Autobiography.

Part I. Early days.

2. Adolescence. 1861, 1862. 20

(Written in 1925)
Adolescence.

There comes a time when the passive, receptive state of mind comes to an end, and one begins to look round on one's circumstances as an agent, possessing choice. So completely was I imbued with submission to the will of those above me, that I took the first steps with extreme hesitation, like one groping in the dark, ready to draw back at any instant. I think the very beginning of this new stage of life came when I was fourteen years old in the year 1861.

At fifteen Gary grew tall, and was very sweet-looking; the home life was too small for her, and she was sent to school. It was to Belstead, to dear Mrs Ampholby she sent, and was soon immersed in new loves and new duties; she became so polite, so fastidious, that when she returned we felt she had left our world for another. Dora and I were still children; we found some pot-clay at the Shaw, and moulded it into cups and pipkins and baked them on the schoolroom fire. Gary evidently thought this rather grubby and dirty. Separation in feeling was unavoidable when children in a family are of different ages. One shoots ahead of the rest, but they level up later on. It was something of
a trial, but I still loved her best of all, and grieved when the holidays came to an end. Dora very soon joined her and I was left alone for three years. Well do I remember riding down to Etchingham to see them off some two or three times, and as I dismounted from Fairy, stood on the platform and said Goodbye, I saw the end of the train vanishing in the distance; I felt as though my heart were pulled after it along the railway lines, till was like to break. They went off to a crowd of friends, and a wide scope of interests, and I must ride slowly back beside an empty carriage, and reach an empty home. Yes, it was empty. Mother saw me every day, read the Bible with me, giving me no practical impression whatever, but rather that there was a great mass of solid truth which I was as yet too young to understand, and sometimes too called her "Self-student," said I must now read and work by myself, not by compulsion but voluntarily, but nothing very definite was proposed. I had learned "Marynull's Questions," and "Child's Guide to Knowledge" and our goodnisses, so these were pronounced "stupid." I was given Creasy's "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," but rather enjoyed that, though my outline of history was too incomplete to place them aright. I knew some few French words, and so toiled through a tet of two alone, but best of all I tried to read with me Schiller's fine "Jungfrau von Orleans," and then his "Marie Stuart," and I learned
long pieces out of each. With her strong dramatic power, they could make a good teacher. When she liked, this was all to the good, but until she was about twenty-eight she seemed impervious to my affection. We were calm & serene, friendly outwardly, but on her side there was often a slight tone of contempt, as if it were some kind of people to feed & clothe & teach anyone who was worth so little, & on my side there a constant fear lest I should provoke her to mimic me, or to say something disparaging. She did not know the weight of the weapon she carried, for in a way she was quite fond of me. She was the only one of our family who was definitely converted, & after that she became sympathetic & lovable, but then I look back on the wasted influence of those earlier years. I am struck with a deep pity for us both. Exactly ten years older than I, oh, what might she not have been? Yes, it was a great pity.

But let me go back to the narrative. Jaddur had finally left South Africa in the spring of 1837, but now that his eldest son was twenty-one, he wished to go back there, so in Feb. 1861 they too went off together, but did not return till near upon Christmas. Mother did not seem able to stay at Oakfield without him, & so arranged a long series of visits. The first in the early spring was to Windsor, where she took lodgings & or stayed
some time, my recollections are not very happy. I had no regular lessons, yet I vaguely longed to learn, my ankles were very sore yet I had to take long walks, & I became restless & I dared not show it. One single day stands out then or sent for a few hours to Oxford, to see two first cousins, dear Fred Hillyard, desponding & quiet, & bright, talkative Percy Andrews, & once more I had a feeling of a glimpse into a new world. A door was pushed & shut again at once in my face, but it was enough to show me that there was a whole world of young men about which I knew nothing at all. I had never even pictured it, yet surely there was something attractive in it? I turned it over in my little ignorant innocent mind.

The first real visit was to Southam, Warwickshire, where Uncle Temple Hillyard, mother’s only brother, was rector. He was also Canon of Chester Cathedral, & his wife was one of the Ansons, grand-daughter of the circumnavigator & daughter of the Dean. My chief recollection is of the supremacy of Tissy, with her little dramatic imitations, her moqueries, her fun, & how Uncle loved and admired her. He had never been a good brother, but here was a bridge between. There, something he understood and enjoyed, something apart from religion, which had seemed to him always a barrier rather than a uniting power. I
kept silence, t was sent out to play with Walter, a somewhat rough and slangy little boy of eight years old. We had prayers in the church every morning, t I liked going out under the fresh young lime leaves so early.

