HEROINES OF HISTORY

FRANK M. BRISTOL

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HEROINES OF HISTORY

TYPICAL HEROINES
OF MYTHOLOGY
OF SHAKESPEARE
OF THE BIBLE

BY
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To

Nellie, My Wife.

CONTENTS

PART I

WOMAN-HEROIC IN MYTHOLOGY

PART II

WOMAN-HEROIC IN SHAKESPEARE

PART III

WOMAN-HEROIC IN THE BIBLE

PART I

WOMAN-HEROIC IN MYTHOLOGY

CHAPTER I

MYTHOLOGY, ITS ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT, AND INFLUENCE

THE heroic element in woman's character receives more or less emphasis in all forms of literature and in every period of history. Wherever found it is one and the same virtue. But it may be associated with very dissimilar mental qualities and very unlike ethical notions in different individuals, races, and ages. The historic heroine may differ widely in her moral and mental entirety from any heroine of poetry or romance—any creation of the imagination. The heroine of the Bible may not as a type correspond in the unity of her womanhood to the Greek heroine of mythology. But when we find the strong, splendid virtue of heroism in historical or fictitious, in real or ideal, in scriptural or mythological character, it is ever one and the same thing.

It will not be insisted upon that we accept the heroine on her heroism alone as the ideal woman. No woman can be ideal without it, but other virtues must unite with heroism to constitute the perfect woman. We are not

claiming that the merely heroic mother, or that the merely heroic daughter or wife measures up to the full standard of the perfect mother or daughter or the ideal wife. But without this heroic element the character of the woman, whatever her relation may be, can never reach perfection. In the ideal mother, daughter, wife, woman there must blend the sevenfold virtues of heroism, purity, love, faith, intelligence, modesty, and devotion, as blend the seven primary colors of the prism in the pure white ray of light.

As Hebrew character, life, and civilization developed under the influence of inspired standards and ideals of virtue, so the Greeks were very largely educated by the ideals of a mythology which was practically their religion. The mythological characters making up the Greek pantheon were doubtless the product of a long and subtle process of evolution, and they were composite myths at that. In one character there would seem to meet and mingle a historic personality and an interpretation of some natural phenomenon and an ethical law or moral principle. The composite whole would be the personification of a great physical force, a law of nature, an influence in the material universe, like light or darkness, or the life principle of the vege-

table world, or the sun, the moon, the seasons, or the controlling power of the sea, the presiding genius of the heavens, or the dark and mysterious forces of the underworld. Here is the sun-god—Apollo; here is Neptune of the sea; here is Aurora of the dawn; here is Iris of the rainbow; here is Flora of the world of bloom; here is Ceres of the harvests; here is Pomona of the orchard and the fruits. Among the lesser myths are found those charming goddesses who preside over the realms of human thought and study rather than over the great forces of the outer material world. Urania represents the genius of astronomy, Clio of history, Euterpe of music, Calliope of epic poetry, Melpomene of tragedy and Polyhymnia of sacred song.

In this mythology we seem to find an evolution proceeding in the imagination of a race; a law or phenomenon of nature seems to evolve into a personality, and that personality into a hero or heroine, that hero or heroine into a national ideal, that ideal into a god or goddess, to be assigned a place in the pantheon of the prevailing cult. Or an ethical principle originally set forth didactically comes to assume a form in the popular imagination, is personified, then deified, and finally worshiped. Or, again, some traditional per-

sonage may grow on the imagination of a people and come to be so exalted by the eulogies of priests, the songs of poets, and the advice of parents to their children as to assume godlike proportions, and finally to become so great and mysteriously potential in awakening individual emulation, in exciting public praise and kindling national pride and faith, as to command the admiration, then the veneration, and then the adoration of the people. Not wholly unlike this may have been the origin and evolution of the heroes and heroines, the gods and goddesses of the Greek and Roman traditions and mythologies. In an age to which science was unknown, and even when philosophers were as children in their knowledge of the laws, forces, and chemical processes of the physical universe, it will not appear altogether irrational that the people with their priests and poets should give an occult meaning to the forms and processes of life, to the movements of the heavenly bodies, and to the origin, nature, and influence of the world-elements. To their imagination all nature seemed to feel and think; every star, every rainbow, every dewdrop, the darkness, the wind, the light seemed to incarnate intelligence; every tree, flower, vine was animated with a spirit. And the very souls of

men and women departing from the body at times become reincarnated in flowers and trees. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls has come down to our modern thought through the fascinating tales of Ovid's Metamorphosis. Who does not recall the melancholy fate of Dryope, who for what seemed the most innocent act of gathering some purple flowers at the water's edge for her prattling babe was transfixed, her feet taking root in the earth; her whole body from her feet to her head was gradually changed into a tree—a metamorphosis which her sister and parents could not by all their tears and pleadings check. She had ignorantly plucked a flower of the nymph Lotis and left the stem bleeding. This nymph had herself been changed into this flower while escaping her would-be ravisher.

The radiantly beautiful Daphne was thus pursued by the infatuated Apollo, but flying from his presence she pursued a hopeless race against her lover, who as he was about to seize her was horrified to see her flowing hair turn to leaves, her outstretched arms become branches, her body take on bark, her feet to root themselves in the ground and her beautiful form change to a tree. "You shall be my tree," cried Apollo. "Your leaf shall not

wither nor fade. From your branches shall be gathered wreaths for the brows of heroes and conquerors." Daphne became the laurel.

Apollo transformed the blood of Hyacinthus into a flower. Apollo conceived a strange passion for the beautiful youth and was accidentally the cause of his death. While playing at quoits Apollo hurled a quoit which struck Hyacinthus in the forehead. The head of the beautiful boy fell drooping from his shoulder as he sank to the earth. Apollo, accusing himself of the accident, promised to immortalize the stricken youth in song, and turned his flowing blood into the purple Hyacinth, the flower of Apollo's favor.

Perhaps no fable of that mythologic lore had a greater beauty to our youthful imagination when first we entered this fascinating realm of literature than the story of Philemon and Baucis. It is an old Phrygian legend reciting the incidents of the origin of a certain linden tree and oak. In a ripe and beautiful old age this pious couple were metamorphosed, and she the linden tree became and he an oak.

Thus have the objects of nature, and especially the trees and flowers, become the habitations of spirits departed or the incarnation of some form of human genius or some ex-

pression of human faculty or virtue. Or thus has the imagination of an unscientific age tried to formulate in story the origin of those natural objects which are most intimately and sentimentally associated with the world's common feeling, and thus, some will argue, did mythology develop.

It is quite evident that corruptions grew up with this mythology, which was originally a purer form of worship than the idolatry which deified graven images and worshiped forms of wood and stone.

When the people made gods and goddesses who were like themselves, or degraded them to personifications of passions even more sensual and bestial than were their own, what wonder that the pantheon became a chaos and an anarchy of contrary and contending moral forces, an Augean stable of corruption? As the people became more and more corrupt and vicious, it was inevitable that their gods and goddesses, their heroes and heroines should become more and more like themselves, impure and depraved. But take those heroines of the Greek mythology, those goddesses—and goddesses because originally heroic, virtuous principles or beneficent, helpful laws of nature—take those heroines at their best, free from the weaknesses and vices with which they

came to be clothed, and they have lessons to teach all ages.

If we look for the heroism of intellect in that old system of myths, we shall find it personified in feminine character. Athena or Minerva represents the devotion of pure intellect to the control and guidance of the world's affairs. She was the patroness of the arts of industry and agriculture and defensive warfare. There is not only the heroism of intellect but also the heroism of purity personified in this goddess. Only the chaste, the pure, the virtuous were originally permitted to worship at Athena's shrine. It was under the patronage of this goddess, who sprang from the brain of Zeus, that Athens came to its storied splendor, the seat and center of art, philosophy, and song. And the highest, cleanest art, the most rational and ethically noble philosophy, the sanest, sublimest, and most perfect literature were produced when the Hellenic genius was dominated by the cult of moral purity and intellectual power as symbolized in the Parthenon—the temple and shrine of Athena.

As Athena, or Minerva, represents, the heroism of intellect or heroic and beneficent intellectuality and culture, so Hera, or Juno, represents the heroism of happy, innocent, and

useful activity. Here is the heroine or goddess who with all her love for nature and the world of life and activity, is the protectress of the sanctity of marriage. Here is the true heroine of the home life of that pagan world.

Artemis, or Diana, personifies the heroism of chastity and virtue. At this shrine youth, innocence, modesty found favor. Here too they found illumination and inspiration. In the original representations both of art and poetry, as well as of tradition and philosophy, this heroine was of spotless, immaculate character and reputation, an ideal, commanding the veneration of Greek and Roman womanhood.

Here was a true heroine-worship. Was it originally anything more than a very praiseworthy emulation of the virtues of which these heroines, who became to the popular imagination goddesses, were the supposed embodiment and personification? Were these goddesses at one time real women and historic heroines? Did they somewhere and some time act a noble part? Did they confer blessings upon their country and people? Did they lift up before them high standards of virtue? Did they become martyrs to great principles? Were they the saints of the old pagan calendar? Was mythology in its genesis and in its sim-

plest forms anything more than a canonization of these heroines of the prehistoric time? Was it this even before its gods and goddesses became the personifications of the great nature-forces, the effort of the imagination to explain a universe which is only now beginning to have an explanation in science?

Try to look beyond the myth to that possible reality, that true, high-minded, self-sacrificing benefactress, that great-souled heroine, that woman there in the dim, far distance, acting a part that made her glorious, made her immortal.

