FLORENCE HOWE HALL

MEMORIES GRAVE AND GAY

Florence Howe Hall

Memories grave and gay

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FOREWORD

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It has been a pleasure for me to recall, at the kind request of the Messrs. Harper & Brothers, the memories of a lifetime, even though some sad thoughts have mingled with the happy ones. So many bright shapes have risen out of the past at my bidding that the difficulty of selection has been great. Beloved faces seem to look out at me and say, “Why did you leave me out?” The ghosts of noble deeds, the memories of stirring scenes sweep softly by me, murmuring: “Are we not worthy of mention?”

Indeed and indeed you are, bright spirits of the past and of the present also, but in my small mosaic all the precious stones would not fit.

For the rest, if the store of my childhood’s early memories seems to be unduly large, it must be whispered that when, some twenty-five years ago, I began to record my reminiscences, a good fairy, my mother, helped me.

MEMORIES GRAVE AND GAY

MEMORIES
GRAVE AND GAY

I

INTRODUCTORY

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The Romance of Philanthropy Causes the First Meeting of Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe and Julia Ward.—Letter of Congratulation from the Poet Longfellow.—The "Chevalier."—The Wedding-tour in Europe.—The Eldest Daughter, Julia Romana, Is Born in Rome.—Why She Was "Mary" and I Was "Martha."

THOSE stern censors, Time and Space, forbid my giving an account of the early lives of my parents, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, since these have been already described in their respective biographies and in my mother's *Reminiscences*. Suffice it to say here that at the time of his marriage my father was already known on both sides of the Atlantic on account of his services in the Greek Revolution, as well as for his work for the blind. As "Surgeon-in-chief of the Fleet," soldier, and almoner of America's bounty, had he aided the Greeks in their long struggle with the barbarous Turks. The King of Greece made him a Knight of St. George, a title which he himself never used. But his intimate friends, fellow-members of the "Five of Clubs"—Longfellow, Charles Sumner, Prof. Cornelius C. Felton and George S. Hilliard—called him "Chevalier," which my mother abbreviated to "Chev."

It was the Ward sisters' interest in his famous pupil, Laura Bridgman, the blind deaf-mute, which brought about the first meeting of my parents, Charles Sumner and the poet driving the young ladies to the Institution for the Blind. In the following winter, 1842–43, Doctor Howe and Julia Ward became engaged, their marriage taking place in April, 1843. Longfellow's beautiful letter of congratulation addressed to the "Chevalier" has been published elsewhere. I am glad to be able to give the one he wrote to our mother's "Brother Sam."

Cambridge, *March 6, 1843*.

My Dear Sam,—I ought to have written you long ago on the great event of our brave Chevalier's conquering the Celestial City; but I have been away from home, and have moreover been hoping to see you here, and expecting to hear from you. The event did not surprise me; for the Chevalier is a mighty man of Love, and I noted that on the walls of the citadel (Julia's cheeks) first the white flag would be displayed, and anon the red, and then again the white. The citadel could not have surrendered to a braver, better or more humane Knight.

Seriously, my dear Sam, and most sincerely do I rejoice in this event. Julia could not have chosen *more* wisely—nor the Doctor *so* wisely; and I think you may safely look forward to a serene and happy life for your sister. And so God speed them upon Life's journey: "To the one be contenting enjoyments of his auspicious desires; to the other, a happy attendance of her chosen muses."

I write you a very short note this morning, because I am going down to hear Sumnerius lecture in the Law School, on

Ambassadors, Consuls, Peace & War, and other matters of International Law.

Write me soon—as soon as you can; and say that you are coming to Cambridge erelong. Life is short. We meet not often; and I am most sincerely,
Henry W. Longfellow.

My mother has described in her *Reminiscences* the wonderful wedding-tour in Europe. In Rome, her eldest daughter, Julia Romana, was born. She fancied she saw, in the baby's radiant little face, a reflection of the beautiful forms and faces she had so earnestly contemplated before the child's coming. Other people saw it there in after-years. The exaltation of her mother's spirit deeply influenced the mind and character of sister Julia, "the first-born daughter of a hero's heart." She was so unworldly that she did not know what worldliness was. Her lovely face and rapt upward look have, fortunately, been preserved by the pencil of our uncle, Luther Terry.