Then we moved to the Croft, Bridgnorth, to stay with the Joseph Maynards. Aunt Harriet, mother's only sister was now a widow, but she had four sons & four daughters, & there was much going on. Needle-work began after breakfast & went on all day with its accompanying chatter, as they altered & re-dressed, t kept well up to the fashion of the day. This also was new to me, as were the parties, in the latter half of the day, Archery & so on, & tea-parties among the circle of neighbours. Again Tilly reigned supreme, t had her separate fun with each one of them, but after two or three days Sir (afterwards Mr. Christopher Heath) took me up, saying, "She's pretty, she's really very pretty, if only she were better got up!" So my hair which was now grown long & worn smooth above & in a "bun" below, was now carefully curled every night, & my hat was re-drimed. It seems odd that these tiny little sparks of vanity should do me good, but I think somehow they did, shewing me I had a place in the world. Also
We went over to Hereford, Shrewsbury for some hours to see another set of cousins, the Maynard Hoos, and Walsingham was there, afterwards Bishop of Wakefield, and (I know not how) but we also saw their sister Mrs. Douglas, with the first seven or eight of her fifteen children, the much-loved Mary, for over thirty years Miss of the Godolphin School, Salisbury, being a fine placid baby asleep in a cradle. For the first time I took note of the family to which I belonged, or were thirty-two Maynard first cousins (beside the Hillards), and those I did not see I heard talked about at Bridgnorth.

From there we went into lodgings at Malvern, and nothing very marked happened. George had been been sent to school at ten years old, and now came for a part at least of his summer holidays, and I was very glad to have him as a companion, together we climbed to the top of all the hills in town. But now it was August, and Belstead broke up, and back we went to Camfield to welcome the two dear sisters. The very day after the holidays were over, Mother started on her travels again, this time it was to join Aunt Harriet, to visit the home of their Huguenot ancestors. Their grandfather was a fine man, Gabriel Tahourdin, for over forty years Rector of Bentley, near Selborne, Hants. He married a Miss Le Bas, so that
his two beautiful daughters, Maryann (Mrs. White) and Louisa (Mrs. Hillyard) were of pure French descent.

So the two sisters went to see the old haunts, and stayed about a long while, listening to the recollections of some of the ancient cottagers, who remembered "Parson Bourbon" of some forty years ago, and could tell pleasant little tales of his kindness. Each of them took a daugh-

Auntie took her, Harriett, the only survivor of the thirty-two, except three of us, and Mother took Tisy.

I was therefore left alone at Oakfield, and now comes the time that is worth recording. Good old Grandam was installed to look after me, and she did it well. She was an excellent teacher of French, and a few other things, but had some lessons, but they were reduced to a minimum, and enjoyed ourselves all day. I seemed set free from curving fears and oppressions, and my spiritual life was able to lift its head once more. A poor little struggling life it was indeed, but it was real, personal, living. My ankles were now confessedly unable to bear my weight, and for everything but the garden, I was always on stilts. The fallen apples in the orchard were beautiful this year, and we collected the Summer-ladings, and others that could not keep, and took them in baskets to our cottage friends, or to the Hop-gardens. Then, as the days
drew in, Grandam, I would lie on the school-room sofa in perfect darkness for an hour, our ostensible reason being to read "Blind Books"; not Braille, but Moon's far easier system, - this we both learned to do very well. We kept silent, and somehow it seemed solemn and wonderful, and my spirit knew and then cried out to God, to come to me, to save me, to come and live in my heart. Once, having an afternoon to myself, I climbed up a tree, that overlooked the sunny called garden, and said I would not come down until I was a true Christian. For an hour and a half I sat over texts and hymns and prayers, and finally slid down again a little comforted. Again, I had a row of tiny little dwarf cactus plants on a stand in my bedroom, one night the full moon shone on them. I can recall the feeling now that came over me, for it was of an endless, timeless, white peace, which though it was beautiful had in it something almost dreadful. It was like a wave of Eternity coming over into my little warm, flustered life and soaking it away. And yet I loved it, I wanted to be one with it. So I stood there before getting into bed, - the narrow little iron bed that dear Mother called the Kidd-Bed - absorbing all I could of this appalling calm, and saying over the best prayer I knew. - It was this: -

"Father, whatever of earthly good Thy sovereign will denies, accepted at the Throne of grace, let this petition rise;"
Give me a pure and thankful heart, from every murmur free;
The blessings of Thy grace impart, that I may live to Thee,
Set the sweet hope that Thou art mine, my life and death attend,
Be with me all my journey through, and crown my journey’s end.

