Octobiography.

Part VIII. My Life Work. Bowdoin College Section.

1885.

Autumn Term 10 Sept 29:

1886.

Sem. Term. 11

[Written Nov 1926 - see p. 132]
In reading the external account of this new Session, it may appear a good
and happy one, but it was neither. I went with hope, with physical energy, than before.
I write now that it is years since I had a September at home without visitors to be
entertained, & I still of the long fragrant days in the hop-garden, distilling the
taken apples & sometimes little books among our village friends; then there
was a fine harvest of everlasting-flowers to be treasured & stored, & those glorious
Zinnias in the upper garden to be arranged, & the hidden furrow where I could
walk & meditate & pray. There were lectures to prepare also. I had dabbled in
Sorico, but now I was to deliver a real course for the B.C. & better still, the
marvelous analogy of the laws of Light spread out before me, & I wrote a course
of Bible lessons on the Solar Spectrum & its meaning. Then for the College, I had
secured J. Willoughby as resident Lecturer, & May Pettico B.D. as non-resident, &
we were striving to work at a higher level. Was it not good?

Also alas, it was not. The first trial was the lack of Students. I had really
worked hard, organizing & taking more meetings than I have mentioned, & explaining about
the College, yet, while the first Session doubled our numbers, & rose from 5 to 15, this
the fourth Session had only brought up our number to 16. All the Council were
disappointed, some were angry. More acute than this was the almost forcing
upon me a Miss A. Stowe, a woman of 30, a Unitarian, who said she would "take
a great interest in the Students." She had been at Mansion, & hated it, she had
been at Lady Margaret, & said it was "perfect," till she suddenly left in a
shrewd wind of rage over refusing obedience to some law of the College. How could
I let such an one loose among my flock? Yet there stood the empty rooms,
& the Council wished it. Seldom have I been in more utter despair. Would no
one stand by me? Nannie & Ralph Goff knew her personally & thought I
ought to try her, & my soul tried out in a string of pain. At last I said to
myself, "It is unkind, it is unjust, but was not Christ treated unkindly & un-
timely? Would you not like to share with Him?" With many tears I bowed &
said, "Yes." Then suddenly the weight was lifted, for Miss Stowe did something. I
forgot that, which shored up her recent trial, high upon memory & she had to be
"under care" for awhile. Once more I breathed freely.
The darkness gathered again at once... on Oct 7 I wrote, “The Council Meeting, I seem to be looked on with suspicion by almost all... I feel as though I could read their mean, unworthy thoughts, but I fear I may be getting mired on the subject. I stormed into Westminster Abbey with a hearty heart. Their aims & mine seem to be quite different.” On Oct 9 I add, “Mrs Cleghorn’s letter dictated by Lady Cone in is worse still. They are dissatisfied with me, I suppose. I must resign. Think of my high hopes & visions ending thus... but after many unkindnesses, here is a direct infringement of contract, & that means that the balance has dipped over, the crisis has come, & I must resign in March next. I’ll give plenty of time on both sides & meanwhile will put up with anything they say or want, but this must go. They will, I know, make many attempts at conciliation, but I cannot listen unless they are the outcome of more sympathy with my aims. For the present, not a word: nothing but patience, patience.”

This is very sad, but I love it in silence. It somewhat in my very own private department, some good things occurred. “I had a talk with Lady Astor, I scarcely know how it began, but I was very sure. I pointed out to her that her first year with us had been very selfish, & showed her what a different thing was the true Christian spirit from the fictitious “I like,” “I don’t like,” which are constantly on her lips. She admitted everything, saying quietly: “I am more than you know, I am selfish through & through.” At first, with Scottish canniness, she tried to put her unbelief in the way on God’s acquaintance, but her honest & true spirit was too much for her, & she dropped all these arguments, & said suddenly, “You see, I don’t want to. I know it all beautifully in my head, not one bit in my heart. I give Cicely splendid advice & she thinks me very good. I seem to care for a few minutes at a time, but it is not real. I don’t care enough to make it influence the last fraction of my conduct.” I go on to say that Nancy shall not repent of her confession to me, but that I will always care for her, till how I feel the relief of deadly S. Gifford having departed. I how I think my gloomy, lowering Marie Pickens is really coming out into the light.