After a year and a half in Europe my parents returned to America. The European travel had been by post, in their own carriage. The tour had been expensive and economy was for a time necessary. My mother accordingly did some clerical work, thus earning the money for my baby-clothes.

I soon evinced a practical turn of mind, very different from that of my sister. The tendency to economy with which the family have sometimes reproached me is due, as I believe, to pre-natal influences. Perhaps it is also an inheritance from French ancestors!

II

STORIES TOLD US BY OUR PARENTS

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The Alarming Three Bears of the Howe Coat-of-arms.—Brutality at the Old Boston Latin School.—Boyish Mischief.—Papa's Church.—Grandmother Cutler Rebukes Wemyss, the Biographer of Washington and Marion.—Grandfather Ward, His Liberality and His Stern Calvinism.

SOME one has said that it is hard to live under the shadow of a great name. It has been my great privilege and happiness to live, not under the shadow, but in the light of two honored names, those of my father and mother. They were honored and beloved because of their own love for and service to their fellow-men.

My father was nearly eighteen years older than my mother. He had had the responsibility and care of his young blind pupils for ten years before his marriage. Hence he was well fitted to take an active part in our training, especially as he dearly loved children. The absence in Europe, for more than a year, of my mother and the two younger children, Harry and Laura, brought Julia and myself under his care when we were respectively five and six years old. We thus early formed the habit of close companionship with him, to which, as the elder, we had special claim. Indeed, we all followed him about to such a degree that he once exclaimed

jestingly, “Why, if I went and sat in the barn I believe you children would all follow me!”

The housekeeper who was with us in these early years would sometimes say, “You do not know what a good father you have.” Of course we did not. We knew that “Papa” made us his companions whenever he could possibly do so. We knew that as “a good physician” he bound up our small wounds and cared for us when we were sick. We knew that if we did wrong we must expect his firm yet gentle rebuke. Did he not tell me about a naughty little devil I had swallowed, bidding me open my mouth so that he could get hold of its tail and pull it out? Lessons of thrift and generosity he early inculcated. We received a penny for every horseshoe and for every pound of old iron we picked up about the place.

He constantly sent, by our hands, gifts of the delicious fruit of the garden to our schoolmates and to the blind children.

When our mother played the most delightful tunes for us to dance, Papa would join in the revels, occasionally pleading “a bone in his leg” as an excuse for stopping. Together they planned and carried out all sorts of schemes for our amusement and that of our little friends.

When, at a child’s party in midwinter, fireworks suddenly appeared outside the parlor window, the great kindness of our parents in doing so much for our amusement began to dawn upon my childish mind. Indeed, the Howe juvenile parties were thought very delightful by others besides ourselves.

Our parents told us stories of their youth, in which we were greatly interested. My father must have been a very small boy when he was alarmed by the Howe coat of arms—three bears with their tongues out. I fancy he came across this vision in the attic and that it was banished there by Grandfather Howe, who was a true Democrat.

Father also told us that the family was supposed to be related to that of Lord Howe. I find the same statement made in Farmer's genealogy of the descendants of "John Howe of Watertown freeman 1640, son of John Howe of Hodinhull Warwickshire."

Anecdotes of his school-days showed that my father, despite his feelings in the presence of the three bears, was a very courageous boy. At Latin School the master whipped him for some small fault, but could not succeed in his amiable intention of making the child cry, "though he whipped my hand almost to jelly." His Federalist schoolmates were as brutal as their master. Because Sam Howe, almost the only Democrat in school, refused to abandon his principles, they threw him down-stairs.

Grandfather Howe lost a great deal of money by the failure of the United States government to pay him for the ropes and cordage which he, as a patriotic Democrat, supplied to them in large quantities during the War of 1812. Hence, when his son went to college, young Sam Howe helped to pay his way by teaching school in vacation. The country lads, some of whom were bigger than he, thought they could get the better of the new schoolmaster. He restored order by the simple but sometimes necessary

process of knocking down the ringleader. The handsome young collegian found more difficulty in managing the girls!

He must have been very young when he assured his sister that the pump had a very agreeable taste on a frosty morning. The confiding girl followed his suggestion, but found it difficult to remove her tongue from the cold iron.