CHAPTER II

THE HEROINE-MOTHER

Thetis

Brushing aside all the nonessential and false elements that have gathered about these characters, we see this one great, sublime idea presenting itself to the student of mythology —the heroism of usefulness, the heroism of benefaction. We find heroines among mothers, wives, and daughters of the ancient tradition. They are represented as mortals and as immortals, divine and semidivine in nature, as the case may be. Thetis was of divine birth —"A goddess and the daughter of a god"— beautiful beyond compare. But though she was worthy of alliance with the gods, even with Jove himself, she was fated to marry a mortal, because it was prophesied that her son would be so great as to eclipse the fame of her husband. None of the gods, therefore, though bewitched by the transcendent charms of Thetis, would marry her and run the risk of having to assume a position of inferior greatness to his own issue. The gods did not seem to know, what history proves, that

every truly great man has been greater than his father. Had men acted on the principle of the gods who feared to marry Thetis, there never would have been a Homer, a Plato, a Themistocles, a Cæsar, a Shakespeare, a Dante, a Raphael, a Napoleon, a Washington, a Lincoln. Thetis, therefore, married a mortal, and not a very reputable mortal at that. Peleus had a very bad record. But there sprang from this union "Achilles swift of foot, the first of Grecian heroes."

The devotion of Thetis to her marvelous son forms one of the most inspiring chapters of old Greek tradition. Her immortal nature enabled her to divine the future, and to foresee not only the hardships and dangers of the Trojan War, but also the death of her splendid Achilles should he accompany the Greeks to Troy. She used all her powers of persuasion to prevent his joining the Grecian forces. With the gods and goddesses the element of patriotism had no influence. They were neither Greeks nor Trojans, but superior to both. Their sympathies were often divided, gods against gods; and a god or goddess had the divine right to change his or her sympathies from one side to another at will. Thetis was not sufficiently interested in the quarrel between Menelaus and Paris over the unfaithful

Helen to sacrifice her great son for either. But Achilles, at first inclined to follow his mother's advice, finally yielded to the solicitations of Ulysses and his companions in arms and joined the Greeks, to become the most brilliant warrior before the walls of Troy and the real hero of the Iliad. In the quarrel which arose between Achilles and Agamemnon, the commander-in-chief of the Grecian forces, over a fair captive who had been taken as one of the spoils of war, and on account of which misfortune had come to the Grecian arms, Thetis fully sympathized with Achilles and agreed with him in his purpose to resign and return home. But this mother was not willing to have the matter rest there with her son disgraced. If Achilles was content to sulk, sheathe his mighty sword, and withdraw his Myrmidons from the Grecian forces, Thetis was not satisfied to let this quarrel terminate with her son's passing into oblivion while Agamemnon continued to win battles, spoils, and fame.

Through the influence of Jove, who secured the defeat of the Greeks in an engagment with the Trojans, she forced the Greeks to urgently recall Achilles. When her son heard of Hector's victory over Patrocles, through whose persuasion he had consented to rejoin

Agamemnon with his invincible Myrmidons, he determined to seek Hector in single combat and avenge the death of his dearest friend. In this great duel, Achilles wore an armor which his mother had persuaded Vulcan to forge. It was absolutely invulnerable, and the shield was of such beautiful design and workmanship that its description forms one of the most charming passages of Homer's immortal epic.

It was thus that at every critical period of Achilles' life his mother, Thetis, was his guardian angel. She had championed his cause against the unjust Agamemnon. She had saved him from the humiliation and disgrace in which that quarrel would otherwise have terminated. She had secured the armor for him which made him invincible in battle. She had inspired him with the magnanimity which, while it comforted Priam and consoled Troy, rescued his own name from odium and from the execration of posterity. She had been to the greatest hero of Greek tradition his wisdom, light, and inspiration. But, alas! it was destined that the death of Achilles should be the result of an oversight on the part of his very mother when she was securing for him what she supposed would be the divine attribute of invulnerability. When he

was an infant she immersed him in the River Styx, holding him by the heel. Of all his body his heel where his devoted mother held him alone remained vulnerable. After the death of Hector Achilles fell in love with the sister of his most bitterly hated enemy, with Polyxena, the beautiful daughter of Hecuba and King Priam, the sister of Hector. Apollo revealed to Paris, the brother of Polyxena, the vulnerable part of Achilles' body, and while the conqueror of Hector was in Apollo's temple arranging for his alliance with Polyxena the god guided a poison arrow from the bow of Paris to the vulnerable spot. Thus Paris avenged the death of his brother Hector. And Thetis had to endure the unspeakable sorrow of seeing her son die from a wound which her inadvertence had made possible. On the death of Achilles his mother, still cherishing his memory, wished to dispose of his wonderful armor which she had secured for him from Vulcan. She left it for his old comrades to decide who was most worthy to receive and wear it. The honor fell to Ulysses, the hero who had persuaded Achilles to engage in the war that ended with the fall of Troy. Near to Achilles as one of the noblest figures of the Iliad stands his heroic mother, the immortal Thetis.

Hecuba

But if it were possible, the mother of Hector, the Trojan warrior, was a greater heroine than the mother of Achilles. Thetis and Hecuba! One a goddess born, the other but a mortal! The devotion of Hecuba to her hero son and to all her children—Paris, Polydore, Cassandra, Polyxena—presents one of the most exalted chapters in the dramatic and epic literature of the Greeks. A mortal, though of royal blood, she had not the attributes by which she could influence the gods to favor her ambitions; she could not mother a demigod such as Achilles. Her noble Hector was but mortal like herself and had no divine endowment. She could not persuade a Jove to execute her desires. She had no access to Vulcan, that her son might be clad for battle with terrifying and invulnerable armor. In calamity she could not, as could Thetis by virtue of her divine nature, rise superior to grief, withdraw from earthly scenes and immerse herself in celestial cares and heavenly influences. She bore her trials, her sorrows, her infinite losses and her woeful destiny not as a goddess but as a woman. Alas! it was her sad fate to be the mother of Paris. It is one of the mysteries of Grecian legend that Helen is more grievously blamed than Paris

for the dire calamities of the Trojan War. "For there is no man abhors not Helen." Rarely is a harsh word spoken of Paris in the lines of the tragic poet, while upon Helen's name the vials of both Trojan and Grecian wrath are poured.

But it was left for Hecuba, the mother of Paris, to blindly overlook her own son's misdoing in her rage over the baneful influence of Helen. None of the calamities that have befallen her or Troy seem in her mind due to the act of Paris in which he violated the ancient law of hospitality and ruined the home of Menelaus. Helen alone is blamed:

> by her beauteous eyes was Troy,
> That prosperous city, with disgrace o'erthrown.

But true it was that this greatest heroine of the Iliad, Hecuba, had to suffer the thought that if she was the proud mother of Hector, the noblest hero of the Phrygian host, she was also the mother of Paris, whose act had brought the Greeks in arms against old Troy. This, however, was the honor that crowned the heroine-brow of Hecuba, and her immortal fame came to her from this, that she was the

> Mother of Hector, that brave chief, whose spear
> Once pierced the Grecian squadron,

and when he falls before the prowess of Achilles,

> he dies, among the brave
> Esteemed the bravest.

Ever does this noblest mother of the Phrygian race speak of her sons and daughters with holy pride and tenderest affection. In turn, her children always address her with veneration and speak of her in language expressive of filial love and gratitude. It was upon this mother that the greatest ills and woes of Ilium's ruin fell. The crime of Helen and, let us say, of Paris cost her more than any other mortal. She lost all that once made her happy, proud, and great.

Her husband, sons and daughters, royal palace and country lost, she is doomed to become the slave of Ulysses, and at last to be metamorphosed into a dog! Of all who lost wealth, royalty, children, kingly consort, dignity, and finally personal identity in that long war, who suffered more than Hecuba? She lived to see all her loved ones torn from her, to grow aged in her misery, to be insulted, degraded, enslaved, and at last transformed into a barking beast. She had looked upon the mangled corpse of her proud Hector borne through the streets of Troy. She had seen the assassin strike her kingly Priam down even at the

shrine of Jupiter. She had with broken heart bound up for funeral rites the bruised form of Hector's son, her last hope, her grandchild, by whom she fondly dreamed the walls of Troy would rise again. She had seen Andromache, her Hector's widow, borne captive to the Grecian tents. Her fair and loving daughter Polyxena had been torn from her and immolated on the tomb of Achilles. Her Cassandra too was doomed to exile. She had suffered the loss of Polydore, her youngest son, and even of Paris, cause of all her woes. Old, infirm, alone, she stands homeless, husbandless, childless, countryless, throneless, friendless, helpless, the most shamefully, revengefully treated, the most severely punished, unchivalrously insulted, most ignobly doomed, and yet the bravest, most self-sacrificing, and heroic mother and woman of ancient tradition. It is a strange turn that the epic and dramatic writers give to affairs when they doom this heroine to so terrible a fate and permit Helen to return to Greece and to her husband's arms and rise to happiness and honor! But it was the Greeks, not the Trojans, who wrote the epics and tragedies, and they cannot be expected to reverence even so noble a heroine as the mother of Hector. Her sorrow was that she was the mother of Paris; her glory was

that she was the mother of Hector. From her illustrious motherhood came her heroism, and in that heroism, that mother-heroism, lives her immortal fame.

Latona

We have insisted that, as a rule, the philosophy of a great man's greatness is to be found in the character of his mother. And that mother rarely if ever escapes the trials and calamities which test and prove her heroism. Few of the mighty men of history have been born of the daughters of ease and luxury. It is quite remarkable that when we study these heroes, gods and demigods of mythology, we find it is often the case that their mothers were heroic souls and were forced to endure hardships and make sacrifices like mortals, and we find them devoting their energies and affections to the nursing, training, and development of their children like mortal mothers. The pride of Thetis in Achilles, and her devotion to him, is hardly less humanly tender, affectionate, and heroic than that of Hecuba for Hector and her other children.