Again a little later. I had a scene with Ralph Gray. He old S. J. has been brought to London, & now she had decided that in Jan, she would become a new resident lecturer, living in a flat with him & Sarah, & looking after both of them. I could not say no, but I know I should miss him. She came to my room after the Bible Class, & kneeling down before my fire said, “I’m glad I’m going. It
is getting to be the most intolerable hypocrisy living here? I asked her, if I was hard,
dogmatic & narrow-minded in any way, she answered slowly & steadily, "No, not at all.
You are right, I am wrong. You are so right that I am without excuse. I see it so
clearly. I want to work with people who believe as you do, yet I can't, I can't, so,
and I am too far apart." Silence was a long silence, when I said, "You have been a diffi-
cult audience, Ralph." She turned full upon me & said briskly, "Do you mean at
the Bible-lessons? How could you! You have never heard me. You can imagine how
I have been brought up, yet I honestly say I never knew any one the least like
you for making the Bible interesting. It is a new book to me, only I personally know
how much I like to work for you, if I could like to work for Mrs. Booth, she must
want somebody to come down her stairs, I would like to do it for her." This was
very

At this time I was much taken up with Edwin Arnold's, "Indian Song of Songs,"
I thought she scheme showed the position better than did ourselves. It is the story how
who represents the human soul, his appointed bride is the Son of God, but he is
seeking again & again by her voice, passionate, human love. Some of
it is very fine, I went to heart as I wrote the Bride's Lament:

"In vain, in vain!
Earth will of earth, I wearied more than I blame.
If he had known, he would not --
In vain, in vain!
The temptations was too near & Heaven too far;
I can fast sleep because he sits & dies
Garlands of fire-flowers for her loosed hair.
And in its silken shadow o'ers his eyes,
And curios his fond face, yet I forgave
By jumna's wave
Vainly! all vain!
Make thee the most of that where to show not given,
Heigh her hills Paradise, thy love of loves
Say that her eyes are stars, her face is heaven,
It shall be done --
Noe wilt show so believe shine own blind seeing,
Noe shall shine hearts' thirst even at the cup
Which at the last she brings for thee,
Because still vain
To love that feeds on shadows; vain as thou art.
To look so deep into those phantom eyes
That which is not there.
And vain, yes, vain.

Yet me too is it, having so much striven,
To see this slight snow, take thee, take thou.
Which should have climbed to mine, and shored my heaven,
Spent on a lover's loneliness, those holes
Passion of claim, were but a parody
Of that kept here for thee.

All vain, all vain!

He gives all that they ask to those soft eyes
While mine which are his angels, mine which gleam
With light which might have led him to the skies,

Which almost led him, are eclipsed with tears,
Waiting my fruitless prayers.

In spite of the gloom words of my Sonnet, "Yes, These are more than love,
My choice is made," the conviction remained with me that the one great
Temptation, the weakness of my soul, was expressed in these noble words. But—

...will, as I have said, sustain me through the years. The contrast between the little 'fire of stick' on
My heart, so that my heart was torn in two. I have hardly the courage
To write down the history of the next dozen years of my life, but that we
Will later, for the present, I take things step by step as they come.

Sir Robert Watson was still Lord Mayor, I find Mr. Watson did all he
Could for us. Twice I went to a Reception at the Mansion House, bringing some
2 or 3 Students each time, we saw her arrayed in the City diamonds, each
time I had a nice sympathetic talk after it, slept there, each time we
looked out on the Royal Exchange or the Bank, I heard the thronging footsteps
and had a curious feeling as if I stood at the very centre of the economic civic
Life of the world. In this direction one could go no further.
College affairs went on well within the walls. Dear K. Teitros, you, the Gilchrist Scholarship over the whole University. Well, I think it a very important. We also invented "Polyglot Sketch" which was considered highly amusing, and my Logic lectures were greatly liked. The Garton Committee had things to sell (from old Tinham's legacy), so I bought the two handsome carved chairs that stand in the hall to this day. Then we had a Debate on the proposition "That the good effect of cheap Literature is fully counterbalanced by the evil." The speaking on both sides was discovering a point. Miss Fowler, who was present, was ecstatic in her praise saying many times over that she "had no idea it were so clever!" My Staff were doing capably, too.

One morning I could help Ralph Gray to make a clay model of a Greek Temple, and another morning order some Bellows' eyes from the butchers, so up to the Laboratory to see J. Willoughby skillfully lay them open and show the working of the various parts. There was a day at Garton, for as the representative of the Students I was bound, there was a very interesting day when George kindly took some of us to Tilbury Docks. The bird's eye view from the roof of the Hotel was a sight to be remembered, for 1,500 navies were at work on the mud immediately below us, cutting out the New E. W. India Docks, which was to be one of the largest, quite the most complete docks in the world.

We saw the "steam-navy" dashing away; it cut the solid blue London clay into little blocks which the iron navies picked up with their fork with wonderful speed and accuracy, then a little steam tram carried us over; profound, shiny mud, out to the huge gates that are to control the entrance.