Among his many pranks at college, the most original was a nocturnal visit to a fellow-collegian who had a store of good things in his room. “Sam” Howe entered the window as a ghost and carried off a turkey. When the unfortunate owner of the feast waked up and looked out of the window, he saw a dim white figure rising in the air. Later on, the bones of the bird neatly picked were laid in front of his door. The boy was greatly worried and fully convinced that some supernatural being had visited his room. The affair so preyed on his mind that his fellow-students finally explained the joke.

Strange to say, my father did not have much patience with his son when brother Harry displayed at Harvard the same kind of mischievous ingenuity. They had both inherited this quality from Grandfather Howe if we may judge by the following story.

Having promised to pay Sammy a penny for every rat he caught, the old gentleman surreptitiously withdrew the rodents from the trap. But Sammy was quite equal to the occasion. He parried by making the same animal serve for several mornings, until his father exclaimed, “Sammy, that rat begins to smell!”

Grandfather Howe was very fond of building, a taste inherited by his descendants. When there was a question of

his erecting a house on her property, his second wife said to him, “But your children would never permit it.” The old gentleman’s wavering resolve at once became fixed. He had no notion of listening to dictation from his sons and daughters. So he built the house, which, of course, became the property of our step-grandmother and went ultimately to her heirs, instead of to his own descendants, the Howes.

My father always cherished the memory of his own mother, Patty Gridley, who was a very beautiful woman, of a lovely and sympathetic nature.

He liked to see his daughters sitting at their needlework. “It reminds me of my mother,” he would say. He could not bear to see bread wasted, because of her early teachings of thrift. On the top of his father’s house, there had been a cask or vat into which the lees of wine were thrown and left to ferment into vinegar.

With our mother, also, we had a delightful comradeship. Having been brought up with undue strictness herself, she resolved that her children should not suffer in the same way. Hence we had a happy familiarity with our parents; yet we felt their superiority to ourselves. Mother taught us many things, after the fashion of mothers—lessons in the conduct of life and in social observance, of course. To be considerate of others, to enjoy small and simple pleasures, to take good things in moderation—these were a part of her philosophy. If we made a noise after the baby was asleep, we instantly heard her whispered warning, “Hush!” Indeed, it was an offense in her eyes to disturb any one’s rest.

Her efforts to teach us punctuality were not altogether successful. There were dreadful moments when sister Julia

and I were so late in dressing for a party that Mamma would be reduced almost to despair. Sister Laura saw these things and, being a wise little maiden, resolved that when her turn came to go into society she would be punctual. She carried out her resolution.

When we were old enough, our mother took us to the Church of the Disciples, by my father's desire. He himself went only occasionally, but then Papa had a church of his own, which we sometimes attended. In the great hall of the Institution for the Blind, he held at six o'clock every morning a brief service for the pupils. The deep reverence of his voice as he read a lesson from the Bible, the solemn tones of the organ, the sweetness and beauty of the fresh young voices as the blind larks suddenly burst forth into their morning hymn of praise, were things never to be forgotten. Truly Papa's church was not like any other!

Many stories of her young days we heard from our mother. They were different in many ways from our own happy and athletic childhood. It is true that, like ourselves, she belonged to a family of six brothers and sisters, who had merry times together. But the great misfortune of losing her mother shadowed her young life. Aunt Eliza Cutler (afterward Mrs. Francis), who took, as far as she was able, the latter's place, was most conscientious in fulfilling her duties. But she was very strict with her young charges. Witness the story of the little girl whom Julia invited to tea. After this rash act her courage completely failed her. She did not dare bring her visitor down-stairs, and sat miserably waiting the course of events. The delay seemed to her interminable, but at length a message was sent up, coldly

inviting “Miss Ward,” as she was called even in childhood, to bring her friend down to tea. She never repeated the offense.

Our mother was very fond of her grandmother Cutler, who spent the last years of her life under her son-in-law’s roof. She was a woman of literary tastes as well as of personal charm. The niece of General Francis Marion, the “Swamp Fox,” Grandma Cutler possessed a goodly share of spirit. Thus when Wemyss, the biographer of Washington and Marion, dined at the home of Grandfather Ward, Mrs. Cutler took the careless historian to task:

“Mr. Wemyss, how is it that you say in your *Life* of the General that you have never heard what became of his sister Esther, my mother?”

