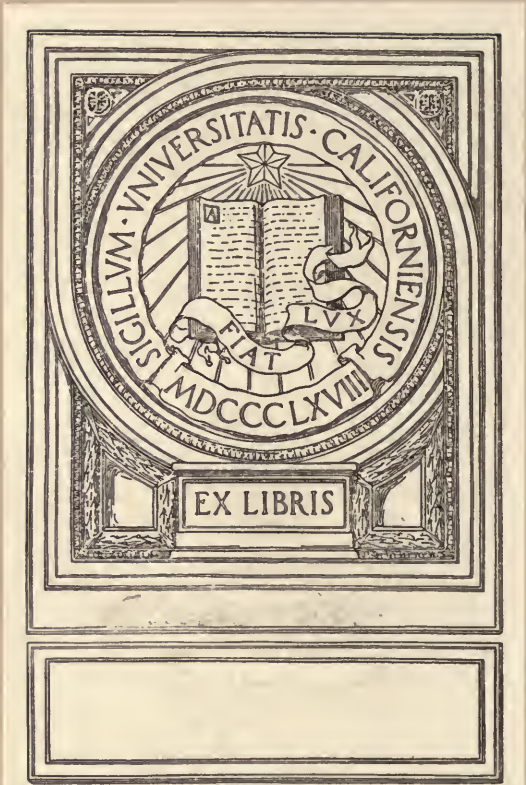


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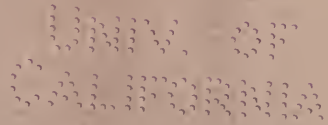
## A CHAPTER IN A LIFE

OCTOBER 9, 1864

AUGUST 24, 1905



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ALAMEDA . . . . .	1864-1885
BOSTON . . . . .	1885-1887
LOS ANGELES . . . . .	1888-1890
BERLIN . . . . .	1890-1893
EVANSTON . . . . .	1893-1905
ALAMEDA . . . . .	<i>July-August, 1905</i>

# **ALAMEDA**

**1864 - 1885**

**T**HEREFORE to whom turn I but to thee, the  
ineffable Name ?

Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with  
hands !

What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the  
same ?

Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power  
expands ?

There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall  
live as before ;

The evil is nought, is silence implying sound ;  
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good  
more ;

On the earth the broken arcs ; in heaven a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall  
exist ;

Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor  
power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the  
melodist

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

Robert Browning.

**T**HROUGH love to light ! Oh, wonderful the way  
That leads from darkness to the perfect day !

From darkness and from sorrow of the night

To morning that comes singing o'er the sea.

Through love to light ! through light, O God, to Thee,

Who art the love of love, the eternal light of light !

Richard Watson Gilder.



**J**OSEPH KNOWLAND, a native of the City of New York, but reared at Southampton, Long Island, migrated to California in 1855. Eight years later, from her native town of Bingham, Maine, Miss Hannah B. Russell also migrated to the Golden State. Both went by way of the Isthmus of Panama, a tedious route, and beset with hardships and dangers. These two married, and their first child was Sadie E., who was born in San Francisco, October 9, 1864. In 1872 the family residence was changed to Alameda, a suburb of San Francisco, where it has since remained.

The parents brought with them from their eastern homes not only the vigor of the pioneer but also, what was less common in the new El Dorado, training and habits of a scrupulous kind. On the mother's side, along with the blood of two

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Massachusetts soldiers of the Revolution,<sup>1</sup> there had descended the typical New England seriousness, and on both sides the Puritan tradition was strong. Both parents feared God, gave themselves to active service in the church, and lived lives of simplicity and neighborly helpfulness.

Thus it was that the daughter came by the solidity and serious-mindedness that characterized her whole life. A certain intensity of temperament that she inherited from her father prevented her from fully sharing the even calm of the mother's faith, but it added emphasis to an unflinching spirit of reverence and obedience, and to a keen realization of the practical, active aspects of righteousness.

The tone of her childhood was serious — too serious, one of her teachers once remarked. Yet she had two blessings that are lacking in many a more careless girlhood. With her mother she enjoyed an exquisite bosom-companionship, more inti-

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Russell and Calvin Russell. By virtue of this descent, Mrs. Coe became, in 1887, a member of the Fort Dearborn Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

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mate, more constant, more lasting than any other instance of it that I have ever known. On the other hand, from close association with her father, whose unbounded energy and strict integrity were gaining for him a high standing among business men, she formed habits of punctuality, system, accuracy, and business honor.

In her sixteenth year, following an experience that she was taught to regard as conversion, she became a member of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Alameda. This experience was a simple outburst of emotion uncomplicated by any dramatic features. As she grew to maturity, though she did not lose respect for it, she ceased to regard it as a decisive event. Obviously it was only one expression of a growing religious life that had been nurtured in the home and the church from the beginning.

Following the custom of her parents, she assumed a share of church work. She did it spontaneously and as a matter of course, and her willingness made her share a large one. Through nearly the whole

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of her teens she was the organist of the church and the Sunday school. For several years she was a teacher in the Sunday school. In the social affairs of the church she was a natural leader, and she was prominent in organizing and carrying on a church literary society. She was likewise one of the organizers and active workers of the Alameda Flower Mission, a society of young women that ministered to the sick by means of California's flower-treasures.

Of her abundant good works a pastor who came to her girlhood church some five years after she had married and moved away from Alameda says :

“It is no risk to say that she was the best known and most highly esteemed young woman in Alameda. When she went east to complete her education the people, without respect to denomination, gave her a memorable farewell reception and made her a handsome and costly present. She had been the presiding and inspiring spirit of the Alameda Flower Mission. There were few sorrowing hearts in Alameda who did not feel the gentle touch of her kindly ministrations. Girl that she was in years, she was always in the right place at the right time. Organist, Sunday-school teacher, at

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the head of nearly every good work in the church and in the community, she became a recognized moral power in Alameda. Though absent nearly seventeen years, the long after-glow of her beautiful Christian life is still remembered. She loved Alameda, and Alameda never forgot her. If she could have chosen the place of her departure it could have been no more ideal."<sup>1</sup>

Her formal schooling was had in the grammar schools and the high school in Alameda. But with her piano lessons, which began at the age of nine, there entered into her life what was destined to become the chief instrument for the training of her powers. Her lessons began as they do with most girls whose mothers value music as an accomplishment. But when, after a time, she was placed with Ernst Hartmann of San Francisco, not only did music become a passion with her, but signs of decided talent also began to appear. Hartmann, a product of the Kullak school, was a real musician and a real teacher. He was a rigorous training-master, but he was more than that; he developed the pupil's musical sense,

<sup>1</sup> Editorial by Rev. F. D. Bovard in the *California Christian Advocate*, August 31, 1905.

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communicated his own high artistic ideals, and inspired to personal endeavor. Mrs. Coe was obliged to learn in later years how great a part muscular relaxation has in effective piano technic, but she never ceased to hold Hartmann in grateful remembrance.

It is needless to dwell upon her early and growing local prominence as a player. There came a time when the applause of neighbors and musical leadership in the home community seemed only steps toward higher effectiveness and severer standards. The need for a larger life became imperative.

No one then guessed what powers were struggling for self-utterance. To all appearances she was simply a young woman of popular social qualities and refined tastes who played the piano exceptionally well and was favorably situated for attaining the general cultural and social ends that commonly satisfy. But she felt suffocated. Dimly she knew that there was a wider sphere for her, and she clearly saw that music was the door of entrance to it.

At first music-study in Germany was

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contemplated and almost decided upon. But parental instinct had to be compromised with, and so Boston was selected instead, and the autumn of 1885 finds her joyously breathing the fine musical, literary, and artistic air of that old metropolis of culture.





**BOSTON**

**1885 - 1887**

**T**HE face of all the world is changed, I think,  
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul  
Move still, oh, still, beside me.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

**H**OW often have we said to each other that it seemed impossible that we were ever strangers! Yet, as far as chronologies are true, we met for the first time in Boston in the spring of 1886. I was then a student of theology, with no other expectation than a life in the pastorate. Through a mutual friend, a former resident of Alameda, I was introduced to Miss Knowland. How vivid is the incident at this moment!

She was absorbed in work. Carl Baerman was her teacher of piano, and John W. Tufts her teacher of theory and composition—both of them musicians and teachers of high rank. With both she did the most painstaking work, unsparing of routine and detail. Without drawing any contrast between the two teachers, it may be said that Mr. Tufts discovered her personality and bestowed on her a friendly interest that won her lifelong gratitude.

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Though she was a private pupil, with no formal curriculum to follow, she conceived music-study in no narrow or perfunctory way. She not only gave herself to the hearing of much music, but she also read and reflected upon musical subjects. In her Boston note-book I find evidence of a wide range of interest. Here are notes on the various periods of musical history, the characteristics of different composers and the qualities of their particular compositions, musical instruments, and various kinds and aspects of music. There are quotations, also, from the lives of the composers and from books on musical history and criticism.

With characteristic enterprise, she was studying also the historical and literary landmarks of Boston and its vicinity, reading the best of our English and American literature, and getting acquainted with Boston's art-treasures. Her first summer vacation finds her enjoying the quaint sights and sounds of old Nantucket Island ; the winter sees her presiding at the piano at religious meetings for the neglected classes in the North End of Boston. Thus,

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around music-study as a nucleus, there grew an aspiring and many-sided life.