Another night there came to me something even more decisive. I had read Isaiah 6. and dwelt on the words, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” I thought on the baseness and thoughtlessness of the lives of some I had seen in the summer, and that a real prophet was as much needed now, as ever it was in Isaiah’s time. As I lay there in my little bed, I seemed to hear a low puzzled voice saying, “But whom shall I send?” as though it would say, “Really I don’t see any one quite suitable.” I thought over this for a couple of minutes, and then I started up with out-stretched arms, saying aloud, “Here am I! Send me!” “Yes,” I thought, “this shall be my object in life—to give up all else. Oh, do, do send me.”

This last impression may possibly have been a little later, in the winter that I was thirteen, but anyhow it is curious. Our Lord chose this Simeon’s business at “about twelve years old,” and so did I, for honestly I believe I was singled out for something of the lonely post of a prophet. Little, very little have I done in the more than sixty years that have elapsed since those days, but the influence of the prophet does not end with death, it perhaps it only rightly begins then. Isaiah spoke almost in vain to his decadent-
generation, but he has helped thousand after thousand
since. Lord Shaftesbury was either mocked at or ignored almost
all his long life through, yet soon already his is perhaps the most
deeply honoured name in the XIX Century. These are great
things, my life is small and unnoticed, yet the principle is
the same, when I am dead. I believe I shall "yet speak"
and stretch out a helping hand to many souls in trouble.

But before the conflict arises, I had to drink deep of the
cup of quiet, satisfied dogmatism. Ten years more yet to
blossom and fade while I went deeper and deeper into the search
for "Truth." Devotion, Love, Obedience were seldom spoken of,
but the object of life on earth was to secure Truth. "My people
are destroyed for lack of knowledge," that I think was dear
Dad's favourite text, and all else was secondary, or was quite
omitted and taken for granted. Explanations of error were
endless, and from the complete silence about the other side
of Religion one imagined it was considered "sentiment,"
a thing that might be nursed in strict privacy, but
not be exhibited. This was the reason, I suppose, why I
so greatly loved the sermons I heard, the hymns I learned,
the solitudes of Nature, when something more central than
reason and judgment was appealed to, the books dear Mr.束德
Charles wrote, which were then coming out two by one,
and Mrs. Gatty's "Parables from Nature."

But I am getting on too fast, for all these thoughts
below more decidedly

In the home years still ahead of me, though the objective
of being somehow “a prophet” never wholly left me. As for this
year, 1861, only one incident remains to be recorded.

In early December, Father and Harry came home from
South Africa. We hung out flags, we made huge bunches
of roses on ropes, we twisted them round the pillars
of the porch, and inside the house we printed over the stair-
way in large letters, “This is the Lord’s doing, it is mar-
vellous in our eyes.” She carriage came grumbling up, and
Mother was soon caught in Father’s arms, and truly flew
at her beloved “chum,” Harry. I had my greeting later.
Details are gone from me, except that some two hours
after they were washed and refreshed, I met Father in
the front hall. I remember the boy spot. His grey eyes
looked at me with a sort of compassionate deep affection,
and his mouth was rather screwed up; he remained thus a
couple of seconds, and then very tenderly he kissed me on
the forehead. My heart gave a kind of leap,—“Why, he
loves me!—he really loves me!”—from that moment
on we began to be friends. Very timid and hesitating at first,
but a steady progress. He called me “Silly” for some two
or three years, and I followed him about when he went with
his spud into the garden to root up weeds, and I sought for
pens in the Camas, & planted them in the Shaw under his direction. & in the evenings he would read me some of Prof. Monier Williams' writings about the Religions of the East, & some of Chundur Sen, or else passages from William Law the Mystic with glimpses of Jacob Boehmen.

Of the home coming of the two sisters, & the Christmas holiday no definite trace remains in my memory.
1862.