The old lady was a flaming Huguenot, as her letters show.

I fear that, despite the fact that she had been a belle in the Revolutionary period, she took snuff. Our mother told us that the Ward family carriage was in the habit of stopping at “Lorillard’s,” then a small tobacco-shop, to buy great-grandmother’s favorite brand—this, if I remember aright, was Maccaboy.

In our mother’s story of her early life the dominating figure was that of her father, Samuel Ward, the third of the name. She fully recognized his great affection for his children and his almost painful desire to shield them from all evil. Evidently to Grandfather Ward “the world, the flesh, and the devil” were not outworn features of a half-forgotten creed, but dreadful realities. He was as liberal in giving money to good causes as he was illiberal in his religious

views. During a period of hard times (perhaps in 1837), he suggested to our mother that they should take care of the conservatory themselves, sending away the gardener.

“For I will not cut down my charities,” quoth Grandfather Ward.

He left a large fortune for those days, but it was a good deal diminished by the management of his brother, who did not understand real estate. The Grange, formerly the property of Alexander Hamilton, was a part of it. The Ward family desired to have this sold to a great-uncle, for the nominal price of ten thousand dollars. My father very properly protested, yielding in the end, for the sake of peace. Some twenty-five years later it was worth one or two million dollars, but the family were unable to hold it after the panic of Black Friday, September, 1869.

III

MEMORIES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

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The Perkins Institution for the Blind.—South Boston in the 'Fifties and 'Sixties.—Migratory Habits of the Howe Family.—"Cliff House" at Newport.—George William Curtis and the Howe Children.—A Children's Party at the Longfellow Mansion.—Professor "Stubby" Child Plays with Us in the Hay.

"IREMEMBER, I remember, the house where I was born." Indeed, I can hardly do otherwise, for the Perkins Institution for the Blind was one of the landmarks of Boston in the nineteenth century. It was also, so to speak, the intermittent home of our family for many years. My father bought "Green Peace" and moved the family there soon after my birth, hence we lived at the Institution only from time to time.

The "Doctor's" wing of the great building was always at his disposal. In the summer, when the family were at Newport, he often stayed there. It was a refuge to us in time of trouble. Did our city house catch fire, or other circumstances make a change desirable—presto! we departed, servants and all, for the Institution! My brother-in-law, Henry Richards, complained mildly during his courtship that no notice was given of these intended hegiras. He would come to see sister Laura one evening and bid her good-by, with every expectation of calling on her the following day. When, twenty-four hours later, he rang the

door-bell, there was no response! The Howe family had folded their tents, like the Arabs, and silently moved over to the Institution. It will be judged, from this story, that the Doctor's part was fully furnished, save that the halls, like all those in the building, had uncarpeted marble floors. For the Perkins Institution for the Blind had originally been a hotel, the Mount Washington House.

The building, simple, massive, and dignified, stood on a hill commanding a lovely view of Boston Harbor with its many islands. Just behind it rose Dorchester Heights. As children we played among the earthworks whence the cannon of Washington's army had forced the British to evacuate Boston. We did not then know that Col. Richard Gridley, one of our ancestors, had planned those fortifications and the defenses of Bunker Hill as well. He was a veteran of the French wars who had "won laurels as an accomplished engineer at Louisburg."[1]

1.Frothingham's *Siege of Boston*.

When the Institution for the Blind was moved to South Boston, Ward twelve was more highly esteemed as a place of residence than it is now. A peninsula connected with the mainland only by Dorchester Neck, it enjoys the full sweep of the famous Boston east wind. Hence it is cool in summer, and the extended shore gives opportunities for sea-bathing. One of the sad memories of my childhood is the booming of cannon fired in the hope of bringing to the surface the bodies of those who had been drowned while bathing.