It is pleasant to recall the zest with which she seized upon her opportunities. The much-longed-for larger world was opening to her. It was a world, too, of fun and frolic with her music-student associates, as well as of ambition-arousing privilege. A long-forgotten parody and cartoon that had their origin in a trio of young ladies, of whom she was one, is a pleasant reminder of the relaxations that gave equipoise to her earnest life.

She was not more energetic and vivacious than she was simple and sincere. One could never encounter her except upon a plane of high purpose.

Tennyson, Browning, and the American writers — especially Emerson — who have made of Boston and Concord America's great literary shrines; Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Schumann — these formed the environment in which our acquaintance grew.

In the spring of 1887 a young man delivered his graduating "oration" in a state of dazed insensibility to his subject

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and to all the scholastic aspects of the occasion. He was alive to only one thing: in the vast audience that filled old Tremont Temple there sat one who had just spoken a word that was for him a word of destiny.

Guided by the advice of my professors, I had shaped my studies with reference to the profession of teaching. But now came an urgent call to missionary service in China, and the whole problem of life's work had to be reopened. All her habits and tastes, all her training and musical ambition, made against toleration of such an idea as living in China. Yet she only expressed her natural bent and her greatest natural gift, as I know from her whole subsequent life, when she refused to regard even China as an obstacle. Though the call of duty was not China-ward, after all, still what I had to offer her was not attractive from any worldly point of view. To forego a prospect of ease, of unrestricted cultural advantages, and of social opportunity in order to share an obscure, laborious, uncertain career with one who was beginning at the bottom of a badly underpaid profession — this was a prospect

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that might well have awakened her friends' anxiety. That she could unfalteringly make such a decision is enough to humble and exalt for a lifetime the lover who received the gift.

Together with her mother, brother, and sister, she spent the summer of 1887 among the scenes and the friends of her mother's girlhood in Maine. Then, until about the holidays, she was again at work with her music at Boston. Her return to Alameda at the holiday season marks a period in her development. Her piano execution has grown firmer, the history and theory of music have been opened to her, and her whole æsthetic horizon has been enlarged. She signalizes the home-coming by giving a public recital which brings her no little honor from her townspeople.

As to the future, — ah! what but love is strong enough to dare so much?





# LOS ANGELES

1888 - 1890

**W**E knew that a bar was broken between  
Life and life ; we were mixed at last  
In spite of the mortal screen.

Robert Browning.

**S**HINE ! Shine ! Shine !  
Pour down your warmth, great sun !  
While we bask, we two together.

Two together !  
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,  
Day come white, or night come black,  
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,  
Singing all time, minding no time,  
While we two keep together.

Walt Whitman.

**D**OES the road wind uphill all the way ?  
Yes, to the very end.  
Will the day's journey take the whole long day ?  
From morn to night, my friend.

Christina Georgina Rossetti.

**E**ARLY in the summer of 1888 I accepted a humble post in the University of Southern California at Los Angeles, and she consented to share my life there from the start. We were married at the home of her parents in Alameda, September 3, in the presence of relatives and a few friends. The officiating clergyman was an old friend of the family, the Rev. Robert Bentley, D.D. He was an alumnus of Northwestern, and Mrs. Bentley is also an alumnus through graduation from the old Female College that became many years ago a part of the University.<sup>1</sup>

After enduring the discomforts of boarding for most of the first college year, we had the joy of building a little nest of our own, a six-room cottage of a type then

<sup>1</sup> At the alumni reunion of 1905 it was my pleasure to discover Mrs. Bentley in the procession. Dr. Bentley passed into the unseen several years ago.

## MEMOIR

everywhere to be seen in Los Angeles. At last we had our own fireside, our own flower-garden, and the exquisite sense of proprietorship in a home. What a joy it was to have a place for our friends about our own open fire!

The topics of conversation were not always of a cheer-bringing sort. For the college with which I was connected was then mostly raw edges, and the financial management was wretched. Aside from the pleasure of helping to develop our students, the chief comfort of the official situation was a fellowship between the professors that was made all the deeper by the discouraging conditions. All in all, the two years that Mrs. Coe and I spent in Los Angeles seemed to us in after-years to have been a time of testing and preparation. We were not tried more than others, we simply bore our share of the general discomfort. Fortunately, the cost of living was still low, so that we were more than able to meet expenses from the start. Our professional aims also were steadily furthered from the first. Best of all, the pressure of hard

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conditions made only so much the firmer the personal relations between one and one that are the foundation of happy home life.

During the first season she devoted herself to piano practice and playing. By the spring of 1889 she had won recognition, and the piano department of the institution was offered to her. We had reason to believe that one cause of this offer was the profound impression made by her playing upon a large college audience.

What the position was to amount to depended on her own efforts and management. She had entire charge of both the musical and the business sides of the department. Then began to appear her power both as a teacher and as an administrator. In spite of adverse conditions growing out of the past of the department, pupils flocked to her until her time was full. At the end of the year, after she had turned over to the institution its liberal proportion of the returns, she had the satisfaction of having earned an income almost equal to her husband's salary. She more than earned it, for she put into

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her occupation not only skill, but also heart and conscience that are above price. She laid stress upon musical theory and history, both of which she taught in connection with piano. She went to great pains to procure the necessary material for such teaching, among other things raising money herself for the founding of a library of works on music. The effectiveness of her teaching was cordially recognized at the time, and several years later two of her Los Angeles pupils followed her to Evanston.

She had found a calling, a profession. For years she had hoped for it, and this is a part of the explanation of her long, severe self-discipline. We had married with a mutual understanding of her ambition, and neither of us ever for a moment regretted it. To work side by side in our respective professions seemed to us to be at once destiny and duty and highest happiness. The year that confirmed her hopes by demonstrating her ability to succeed in the musical profession has always been to me a joyful memory in spite of the discomforts to which I have referred.

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Before the year was over both of us were longing for opportunity for foreign study. We hesitated to embark on such an enterprise with our slender capital, however, until one day — a day of never-to-be-forgotten joy — word came that I had been appointed to a travelling fellowship of Boston University. The home was favorably disposed of, and after a visit in Alameda we turned our faces toward Germany, the Mecca of the student.





**BERLIN**

**1890-1893**

*WHAT if we still ride on, we two,  
With life forever old yet new,  
Changed not in kind but in degree,  
The instant made eternity, —  
And heaven just prove that I and she  
Ride, ride together, forever ride?  
Robert Browning.*

**W**HAT better landing-place for untravelled travellers than Holland? Here, early in August, 1890, we find ourselves almost intoxicated with our first and freshest experiences of the Old World. After a little tour of the land of dikes, we settle down for a few weeks in Göttingen before beginning work in Berlin. Before me lies a note-book in which Mrs. Coe kept a fairly complete record of impressions and events for the first several months in Europe. It shows, not less clearly than my own memory, how sharp were the eyes, how studious the mind, how genial the humor with which she encountered her new experiences.

A month or so of piano practice and German grammar, a visit to the Passion Play at Oberammergau (how rich it was in new impressions!), and then Berlin, the treasure-house of opportunity! There

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was no limit to the enthusiasm with which she went at her work. Her primary object was to study piano with Professor Heinrich Barth. If she could secure admission to the Royal College of Music (*Königliche Hochschule für Musik*) she could have the desired piano lessons and many other advantages at slight expense. Barth, after privately testing her playing, her ear, and her knowledge of harmony, advised her to apply for admission. Unsuccessful in her first effort, she worked privately with Professor Barth until Easter, when she secured the desired privilege. Her description of the unsuccessful examination is worth giving in the words of her note-book.

“Yesterday, October 1, went through ordeal of examination at *Hochschule*. Went at 9 A. M. Found crowd of applicants in all stages of nervousness — girls with one parent, some flanked by both parents, others supported by friends. Girls had taken their gloves off; some were nervously wriggling the fingers. List of names in hall; my number, 49. Grew faint and nervous; went out on piazza. Barth came along nonchalantly smoking cigar as if it were an everyday occurrence, saw me, came and shook hands cordially. Told him

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my number was 49, when he told me I might as well go home and return at 12, as my turn would not come until after that time. Returned at 12. Found the girls who were still to play looking more distracted than they did at 9. Some seemed to be in tears. My courage gradually oozed out at my finger ends. There was a pause then of half an hour. At 12:45 the examination went on, beginning with number 41. Large waiting-room; applicants with parents and friends. Many stood waiting their turn in little entry outside of music room where examination was being held. Two were admitted at a time, so that there might be no waits between. Finally it came turn of 48 and 49. 48 was a young American or Englishman with a wonderful execution. While he played I sat near the door, feeling as if I were waiting my turn to have a tooth pulled. The young man played with his notes, as, to my great surprise, many others did, and when he had finished he was mercilessly stood in a corner while the professors threw chords at him, that is, whacked them on the piano and asked him what they were. Poor fellow! He looked utterly crushed, as I felt when it came my turn to be put through the same process, and I failed in it as gloriously as he did. He was told to come Friday, at 1 P. M., which is said to mean that you are admitted, and my turn had come. The seven piano professors sat around a table, with pens, ink, and paper before them. When I went in, Barth turned, bowed, and smiled in a reassuring way. Professor, evidently

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the director of department, pleasantly motioned me to the piano. On the way was stopped by having this question *thrown* at me in German by one of the professors. 'How do you pronounce your name?'<sup>1</sup> Did not understand at first. Question was repeated. Then I replied in English. Professor (in German) in a very belligerent tone: 'You speak no German at all?' 'I speak a little.' 'But'—interrupting—'don't you know that we speak *only* German here?' 'I do understand some German and am studying'—here a sneering 'Humph'—'and am sure that in two or three weeks I shall understand well.' Upon which I was greeted with a scornful laugh of derision in which several of the other inquisitors—no, I mean the professors—joined. This added insult to injury. Turned my back on the whole lot and went to the piano. There were two grands—Steinways, by the way. Steinway has a factory in Hamburg (?) and his pianos here are called 'Steinweg.' I played same sonata which I played for Barth—was allowed to play a small part of each movement. Then my ear was tested. Barth struck chord and said, 'Major or minor?' I managed to perceive that it was minor, and said so, but when I was asked to tell to which key it belonged, I could n't have done it if my life had depended upon it, I was so completely unnerved and utterly unable to think. This part of the

<sup>1</sup> Germans always had trouble with our name. They took it to be either *Koh-eh* or *Köh*.