A year at home, and I cannot help regretting that so little happened to arouse me. It is a pity when an eager, half-awakened soul such as mine is left with so little material to work upon. No newspapers were read, no politics talked over, at meals, no books discussed, or great questions broached. It is true that religion was sincere enough, but that was kept apart from daily conversation, & all else was about nothing at all, or some kindly chat about the village people. I could live & do all that was wanted of me without using a quarter of my mind!—but there were side-issues that proved of great value to me.

The external facts of the year were these. In March Tiny caught bronchitis, & a very severe attack it was. This caused us for her sake to spend part of the summer at Littlehampton. It was there that Gabrielle & Dora joined us for their summer holidays. As for the mental or spiritual life of this period, I cannot clearly distinguish it from the first six months of the year following, & so I will take them together. Some pleasant things happened about this time, which are worth dwelling upon.
For one thing George brought home a prize from his school, a bound copy of Longfellow's Poems. We read as a few chapters of Hiawatha, and at once fell in love with it. I wanted to learn it, and between us we managed a good deal. At one time I alone knew five chapters. Not only this, but I borrowed the book often, and read the shorter pieces, and seemed to see for the first time what poetry really was. Yes, Longfellow should be loved and honored, for he has opened the door into the enchanted world to thousands of us, and even if we tend to leave him behind, we are grateful still. I learnt the whole of "The Building of the Ship" a little later, and can repeat that still.

Also George bought back a map of the stars, which he had carefully traced from an atlas. Of course one knew one or two obvious constellations, but now came the desire to know all, and every clear night we ran out to study them. We got hold of the Zodiac after a while, and then as winter drew on came the supreme joys of seeing the Pleiades rise above the great belt of oaks to the east, followed by the splendour of Orion. Here was a sort of outlet into Eternity, and I seemed to lose myself in vague glory. The surroundings of our home were favorable to astronomy, for there only a mile away at Collingwood, was the fine old Sir John Herschel with his long white hair, ...
bounteous store of knowledge in his massive brain, & once in the dark he played notes on the violin & threw patterns on the ceiling, & gave us a lecture on the connection between Light & Sound. And up at Slimwell was a closer friend, Rev. Fred Howlett, who also was an F.R.S. & who gave his life to the Sun, & made some real discoveries & threw sun-spots on a white screen in his garden for us to see. At his house, when I was nine years old, I saw one of the very first Spectroscopes that ever was made; a clumsy enough affair I doubt not, but it did its work, for I saw sodium & magnesium line & other such things make blazing alterations in the spectrum. But now George & I were left to ourselves, & we laboured away at the stars, still not got it right," & then to locate the chief planets was a joy. He was at school now at Harrow, a most beautiful country, & a well-managed select sort of school, under the gentle guidance of a Mr Harrington, who was devoted to the memories of Julius & Augustus Hare, which hung about the place, & there George stayed until school-days were over. One day, one happy day, Father & Mother drove over the fifteen miles or so, & they took me. I can see George now, jumping up & down on the grass-plat as we drove up, a slight little straight figure in a grey tunic, & while the parents talked to Mr Harrington he showed me the "Jingo-tree," which had leaves like a maiden-hair fern, & made me creep down the entrance of a long underground passage.
which the boys were invited to dig out, + so join the school to one of the dungeons of the ancient ruined Castle, where a similar passage had been begun ages ago. We had early dinner + then drooz back, + again it was a glimpse into a new world to me, + I wished I might share both the learning + the freedom.

Dear Maggie had left, + "Pug + Puglet" were now with us. I was too old to walk with a nurse, + I was never allowed to go a step outside the gates alone, so my actions were a good deal restricted. After walking about the garden without an aim, I took for a while to digging in the orchard + used to work till I was tired. I could nearly always have Daisy of course, with good old "Bishop" in full livery riding respectfully behind me, but this also was aimless + solitary. At last, I knew not exactly when, I hit on a good plan. There was a damp, sheltered, binding path at the foot of the apple-orchard, + there I measured off "the thurlow" that was to be pretty much the home of my soul for ten years. From the entrance to the Shad on the one hand to the foot of the steep hill on the other was one-sixteenth of a mile. At this end a Scotch pine threw little cones on to the path, + each time I came up to it I used to pick one of them cones into a little heap, + count them. When it was time to go home. It was only begun now, + in a slight fashion,
but when I was fifteen onward it was a real boon. My ankles were well again, I was sheltered from eye and ear, and here I learned all my poetry, there it was I prayed, and never forgot to ask earnestly that I might eventually become "a prophet of the Lord." I wish I had counted the miles, for I must have walked a few hundred!