South Boston has so many natural advantages of climate and scenery that it was hoped the city would grow in that direction. But the situation has its drawbacks. In order to

reach Boston proper it is necessary either to take a long and circuitous route through Dorchester, or else to cross one of the bridges which span the harbor. These were, when I can first remember, fitted with primitive wooden drawbridges through which vessels seemed always to be passing, if one were in a hurry. Boston was at this time a seaport in reality as well as in name, the wharves filled with shipping. To a child it was alarming to see the solid floor of the bridge divide in two portions and rise slowly in the air, disclosing an open space of water. It diminished very much one's feeling of security. To be sure, after the vessel had finally passed through, and the great wooden jaws had again snapped together, a large iron bolt restrained further vagaries on their part. But what was to prevent the draw from sinking down under the weight of the passing vehicles? Then there were legends of adventurous and unfortunate little boys who had been caught between the descending jaws. If you and your driver were fair-minded persons, your carriage took its proper place in the line and patiently waited its turn to cross. Despite the warning sign, "Keep to the Right as the Law Directs," there were people so unfair as to try to form a second line and so cross ahead of earlier comers. These we regarded with righteous indignation.

The neighborhood of the bridges was occupied by tenement-houses, making the approach to South Boston rather squalid. The House of Correction and other public institutions then established there lessened the attractiveness of the peninsula. So when Boston began to expand in earnest it took the usual course of cities and grew toward the west. The Back Bay was duly filled in, for the

new part of Boston is on made ground. My father considered this much less wholesome than the original soil.

In the days of my childhood, South Boston, while not a fashionable suburb, counted many substantial and fairly well-to-do citizens among its inhabitants. Toward the eastern end it was pleasantly open and still retained a rural air. At City Point were semi-circles of granite, built for the cannon of the Revolution. Facing it, with a mile of water stretching between, was the grim gray outline of Fort Independence, not yet reduced to innocuous desuetude by the changes in methods of warfare.

As there was already a baby girl, it was hoped that I would be a boy. My father was much disappointed at my failure to fulfil this hope. He declared that the only way to console him would be to name me for Florence Nightingale, which was accordingly done. This was before the Crimean War had made her famous. My parents, however, had spent some days at “Embley,” the home of the Nightingale family, while on their wedding-tour. Florence, then a young woman of twenty-three, was already turning toward her life-work. She consulted my father, as a philanthropist of experience, about the propriety of her studying nursing and devoting her life to the care of the sick. He, of course, counseled her to do so. Ever in advance of his own day and generation, he would have had small patience with the people who even now consider a nurse as a species of social pariah.

Miss Nightingale corresponded with my parents before she had taken up her public work. The beautiful and devout spirit of her later years, as well as an intense interest in the movements in behalf of political and religious freedom, is

manifest in these early letters. Touches of fun remind us that she had a happy sense of humor. Throughout the correspondence we see the great admiration of the young English gentlewoman for the man whose life was dedicated to the cause which she longed to take up.

She thus acknowledged the news of my birth and of the decision to name the new baby after her, foreshadowing, also, her own future career.

Embley, *December 26*.

I cannot pretend to express, my dear kind friends, how touched and pleased I was by such a remembrance of me as that of your child's name.... If I could live to justify your opinion of me, it would have been enough to have lived for, and such thoughts as that of your goodness are great thoughts, "strong to consume small troubles," which should bear us up on the wings of the Eagle, like Guido's Ganymede, up to the feet of the God, there to take what work He has for us to do for Him. I shall hope to see my little Florence before long in this world, but, if not, I trust there is a tie formed between us which shall continue in Eternity—if she is like you, I shall know her again there, without her body on, perhaps the better for not having known her here with it.

... Good-by, my dearest friend, which word I am sure I never say to you without its good old meaning, God be with you. You never can tell me enough about yourself, or about Dr. Howe's reforms.

I have no time to be ashamed of myself for writing you such a long and barren letter in return—I *would* write now, because, from the day after Christmas Day, for a month, I shall not have a moment to myself, except the solemn

minute of the procession in to dinner, when everybody knows that each person may have the full and exclusive possession of his or her thoughts to him or herself, till the dogs are fairly feeding.

If I could live to see anything like a Protestant Sisterhood of Charity in England “my eyes would indeed have seen His salvation,” but now I see nothing but a mist, and only hope, when the mist clears away, to see something else.

Pray excuse me—I’m coming back—but only to say this time, what I never can express, how very earnestly I am ever your loving and grateful Florence.

Pray give our very kindest remembrances to Dr. Howe—and so fare you well, very well, my dear, dear friends.