Perhaps, however, larger elements of trial, of courage, and self-sacrifice in contending with adversity are to be found in the life of Latona, the mother of Apollo, than in the life

of Thetis. While Hector was but a mortal, though of royal blood, and Achilles was only a demigod with a goddess for a mother but a mortal for a father, Apollo was well-nigh a full-fledged god. Zeus, or Jupiter, was his father, and Latona, the daughter of a Titan, was his semidivine mother. To have been the mother of this, the most splendid of all the mythological deities, raised Latona to an eminence in popular thought, if not in the pantheon, hardly inferior to that held by Venus, Juno, and Minerva.

Apollo belongs to a higher class of beings than Achilles, Hector, Ulysses, Agamemnon, and such heroes of the Trojan War legend. He is the most glorious and beneficent of the gods. He is the mythic god of light, the sun-god. But in the intellectual rather than the merely physical sense he shines forth—radiant with truth. He is the ruling divinity of the muses. He is the inspiration of poetry and music. His emblem is the lyre rather than the sword, and he rules in the realm of peace, happiness, and the achievements of genius. His worship was the purest cult known to the Greeks. His twin sister, Diana, was the most austerely chaste goddess of the whole pantheon, worthy indeed to be the divine sister of Phebus Apollo, the purest and loftiest

conception of the myth-creating imagination. So exalted was Latona in the popular mind as the mother of Apollo and Diana that in the annual festivities of Thebes and Delphi, when the people assembled with incense and garlands to pay their vows at the altars of this god and goddess, they included her with her divine children, and paid no less honor to her than to them.

Latona was of such extraordinary beauty that she incurred the jealous hatred of Juno, who had her banished to wander upon the earth in quest of a home and country for her children. The heroic mother went forth from the abode of the gods carrying her twin born infants in her arms. In hunger and thirst, footsore and weary, her very children famishing and suffering with her, she sought a place of rest among the islands of the Ægean where at last Delos gave her a welcome and a home. In her sufferings for her children and in her devotion to them Latona proved herself a mother heroine of most exalted greatness. If, as we may suppose is true, the mythic deities, like mortal men, owed their character to their mothers' training and influence, then what honor is due Latona for the training of Apollo and Diana, the most highly intellectual and chastely moral deities of the Greek pan-

theon and the noblest national ideals of Hellenic genius and character. Among the immortals no heroine-mother gave to that most splendid civilization of antiquity children of equal virtue, power, and greatness. The Greeks in the best period of their wonderful development, in the brightest age of their history, in the culminating glory of their art, philosophy, and literature, owed more to Apollo than to any other god, and derived more inspiration from his oracles than from any other shrine of worship. Hence the Greeks' veneration for Latona, by whose sufferings, hardships, self-sacrifices, and careful training Apollo had come to be their sun, their light, their glory. And even now, with the old mythology without an oracle, a shrine, a worshiper, or a deity in the earth, Latona lives in the imagination of the world as an ideal conception of heroic motherhood; the mother of Apollo is as imperishable a memory as is that god who was the light of Greece.

CHAPTER III

THE HEROINE-DAUGHTER

ANTIGONE

THERE are not wanting examples of filial heroism in those old Greek traditions which compare most favorably with any presented by the fiction, poetry, and drama of modern literature. Antigone, the daughter of Œdipus, has justly been compared to Cordelia, the faithful and heroic daughter of King Lear and one of the most perfect creations of Shakespeare's genius.

Œdipus, the king of Thebes,

> whose luckless skill
> That intricate enigma did unfold,
> And slay the sphinx who chanted it,

has been reduced to the most abject misery by a series of misfortunes in which he and his house seem foreordained by cruel fate to utter ruin.

Unwittingly had Œdipus slain his own father, married his own mother, and become the father of children who were his own half brothers and half sisters! This intricate and horrible plot is worked out by Sophocles in

the drama of Œdipus Tyrannus. When the revolting truth was revealed to Œdipus that he had, though unwittingly, killed his own father and married his own mother, he was ready and willing to suffer any punishment that might be inflicted upon him. Heart-broken by the dreadful revelation, his wife, really his mother, took her own life. At sight of her, Œdipus plucked the golden pins from her garment and stabbed his eyes sightless! And thus went he forth a wanderer, shunned by men as one accursed of heaven. Forsaken and avoided by both gods and mortals, he found one only comforter, one guide and nurse, one true inseparable companion—Antigone. In her pathetic grief she cries:

"My sire,
What Grecian, what Barbarian, or what chief
In ancient days illustrious, who that sprung
From human race, hath e'er endured such ills
As thou hast done, such public griefs endured?"

Her mother dead by her own hand, and her two brothers slain, the cup of her sorrow seems filled to overflowing, yet she turns to her poor father, the blind, dethroned king, and with a filial tenderness addresses him:

"O my sire,
Into what hopeless misery art thou plunged!
For thee far more than for the dead I moan."

Casting from her heart her affianced lover, she makes the heroic resolve:

"My miserable father in his flight
I will attend."
"I am resolved to share his death."

To her father's expression of approval she affectionately replies:

"How can I wed, while you, my father, roam
A solitary exile?"

And when he laments his misfortunes, she with a noble spirit of self-sacrifice puts the sweetly tender query:

"May not I also be allowed to take
A part of your afflictions?"

When the stricken and blindly groping Œdipus assures his daughter that by the oracle of Apollo he is to die in Athens, he piteously pleads,

"But hasten, and minister with duteous zeal
To thy blind father, since to share my plight
Was thy most earnest wish."

Then tenderly Antigone replies,

"My aged sire,
Into a wretched banishment go forth:
O give me that dear hand, for I will guide
Your tottering steps, as prosperous gales assist
The voyage of the bark."

As she goes forth a wanderer, leading the blind and fallen king on his journey to dis-

tant Athens, does not every admiring reader of the old tragedy exclaim with grateful Œdipus,

"How is thy soul
With matchless generosity endued!"

In the drama of Œdipus Coloneus the long and weary journey of the sightless wanderer terminates, and, faithful to the end, Antigone devotedly attends him. She is his light, his guide, his nurse, his comforter. When he passed from the earth away, thus ran the messengers' report:

"After short space we turned, and saw far off
Only the king's self, holding up his hand
Over his face, so as to shade his eyes,
As if some sight of terror had appeared,
Awful, intolerable to gaze upon;
Then, in a moment, without interval,
We saw him kneel, worshiping earth and heaven,
The abode of gods, both in one act, together.
But he—what death he died, save Theseus' self
There lives not any mortal who can tell.
For neither any fire-fraught thunderbolt
Rapt him, from heaven, nor whirlwind from the sea
Stirred up to meet the moment; but some guide
Sent from above, or depth of the earth beneath
Opening to take him, finally, without pain."

Looking back upon the sad experience of those wanderings in exile, Antigone could but rejoice for him:

"In whose way
Nor war nor ocean lay,
But viewless regions rapt him home
Sudden, by some mysterious doom."

But the memory of that companionship of service and suffering, of filial duty and self-sacrifice was precious to this noble heroine. When this daughter, who had been faithful to the end, came at last to suffer the penalty of her sisterly devotion in giving honorable burial to her brother, Polynices, she looked upon death as joining the band of kindred gone before, saying,

"I come, cherishing this hope especially,
To win approval in my father's sight."

Such was the filial heroism of Antigone. But the ages have not proven all her sad words prophetic; when facing death she said,

"Friendless, unwept, unwed,
I, sick at heart, am led
The way prepared for me;
Day's hallowed orb on high
I may no longer see;
For me no tears are spent,
Nor any friends lament
The death I die."

No, not friendless, not unwept. Through ages noble souls in reading have become thy friends; for thee tears have been spent, and to this day, O daughter, faithful daughter-

heroine of Œdipus, sister-heroine of Polynices, friends, eternal friends lament the death you died.

Antigone, without boasting but in perfect naïveté, uttered a prophecy when she said of her filial devotion to the doomed and wretched Œdipus:

> "Such conduct 'midst my father's woes shall make
> My name illustrious."

Yes, and her name is illustrious wherever woman has honor and her name is known. Antigone, the martyr to her father's dutiful service, the ideal of sisterly devotion, the paragon of filial heroism!

Iphigenia

Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, by her final though reluctant surrender to the demands of the oracle of Diana, deserves to rank among the filial and patriotic heroines of Greek legend and tragedy. It was the sacrifice of this virgin daughter of the commander-in-chief of the Grecian fleet that made possible his success and fame, the fall of Troy and the triumph of the Greeks. The Argive ships were becalmed in the port of Aulis, and Diana, who had been offended on account of Agamemnon's having killed, in hunting, a sacred stag, demanded the sacrifice of the chieftain's

daughter as a condition upon which she would send the favoring gales and make possible the sailing of the fleet. Agamemnon, in his great love for Iphigenia, refused to have her led to the sacrificial altar. His brother, Menelaus, the husband of the unfaithful Helen, upbraided the chief, and charged him with treason, and accused him of a lack of brotherly devotion to the cause which had inspired the expedition against Ilium. Agamemnon wavers between his love for his daughter and his duty to his country. He finally resolves to sacrifice his daughter to propitiate Diana and insure the success of the expedition. But in his perplexity he resorts to deception in securing the presence of his daughter, who, he pretends, is to be married to the godlike Achilles. Iphigenia receives the letter and comes in response to her father's summons, as she and as her mother suppose, to marry Achilles. Now Agamemnon is resolved, for fear of the wrath of the Greeks and the mutiny of the fleet, to carry out his purpose and yield to the demands of Diana. Of course when the deception which Agamemnon had practiced became known it came as a shock to Iphigenia, to her mother, and to Achilles. Clytemnestra, the mother, and the gallant and chivalrous Achilles try to prevent the sacrifice. But

the overconfident son of Thetis finds himself opposed by Ulysses, by his own Myrmidons, and by the entire Grecian fleet, who demand that the sacrifice of the fair virgin shall be made, that the favor of Diana may be propitiated. Iphigenia at first looks with horror upon her father's proposal to slay her, and all on account of the infidelity of Helen which had precipitated this war. But finally the heroism of her nature triumphs over fear. She wonders that a father who had so dearly loved her and whom she regarded with tenderest affection could entertain the thought of sacrificing her. But seeing her father's agony of mind and his sore perplexity, considering how as commander-in-chief he will be held responsible if this vast enterprise should fail, and further thinking with patriotic concern upon the disgrace which that failure would bring to her country, she yields to fate:

> "Hear then what to my mind
> Deliberate thought presents. It is decreed
> For me to die: this, then, I wish—to die
> With glory, all reluctance banished far."
> "For Greece I give my life."