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examination was not continued, and I was also told to come on Friday at 1 o'clock. Test is really the playing. The whole ordeal is terrible! Am not surprised that so few Americans attempt it. Girls came out looking utterly unnerved and exhausted. I suffered for hours afterwards with a severe nervous headache."

It appears that only about a third of those who took the examination at this time secured admission, and that scarcely one of the several American applicants, if any at all, was of the fortunate number.

Mrs. Coe plunged at once into private lessons with Professor Barth. The rate at which she worked may be gathered from a note that recites the material that she traversed in the first eleven or twelve lessons. In addition to abundant technical studies, she had worked up Bach's G minor Fantasie ; Schubert's Impromptu, op. 142, no. 4 ; Henselt's Berceuse ; six of Bach's Inventions, and two Beethoven sonatas, op. 10, no. 2, and op. 14, no. 2. As it was her custom to play her pieces from memory the first time she appeared with them, it is not improbable that all the compositions in this list were memorized.

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Of Professor Barth's courtesy and kindness her notes repeatedly speak. Yet the severity of his methods is well known. It seems that he made a distinction between pupils. Those who pursued music simply as an accomplishment were handled with relative gentleness, but those who named professional aims, as she did, were given the tonic of harsh experience. Many were the tales of suffering told by his pupils. But for the fruits of this method, a well-established technic, Mrs. Coe never ceased to be grateful to her teacher. The details of this technic are, of course, beyond my ken, but I know that she learned how to play for any length of time without muscular weariness, that the secret of this lies, in general, in the complete relaxation of each muscle except at the instant of using it, and that this method prevents the harshness of tone that characterized the old-fashioned technic of raised, hammer-like fingers and stiff wrist and arm.

The second examination at the *Hochschule* went happily, and now, in addition to lessons with Barth, she was expected



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to study history of music, theory, and ensemble playing. But she was already so far advanced in history that Professor Spitta excused her from that subject. She was promptly put into one of Professor Succo's advanced classes in theory, and in Professor Bargiel's ensemble class she quickly gained recognition. The ensemble lessons were, indeed, among the happiest of her experiences in the school.

With Frau Steinmann, mother of Professor Barth, and with Professor and Mrs. Succo, there sprung up a warm personal friendship. Professor Succo's interest in her began in appreciation of her work in theory, harmony, and composition, but it grew into appreciation of her whole personality. She became a glad guest at his home, and until his death it was her delight to send and receive letters and holiday tokens.

How she revelled in concert and opera ! Von Bülow was then conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra ; Joachim's quartette and Barth's trio were offering the acme of chamber music ; the Royal Opera was brilliant, particularly in the Wagnerian

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works. Her joy in them all was not less, but greater, because of the solid purpose with which she listened. The profound emotional effect that music produced upon her did not deter her from studying, even as she enjoyed. Both her notes and her remembered conversations testify to this, and here, it seems to me, is to be found the clue to the unusual breadth of musical interest and appreciation that she displayed in subsequent years.

She was nearer right than the piano professor guessed when she said that in two or three weeks she thought she should understand German in her lessons. She was not unacquainted with the elements of the language when she first went abroad, and she continued to study it in the conventional fashion after she reached Germany. But her musical ear and her extraordinarily rapid perception enabled her to outstrip, in hearing and in speech, every other student of German known to me. She acquired the language as a child acquires it. This implies, of course, only gradual approximation to grammatical exactness, but meantime there was a re-

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markably fluent use of the idiom. "Frau Coe, where did you learn that idiom?" her German friends asked again and again, and the answer was that she had simply picked it up from conversations to which she had listened.

So passed rapidly away her first season in Berlin. With the coming of summer, the mail brought me an unexpected call to Northwestern University. I had hoped to spend at least one year more in Germany, but the proffered chair accorded so well with my desires that I said to Mrs. Coe, "I will go, but you must remain and finish your work. I will return each summer." It was my own first thought, but my second thought and all my thoughts have approved that decision. Neither of us could have endured the separation for any light reason. But, assuming that each had an individual talent and an individual work to do, we knew that we could afford the personal cost of the best preparation that was available to either one.

That summer, 1891, we spent together in a long tour of Germany. Upon my return the following summer we travelled

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in Austria, Italy, and Switzerland, and in the summer of 1893 we journeyed northward to Denmark, Norway, the North Cape, Scotland, and England. The autumn of that year finds us together in Evanston with no more long separations — except one — before us.

The second and third seasons in Berlin had been passed as agreeably as the circumstances permitted. In the *Pension* of Fräulein Kirstein she formed pleasant friendships, not least that of the Fräulein herself. Journeys to Paris and Dresden and study of the great art museums relieved the routine of duty. After two seasons with Barth, she turned, for the sake of variety on the musical, as distinguished from the technical, side of playing, to Moritz Moskowski, who at that time resided in Berlin. She greatly enjoyed his teaching and many of his personal ways. One of her letters paints a picture of how, in the midst of a lesson, the barber was announced. Moskowski excused himself, was gone only a few minutes, and then returned with a fleck of lather on his ear! When he was absent from town

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on a concert tour, she took the opportunity to widen her acquaintance with men and methods by studying for a while with Jedliczka, who was then just beginning to acquire his fame as a teacher.

Her letters, not only at this time, but from the first one that my eyes ever rested upon, had a concreteness, vivacity, and humor all their own. It was the artistic temperament, I doubt not, finding expression for itself in spite of the general decay of the fine art of letter-writing. Several years ago we held a consultation as to what should be done with our letters — hers and mine — of which there was a large accumulation. The consultation was occasioned by our reading the published letters of Mr. and Mrs. Browning. Though we had no fear of attaining a like fame, we asked ourselves whether we were willing that anyone else should ever see that which we had written only for each other's eyes. Both masses of letters went into the furnace.

In addition to the ordinary fruits of travel, she brings back to the home-land firm, well-rounded, independent musician-

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ship. As far as I know, she never entertained a hope of becoming a piano virtuoso. Her ambition had always been directed primarily toward teaching. But teaching meant very much more to her than "giving lessons." She held that a piano teacher should be, ordinarily, an artist if not a virtuoso, and her three years in Germany had equipped her for maintaining this standard. Her technical method was up to the most modern ideas, and her own execution was brilliant. Her acquaintance with the literature of music was wide, and in the analysis and interpretation of that literature she had both intellectual insight and sound musical sense.

The student days are over, and now she determines to establish a private studio where she may work out her ideas unhampered by scholastic traditions or administrative machinery.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In fairness to Mrs. Coe it is necessary to say that throughout this story I am giving my own impressions, not her opinions. I have not sufficient knowledge of music to justify an attempt to reproduce her points of view, much as I would like to do it here and there. All that I can do is to paint the thing as I see it from my musically untechnical point of view.

# EVANSTON

1893 - 1905

***M**Y own, see where the years conduct !  
At first 'twas something our two souls  
Should mix as mists do : each is sucked  
Into each now ; on, the new stream rolls,  
Whatever rocks obstruct.*

*Think, when our one soul understands  
The great Word which makes all things new —  
When earth breaks up and Heaven expands —  
How will the change strike me and you  
In the House not made with hands ?*

*Oh, I must feel your brain prompt mine,  
Your heart anticipate my heart,  
You must be just before, in fine,  
See and make me see, for your part,  
New depths of the Divine !*

*Robert Browning.*



**I**N spite of setbacks to health incident to the change to Evanston's stimulating climate, she was able, during her first season, that of 1893-94, to do considerable playing and to gather a larger class of pupils than one could have expected. Already a good basis was laid for financial success, and there was every prospect that her enterprise would develop according to her hopes.

But to carry out her plan of private work would have involved the diversion of patronage from the University School of Music, which was then small and weak and struggling against adverse conditions. She was asked to transfer her work to the School. My relation to the University gave force to strong persuasives that came from official circles. Reluctantly she consented, sacrificing cherished plans rather than create complications of unknown degrees of discomfort to all concerned.