In a later letter she writes of the two babies:

... I often think of your little couple, and imagine what they are like, and fancy the curious mixture there must be in them. I see them standing in the doorway, looking at me with irresolute eyes, and I sit quite still, that they may not go away—perhaps the only intercourse that will be permitted me with them on earth. It would be a curious speculation (if one’s acquaintance were but large enough to enable one to collect a sufficient number of facts to form a sort of experience) to find out *what* materials in the parents’ characters kneaded together into what sort of *pâte* in the children’s—and the general laws of these admixtures. I wonder, in this diving and grubbing age, that people don’t make at least rough theories about it (there must be some laws, if we could but find them out)—beginning with Genesis, where we see that the “sons of *God*” which, I suppose, only means the men great in wisdom and virtue

and piety, who led these antediluvian females to the Hymeneal altar, who, I am afraid, were pagans or at the least something very bad by their being called the “daughters of *men*,” we see that their offspring, poor things! were strong and violent and restive and whatever else we may suppose symbolized under the character of “*giants*.” N. B.—This, upon second thoughts, looks like an uncivil apologue, and, as I remember, poor Mrs. Fowler got into a scrape by sealing a letter once with a wafer on which were two donkeys with the motto “When shall we three meet again?” of course implying that the receiver of the letter was the third donkey (though preserve me from putting you into the same category of souls as Mrs. Fowler’s correspondent!), yet I must beg to assure you that the above is no parable.

The downfall from the heavens has been so prodigious these last three weeks, that the river has been the driest place, and standing in it up to one’s shoulders the best shelter from the rain. Archbishop Whately is practising mesmerism at Dublin with a Catholic priest. Miss Martineau’s last books are stupid—if the revelations of the laws of Nature, which were made to her in a state of mesmerism, have found their incarnation in her recent Game-law Tales in sea-green covers, I wish her “*toutes sortes de prospérités et un peu plus de goût*.” The laws of Nature are uncommon dry ones—but I have come to the end of my paper, and with all our kindest remembrances to Dr. Howe, believe me, dearest Julia,

Yours till Doomsday i’ th’ afternoon,
Florence.

Florence Nightingale did not content herself with sending loving messages to her godchild. Her christening-gift—a beautiful edition of Knight's *Shakespeare*—is one of my most treasured possessions. I still have also the remains of a bracelet made of her hair, with a little golden heart at the clasp.

In my mother's correspondence with her sisters the "babies" are important figures. Maternal affection represents us in a glorified aspect; nevertheless, it is pleasant to have our early virtues and talents recorded by her loving hand. A few extracts from her letters are given below.

New York, *Oct., 1845.*

To Mrs. Thomas Crawford.

... You complain that no one tells you about Florence. Oh! she is a perfect angel! The little creature lies in my arms all night, and makes me too happy. She is the image of our dear father—is not that strange? She has his eyes, his brow, almost his smile. So strong is the likeness that even Lizzie Hogg cried out: "Oh! she is like dear Mr. Ward!" This endears her to me very, very much. She was christened in our little study at South Boston. No one was present but Sumner, [Doctor] Fisher, Wightie, and Laura. The good Mr. Burton christened her, and made the service even more touching and beautiful than did our friend Parker. I had had a very nice cake made at home, iced over and adorned with sugar-plum letters.... The child has a heavenly disposition, and is much more robust than Julia was at her age....

May 30, '46.

To Mrs. Crawford.

... For this summer my great themes of interest are Annie's[2] marriage and Fofo's teeth. Flossy, as Julia calls her, is as healthy a child as one can see. She creeps on the floor all day, and can pull herself up by a chair, and stand for a long time, though she is just nine months old.... I confess my spirits have risen wonderfully since I left the institution. My little corner is so green and pretty, so quiet and hidden from all. I have not those dreadful stairs to go up and down, all the rooms are so near together. I need not lose sight of the children at any time....

2.My aunt, Anne Eliza Ward, who married Adolphe Mailliard.

June 17, 1847.

... I stay at home pretty much all day, and generally all the evening, too. I write stories and verses, and when my eyes are tired I paste pictures in the nursery scrap-book, which is in great demand. In another year I shall have a governess for Julia, who is getting too big to be left with a servant. She and Flossy come on well with their French....

Nov. 31, '47.

... Yesterday I incautiously used the word *devil*, and Julia said, "Mamma, that is not a pretty word; you had better say *villain*." They are both as lovely as children can be. The little one is passionately attached to her sister and cries whenever they are separated....