As she is led to the altar of sacrifice, where she is to save her father's honor and bring glory upon her country, she bids the virgins sing, "Success to Greece."

In the chorus that greets her ears as she goes to the fatal altar, prepared to die, she hears the prophecy of Ilium's fall and the triumph of her country's arms; and, what must thrill her heroic soul with greatest pride and joy, she hears the refrain:

"On Agamemnon's honored head,
Whilst wide the spears of Greece their terrors spread,
The immortal crown let conquest place,
With glory's brightest grace."

That heroic daughter, by yielding herself a willing sacrifice to Diana, saved her country and her father Agamemnon and vindicated the honor of the womanhood of Greece. But, strange to relate, Iphigenia was not slain by her father at the altar of Diana, but as Agamemnon lifted the fatal sword his daughter, wrapped in a cloud of mist, was caught away, and

on the ground
Panting was laid a hind of largest bulk,
In form excelling; with its spouting blood
Much was the altar of the goddess dewed.

At sight of this, Caldeas, the priest, knew that Diana had interfered, and he exclaimed:

"This, rather than the virgin, she accepts,
. . this she hath received
Of her free grace, and gives a fav'ring gale
To swell our sails, and bear th' invading war
To Ilium: therefore rouse, ye naval train,
Your courage. To your ships!"

Then forth the proud fleet sailed from Aulis. Iphigenia was supernaturally borne away to Taurus, there to serve in the Temple of Diana. Thence, years later, escaping with her brother Orestes, she returned to Greece bearing

> Diana's holy image
> Which fell from Heaven.

In reading this tragedy of Iphigenia in Aulis, one is impressively reminded of that awful and dramatic incident in the life of Abraham. When he is about to slay his own son Isaac upon the mountain altar as a sacrifice to God, suddenly his hand is stayed; there by the altar appears a ram, caught in the thicket, which God designates as the victim to take the place of Isaac. Surely, on that occasion Abraham could not have felt greater grief than crushed the soul of Agamemnon before the altar of Diana, nor could Isaac have manifested greater heroism as he awaited the fatal stroke from his father's hand than did Iphigenia as she lay upon the altar ready to have her own heartbroken sire dispatch her with the sword. She remains in the classic legends of the Greeks a filial and a patriotic heroine of transcendent virtue, an ideal for the emulation of all time.

CHAPTER IV

THE HEROINE-WIFE

ANDROMACHE

HECTOR possessed in Andromache a wife worthy of his own exalted nature. For this hero, the hope and pride of Ilium, "The Matchless Chief, the only prop of Troy," was famed no less as a man of every manly virtue possessed than as a warrior endowed with every soldierly attribute. This wife of Ilium's hero was Ilium's heroine. True, loyal wife she was. All the domestic virtues centered in her most womanly and wifely nature. Andromache was the queen of Hector's home; she was the pride of his eyes; he was the idol of her heart. "His white-armed spouse, the fair Andromache," tells what her ambition was as the wife of "the foremost man of Troy."

Nor is this the language of pride and haughtiness, but the naïve expression of most womanly modesty:

"All that to prudent matrons gives a grace,
In Hector's house was ever my employ,
First, for in this to women blame is due,
Charged or not charged, to such as rove abroad,
I checked this wand'ring humor, and remained
At home, within my house; nor gay discourse

Of females there admitted, but intent
On ordering what was useful, deemed myself
Well occupied. With silence of the tongue
And cheerfulness of look I entertained
My husband: where my province to command
I knew, and when to yield obedience to him."

When by the sin and folly of Paris, her husband's brother, the direful woes of war fell upon peaceful Ilium, and his country placed its hope and confidence in the defensive leadership of "Hector, well-beloved of Jove," he found in his Andromache a wife worthy in all heroism to be the wife of Ilium's greatest hero. Yet in her horror of war, and in her dread and fear of the consequences of Hector's leaving the walled city, entering the field, and contending with the Greeks in open battle, she but displayed a fond wife's most gentle instincts and a loving mother's most praiseworthy solicitude. In the quiet and matronly discharge of her domestic duties, in her devotion to her babe, son of her glorious Hector, in her filial attentions to the aged Priam and his queen Hecuba, she moved among her maids the ideal wife, daughter, and mother in the ideal home. But she watched with keen and nervous interest the progress of the siege. She listened for every word of news during those days of anxiety, and was agitated with the conflicting emotions of doubt and faith, des-

pair and hope, grief and joy as the intelligence of the varying fortunes of the conflict came to her ears. So intensely anxious for her Hector's welfare would she become at times that, folding her boy in her arms, she would leave her home and hasten to the wall, thence to scan the field if perchance she might in seeing Hector still alive be assured and comforted.

One day as Hector came into the city and hastened to his home, "the home of his peerless wife," lo,

> She with her infant child and maid the while
> Was standing, bathed in tears, in bitter grief,
> On Ilium's topmost tower.

Learning of her whereabouts, Hector hastened back across the city, and

> the Acuan gates were reached,
> Whence was the outlet to the plain, in haste
> Running to meet him came his peerless wife,
> Eetion's daughter, fair Andromache.

Then was it that the wife poured forth her heart in pleading that Hector might not expose himself in the open field where she seemed to have the premonition that he would fall and leave her and his child the victims of the Argive's lust, revenge, and cruelty;

> at his side Andromache, in tears,
> Hung on his arm.

She had lost father and mother, and she laments:

"There were seven brethren in my father's house;
All in one day they fell, amid their herds
And fleecy flocks, by fierce Achilles' hand."

Then what a nobly pathetic plea she pours into his ears:

"But, Hector, thou to me art all in one,
Sire, mother, brethren! Thou my wedded love!
Then, pitying us, within the tower remain."

No scene more touching, more nobly beautiful, was ever created by the poet's imagination than the parting of Hector and Andromache. The hero in that moment of his sorest trial felt and obeyed the promptings of true patriotism. His loving wife pleaded for his safety, but duty called him to the open field, and the fate of Ilium might depend upon his decision. He listened to his country's call. But at what a sacrifice!

Hector's farewell to Andromache is one of the most touching and eloquent passages in the world's literature.

Who can measure the heroism of Andromache? What a loss and sacrifice were hers! Think that the folly of Paris should cost the life of Hector! Think that the infidelity of Helen should cost the infinite sufferings, the

cruel humilities, the great sacrifices of so perfect a wife, so majestic a woman, so noble a heroine as Andromache!

With her love, her tears, her faith, her pride, her prayers, she followed her brave Hector as he went forth to defend his home and country against the Argive host. Hector and Achilles met in single combat. "The prize at stake was mighty Hector's life." And Ilium's hero fell before the divinely armored Achilles! The cruel conqueror bound his victim's feet to his chariot, and leaving his noble head of glossy hair bounding in the dust and dashing against the stones, dragged him with fury before the walls of Troy. At the dreadful sight all Troy was terrified. Priam and Hecuba were frantic with grief, and poor Andromache—"Backward she fell, and gasped her spirit away." When she recovered from the deadly swoon and poured forth her lamentation, did Helen, faithless Helen, see and hear? Did she behold the heroine-wife of Hector in that awful hour and admire her loyalty, her love, and her very misery? Did she see Hector fall and behold his lifeless, mangled body dragged in the dust before the walls of Troy and realize that her sin had brought this woe? And did Andromache's affection for Hector and her sorrow over his death fill the faithless Helen's soul

with remorse and shame? Did she behold her own baseness by contrast accentuated as she thought of the chastity, fidelity, and undying love of Hector's heroine-wife? Ah, what a contrast is here presented! Helen, the unchaste, unfaithful wife of Menelaus, wretched cause of all the woes of Greece and Ilium! Andromache, the "peerless wife," "priceless wife," the true, loving, chaste, heroic wife of Hector!

When, through the magnanimity of Achilles, Priam was permitted to bear his son on a litter into Troy,

> nor man nor woman there was left
> Within the city; . . . to the gates in throngs
> They pressed, to crowd round him who brought the dead.

In that awful moment, when, bruised and mangled, the hero lay upon the litter at the gates of Troy,

> The first to clasp the body was his wife
> And honored mother; eagerly they sprang
> On the smooth-rolling wain, to touch the head
> Of Hector; round them, weeping, stood the crowd.
> Weeping, till sunset; all the livelong day
> Had they before the gates for Hector mourned.

The car which bore the noble corpse at last proceeded to "Priam's lordly home," where preparations were made to pay funeral honors to the dead hero.

They laid him on a rich-wrought couch, and called
The minstrels in.

In the dirge which was sung by a chorus of women

Andromache the wail began,
The head of Hector clasping in her hands.

In that lament the heroine-wife gave voice to feelings which proved her to be of kin with all mankind. How natural, how wifely, how universally and eternally human is the lament!—

"Thou to thy parents bitter grief hast caused,
Hector! but bitterest grief of all hast left
To me! for not to me was given to clasp
The hand extended from thy dying bed,
Nor words of wisdom catch, which night and day,
With tears, I might have treasured in my heart."
Weeping she spake—the women joined the wail.