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Her contribution to the upbuilding of a school of music in Evanston can be appreciated only by one who understands what details of labor and sacrifice are demanded by any such enterprise. She carried into the School a good-sized class of pupils; because the School lacked space, being then housed as an interloper in Woman's Hall, she taught her pupils in her own home for nearly three years without compensation for rental; she carried the name of the School into large circles through her outside activities; she labored loyally, indefatigably, skilfully, with her pupils, in the recitals, and wherever there was opportunity to help build up the institution.

Little or nothing had been done with history of music; she took up the subject and made it a living, organic part of the course of study. At first she taught the subject for the love of it, receiving no compensation whatever. There was no musical library or any systematic plan for purchasing books on music for the general University library; she assumed that care also, making up the purchasing-

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lists from time to time, and securing the transfer to Music Hall of the works that were most in demand. The poverty of musical periodicals she alleviated by regularly turning over some or all of her own. She helped on everything that made for broad policy and high standards. The string quartette in its long struggle for existence found in her a staunch supporter. She was the first to advocate the requirement of literary standards and studies in connection with music, and she never wavered in her allegiance to that principle. She stood against permitting students to evade standards as defined in the published curriculum. She resisted the temptation (that comes, no doubt, to all struggling schools of this class) to accommodate or administer standards in the interest of large student-lists and large financial returns. To stand thus in absolute sincerity for one's art and for educational principle in schools of music that are entirely dependent upon income from tuition fees is never easy or without its cost.

Her teaching met almost instant recog-

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niton, and before long the lesson hours of pupils were encroaching upon her precious practice. Yet she found time not only to teach, but also to play, to read widely in musical history, biography, and criticism, to conduct musical courses for women's clubs, write lectures, give lecture-recitals, write for the press, and finally to compose. The amount of work that she turned off from 1894 on may fairly be called prodigious. It was a wonder to me day by day, and the wonder increases now that I contemplate the period as a whole. Often I feared for her health, but my attempted warnings were met by the stubborn fact of obvious and increasing robustness of health. From a girlhood and youth somewhat inclined to frailty, she rose in her mature womanhood to such abounding vigor as one rarely sees, even in this era of healthy women.

She was an instinctively good teacher. Exacting in the fundamentals of technic, yet always insisting that skill should be only a means for expressing an intelligent musical sense; always going back from symptoms to causes, and forward from

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principles to rules and methods ; unwearingly fond of young life and of seeing it grow ; consulting her pupils' interests first and her own last, and never failing to see that genuine accomplishments must have their root in a worthy personality and bear fruit in the enlargement of true life — she was far removed from everything merely perfunctory, mechanical, or narrowly professional. Again and again she remarked that such or such a pupil could play if she only had personality, or moral earnestness, or life-experience enough. Thus it was that she took an interest in the whole life-course of her pupils, and not merely in their music ; thus it was that she became a vitalizing force in their personality. She never shrank from being known as a severe teacher, however, for she knew the cost of genuine success and how alone strong personality is attained. A part of her reward she was able to enjoy as she went along. She saw an unusual number of her pupils blossom into able players ; she felt the love of a great number of sincere hearts ; best of all, she saw character unfold through music study. Some of the

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parents of her pupils saw what was happening. One of her last joys on earth was to receive from such a parent a letter filled with appreciation of this broad educational effect of her work.

The freshness of her teaching was due, in a measure, to her lifelong habit of searching for new material. She was not satisfied with any stereotyped series of student pieces and programmes. I believe that it is not too much to say that she was acquainted with the whole vast range of serious compositions for the piano, and that she kept fully abreast of new works in this field by indefatigable search.

Students who were struggling with the problem of meagre resources, whether they were her own pupils or not, found practical sympathy. She obtained opportunities for employment for them, and there was rarely, if ever, a year that she did not carry at least one free pupil on her teaching-list. This continued even after she began to be paid a fixed salary ; it was not the School, but the teacher upon whom the cost of free lessons fell. Into the struggles of these young persons she entered with a

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royal heart. One of them writes, "I have lost the best friend I shall ever have."

Her playing during these years showed both an increasing range of musical feeling and a maturing control of the means of expression. There was a time when playing consisted in the neat, rippling, velvety rendition of pieces, but she transcended this when, partly through the broadening of her technic, but largely through a study of Wagner that started in Germany and continued to the end, she came to realize the deep relation of music to life. Incidentally, the attitude toward Wagner manifested in the School of Music now as compared with the attitude ten or twelve years ago is worthy of comment. Then Mrs. Coe was alone in recognizing the great significance of Wagner's work; to-day all that she then contended for is assumed as a matter of course. The influence of the Wagnerian movement upon her was profound. It changed her whole musical horizon and opened a new world of musical realities. I base this statement solely on my own observation of her development, for, as far as I know, she never

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attempted a self-analysis. I cannot better describe my impression than by saying that music became for her more and more an essentially dramatic expression of human feeling. It took on more of movement and action, and it strove for organization and unity and climax.

This, I think, is the explanation of her tendency away from the more conventional "pieces" toward ensemble playing and toward the relatively free compositions of the modern schools. Without losing appreciation for the classically regular forms, she took an absorbing interest in other types. She was the means of introducing not a few fresh works, some of them heard here for the first time in the West. One of her note-books contains the following quotation, which seems to give a clue to her own thought: "Music is pre-eminently the art of the nineteenth century because it is in a supreme manner responsive to the emotional wants, the mixed aspirations, and the passionate self-consciousness of the age."

This growth in the meaning of music was reflected in her playing. The dra-



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matic sense of which I have spoken put into her interpretations intense lights and shadows — too intense for some eyes, perhaps, yet always what the eyes of her own brilliant imagination really saw in the composition. It made correspondingly heavy demands of a technical sort. The minute and patient care with which she worked up every little detail of a composition, and then put all the parts together into an organic whole, is a part of the explanation of a certain mastery of the instrument that was often commented upon. To me, and in some measure to her, there was a pathetic side to all this because of the merely temporal character of executive musical art. To spend weeks, sometimes months, in rounding off one's execution of a composition, and then, after a public appearance or two, to have nothing to show for the work — this is the musician's fate. The waves of the ocean will go on rolling, but where are the waves of yesterday?

Her catholicity of taste, her feeling for the human life-forces in music, gave vitality to her history-teaching. The history of

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music was to her, not a set of dry annals, but an entering into the enjoyment of music in all its stages and forms. Everything was concrete, and in a sense modern. By song, by instrumental rendition, by the exhibition of instruments, by charts and pictures and story, the wealth of her imagination was conveyed to her hearers. No wonder that her course grew in popularity, had to be extended, and was finally supplemented by a second course.

The culminating point each year, and one of her favorite subjects for lecture-recitals, was the Wagner operas and music dramas, which she analyzed from the score. Upon these she lavished labor year after year, never ceasing to work out new points and to read the new literature of the subject. And this is only typical of the enthusiasm with which she ransacked many a phase of music history. The manuscript notes of her lectures, besides treating of various periods and composers, the various musical forms and instruments, and the analysis of Wagner's works, include several special topics, such as "Programme Music, or Music as a Language,"

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“Colonial Music in America and America’s National Songs,” “Primitive Music,” and “Music of the American Indians.” The large attention that she ultimately gave to Indian music grew directly out of a general historical interest. She delved into the music of the Asiatic peoples and the African tribes also, but no early music attracted her as did that of our American aborigines.

It was natural that her enthusiasm for music as culture-material should far overstep the bounds of the School of Music. Soon after her return from Germany she gave a short series of lecture-recitals at several hospitable homes. Later the Evanston Orchestral Club engaged her for a course on Wagner and the Music Dramas. Then she took the lead in the music work of the Evanston Woman’s Club for four seasons. During the season of 1898–99 she gave a course of illustrated lectures on selected topics. The following season she organized a series of studies and programmes on “Woman in Composition.” The third series was “American Composers,” and the fourth season wit-

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nessed an extended study of the periods of musical history. For the various programmes, besides frequently participating herself, she secured speakers, singers, and players, and in many cases she went for material directly to the composer concerned. That every programme was carried out without a hitch is due to her unlimited capacity for detail. What this implies no one can understand who has not tried to carry through some corresponding scheme of popular culture. As to the broadly cultural influence of such activities, one of our foremost American composers said, "I do not hesitate to give my belief that the most efficient factor for music in America now is just that done by those clubs, chiefly, naturally, in the Middle West, although there has been a surprising and healthful growth in the same direction about here."

These and other successes led to an appointment for two years as chairman of the music department of the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs. At the annual meeting of this association at Decatur in 1901 she gave an illustrated

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lecture-recital on "The Music of the American Indians." She also took steps toward a scheme for popular musical culture by means of travelling libraries. Two or three such libraries were actually gotten together with funds contributed by a lady of means, but for some reason the circulation of them (which was not in Mrs. Coe's hands) lagged and was finally given up.

Two courses of Wagner lecture-recitals were given before the Rogers Park Woman's Club. At the Chicago South Side Club, Wilmette, Edgewater, Champaign, Canton, San Francisco, single lecture-recitals were given. This is not a complete list, but it is sufficient to indicate the growth of her influence. The response to her lecture-recitals was unequivocally hearty. The reason was that she had a real message, that her spirit was that of sharing with others the treasures that she had found, and that she was able to present a rich body of material with extraordinary clearness.