My father hired a house in Mount Vernon Street, in the years 1847–50, and of this I have still some recollections. The most interesting is that of a day in February, 1850, when my father carried all his three children down-stairs on his back, in a single load, to see our new little sister. She was later named Laura, after my father's noted pupil, Laura

Bridgman, and Elizabeth, after his sister. As Mrs. Laura E. Richards, author of many nursery rhymes and juvenile books, she has since been beloved by several generations of little folk.

Our brother, Henry Marion Howe, was not quite two years old when he came down on his father's back to welcome sister Laura into this bustling world. Although, on one occasion, when he plunged her into the horse-trough, he nearly helped her out of it, they were throughout their childhood inseparable friends and companions.

Other memories of those years, 1847–50, relate to my earliest school-days. We went to a private school near by, kept by a Miss Watson, Paper dolls, made or contributed by the older girls, and peach leather loom large in these recollections of school attendance. The latter delicious article of food was a species of stiff marmalade prepared in a sheet about half an inch thick. This was rolled up tightly, and a piece, which was literally a jelly roll, was cut off the end. You could not only eat this, but you could first, happy thought, uncoil it. In old Southern cook-books the receipt for making peach leather can be found. Ours came from Professor and Mrs. Lieber, the former being at that time connected with Columbia College in South Carolina. He has been gratefully remembered, during the present war, as one of the freedom-loving Germans of earlier days.

Somehow or other I learned to read, for I can remember being conversant with my Reader before I was five years old —according to the custom of that day.

In the early summer of 1850 our parents, with the younger children, Harry and Laura, sailed for Europe. As

became a child of New England, I was extremely reserved, and it was thought a pleasant sign when, as the family were about to depart, I wept. Alas! Investigation revealed that my tears were really connected with the little Greek almonds—doubtless too few had been allotted to me. In justice to myself I must say that on the return, eighteen months later, of my mother, brother and sister, I found tears of joy in my eyes.

My eldest sister and I were left in the custody of our faithful nurse, Lizzie, and in the care of friends. We spent the summer happily at Concord, Massachusetts. Hearing the bells toll one day, we asked the reason, and were told that General Taylor (then President of the United States) was dead.

One happy autumn day there was a cry of, “Papa! Papa!” and we rushed down the street into his arms. He could not remain away longer from America, owing to his many cares. We were now installed in the delightful home “Green Peace,” with an efficient housekeeper, Mrs. Stanwood, to care for us.

A sad memory comes back to me out of this distant past. On a certain summer day the blind pupils and their teachers made an excursion to the seaside, sister Julia and I going with them. Nurse Lizzie allowed us to go in bathing, but cautioned us to hold tightly to a rock whose head rose above the water.

With childish bravado, I let go, calling on the others to look at me. Suddenly a great wave dashed over me, but not more quickly than Lizzie, who rushed in and dragged me out, all dressed as she was. She never recovered from the

cold taken that day, dying of consumption not long afterward. I must have been five or six years old at the time of the funeral. I remember seeing the face of the devoted nurse lying white and still beneath the glass of the coffin. I remember, too, that all knelt on the earth around the grave, the service being according to the Roman Catholic ritual.

While “Green Peace” remained our home for many years, its situation on the southerly slope of a hill made it warm in summer. Accordingly, in 1852 my father and the poet Longfellow hired a house on the cliffs at Newport, with the understanding that no other boarders should be received except those of whom they approved. The company that assembled beneath the roof of this early “Cliff House” was of a literary turn of mind. Count Gurowski nicknamed it “Hôtel Rambouillet.” A daguerreotype is still in existence showing Mr. and Mrs. Longfellow, my mother, Mrs. Freeman (wife of the artist), and Mr. Thomas Gold Appleton, the noted wit. A broad smile pervades the group, doubtless due to the fact that in those early days of photography the victims were obliged to sit some twenty minutes before the camera.

George William Curtis was among the favored few who spent that summer at the “Cliff House.” He was then a handsome young bachelor who went to balls and parties. Alas! Near his room was the Howe nursery, and the children, who took no part in the social gaieties of Newport, arose at an early hour. Our noise and that of our portable tin bath-tub sadly disturbed the morning slumbers of the “Howadji.”