The Richardson's seem to have been in London for a while. Those men at once wanted to marry the pretty one, Gertrude, and she chose Leonard Harris. [As I write, Nov. 1926, he has just died.] Also came hearing about the College, so once or twice George met her, but nothing came of it. Again, there came an invitation for me to see the Renewides acted at Cambridge, so I accepted it with delight. Then came a letter from "Mr. Mowle of Ridley," very gently and respectfully announcing the fact that last year I had come up to see the Elettra, asking me if it were consistent with my highest aims. Disappointed as I was, I determined to follow his advice, for this is a precedent for things to come, it is better to be too strict than too lax. Mowle's Ralph went quite enjoyed it, but two days later Dr. Mowle's opinion seemed to
be confirmed, for Annie received a letter from a girl she knew well, quivering in very strong terms over. "The best example," set by one of his position in church. With characteristic honesty Annie answered it. I then read me both letters as we sat over our fire. Excellent ethically, the standard was not exactly that of Christ our Lord; it was not "the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak," but more like "every man for himself." The whole discussion left a very long feeling with me, as I saw how my dearest, strongest, best, shrank from standing just where I stand, to toil their own course.

All this while public events troubled me far more nearly than they usually did. Evidently I torment again myself greatly about the Election for the London School Board, for which I had a vote. I went to big and somewhat stormy meetings, with Mr. Parnell in the chair, and some very fine speakers on all sides. I heard Conservative Church people, I heard the Popular Radical party, I write down that the disposal of my vote made me "ache with fear," lest I were going wrong. I heard a poor cobber man say openly that he was sick of the "dead thing," if he, a father, did not care, why should we? This most un-Christian was checked by a magnificent speech from Mr. Massey, who showed the England of the future, dying plastic in our hands, yet, yet, yet, with the clapping and beating and thumping, and unreasonable noises, a score of my kind came over me such as I have never in my life felt before, and thankful, indeed, I was that my beloved lay wholly outside the region of politics. On 1:5:15 came the Election, of a very much more I oppose Board, they were in for 3 years. I cannot here go over all the tongues I have recorded, how I was tossed about, how there seems to have been a General Election as well, that I was thankful women had no vote.

More deeply was I struck with the brave adventure of W.T. Stead. He wrote an article in the Westminster Gazette called "The Maiden Tribute," showing how girls could be actually bought for wicked purposes. To prove his assertions one time, he bought one himself and took her to his home. The enemies got wind of this, the article aroused a fury, he was impeached, for this shock crime was sent to prison. On 15: Nov. I write, "Here, this long discussion the verdict has now been given. "Stead, Garrett & Jaques, Guilty," all are now in prison. Thousands of these most disgusting of all crimes go free, unpunished, so that there is a real system or trade to serve the lust of men, & the one man who has bravely plunged into the black mine to rescue the victims is punished by
the law of the land. Poor Rebecca Jarrold who was his agent, said, "I have done many, many bad things in my life, some dreadful things, and I have done only one good thing, for which, for the very first time, I must go to prison." Shead is a hero, I think a little prayer is going up from thousands of us that God will be consciously near him on his first Sunday in prison." Later I write, "This martyrdom has done us good. England is proud, true, at heart, after all, yet amid masses of corruption, the main spirit of the nation is pure and sound and clear, as a crystal. Very good work is going on. Better little renewed vigour. There is hope, hope, hope for our country!"

Inside the College, all went on briskly and well. Good hard work, all sorts of festivities at the close of term. On Dec. 15th I was dismissed, and on the 20th I went home. Dora and her two angels were all with us; Gaylee, looking very sweet, "doing lessons" and knitting; Baddie in a scarlet dress playing on the piano deliciously with one finger; Frank with the handsome features of the family, 18 months old, thumping vigorously on the triangle. Presents, cards, letters, good country, parties for girls, for boys, parties for the aged, every sort of party arranged by my indefatigable sister. One day Henry came in, having walked 36 miles in pouring rain, he was hot, bad and bed at the clothes dried, and through all he was bright and cheerful. To me, an unfailing treat.

In such a year as I have described one could not think there was room for the "horror of great darkness," but there was. Spaces of the present dark, the future far, came over me. Everything disappointed.annie's strength, which was like a young eagle's, sometimes seemed misdirected; Ralph's problems got around in despair till she was glad she was leaving us; a sad scene with mayan showed a chasm between us which she soon, passionate, faithful love failed to bridge; Dora Greenwell, my beloved teacher, had died in a mist of drugs and beauty; Eliza Thurlow, whose letters I was publishing, told lies for months together; Isewell Smith who had done so much for us, gave up his religion, said it was an illusion, became worldly and indifferent. What could I say? "Put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man" had been instilled into me all my life, yet never before did I see that it really must not be done, that the supports snap one by one under the weight of life, and I fall helpless. Soon is my enemy, and the only safety is to say, "Straight as a flaxen, as growing wheat is straighter, yes, then and more than ever, my choice is here!"
1886.

ἸΔΟΤ Ἡ ΔΟΥΛΗ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ.

"They thirsted not when He led them through the deserts." "Come ye near unto me."