conscientious in regard to their family duties. They ought to consider, not the easy self-sacrifice of the moment, but the absolute duty of making their own lives and developing their own character and their own powers and preparing themselves for the life they must live when their parents are gone. Parents are very apt to think that daughters ought to be kept on tap, ready for any little social requirement that comes up, and never with a chance to live any life of their own, and as a consequence in thousands of instances middle-aged women are stranded in life at the death of their parents with no pursuits of their own and no real friends, and drag out aimless useless wearisome existences.

In my own case, my declaration of independence carried me triumphantly through the ordinary things of life, but when it came to religion, I must say that I suffered a martyrdom from the interference of the

older generation. My views of religion were entirely different from the views of the previous generation. I do not say whether they were better or worse, but they were different, and it would have been as impossible for me to <sup>move backward</sup> ~~take~~ and adopt the views of my parents or their generation as it was for them to move forward and adopt my views and the views of my generation. And I am afraid, in looking back, that I was as intolerant of the older generation, and as anxious to bring them to my views, as they were intolerant of me. It was a fruitless squabble, and caused needless heart-burnings before both sides came to see that they must allow each other perfect independence, and that there was a possibility of union of spirit even in the midst of difference of views.