How nobly faithful to the memory of her hero did Andromache ever remain! Though by the fortunes of war she became a captive to the Greeks, and was forced to wed one of her country's conquerors, yet never in her superb dignity, in the hallowed memory of her first and only love and of the happiness of her Ilium home, did she forget that she was the wife of Hector. In that tender farewell had not the hero assured his sorrowing Andromache that if he fell in battle, even their

enemies would respect and honor her on account of her relations to him:

> "Then they who see thy tears perchance may say,
> 'Lo! this was Hector's wife, who, when they fought
> On plains of Troy, was Ilium's bravest chief!'"

Nor did she ever fail to boast when occasion offered that she "was Hector's wife." Her only hope and solace now was in her babe, the son of Hector. But soon, alas! he was to be torn from her arms and sacrificed to Argive fear and vengeance. As the awful premonition of her son's fate took possession of her, still was her pride in Hector manifest:

> "Yes, thy father's worth
> Shall kill thee, which to others is a shield
> Yielding protection."

Yes, she knew that the Greeks were afraid of Hector's son. A mighty nation stood in awe of him and dared not permit him to grow to man's estate, acknowledging that one only man in whose veins flowed the noble blood of Hector might some day overthrow the Argive power and restore the ancient glory of ruined Ilium! That widow's dream, that mother's dream, alas! was but a dream, the dream of a heroine whose heart broke when her Hector fell, and whose last hope for Hector's line and for Ilium perished when the cruel, coward Greeks tore from her mother bosom and put

to death the son who was the only fruit of the true, undying love of her godlike Hector.

Andromache, live forever in the imagination of the world, among the noblest heroines of Troy, the "priceless," "peerless" wife of "Ilium's bravest chief"!

Alcestis

No heroine-wife of all the mythic legends compares with Alcestis in her self-sacrificing devotion to her husband. As chaste, as faithful, as tender in affection as she were Andromache, the wife of Hector, and Penelope, the spouse of Ulysses. But their heroism was tested less severely than was hers. It is a question as to which was the greater sufferer —Andromache in her loss of Hector or Alcestis in the resignation of herself to death in the place of her husband, Admetus. Whether to lose one's husband or to die for one's husband be the sorer trial of wifely heroism, it may be idle to inquire. But it would seem that to the world's thought no form of heroism is more Christlike than that which inspires one to lay down his or her own life as a willing ransom and thus become a sacrificial substitute for another.

It is true that we are here in the realm of fiction, but where can the parallel of Alcestis

be found among the creations of modern or ancient literature? We shall search the pages of Shakespeare in vain to discover her heroic equal. Euripides cannot be credited with the creation of this transcendent heroine any more than Shakespeare is to be credited with originating Portia, Imogene, or Hermione. Alcestis belonged to the ancient legends, and upon the old, old tradition, long familiar to the Greeks, Euripides constructed his drama.

While we may easily imagine that an Andromache or a Penelope, an Imogene, Hermione, or a Portia would have stood the severest possible test of wifely heroism, not even shrinking from death itself for her husband's life or honor if duty had ever demanded such a self-sacrifice, yet not one of them had her devotion put to so extreme a test, whereas Alcestis was subjected to that utmost trial and proved herself the most perfectly ideal heroine-wife in all the world of literary tragedy.

Admetus as king of Thessaly became enamored of Alcestis, the beautiful daughter of King Pelias. From among her many suitors he was chosen by her royal father on the condition, which he alone met, of coming for her in a chariot drawn by boars and lions. But it was evidently a true and genuine love match. No love can be deeper, more genuine and pure

than that which Admetus cherished for his incomparable wife. What deep and genuine feeling is poured into the words by which he honors her!—

> "For conjugal affection justly deemed
> By me, by all, the noblest of her sex."

The tenderest phrase, the most impassioned language, the whole range of manly eloquence scarce meets the demand to express the full deep dignity of his admiration and love. Alcestis is to him "A wife with every excellence adorned." The chorus of the tragedy voices his feelings as it does the feelings of all who knew her:

> "the best of wives:
> The sun in his wide course sees not her equal."

To Admetus is accorded the finest phrase when to his lips the poet sets the tender words:

> "in thee I live; thy love,
> Thy sweet society my soul reveres."

Here is a love deeper and nobler than any sensual passion, a love blending admiration, esteem, veneration, and reverence with the purest emotions of the soul and the loftiest conceptions of a manly mind. Always Alcestis was to him "The dearest, best of women." That the love and honor which Admetus had for his wife was reciprocated by her the act which im-

mortalizes her in legend and literature is the full and splendid proof.

Over this domestic joy there came a cloud threatening to wrap in gloom and night and death the lives which had been united in an ideal conjugal affection. Admetus was stricken with a fatal illness. With what tender solicitude Alcestis nursed her lover-husband, and with what consternation she saw death approach may well be imagined. But good news came to the stricken home and hope dawned upon the gloom. Apollo, who for a year, as punishment for shooting his arrows at the Cyclops, herded the flocks of Admetus, came to the rescue of the dying king. Through his influence the Fates promised to spare Admetus if he would find a substitute who would be willing to die in his stead. At first the promise was received with joy, and the condition accepted. But it gradually dawned upon Admetus that he might have difficulty in finding a substitute. Indeed, it soon looked as if it would be impossible for him to meet the conditions imposed by the Fates. He looked in vain for a substitute among his soldiers, courtiers, attendants, servants. Though his father and mother were old and near the end of life's journey, neither of them would volunteer to take his place. Here Alcestis, the

heroine-wife, offers herself as a substitute to ransom him:

> His friends, his father, e'en the aged dame
> That gave him birth, were asked in vain; not one
> Was found, his wife except; for him she willed
> To die, and view no more the ethereal light.

Had the king but known that this would be the outcome of his accepting the condition demanded by the Fates, he would have refused to purchase his own life at the cost of the precious life of Alcestis. But the condition that he furnish a substitute had been accepted; the bargain had been struck and could not be recalled. With what grief he bowed to the cruel will of the Fates! How it lacerated his heart to think that she whom he loved best must die, and die for him! As he began to mend, Alcestis began to decline. Watching by her couch with breaking heart, he sobs:

> "O thou poor sufferer, raise thee, leave me not;
> Entreat the powerful gods to pity thee."

But with what a sweet devotion and with what a sublime heroism Alcestis surrenders to her fate!—

> nor tear, nor sigh
> Came from her, neither did the approaching ill
> Change the fresh beauties of her vermeil cheek.

As death approached, having commended her children to the heavenly care, having cast her-

self upon her marriage couch and kissed it farewell, and having with kindly word and gentle hand bidden the servants of her household farewell, she seems about to depart. To her attending husband, who had assisted her through the trying ordeal of visiting the familiar rooms of the home for the last time, she now sighs:

"No longer hold me up, hold me no longer.
Here lay me down: I have not strength to stand:
Death is hard by; dark night creeps o'er my eyes."

The last soft, tender word that fell from her lips as she became unconscious in the arms of her husband was, "Farewell."

Admetus seemed worthy of such a wife. Had it been within his power he would have saved her, nor permitted her to die that he might live. He expressed the manly sentiment of a manly heart when, holding her to his bosom, he cried, "O lead me, by the gods, lead me down with thee." He would have followed her in death by the violence of his own hand had not the very pledge he made his wife to be a mother to her children prevented the desperate act, and had not his attendants dissuaded him.

Though by divine interposition this heroine-wife was restored to her Admetus, her self-sacrificing devotion loses not a whit of its

undying glory. Hercules, conquering death on her behalf, and snatching her from the opening jaws of the grave, presented her alive and unharmed, radiant and happy, to her astonished, skeptical, but finally believing and rejoicing husband. This restoration, however, must have deepened the impression of Alcestis' heroism by inculcating the ethic of the divine approval of such a noble virtue, while it gave to Admetus the opportunity, let us hope, long years of opportunity, to demonstrate his gratitude to that heroine-wife, to bestow upon her every token of honor and affection and to enjoy a love which for its purity and fathomless depths could never have been revealed save by the sacrifice it made to save his life.

Where among the heroines of legend or mythology shall we find the equal of Alcestis? The story of her wifely heroism has adorned the poet's verse, added an ever-increasing splendor to classic lore, and presented to the ages as they have come and gone the highest ideal ever created by tradition or imagination for woman's emulation. It is not matter for wonder that on such a theme Euripides should have risen to his highest strains of eloquence. Let it awaken within the heart of every generation a more just and worthy veneration for that immortal poet, and for the age and people

that listened to him with unbounded admiration and applause, that Alcestis was to him and to the Greeks a beautiful character, an incomparable woman, an ideal heroine-wife. Euripides seldom, if ever, reached a loftier flight ethically or artistically than in these strophes and antistrophes of his tragedy of Alcestis.

Penelope

Woman's wit in wifely devotion never played a more fascinating and triumphant game than in the trying experience of Penelope. Modesty, virtue, fidelity, patience, and heroism mingled harmoniously in this "great souled Icarius' daughter." For her mental gifts and moral attributes rather than for her physical charms was she universally admired.