The lucidity with which she wrote and spoke was no happy accident of expression ; it was the outshining of a penetrating and

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orderly intellect. In her case fulness of feeling and of intuition were no obstacle to intellectuality. To whatever subject she turned her attention, whether music, or business, or religion, or domestic economy, she exhibited a keenness of analysis that was ever a fresh wonder to me. Time and again I have been almost envious of her ability to see to the heart of a problem at a glance, and to discover fresh foci for the rational organization of facts. This was rarely a jumping at conclusions; it was rational insight. In criticism she was sharp as a Toledo blade, yet her predominant tendency was nevertheless affirmative and constructive. All this appeared in her musical work as a habit of seizing upon the salient point and gathering about it fact and illustration and exposition until what she wished to teach seemed almost self-evident.

Her imagination was exceedingly fertile. Now and then there bubbled forth in the presence of her intimate friends such exquisite mimicry as made one wonder what would have happened if her attention had been turned to the stage instead of the

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piano. She constructed plots for novels that, if her powers had matured in that direction, might well have brought her fame as an author. For several years she dreamed of a future when she should be able to express in literary or musical form what she felt within her. It was doubtless the manifold demands of her immediate situation that postponed for a long time the exercise of a talent for composition which Professor Succo had clearly recognized. Sooner or later, it is safe to say, her exuberant imagination was certain to express itself in original work.

The "Melodrama of Hiawatha" was a preliminary and partial utterance of this inner wealth. The subject and the form are easily accounted for. On a number of occasions in different states she had played the piano part of Richard Strauss' melodrama of "Enoch Arden," the lines being rendered by Mrs. Isabel Garghill Beecher. This started Mrs. Coe's interest in the melodrama as a mode of musical expression. She procured various compositions of the sort, and one of them, "Bergliot," the beautifully tragic composition by

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Grieg, with words by Bjørnsen, was given before the University Union, with Professor J. Scott Clark as reader. Meantime her studies of primitive music had made her acquainted with the entire cycle of American Indian melodies collected by Mr. J. C. Fillmore, Miss Alice C. Fletcher, and others. For years, also, she had followed the discussions as to the possibility of a distinctively American music based on folk-material, whether Negro, Indian, or other. She was actively interested in the work of Mr. Arthur Farwell and the Wa-Wan Press, and in every effort to make use of the Indian melodies. Rarely did these melodies seem to her to be developed in the spirit of the life-types out of which they sprung. The melodramatic form, however, with a story of Indian life as text, and with Indian melodies as the basis of the music, seemed to be worth trying.

She turned to Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha" for such a story, and by weaving together the parts that deal with the childhood, youth, and courtship of Hiawatha, and with the death of Minne-



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haha, she was able to secure movement and unity, with adequate emotional contrasts, and with a true climax for the whole. From her collection of Indian material she sifted out a set of melodies that had, in their original use, substantially the same emotional value as the various personages and events of the story. A Cherokee cradle song fitted the infancy of Hiawatha, an Omaha warrior song his manhood. A war-dance served the celebration when he killed his first deer. There was a love-song for the courtship, a ghost-dance for the famine, and so on through the list of a dozen themes. For Minnehaha, however, no appropriate theme could be found. Indian song celebrates war and warriors, it celebrates love, but apparently it does not celebrate woman. The Minnehaha theme, accordingly originated with Mrs. Coe.

When she came to develop this material, she sought by all means to preserve a true sense of every situation. So she retained the peculiar Indian rhythms, accenting them in the bass as the drum accents them in Indian song, and she deliberately

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restrained the impulse to complex developments of the themes. She believed that relatively simple elaboration, even with considerable repetition, was more consonant with her purpose to represent simple, primitive emotions. Of course these emotions are idealized in the poem and in the musical setting; they take on a broadly human aspect; but is not the discovery of the universally human in a particular time or people the truest discovery of what that time or people really is?

After several months of work upon the melodrama, a first draught of the manuscript was completed near the end of June, 1903. Mrs. Coe regarded the undertaking at this stage as entirely experimental and problematical. She was encouraged, however, by the impressions of friends for whom she played the piano part, and later by a preliminary trial of the entire work with Mrs. Isabel Garghill Beecher, who met Mrs. Coe in Cambridge for this purpose, and to whom the published work was afterward dedicated. After slight rehearsing, Mrs. Coe and Mrs. Beecher rendered the melodrama before Miss Alice

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Longfellow, daughter of the poet, and before Mr. Arthur Foote, for whose musical judgment Mrs. Coe was most desirous. His approval and encouragement of a work so opposed in method to his own compositions finally gave her courage to decide upon making the melodrama public.

With Mrs. Coe at the piano and Miss May Neal as reader, it was first presented before the Evanston Woman's Club, November 3, 1903. On December 11 they presented it before the University Union and a number of invited guests at the residence of Prof. J. Scott Clark. On the twenty-seventh of the following February, the anniversary of Longfellow's birth, they rendered it in the afternoon before some hundreds of school children at Music Hall, and in the evening before a crowded public audience at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James A. Patten. These two recitals were under the auspices of the students' lecture committee. Subsequent performances, with Mrs. Lida Scott Brown as reader, were as follows: Ravenswood, March 7, 1904; Rogers Park, March 29;

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Wilmette, October 5—all these under the auspices of women's clubs; Artists' Recital at the School of Music, February 16, 1905. An engagement was secured to give it in the great auditorium at Chautauqua, N. Y., in the summer of 1904, but an attack of insomnia compelled Mrs. Coe to cancel all engagements for that summer.<sup>1</sup>

A heartier response than the "Hiawatha" received from its audiences could not well be imagined. After allowing for the disposition to pay a compliment to the composer, or merely to admire a clever piece of work, one saw too many signs of emotion to permit a doubt that the deeps had been stirred in a manner out of the usual. The auditors saw in the poem what they had never seen before; they felt in the story depths of human meaning that reading and hearing it without the music had never revealed. The musical setting had proved its power. This was true with every audience of adults. How

<sup>1</sup> This was a great disappointment to her, because it prevented the wider hearing of the "Hiawatha," which she greatly desired, and a similar wider hearing for six lecture-recitals that were included in the Chautauqua engagement.

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far the school children entered into this spirit Mrs. Coe was uncertain. She had hoped to make the composition a useful adjunct to the teaching of American history and literature in the schools, but she never had adequate opportunity to satisfy her own mind as to the feasibility of this project. Whether childhood, which takes such delight in the Hiawatha of story and picture, could take in also the emotional meaning of the music remained an unsolved problem.

The cordiality with which the melodrama was received in her home city, and the growing interest that was there manifested in its successive presentations, constituted one of the greatest satisfactions of her entire professional career. For once a prophet received honor in his own country. The climax was reached in the rendition at the School of Music, when the hall was overfilled and many scores of would-be auditors had to be turned away. This was her last appearance before a public audience.

A few of her friends know how her soul found an outlet in this work. She felt

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intensely every incident ; there was not a line or a phrase to which her imagination did not add light and life. The closing scene, which is the climax of the whole, Hiawatha's declaration of faith, —

“ Soon my task will be completed,  
Soon your footsteps I shall follow  
To the Islands of the Blessed,  
To the Kingdom of Ponemah,  
To the Land of the Hereafter ! ”

was her own religious self-expression. She felt the pain of the famine and the fever, the sorrow of the bereft husband-lover, but she felt most of all the grand sweep of faith which she put into the magnificent closing chords.

During this period of renditions from the manuscript she continued to revise the composition until at last she felt that it was ready for publication. It was issued from the press of the Clayton F. Summy Company early in August, 1905. Just before the long shadows fell upon her earthly life, she had the great pleasure of seeing it in this, its final and completed form. What its future is to be is a matter of surmise. But in any case, whether the

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melodrama is to live in a large or a narrow place, it has already justified its existence as an expression of her own self and as an awakener of noble sentiment in others.

All that I have now described of her Evanston career was crowded into a period of less than twelve years. The high plane of her interests, and the range, amount, and uniform thoroughness of her activities are an index of splendid talent. It did not go altogether without recognition. In 1901 her official rank in the School of Music was advanced from that of instructor to that of professor, her chair being designated as Piano and Musical History.<sup>1</sup> She could not be unaware of the cordiality with which her playing, her lecture-recitals, and her other enterprises were received. The love of her old pupils, and the gratitude of many other persons, especially in women's clubs, to whom she had opened

<sup>1</sup> The tangible rewards were always moderate. For six years her compensation from the School of Music, which amounted to two-thirds of the tuition fees of her pupils, ranged from a little less than \$1500 a year to almost \$1850. During the last five years she received a fixed salary, the maximum of which was, in round numbers, \$1925. Her outside engagements added something to her income each year, but never much beyond \$200.

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new vistas into the world of tonal beauty, gave her exquisite pleasure.

Yet few persons, if any, have been in a position to understand and estimate her work as a whole. Even now it would be hard to say how much she contributed to the uplift of individual life through music in the case of her hundreds of pupils; to the development of a worthy school of music; to the spread of sound methods and ideals through pupils who have become teachers; to the broadening and popularizing of musical culture in Evanston and the Middle West; and, through the still problematical career of the "Melodrama of Hiawatha," to the æsthetic pleasure of a yet wider public. But it is easy to see that she had a mission, and that she accomplished that whereunto she was sent.