Another point to mention concerns my brother Harry. When Mr. Müller's reign ended, then he was getting on for nineteen, he was at once put into Father's office in Pancras Lane. I think he must have begun in Jan. 1859. His career was marked out for him without a moment's hesitation, his inclinations not consulted, as he was to be a South African merchant on a large scale. Nothing could have been more unsuitable. With his fine limbs and his handsome presence and his stupid brains, with his complete physical courage and love of adventure, with his not having the least desire to make money nor indeed any cognizance of its value, he could have made a good soldier, a better sailor, and perhaps best of all a colonist with rough hard work to do. Placed in the office, the sedentary life was disagreeable to him, doubtless he worked badly, his health began to suffer, and from first to last he hated the whole thing with a great hatred. Mother wrote to what she saw was absolutely
invariable as to the work, I said no word save to cheer him on, but outside the Office hours she took entire control, for she knew the weakness of his simple, slack, generous nature, and how easily he might be led into evil. Her rule was never to leave him more than a fortnight or at most three weeks alone, but to come and look after him. Thus she could send him alone on a visit for our cousins Farquharson and Anna King were near by, but then she sent herself. She frequently took one of us little girls with her. I went about three times, but the prime favourite I need hardly say was Gabrielle. Once, at any rate I was with her, and we made the evening with her. She invented so well, + which Mother delighted in. Harry would come back from town, put on an old red + grey blazer, which we called “the coat of many colours” + it speaks much for the sweetness of his disposition that though we openly called him F.C. - which was translated “favourite child”, + also “fatted calf,” there was never a shade of envy. He was worth all we could do for him. He would sit down to the piano + slowly make out a chant + hymn, or he would go over his accounts with Mother, + they were invariably in a grand confusion, + then after supper the table was quickly cleared, + it was “Now for Theesaurus!” This was a large book of synonyms + rhymes, + be used to choose one + work it out. “Let us do it quickly!” - then we wrote,
"fast, rapidly, swiftly, speedily, hastily, hurriedly? No, that's different! - with celerity, without loss of time, instantly? - no, we are going wrong again!" + so on, till we reached quite long sentences like, "Harry's like greased lightning going downstairs."

We found that the synonyms of "beautiful" had every one a different shade of meaning; all this was a good background for spritzy decent prose. We tried worse too,-

"There once was a lion fierce + strong,
He lived in a district full two miles long."

No that's not good. Try again.

"There once was a lion who lived in bush,
And when he came out, he came out with a rush!"

I need hardly say it was Gary was the inventive spirit here, + Harry + I followed blundering along, but surely it was good, all good. We had to make our own amusements, for I never remember being taken to see anything.

It was, I imagine, chiefly for Harry's sake, that Mother took a house in London for the winter of 1862, 3. It was in Highbury + we were surrounded with good Evangelical preachers, which to me remain about the chief note of that time. They had not rightly recovered from her bronchitis, + so was sent out to Cannes for the winter, the sisters too still at Biskraed, + once more I was quite alone. Well do
I remember a little dingy back room high up where I was supposed to "do lessons" by myself. It commanded a wide view of roofs and chimney-pots, and sometimes when the sun was setting a wonderful red glow tinged the tiles and the smoke into a lurid glow I loved to look on. Deeply I had loved nature in her freshness and purity, but now my eyes seemed opened to a kind of pathos in the swarm of life in those homes going on with their hopes and fears below me. Also now I began on an early edition of Tennyson. Longfellow I loved supremely, and felt as though I understood every word he wrote, that he knew how to express my feelings far better than I could myself, but here was something out of reach. I read "Holmira":

"O love! O fire, once he drew
In one long kiss my whole soul through.
My lips, as sunlight drinks the dew."

What did that feel like? I thought I could guess at it. There were other less violent passages that also attracted me. It seems a pity that a girl should have no one whoever to confide in, but should have to cover her speech and conduct with a sort of glaze of artificial contentment. There was a brisk cheerful humility and satisfaction that Mother especially loved, and this we learned to cultivate. All else was sentiment and dreams, and this was wholly unworthy of us. I think it was not all bad, but it produced a certain conventionality among us.