She was the idol of her father, one of the princes of Sparta, and her filial devotion was a proverb. To the maids of Sparta her character and manners became the ideal for emulation. As may well be supposed, Icarius did not look with favor upon the increasing number of her suitors. He could not anticipate with any degree of reconciliation the time when he should have to part with so dutiful and loving a daughter and surrender her to the man happily destined to secure her as his wife. But Ulysses, who afterward distin-

guished himself as one of the greatest heroes at the siege of Troy, won the affection of the chaste and gifted Penelope and led her a bride to his distant home in Ithaca. When asked to choose between her father and her lover she dropped her veil over her face to hide her blushes and thus betrayed her desire to become the wife of Ulysses rather than remain unmarried in her father's house. Icarius, giving his reluctant consent to the marriage, surrendered his daughter to Ulysses and built a monument to her modesty. Of this happy union was born Telemachus. On the organization of the expedition against Troy, Ulysses hesitated to join the Grecian forces, and the strong tie that bound him to his home was the love he had for Penelope and the son which she had borne him. Yet was this son the innocent cause of the long separation of his father and mother by the departure of Ulysses for the war. To escape leaving his home and separating from his beloved wife and child, Ulysses feigned insanity. He sowed salt in the field and yoked an ox and an ass together to plow it, thus trying to make the impression that he had lost his reason. But Palamedes, his friend, suspected that Ulysses was only pretending to be insane, and to test him he laid the little Telemachus on the field before

the plow, thus endangering the child's life. When Ulysses saw his infant son lying in the way of his plow he stopped, turned aside his ill-matched team, and saved the boy from harm —which act revealed that he was only shamming madness. Thereafter he had no excuse for refusing to join his countrymen in their expedition, and after due consideration he came to the patriotic conclusion that even at so great a sacrifice as that of parting with his devoted Penelope and his beloved boy he must obey the voice of duty and at his country's call march with his compatriots against Ilium.

Ulysses was absent twenty years: ten years at the siege of Troy and ten years more spent in his wanderings to reach home after the war. The Odyssey celebrates these wanderings of Ulysses as the Iliad sets forth his exploits at the siege of Troy. Immortal fame had crowned the achievements of this hero of the Trojan War. Among gods and men he had won a deathless name: "Wise Ulysses," "Renowned Ulysses," "Divine Ulysses," "Jove-bred Ulysses."

But how long and sad and anxious were those years of separation to the loyal Penelope! What the fate of her noble Ulysses was she could not know. Waiting and watching,

patiently hoping, day after day, year after year, what a trial of her faith, what a test of her devotion! Though other soldiers who had survived had long since returned from Troy—fathers to their children, sons to their parents, lovers to their sweethearts, husbands to their wives—her Ulysses came not. Yet was she faithful to him. Did not she suffer with him for the glory of Greece? Nay, were not her trial and heroism as great as those of her soldier husband? No blare of trumpets, no clash of arms, no marshaling of hosts, no glittering forests of spears, no pæan of battle, no shouts of victory stirred her blood and animated her soul. Simply waiting and waiting, dreaming and dreaming, hoping and hoping, fearing and fearing, weeping and weeping, longing and longing! O, the heroism of it! Was it not a higher, nobler heroism than was demanded of any chief that fought or fell under the walls of Troy?

Penelope honored Ulysses with an unbounded admiration of his worth and greatness. To her thought no other man measured up to the fullness of his manly stature. She saw in her Ulysses, whom she had lost by the decrees of heaven,

> A husband, that of all the virtues bore
> The palm among the Greeks, and whose renown

So ample was that Fame the sound hath blown
Through Greece and Argos to her very heart.

It was this proud mother's just ambition that her son, Telemachus, should in all his virtues resemble his father, and it was her hope that when he came to manhood

Beholders should affirm, "This man doth grow
Like the rare son of his matchless sire,
His goodliness, his beauty, and his fire
Of soul aspired to."

Through all the long years of Ulysses' absence Penelope never ceased to grieve nor could any voice of friend, divine or human, assuage her sorrow. She could not banish her loved one from her thoughts, nor could she think of him without weeping bitter tears. Pallas informed Ulysses of the sorrow of Penelope:

"Who for thy absence all her desolate life
Dissolves in tears till thy desired return."

Though twenty years are passed since she bade her husband farewell, her love has not grown cold nor has her grief abated:

But, for her lord's sad loss, sad nights and days
Obscure her beauties and corrupt their rays.

Often in fond imagination or in sweet dreams she saw her absent one,

and to her love appeared
Her lord so freshly, that she wept, till sleep,
By Pallas forced on her, her eyes did steep
In his sweet humor.

An infinite pathos breathes in her words as she acknowledges that her woes are all ordained by powers divine:

> "Heaven's stern decree
> With many an ill hath numbed and deaded me.
> He took life with him, when he took my hand
> In parting from me to the Trojan strand."

But there came to this wife a severer test and trial of her heroism than that of her long, lonely, and patient waiting for her beloved. Ulysses had won her heart and hand against a host of eager suitors. He had been married but one short year when the parting came. Now in his absence the old suitors and many new ones lay siege to the heart of Penelope. Her wooers came in a multitude, servants and all numbering over four hundred. They take possession of the home of Ulysses and daily feast at his board, demanding the richest wines and most delicious viands. For years they impose their insulting and hateful presence upon the palace, exhausting the resources of the fields and flocks and vineyards of the absent lord to satisfy their gluttonous appetites. Each of the scores of wooers claims the right to succeed Ulysses in the affections of his wife. In this unseemly rivalry, which was a wrong to Ulysses and an insult to his faithful and sorrowing wife, many arguments were ad-

vanced that may have suggested sad questionings in the mind of Penelope. Long had her Ulysses been absent; no word had come from him, no message of love and assurance. Was he still living? Had he fallen in the long ten years' siege? Had he forgotten her? Would he ever return? Her wooers importuned her to forget Ulysses and each one presented his claims upon her affections and sought her hand in marriage. But, heroine-wife that she was, she brought into exercise all her wit and wisdom in resisting the influences that were at work to quench her hope of Ulysses' return, undermine her affection for him, and uproot that wifely fidelity which all the years of separation had but deepened and strengthened in her heart. But how contemptible they all seemed in her eyes beside her incomparable Ulysses! She abhorred the very thought of marrying any one of those many insulting wooers. She would wait for her husband's return even to the last moment of her life. She repelled the advances of her many suitors, yet did they persecute her with their unwelcome attentions. At last, to gain a little respite from their tormenting importunities, her woman's wit invented the famous ruse which has ever since been associated with her name. Men of noble lineage and high station, men

of wealth, of talent, of handsome face and graceful form paid her attention and solicited her hand. Still in her heart of hearts she despised them all as she compared them in mind with her Ulysses.

After she had tried many arts of evasion and had long resisted by every honorable device their demand that she come to a decision, she falls upon this ruse. It becomes her duty to weave a funeral canopy for Laertes, the father of Ulysses. Busily and constantly as a sacred obligation she weaves the fabric, and when pressed with unusual ardor to make her choice of a husband and marry, she makes the promise that when this sacred duty shall have been performed, and when the canopy she is weaving is finished, she will make her choice. Content with this promise, her suitors ceased to torment her and each waited in blissful anticipation of the day when the canopy would be completed and he would happily be the chosen one. Penelope diligently wrought upon the canopy, but what she wove by day she stealthily unraveled by night, and thus for three years she kept her tormentors at bay.

This same story of her ruse did Penelope recite to Ulysses on his return. By such inventions did she prove her faithfulness to her husband. Hers was a fidelity and wifely

heroism too tender, patient, and exalted to be called pagan; hers was a character which seems too perfect, too nearly ideal to have been created by the ancient imagination. Again and again does the devoted wife put off the day of choice in her undying love for her absent husband, but her insolent wooers grow still more clamorous and imperative. With the flight of time their arguments against the possibility of Ulysses' return become more plausible. The day approaches when, according to the direction left by Ulysses on his parting from Penelope, she may claim the right to take another husband on the supposition that he is dead. Said he, "Your son to man's state grown, wed whom you will." Telemachus has grown to manhood. How long, how long has this heroine-wife waited for her lord's return! Five years have crept away, ten years! The war is now an old story. Where is Ulysses? Fifteen years—O how long! Twenty years—Telemachus a man! Is Ulysses dead? All argue that he is dead. Penelope mourns him as dead, but still is true to his memory, and only with a breaking heart can think of making choice of another lord from among the detested wooers who have well-nigh ruined Ulysses' estate.

As the time approaches when Penelope will

be absolved from all her marital obligations to Ulysses not only do her wooers become more and more importunate, but her parents and her own son urge her to the celebration of what she thinks of as "those abhorred nuptials" with one of the hateful wooers whom she cannot but loathe and despise. It is pitiful to hear her tell Ulysses, though she knew not it was he, how she suffered:

> "My parents bore
> Continued hand on me to make me wed;
> My son grew angry that so ruined
> His goods were by them."

Her friends resolved to terminate her delays and make her marry one of her wooers. But she has no intention of marrying, whether Ulysses be alive or dead;

> but her words
> Bear other utterance than her heart approves.

It has been prophesied that Ulysses will return, and the report has come that he still lives and has been seen in distant lands. Fear and hope alternate in the mind of the perplexed and grieving Penelope. She manifests the deepest interest in any news that comes to her of her dead or wandering hero. Telemachus has been inspired by Pallas to go abroad in search of his father. His departure, without Penelope's consent or knowledge,

sadly grieves her. And when she learns that her hated and detested wooers have formed a conspiracy to assassinate him, the fear and sorrow of her soul become well-nigh unbearable. Struggling, and still struggling, like a true heroine against the importunities of her wooers, her friends, and her parents, she puts off the day of choice until her wit suggests another plan of escape. Telemachus has returned with news of his father, and Ulysses himself has by an accident found his native land. Father and son meet. But they agree that the father's presence shall remain unknown until such time as shall be most opportune for him to trap the wooers who have so wronged him and insulted his wife and mete out to them such punishment as they deserve. Ulysses is so changed in appearance by the touch of Minerva that he appears to be

> at all parts like a poor
> And sad old beggar.