The comfortable ease of those who shine by reflected light, or of those who traverse a prescribed orbit, was not for her. Her talent was too conspicuous, and she had too keen a conscience for the quality of her work and the obligations of her station. She bore her share of the pains by which alone ideal standards are kept out of the



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dust. They were the pains of a large and generous nature, though one endowed, as only such natures can be, with the finest sense of justice. Never seeking any professional consideration on the ground of her sex, she nevertheless encountered a few — a very few — male musicians who were unable to reach a similar professional standard. Of the sorrows of Art in a commercial age, with its individualism and its blind worship of mechanical process, she had inevitably to learn. What fell to her to bear as an individual she accepted with patience and with the magnanimity that overlooks everything except to do good to all. Yet she had the courage never to compromise her art, and when, for example, a mechanical device commanded her to surrender the proper functions of a teacher, she never for an instant flinched.

Though she was self-sacrificingly loyal to the School of Music, her original ideal of teaching under conditions that would permit the free outworking of her conceptions never lost its attractiveness. One event after another carried her mind back

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to the old hope. It is not improper for me to confess that for several years nothing but considerations growing out of my own relation to the University prevented her from returning to her original plan. These considerations I never pressed upon her; indeed, they seemed much less serious to me than they did to her. But at last the time for such action seemed ripe, and in the spring of 1905, against the protest of the head of the School, she insisted upon being released in the following June.

For several years students of the College of Liberal Arts had been permitted to attend her classes in the history of music and to obtain college credit therefor.<sup>1</sup> In order that this privilege might be continued and extended, the trustees now appointed Mrs. Coe as Lecturer on Musical Æsthetics in the College of Liberal Arts. The duties of her new position were to give a two-hour course, abundantly illustrated, and the compensation was to be \$500 a year. This appointment gave her

<sup>1</sup> On one occasion two college students entered her class under the impression that it was a "snap." Their amazement when they found that they had "flunked" was one of the humors of a conscientious teacher's life.

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great satisfaction on many accounts, not least of which was the fact that it was made with a full understanding that she was to be free to carry on her piano work in such manner as she saw fit.

Plans for the new enterprise were immediately begun. A partnership was formed with Miss Tina Mae Haines, the well-known organist and teacher, temporary quarters were rented, and many details were worked out. A year's leave of absence having been granted to me, Mrs. Coe and I determined to spend the year 1905-06 in Europe. There she intended to get into touch with various teachers and institutions for a study of present-day movements in music and music-teaching. She had also designs, of which I shall presently speak, for further publishing. Meantime students in encouraging numbers announced their intention of entering her classes upon her return. There was every indication that within a relatively short time a high-grade private school would be in thrifty operation.

What time would have brought in the way of original work if life and health had

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been continued can only be guessed with more or less approximation to probability. She had distinctly formulated, even to many details, plans for two publications which it is easy to think that she would have carried to a successful issue. The first was to be a monograph on "Wagner's Heroines." She had already gone far into the literature of this subject, and she had given one or two lecture-recitals upon it. Her purpose, as I gathered it from her conversation, was not only to work out a group of interesting studies in personality, but also to make these studies a new mode of approach to Wagner's whole philosophy of life and art. This study, which was not expected to result in a large volume, she hoped to have well along toward publication before her return from Europe.

The other project was nothing less ambitious than an opera. The plot was to be based upon the present relations between the American Indian and our Caucasian civilization; the music was to be in part a development of Indian material. Off and on for perhaps three

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years she had talked of the structure of the plot. The scene was to shift from an Indian reservation to one of the oldest seats of American culture, and back again; the hero was to be a young Indian for whom a life-tragedy was to grow out of an inner conflict between the two stages of culture which he should experience within himself. It is needless to mention details of the story. They were so far wrought out in her conception that the whole seems now as if I had read it in completed form. As far as either of us ever learned, this plan is unique. It certainly appears to offer extraordinary opportunity for fresh dramatic and musical effects.

I have spoken thus far of her professional doings and plannings. They truly reveal her, yet only in part, and how inadequately! Now that the end of this narrative is in sight, I realize that what I most desire to tell will remain unsaid; the greatest thing that she was and the greatest thing that she did consist in something that no one could learn except by being continually in her presence.

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Only a few hints of her more personal and private life may be set down; the rest must abide where it is already lodged in the hearts of the few who entered the inner sanctuary.

The first year of our residence in Evanston we lived in rooms, and then once more we had a home. During the summer of 1894 we built, and when college opened we had a house and a debt, but little more! She felt the burden of being in debt even more than I did, and the economies that she practised are as great a marvel to me now as they were then. But no sacrifice seemed too great if we could only have a nest of our very own. This was her foremost feeling. But she needed also a music-room — she needed a larger and better one than our means could buy; but by adopting a radical building plan (her own conception), we were able to utilize the floor space so as to seat, on some occasions, as many as a hundred persons.

Another motive also underlay this plan: we desired to make our home useful to the students. I had a feeling, which she

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heartily shared, that something could be done for the religious and moral life by providing one open home for students on Sunday afternoons during the indoor-period of winter. The music-room was religiously consecrated to this purpose, and when the meetings began she threw herself into the enterprise with all her heart. To her was due, in very large measure, the social atmosphere that made our *conversazioni*, as we have had reason to know, occasions of heart-warming as well as of moral reflectiveness. After two seasons the *conversazioni* were superseded by a regular Sunday mass-meeting, in some of the University's halls, addressed by prominent speakers. But our home never ceased to seem to her to be a gift in trust for others, and it was her pleasure frequently to invite larger or smaller groups of students of the College or the School of Music, or both, to spend an evening around our fire, or to dine with us. This was most often the case at the Thanksgiving and holiday seasons. Again and again the house was opened for all who chose to come. Her planning

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for these occasions was minute, and her pleasure in the happiness of our guests was as deep as it was unselfish.

Many musical recitals which were intended for our home, and would have been given there if she had gone on with private teaching, were transferred to the School of Music. Yet the music-room witnessed a varied series of musical events. One of the last of them, and possibly the most pleasurable of all to her, was a reception in honor of Mr. Arthur Foote, who was gracious enough to render several of his own compositions.

Here she practised, studied, wrote, composed; and here, as nowhere else except in the homes of two or three of our friends, music became for her a free self-disclosure, like conversation. For me, and I think for some of our friends, music here acquired meanings rich and varied, meanings that entered into life as a part of it, even though the analytical aspects that were an open book to her were only dimly apprehended by us. The hunger of my ear these days apprises me how life came to be lived in tone, and



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how thereby life was raised to a higher plane.

Not too rapidly, but surely, she found true friends of her mind and heart — fire-side friends who understood her, rainy-day friends who lined all her clouds with silver — to whom she clung with passionate loyalty to the day of her death. Extremely sensitive to the attitudes of others toward her, having the keenest insight (commonly called intuitive) into the minds of others, blessed with intense likes and dislikes, she yet had the self-control that makes enemies few, and the warmth of loyalty that preserves friendships once made. Though she enjoyed general society, and was not unadapted to its demands, her growing professional work gradually decreased the frequency with which she participated in large social functions. But all the more she “grappled to the soul” a group of friends whose affection she had proved. Our home on University Place came to be linked by indissoluble bonds with other homes, here and there, and thus to its other eternal sanctities was added that of friendships that cannot die.

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It was often asked how she could carry on her professional pursuits and still be the good housekeeper that everything about our home proved her to be. How could she keep everything so clean, orderly, tasteful; how could she make so much of the little with which we had to do; what kept the household machinery so regular and free from friction? Precisely the executive qualities that made her professional work so effective — a comprehensive and orderly mind, attention to detail, quick perception, courage to put well-defined responsibilities upon others and then take her own hands off; above all a spirit of fairness and dignified sympathy that enabled her to keep her hired helpers year after year and to entrust to them almost the whole routine of household management. She brought out the best in a servant very much as she did in her pupils, by a faith that stimulated to one's best, and tolerance of the defects of one's best.

She was a home-maker! It is fitting that I, who have said so much of her music, should praise also the skilled

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housewifery of which I have enjoyed the blessings these many years. In 1900, without her suspecting my intention, I dedicated my first book to her in the words of Lowell:

“’T was nothing that I can phrase,  
But the whole dumb dwelling grew conscious,  
And put on her looks and ways.”

The first copy that came from the press was specially bound for her, and therein she found a hint of how she herself and our home had gone into all my work. I cannot now think of better words in which to tell what our home has been like, but the source of them, “The Dead House,” assumes a new meaning.

She was fond of literature, and it was a custom of ours to read aloud to each other. In this way we traversed together not a little poetry, essays, fiction, and biography. In current fiction she read more widely than I, and then she permitted me to see, through her eyes, some of the ongoings of the literary world.