I was a little girl of an independent turn of mind and objected decidedly to being kissed. Some of the gentlemen thought this very amusing in a child of barely seven, and

delighted in teasing me. To enter or leave the house was a feat of daring, for the enemy might be lurking in the shadow of the hall, ready to catch me. Once, at least, I was seized and held up in the air by a Mr. G——. “Now I’ve got you!” he exclaimed. He was soon glad to put down a very irate and struggling little girl. The foolish custom of kissing children indiscriminately has happily gone out of fashion.

Another sad memory of that summer rises before me. I see on the lawn of “Cliff House” my silver mug, with a deep wound in its side. One of the gentlemen, espying it in the grass, took it for a pewter vessel and obligingly discharged his pistol at it.

The Longfellow boys, Charles and Ernest, who were of nearly the same age as sister Julia and I, were our pleasant playfellows. Speculating on their father’s height, they declared that he ought to be called Mr. Shortfellow rather than Mr. Longfellow. I do not so well recall his appearance at the “Cliff House,” but a year or so later he emerges from my childish recollections as an alert, slender and rather short man, with a cheerful expression of countenance and remarkably bright blue eyes. My uncle, Samuel Ward, declared they were like blue water-lilies. His hair was then sandy, with a dash of gray, and his sensitive mouth was not concealed by either beard or mustache, for he wore only side-whiskers.

In those early days he did not, to my thinking, *look* as poetical as in later years. It was customary in Boston to speak of him as Professor Longfellow, as he then filled the Harvard chair of belles-lettres. His predecessor, George L. Ticknor, author of a history of Spanish literature, was not

well pleased at giving up his office. Instead of bequeathing his Spanish library to Harvard College, he left it to the Boston Public Library, with strict injunctions that the books should not be allowed to circulate, lest they should fall into the hands of the Cambridge professors. A more amiable postulate is that he feared the books might be lost. Dr. Joseph Greene Cogswell, the first Astor librarian, administered that foundation on the same principle.

With Mr. Longfellow himself Mr. Ticknor maintained pleasant and friendly relations, as we see by the poet's letters.

I remember very well a charming children's party given in the pleasant grounds adjoining the old "Craigie House."

The mansion is Colonial in style, and with its wide verandas, has an ample front of more than eighty feet. As a child, the interior, with its spacious halls and rooms, impressed me more than the exterior. The former had an aspect of comfort and of a certain elegance which bespoke the refined and scholarly tastes of its owner. This was not so common at that time as it is now, when interior decoration is so much studied.

Great clumps of sweet-flowered shrubs grew about the dear old house, as if longing to shield it from the dust and traffic of the wayside. Here blossomed the sweetest of old-fashioned spring flowers, the lilac, and the starry syringas which were so much more fragrant than the modern more showy variety of the same flower.

Mr. Longfellow was an extremely kind and indulgent father and his boys, like other boys whom we have all known, sometimes abused his kindness. Across the pleasant

memories of the “Craigie House” party lies the shadow of our virtuous indignation at the conduct of the boys, who, as he thought, cheated us out of our fair share of candy. The calm reflection of later years suggests that the spirit of fun and adventure rather than mere rapacity may have influenced their conduct. The girls were too young to accept their defeat in the true sporting spirit.

The coveted bonbons were showered upon us from a scrabble-bag, to wit, a large, brown-paper bag filled with candy and hung above our heads. At some parties the scrabble-bag also contained raisins and popped corn, but at the “Craigie House” I can remember only great showers of candy.

The children were in turn blindfolded, armed with a stick, then bidden to advance and bring down the contents of the bag with three blows. It was hung from the bough of a tree, the bonbons came down pellmell upon the grass and we all scrambled for them.

Mr. Longfellow, who must evidently have had assistants, was most active and energetic; I should be afraid to say how many brown-paper bags were hung up, a great number of them succumbing in turn to our childish onslaughts.

The boys established a sort of robbers’ den, or retreat, in one of the lofty trees of the dear old garden; here they would fly for protection when hard pressed by the enemy, returning to the attack when the sugar-plums were about to descend. It is but just to the Longfellow boys to say that they were usually pleasant playfellows. My sister Julia and I had many merry times with them before the dreadful