He is so disguised that neither his son nor his faithful old swineherd Eumæus recognizes him. He soon reveals himself to Telemachus. Later, as an old beggar, he gains an audience with his own Penelope, whom he finds eager to hear the news which he brings from her Ulysses. Nothing can be more touching than

the interview of Penelope with this supposed old beggar, but in reality her own long-absent husband. He tells her of Ulysses. Describes his dress which she had made for him and by the recital brings the tears gushing from her eyes. She tells him, not knowing it is her own husband, how she had mourned for her Ulysses, how she had been tormented by her wooers, how she had fought against them and by every possible ruse had avoided choosing a husband from their number. It is amazing that Ulysses could have endured this interview without unfolding himself and clasping his long-suffering and heroic Penelope to his bosom. But he is to have not only vengeance on his and her hateful enemies, he is also to have another proof of Penelope's loyalty. While she never felt a temptation to accept a single one of her wooers, nor allowed her affections for Ulysses to grow cold or her hope of his return to her, if alive, to withdraw its sweet light from her heart and life, nevertheless to gain time and keep her tormentors at bay as long as possible without rousing their suspicions, she at last made pretense of yielding and coming to a decision as to whom of her admirers she would choose as a husband.

Penelope's inventive genius furnishes her with a scheme for testing the wooers which

proves their undoing and furnishes Ulysses with an opportunity for wreaking vengeance upon them. This, then, is her proposal to the assembled and expectant wooers:

"Hear me, ye wooers, that a pleasure take
To do me sorrow, and my house invade
To eat and drink, as if 'twere only made
To serve your rapines; my lord long away,
And you allowed no color for your stay
But his still absence; striving who shall frame
Me for his wife; and since 'tis made a game,
I here propose divine Ulysses' bow
For that great masterpiece to which ye vow.
He that can draw it with least show to strive,
And through these twelve ax-heads an arrow drive,
Him will I follow, and this home forego
That nourished me a maid, now furnished so
With all things fit, and which I so esteem
That I shall still live in it in my dream."

The wooers came to the trial of their strength and skill. Telemachus and Ulysses prepared to make this the occasion for their attack upon the wooers, although their plan was kept a secret from Penelope. Precaution had been taken to remove all other weapons, including those of the contending wooers, from the room. The trial began. The bow of Ulysses was produced from the armory where long it had rested unused. Each proud, expectant wooer seized the mighty bow in turn and tried to bend it and fit it to the string.

Not one of all that company could bend the great Ulysses' bow; every vaunting but now crestfallen wooer failed. But in that company stood the beggar, the butt of the company's ridicule. When all had ignominiously failed he asked for the privilege of testing his strength; he thought he could bend the bow and adjust the string and send the arrow through the twelve ax-heads. His request was greeted with derisive laughter. Penelope defended the beggar in his request, not knowing him other than as the beggar who had talked to her of her Ulysses and thereby gained her good will. Telemachus, who presided over the contest, now saw the moment was at hand for action. With pretended anger he ordered his mother from the room; sent signal to have all the doors fastened. While the wooers were cracking their jokes at the beggar's expense, by the order of Telemachus, his faithful swineherd, Eumæus, handed him the bow.

When the wise Ulysses once had laid
His fingers on it, and to proof surveyed
The still sound flight it held, as one of skill
In song, and of the harp, doth at his will,
In tuning of his instrument, extend
A string out with his pin, touch all, and lend
To every well-wreathed string his perfect sound,
Struck all together; with such ease drew round;
The king the bow. Then twanged he up the string,
That as a swallow in the air doth sing

With no continued tune, but, pausing still,
Twinks out her scattered voice in accents shrill;
So sharp the string sung when he gave it touch,
Once having bent and drawn it. Which so much
Amazed the wooers, that their colors went
And came most grievously. . . .
Then took he into hand, from off the table
The first drawn arrow, . . . this one
He measured by his arm, as if not known
The length were to him, rocked it then, and drew;
And through the axes at the first hole, flew
The steel-charged arrow.

Yes, the beggar was Ulysses! And instantly throwing aside his rags and revealing himself to the astonished wooers,

He, frowning, said, "Dogs, see in me the man
Ye all held dead at Troy."

Then fell the mighty hero upon his enemies, and with the other arrows slew them, and with Telemachus by his side using swords when arrows were all spent he wreaked full vengeance on the villains who had persecuted his wife with their hateful attentions and tried by every wicked machination to shake her fidelity, destroy her peace of mind, and bring eternal reproach upon her fair name.

Happy indeed was the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope! The revelations came so suddenly and were so amazing that Penelope could not at first believe it true that her husband had returned. Telemachus was in the

secret, as was the old swineherd Eumæus; and even Ulysses' old nurse had recognized him by a scar on his body. Poor Penelope hesitated and at first acted coolly toward Ulysses. But when the proof was given and the full truth dawned upon her, she welcomed him to her arms.

> He wept for joy, t'enjoy a wife so fit
> For his grave mind, that knew his depth of wit,
> And held chaste virtue at a price so high.

If Ulysses came back to his dear wife with all the honors of splendid exploits resting thick upon him to fill her with still greater admiration and love for her hero husband, he also returned to a wife who had proven herself a superlative, incomparable heroine in her devotion to him, who had by severest trials demonstrated her fidelity and had shown her worthiness to be the recipient of such love, honor, and veneration as only a great soul like his own could feel and bestow. Heroic Penelope, worthy wife, faithful wife, heroine-wife of the great hero Ulysses!

PART II

WOMAN-HEROIC IN SHAKESPEARE

CHAPTER I

SHAKESPEARE'S GENIUS IN THE DRAMATIC REALM

If we look outside the Scriptures for the greatest master of the laws of nature and character, we shall call that monarch in the realm of delineation, Shakespeare: Shakespeare, "the dear son of memory and great heir of fame," who forgot to write his autobiography, and wrote the biography of every other character in this multitudinous world. When Coleridge calls him "the guide and pioneer of true philosophy," and Goethe regards him as a "celestial genius, who mingles with us only to make us in the gentlest manner acquainted with ourselves," we learn what a position Shakespeare has gained among the intellectual thrones of the world.

These dramatic productions of Shakespeare's genius are so many magnificent pictures crowded with characters drawn as nearly as art can draw them to the correct proportions of nature. They are neither Lilliputians nor giants of disordered dreams, but the creation of the most penetrative and comprehensive, the most synthetic and the most analytic poet

of humanity. If you would know the mythic gods and goddesses, go to Homer or Hesiod; if you would know angels and devils, go to Milton; if you would know monstrosities, go to Ovid or Dante; if you would know man and woman, go to Shakespeare. But do not demand more of Shakespeare than art and imagination have the power to create.

Perhaps too enthusiastic praise may be given to Shakespeare for originality and creative genius. He created but few of the leading characters of his plays; not one, in fact, of the most conspicuous personages of his tragedies leaped from his own imagination. He went to history for Cæsar, Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Richard III, Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. He found in romance his Shylock and Portia, Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Desdemona, Hamlet and Ophelia. Nevertheless, who but a Shakespeare could have rescued these romantic characters from literary oblivion? Who but a Shakespeare could have clothed these historic personages of Plutarch and of the English Chroniclers with the dramatic immortality which they now wear? Not only is Shylock in the world's estimation "the Jew that Shakespeare drew," but Hamlet is the Dane that Shakespeare

drew; Richard III is the Richard that Shakespeare drew; Henry VIII and Wolsey are the Henry and Wolsey that Shakespeare drew. We see these historic characters, whether English, Greek, or Roman, through Shakespeare's eyes.

It may be that for one thing Shakespeare has not been sufficiently praised—for his superlative wisdom in selecting characters to people his drama. In a survey of the whole wide field of romance and history we can scarcely find a character neglected that could have lent itself to a noble Shakespearean delineation. This poet undoubtedly selected the most instructive personages for the illustration of his moral principles. And, although his ethical method is negative rather than positive, warning rather than idealizing, he has presented to our imagination and conscience the life-portraits of men and women, who, of all others in romance and history, should deter us from pride, jealousy, revenge, ambition, unbelief, misanthropy, cruelty, and tyranny.

If we look for ideals in Shakespeare, they are to be found, if at all, in his heroines. There are but few heroes in Shakespeare's plays. Nearly every hero is a subordinate character. In the true sense of the word

Hamlet is not a hero, nor is Shylock, Antonio, Othello, Macbeth, Richard III, Timon, or Henry VIII. Even with the characters of Cæsar, Brutus, Coriolanus, and Richard II before us, we must still believe that Shakespeare would make us see more of the heroic in the nature of woman than of man. It may be justly claimed that this poet is a more consummate master in the interpretation of the heroine than of the hero. There are not wanting critics who insist that his female characters are the more perfect, even from the viewpoint of dramatic art.

For reasons which inhere in the nature of things those characters which are the most perfectly and exquisitely drawn cannot be the most striking, powerful, and awe-inspiring. Kings, warriors, statesmen, men of affairs, hold a larger, more conspicuous place on the scene of historic and dramatic action than do women of any station. This was true at least in Shakespeare's time, and in the times and ages of which his drama is the mirror.

But coming into the realm of Shakespeare's most powerful dramatic mastery, we find him to be a multiminded worker. Now he paints with the delicate, accurate pencil of a Raphael, again with the bold grandeur of a Michael Angelo; now with the sweet tenderness of a

Correggio, again with the strong, severe tones of a Ribera. Now he is as minute in detail as a Da Vinci, and again he has the breadth and abandon of a Salvator Rosa. Now he is as ideal and sensitive as a Corot, and again he is as rich and splendid as a Titian. Now he is as refined and spiritual as an Angelico, and again he is as glowing and sensuous as a Rubens. But what forms spring into immortal color upon the canvas of his comedy and tragedy!