Not less did she love nature. The *Vogelweide*, as she christened that home of meadow-larks, the field opposite the

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north campus ; the lake shore ; the woods to the north, with their spring flowers ; the mountains that we visited in summer — all brought her a message. In connection with our annual vacation-visit to her people (omitted by her only twice, when we visited the White Mountains and some of the Wisconsin lakes), we found opportunities for outings in the forests and mountains of the wondrous West. In Colorado, in the Lake Tahoe region of the Sierra Nevada, in the Shasta region, at Los Gatos and Pacific Grove, in the forests of Oregon, in the Canadian Rockies, she found healing of the spirit and deep joy. After gazing in rapt absorption at some mountain landscape, she would turn and say, "The annoyances of life are not as large as they seem, after all." In the summer of 1904, while she was at Alameda, she suffered from an obstinate attack of insomnia, the only incident of the kind in her life. After all skilled treatment failed, we fled to the Sierra Nevada. We knew that high altitudes are not ordinarily prescribed for insomnia, but we had faith that the mental effect of

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mountain scenery would more than counterbalance the tendency to nerve-stimulation. Tenting in a great cañon, with mighty crags and peaks around her, with wildflowers rioting at her feet, and a clear-voiced brooklet singing to her of sleep, she found rest. Of all that we read together at that time she enjoyed most of all the stately references to mountains that we found in the Bible — the mountains that are round about Jerusalem, the mountains toward which the Psalmist lifted up his eyes, and all the others. From that time these were among her favorite passages in the Bible. As the years wore on her delight in simple, close contact with nature increased. She acquired a fondness for tenting that made a hotel room seem stale and confining. Her tramps in the mountains grew longer. No one could enter with more child-like zest into the joys of camp-fires at night, and fishing excursions by day, with their epicurean cooking at luncheon-time. She was beginning to learn the gentle art of fly-casting for trout.

Her conversations and letters were

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lighted up by a rich humor. No one enjoyed a good story more than she did, and few persons whom I have known could tell a story as well. She had a fund of anecdotes, and whatever she touched, whether it was one of the common details of life or one of its larger problems, she was always likely to discover a humorous angle of vision.

On the other hand, nothing was more characteristic than a certain deep conscientiousness that compelled her to meet all the events of life on a plane of moral earnestness. Impulsive she was, splendidly so. She would take in a situation in a flash, and her great heart would surge with admiration or wrath, with indignation or pity, with disappointment or hope ; but from girlhood her training had tended to the postponement of action until the second thought came. That thought was sure to be one of kindness, one in which her responsibility was taken seriously. Duplicity and insincerity she could not abide, and these are the only faults toward which she was uncompromisingly severe. She was herself the heart of

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honor and discretion. She could keep a secret, and she carried locked fast to the end many a dangerous confidence. I have already referred to a keen sense of justice that was only the obverse side of a large generosity. She was not only too just to invade the rights of others herself; she was too just to hold a grudge, and the meanest person with whom she ever had to do could count on her help if he were unjustly attacked.

Her predominant attitude toward life was a constructive one. It was the attitude of religion as a practical purpose and activity. I believe that I am the only person to whom she ever fully confided the facts of her religious development in her mature years. They are full of interest, for in her own decidedly individual way she experienced the whole stress of present-day religious reconstruction. She was profoundly unsatisfied by conventional modes of church life, by forms of public worship, by much of that which gives itself forth as the way of life. She thirsted for a reality that she did not always experience in what was offered to her. For

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a time she questioned much. With the exception of the future life, of which she never doubted, all the essentials of Christian belief went at one time or another into the crucible. The doubt arose invariably out of an immediate practical issue, never out of analysis of historical doctrines. For such analysis she had no taste. Nevertheless, her doubt usually culminated precisely where the theological difficulties of our day have been most intense. With a flash of wit, or in a word of twilight musing, she would lay open a commonplace fact so as to show at its core the characteristic issues of our age. I remember coming home from church one Sunday silently revolving in my mind certain high philosophical considerations relating to the sermon that we had just listened to, when she suddenly broke out with a remark on life as it actually is that in a sentence projected the whole problem and the whole drift of the sermon before the mind.

It was fascinating to witness these insight-flashes of a mind utterly unversed in theological lore and method. They



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were absolutely fearless. She dared to face the worst possibilities, though for her, with her vigorous sense of life, the values at stake were the greatest.

Little by little, with occasional periods of depression, she regained a constructive position. To say how she won it would be to write a history of our own times. Partly through nature came the larger hope, but more through a growing realization of the laws of life as she experienced them in her efforts to make life more ideal. Time and again she would sum up a series of events with the remark that, after all, this or that principle that Jesus taught is the only one that really works. Without philosophizing about it, she seemed to reach a realization that the highest in our human life may safely be taken as an index of what lies above and underneath our life. In particular, her own perennial impulse to communicate ideal values to other lives seemed to gather strength to reach up through the clouds to its source in God. Certain it is that her daily work became in a fully conscious way the service of God. She responded,

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how thankfully, to sermons that illuminated the daily life with hope and faith and love. All sincere religion appealed to her, whether or not she could adopt its modes of expression. For her, religious expression in words was almost impossible, but helpful conduct toward others, particularly in everyday relations, took the place of words. She lived out this spirit in her home, and toward any who needed her there went out sympathy and cheer and help. Thus, after a time, she realized a reconstructed faith. All the values of her girlhood religion withstood the crucible and came out as gold tried in the fire; and when a new and final test, which many regard as the most severe of all, met her, her faith shone, as we shall see, with undimmed lustre.

Of her glorious capacity for affection, how can I speak without profanation, yet how can I be silent? All the prismatic rays of a brilliant mind and an ardent temperament focussed in her heart-life. Impetuous as the magnetic needle when it seeks its pole, and not less constant, was her affection. In her home, as no-

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where else, the wealth of her personality spent itself forth as California's summer sun glows down upon the mountains. It was such a self-giving and self-forgetting as makes credible the love of God wherein all meaning is. The object upon which such affection is lavished can never henceforth become poor. Time and death and eternity have found their meaning for him, and that meaning is good. Death cannot rob him, because the love that makes separation so tragic is itself the realization of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The very intensity of the suffering is evidence that death is swallowed up in victory.



# ALAMEDA

July - August, 1905

**I**S this the end of all my care?  
Is this the end? Is this the end?  
Alfred Tennyson.

**W**HAT is excellent,  
As God lives, is permanent;  
Hearts are dust, heart's loves remain;  
Heart's love will meet thee again.  
Ralph Waldo Emerson.

**S**HE is not dead.  
Jesus.

**T**ILL all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.  
Alfred Tennyson.

**T**HE expected year in Europe meant only a little less to her than did the first opportunity for foreign study. Her plans were definite and full. Two of her advanced pupils were to accompany us, and they were to be placed in Berlin for the winter after a visit to the Wagner festival at München. She was then to spend a considerable part of the season in Paris. Passage to Europe was engaged for August 30 from New York. Between commencement and that time we were to pass nine or ten days in the Sierra Nevada, and then she was to visit her people in Alameda, leaving me for a little longer in the mountains.

Her brother and his family met us in the Sierra, and with them and other friends she spent delightful days. There were walks, and drives, and picnics, and quiet hours in the hammock. Early in July she went on to Alameda, and I

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followed her thither on the 4th of August. I found her not quite well. She had had an attack of ptomaine poisoning following the eating of shrimps at San Francisco on the first day of that month. Apparently she was recovering from the attack, but in a day or two she became worse, and for a week she was very ill. Between the 13th and the 20th, however, convalescence was so rapid that the attending physician had no scruples against her starting for the East, in accordance with our programme, on the 22d. On the 20th she began to suffer with what appeared to be colic. No alarming symptoms appeared until late the following afternoon. Early the next morning, after a night of terrible suffering, it was for the first time clear that a stoppage of the intestine existed. She was immediately removed to Ward's sanatorium in San Francisco, where Dr. J. W. Ward operated the same day for the relief of the stoppage. He found the cause of it to be a cancer, evidently of long standing. Perforation and blood-poisoning had already occurred. The possibility of saving her was only a



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chance in a thousand, but it was seized upon and a fight for her life was made. The difficulties were enormous. But resection was successfully accomplished, and the blood poisoning was somewhat checked. Undoubtedly the operation prolonged her life, but just before six o'clock on the morning of the 24th, thirty-six hours after the operation, the poison stilled the beating of her heart.

The medical aspects of the case are most strange. "Doctor," said the surgeon to the attending physician when the truth was revealed by the operation, "it's impossible, but there it is!" Of the fact of cancer there is no doubt, for the diagnosis was subsequently confirmed by bacteriological examination. The disease had been present, without doubt, for many months, yet no symptom of any chronic or organic disorder had ever shown itself. Every incident that can now be regarded as possibly connected with the disease had been fully accounted for. She had shown more fatigue than usual toward the end of the college year, but it was fully explainable by the mental

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strain connected with her resignation from the School of Music. She had suffered from a gastric disturbance for a few hours, but this also was completely explained by the immediate circumstances. The ptomaine poisoning that preceded her last illness seems only to have been rendered more stubborn by the diseased condition of the tissues. All that is possible to medical and surgical science and skill was done at the first indicated moment, but that moment was too late.

Of the personal side of her life from August 4 to August 24 I must speak, in order that her friends may know how she met these fiery trials. They revealed, not weakness, but strength. Though she was always sensitive in the highest degree to all pain stimuli, day after day she bore intense suffering with unwavering courage and high spirit. I can say this with full knowledge of the facts, for it was my privilege to nurse her day and night until she entered her room at the hospital. Cheerful, uncomplaining, thoughtful of others, foresighted, affectionate always,

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even indulging her irrepressible fondness for humor, she shed a glory upon those days that transfigures their tragic pathos.

The abrupt announcement of the necessity for an operation caused her to shrink, but only for a very few moments. Then the strength of her nature showed itself. A number of years ago, when we were travelling by stage in Oregon, our road brought us to a ravine where the bridge was down and our only chance of crossing lay in several lengths of plank only a foot wide. She had always had extreme fear of high places, yet, after surveying the situation, she calmly told me to take her hand and lead the way across. Until that instant I could not have believed her capable of it, yet she made the perilous passage with utter steadiness. She had always had a horror of operations, but now she placed her hand in that of the great Guide and Helper and went forward as steadily as if she were merely undertaking an unusual piece of work. She made ready with her characteristic attention to details, was interestedly observant of all the preparations, talked

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frankly and fearlessly of the extreme danger that lay ahead. The faith that had sustained her in the work of life now went with her in her peril and suffering.

After the operation, which was of extreme severity, though she was weak she was still in possession of her mental powers with all their individuality. Patient, practical, thoughtful of the nurse, still seeing the humorous side of things, constantly striving to make the situation easier for her loved ones, she was her very self.

We could not take the risk of exciting her by explaining her condition, yet toward the end she knew by inference from the activities of the surgeon and the nurses that her life was the prize for which a persistent fight was being made. To the sentiment that we were in the hands of God, and that He would do all things well, she responded with the smiling trust of a child that nestles against its mother's breast. Even in the last hours she was so fully herself that, when something that she desired had to be denied, I did not hesitate to reply in the appropriate words

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of a humorous story that we had recently enjoyed together. She took in all the humor, and she made the application in her characteristic way. The end came peacefully just as morning broke.

No, not the end! Only the close of a chapter in her life! With suppressed protest this story has conformed to usage by saying—how often—“she was.” If it is given to us to discriminate the seeming from the real at all, a rich personality like hers cannot be mere transitory seeming. To have known her very soul for seventeen years is enough to make one certain that death cannot reach *her*.

The funeral was held at the home of her parents on the 25th of August at two o'clock. There were present about seventy-five invited guests, largely her friends of other days. The service was in charge of the Rev. Charles R. Brown, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Oakland, a friend of both of us in the old Boston days. In accordance with a special request, the service was a brief one. The hymns, “Lead, Kindly Light” and “Sweet is Thy Mercy, Lord,” were

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sung by the quartette of Mr. Brown's church, Mrs. Grace Davis Northrup, soprano, Mrs. Lena Carroll Nicholson, contralto, Mr. Henry L. Perry, bass, and Mr. Chester Rosekrans, tenor. Mr. Brown's address follows :

"This event we call death is never referred to in the New Testament as in any sense a finality, but always as an experience in life. It is represented under many different figures, some of which I recall to your minds to-day.

"Death is called a sleep. When Lazarus died Jesus said, 'Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep. I go that I may awake him out of his sleep.' Death was a sleep which came at the end of a long day of life, when the body, wearied by disease, it might be, or by old age, lost itself in sleep. It was a sleep out of which there was to come an awakening to a brighter, longer, fairer day. It was thus that Jesus spoke of death as a sleep.

"He also spoke of death as a 'going out.' When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration with his three disciples, Peter and James and John, his companions spoke with Him of 'the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.' The word used for 'decease' was the word 'exodus,' the going out. It had reference to an experience in the life of the ancient Hebrew nation, when the Israelites, suffering under the bondage and the varied limitations of their life in Egypt, accom-

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plished an exodus — they went out into the broader, freer life of the steppes and then on into the larger and more joyous opportunities of the land of promise.

“Death is an exodus, a going out from whatever bondage we may suffer here because of the physical order in which we live, into the finer opportunities of the land of promise.

“There is yet another figure used by St. Paul which I have always loved. He was fond of the sea. In his missionary labors he had made many voyages around the Mediterranean. He had been shipwrecked, spending a day and a night in the deep. He had come into close contact with the sailors and out of all this experience he had brought many nautical terms which now and then he used in the expression of spiritual truth.

“Near the close of his life, when he was not an old man, but worn by the many hardships of his active service, he wrote from his prison in Rome to his young friend Timothy the last letter of which we have any record. ‘I have fought a good fight,’ he says. ‘I have kept the faith; I have finished my course. The time of my departure is at hand.’ And the word he uses for ‘departure’ means literally ‘the unmooring.’ ‘The time of my unmooring is at hand.’ He thought of himself as a ship tied at the dock, fretting and chafing its sides against the wharf, dreaming ever of the open sea. By and by, when in the purpose of the master the hour for departure arrived, there came an unmooring, a casting off of all the cables,

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and the setting forth on the wide sea to the haven beyond.

“Death is an unmooring, a cutting loose from things which have held us here, a casting off of cables which may have grown inexpressibly dear, holding us as they do to this earthly situation. But when death comes, it is not in any sense the end of life, but rather the beginning of a vast voyage on an open sea to the appointed haven beyond.

“Death then is a sleep, a going out, an unmooring. When we thus think of it in the terms and in the spirit of the New Testament it seems no longer a finality, but a supreme experience in every way preparatory to the larger things that lie further on. In this firm assurance we find our comfort when at hours like this we come to mourn the loss of those whom we have loved.

“It would be altogether superfluous for me to stand here to utter extended words of eulogy in regard to our dear friend Mrs. Coe. We are all here because we knew her, and because appreciation, esteem, and love have filled our hearts. She was strong, sane, well-poised, unselfish, finding ever her greatest joy not in being ministered unto, but in ministering unto others, tender-hearted, as every true woman must be to be true. How nobly and beautifully these qualities were embodied in the life we knew!

“She was by extraordinary natural endowment, by wide and varied training, and by demonstrated efficiency a teacher, a great teacher. She was not



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only a teacher of music, her chosen instrument in the accomplishment of her work, but a teacher of the higher, finer values in life. It was her office to aid in the unfolding, the maturing, and the enrichment of personality, and music was her appointed instrument to that high end. She wrought not only in the world of tone, but in the world of spirit.

“She was a musician in her own right — not only a skilled performer of the melodies and harmonies of others, but a creator of melody and harmony herself. While she lived and worked in this sense-world the tones were but as symbols of deeper spiritual values, and with them she sought to bring out the deeper meanings of life’s aspirations, to the end that ‘there might be one music as before, but vaster.’

“She was a daughter, and how she was endeared to this household! How they all rejoiced in the splendid success which she achieved! How they welcomed her home coming! How they were blessed and enriched in her sweet companionship! How it seemed to them as if all the stars had fallen out of the sky when the sad news came that she was gone! She nobly fulfilled all that was beautiful in that word ‘daughter.’

“She was a wife, and upon one heart most heavily of all there falls a sense of deep disappointment and irreparable loss, now that she is removed from us. George Albert Coe and Sadie Knowland knew and served God when their lives lay apart. Then the paths drew near, blended, and became

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one path where they walked side by side, working together, living together, loving each other, making their contribution of clear thought and noble harmony, that the world about them might have life and have it more abundantly. And now again the paths have drawn apart, yet not far apart, and not apart at all except to our mortal eyes. In spirit and in purpose their work is still one. The kingdom is one, though some citizens toil here and some there. The great task is one, though some labor in one abiding-place and some in another of the Father's House. The unfolding, the maturing, the enriching of personality does not end at death, and there is still and ever the same necessity for that noble service to be rendered under the eye of God. The paths may lie apart for a season, but the work, as well as the spirit and purpose of their lives, is forever one.

“Thus in these great assurances gathered to our hearts out of God's word to men, and in the great anticipations which rise before us when we rest upon the integrity of those plans with which we have already learned in some measure to cooperate, we find our comfort!

“Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar, when  
I put out to sea,  
But such a tide as moving seems asleep, too full  
for sound and foam  
When that which drew from out the ocean deep,  
turns again home.

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“ ‘Twilight and evening bell, and after that the dark !  
And may there be no sadness of farewell when  
I embark :  
For tho' from out our bourne of time and place  
the flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face when I have  
crost the bar.’ ”

By a strange and comforting coincidence, three of my old Boston student-friends, in addition to Mr. Brown, were present. They are the Rev. Arthur H. Briggs, the Rev. Edward P. Dennett, and the Rev. Francis M. Larkin. Mr. Briggs and Mr. Larkin had known Mrs. Coe when she was still Miss Knowland, and Mr. Dennett had married one of her most intimate girl friends. These three, together with Mr. W. F. Minium, a Northwestern alumnus, whose wife had studied with Mrs. Coe in Evanston, Mr. Joseph Forderer, an old friend of the family, and Mr. W. K. Scott, who had been one of our merry party in the mountains a few days before, served as pall-bearers.

In her days of health Mrs. Coe had expressed to me and also to her mother a preference for cremation. Accordingly, what was mortal of her was committed to

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the purifying heat at the beautiful Oakland crematory. In due time a permanent resting-place will be provided for her ashes.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of everyday's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith;  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints — I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and, if God choose  
I shall but love thee better after death.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.





