Shakespeare is not always looking for, nor is he always painting, the heroic; he quite as often delineates the very antithesis of heroism. Shall we say that this is meant to accentuate that virtue? One thing must be said of the women of this Shakespearean drama—they are always women. They may be strong, intellectual, forceful, dominating, virtuous, heroic, or they may be weak, silly, soft, vicious, wicked, unnatural, but they are always women. Strong women or weak women, bright women or stupid women, good women or bad women, sensible women or light-headed women, natural women or unnatural women, they are still women. Even Kate, the shrew, is feminine; Lady Macbeth, the murderess, is feminine; Queen Anne is feminine; Cleopatra is feminine. Even if wicked women are wickeder

than wicked men, and cruel women crueler than cruel men, yet in their very wickedness and cruelty the women of Shakespeare are forever women.

It must be admitted that Shakespeare's world of heroines is far removed from the common walks of life, and they who act their parts in spheres above this ordinary world of reality, of which our average humanity knows but little in actual experience, are exceptional women placed in exceptional environments, created by imagination, poetry, and romance. This greatest poet since the world began never saw the poetry of our common life, although he himself sprang from that common life. He never found a heroine among the daughters of poverty, the sisters of toil, the queens of the humble cottage.

Shakespeare's so-called heroines are ever engaged in romantic activities, and, whether in comedy or tragedy, are almost invariably chosen from high station. Juliet is the fair patrician of Verona; Portia is the wealthy heiress of Belmont; Ophelia is the daughter of a Lord Chamberlain; Lady Macbeth is the wife of the Thane of Cawdor; Constance is the Duchess of Bretagne, and Isabella, the Duchess of Vienna; Volumnia is a haughty Roman patrician; Imogen is a princess, as is

also Rosalind; Hermione is the wife of Leontes, king of Sicilia, and of royal descent, and Perdita is her daughter, hence also royal in lineage; Cleopatra is an Egyptian queen. The historical plays are crowded with duchesses, princesses, and queens. As there is little democracy, so there is little modernity in these heroines. Indeed, to modernize is to destroy the romantic. Keats, with his Greek-like soul, hated the prism that destroyed the mystery and poetry of the rainbow as others hate the modernity that destroys romance. Shakespeare's heroines live in other lands and in bygone ages. Several are Italians, moving in the golden atmosphere of southern ideality; others belong to the ancient and mysterious days of Rome and Egypt. Such British characters as Lady Macbeth, Cordelia, and Imogen live in the nebulous, fabulous days of Britain, and even in days as remote as the time of Christ. We make exception of Shakespeare's historical plays, and of the women of those plays, since they are not in reality the creations of his brain, but belong to the written and authentic chronicles of the nations.

CHAPTER II

THE SO-CALLED HEROINES

JULIET

LET us keep in mind the true idea of heroism—that it is noble, virtuous, kind, generous, magnanimous, devoted, helpful, self-sacrificing. It may, therefore, be said that true heroism should inspire admiration, but never pity and commiseration. Nevertheless, with all the tears that have been shed over Juliet and Ophelia, evidence of their having been too soft and sentimental, too weak-willed, too characterless to be real heroines, they are still and forever will be heroines to the imagination of the sentimental, heroines of poetry, romance, fancy—theatrical heroines. It is a misuse of words and a confounding of ideas to call Juliet a heroine, and to think of her as such. It is precisely the heroic element that is lacking in her moral constitution. It is her beauty that betrays us into a false or fictitious judgment of her character. Her physical charms hide her moral weakness. She does not lack refinement, and she possesses a modicum of intellect, but by false education, due to the age and to the manners of the time, her intel-

lect has become subordinate to her imagination, and her imagination to her passion. She has no high ideal of life to lure her to worthy aims and noble endeavorings. She is sweet, gentle, tender, soulful, confiding, but not strong, self-reliant, well-poised. Life to her is not duty; it is passion, and selfish passion at that. It is not a womanly strife and mission, a purpose and mastery, a responsibility and a task, a thing of conscience and accountability. It is a dwelling in the honeysuckle of self-gratifying love, sipping its intoxicating sweets and fainting with its delicious fragrances, and dying when deprived of them. Juliet loves for love's sake. Purpose, aim, duty, responsibility are not in her brief vocabulary, or they all spell one thing to her—Romeo. Self-destruction in her case is a confession, a confession and a revelation of her intellectual limitations, of her failure to even know that life is a vast moral problem, a confession and a revelation of a volitionless emotional system; of her deficiency in high ethical sense. Juliet is sadly out of balance in the make-up of her mental and spiritual womanhood. She is capable of loving too unthinkingly, too self-sacrificingly, too all-absorbingly. The normal woman was not made for such love. But had she lived, Juliet would have

been forever what she had become—a living suicide. She had slain her spiritual being, immolated her very self-hood on the altar of passion. She had shut her eyes and soul to all the world save Romeo; there was no humanity, no divinity but Romeo. That was the suicide of her highest moral self. True love demands no such sacrifice as this, that one must bury her soul in the grave of a passionate infatuation. Self-destruction is not self-sacrifice, and is not true heroism. Had it been the aim and purpose of Juliet in loving Romeo, and in marrying him, and finally in taking her life to unite the families that were united over her dead body, there might have been an element of heroism in her life and character. But she dreamed no such dream as that of reconciliation, and those old, falsely educated families of Verona were not again united in friendship because Juliet or Romeo had willed it and had sacrificed themselves to effect it; hence the result of that double suicide was not a justification of the crime, much less a proof of the heroism and virtue of it. Can a suicide be a heroine? Can a heroine be a suicide?

Ophelia

Ophelia was never mentally well. She had a pale soul, a fragile, wraithlike individuality.

She was never in full command of herself, nor even dreamed that she belonged to herself. As daughter and as lover her will was never her own. With her, love did not rise to a great passion; it was a malady; it had not intellect enough to be a passion. Her will, her imagination, her love were all abnormal. She was but a frail reed shaken by the wind, with no volition but to bend to the wind, to bend and bend and—break. She was so delicate a flower that the gentlest touch of sun or frost must wither her life. Hamlet, that conscienceless intellect, had but to breathe upon her heart to crush it.

Insanity was as inevitable in Ophelia's case as was suicide in the case of Juliet. Indeed, this love affair was not the cause, but only the occasion of the frail girl's insanity. She would have gone insane had she never met Hamlet. Some other affair would have furnished the occasion or condition; that mind was doomed to eclipse. It must needs be that evils come, but woe unto him by whom they come! Woe to the Hamlet by whom Ophelia's poor heart breaks and Ophelia's mind gives way! It is infinitely pathetic. But is it heroic? Is heroism ever pathetic? Poor, poor child! If to Juliet we give our sighs, to Ophelia we give our tears. But heroism

demands higher, saner tribute than tears and sighs. There is nothing highly and nobly ideal in this poor Ophelia, yet is she called one of Shakespeare's heroines. Who has ever desired to emulate her and become an Ophelia? Who has ever felt, when in the presence of Ophelia, that this was a strong, noble, healthy, and truly admirable personality? Who can honestly say: "Ophelia is my heroine"?

Beatrice

We come into a more wholesome atmosphere, where sighs and tears give way to smiles and laughter, in the presence of Beatrice. Heroine? Yes. If gayety, pertness, wit, high temper, willfulness, a saucy tongue, abundant animal spirits, and a girlish, but not too sentimental love for a not oversentimental Benedick, are stuff for the making of a heroine, here you have her. A stage heroine, I grant you. This woman will never commit suicide for any man, never. We are not so sure that she may not drive some man to commit suicide for her.

"There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord: she is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing."

Insanity? Impossible! She has too much good sense and, let us say, too much nonsense

ever to go mad. She may lose her temper, but not her mind.

> *Leonato.* You will never run mad, niece.
> *Beatrice.* No, not till a hot January.

With her, love is all right, but it is not worth killing one's self for, nor worth giving up one's sanity for. In fact, she never thinks of love as anything but a very sensible, wholesome passion, and there remains a lot to live for even if a love affair goes wrong. Well may one wish that this fresh, buoyant, rosy-cheeked soul of laughter might have been near when Juliet began to think life was no longer worth the living, just to laugh the suicidal sentimentality out of the viciously educated girl. And this cheerful, happy Beatrice might have saved poor Ophelia if she could but have inoculated her with her own cheerful view of life, and her sensible philosophy of love. Beatrice is not a deep-river soul; she is just a careless, laughing brook of crystalline delight. She is genuine, true, awfully sensible, chic, and clever. She has a conscience easily gotten on with. She has a willful will, quite her own, and she has brains, but not so many ounces as to make her very profound. Her imagination is well within the control of a womanly discretion. She is not a dreamer, not a sentimentalist or idealist. She is ex-

quisitely feminine and has a lively wit—more wit than humor; yet is her nature full of sunshine. She is incomparably interesting when in love. In matrimony? She will undoubtedly be very, very interesting. But if you run across Benedick, ask him. It may well be asked, Can Beatrice be placed among the heroines? What has she sacrificed or suffered? What great, strong, courageous, aspiring, self-forgetful emotions dominate her being? What sore trial does she encounter? What brave resolve does she form? What joy or comfort or self-gratification does she surrender for another's salvation, or for the common good? But, if to have caught the good will of the romantic and the sentimental; if to have made the world look on the sunny side of life's mysterious picture; if to have made the sad and melancholy laugh the subtle medicine of good cheer into their souls, is to have made this humanity love her and emulate her happy way of living and of loving, then may many a woman or many a man most justifiably say, "Beatrice is my heroine."

Rosalind

The atmosphere is growing sweeter, purer, and more wholesome still, as we enter the world of the fresh, vivacious, impulsive, and

sanely sentimental Rosalind. She is a woodland nymph, a poetical creation of such stuff as dreams are made of—lovers' dreams. Of course you will not meet a Rosalind except in poems; she is altogether romantic and ideal. She never walks up Broadway or down Pennsylvania Avenue. She does not make afternoon calls, nor does she attend the season's functions. She lives on Romantic road near the wild wood of poesy, where the sweet streams of laughter cross the flowery meadows of delight, far up in the beautiful land of imagination. Do not ask too much of her reflective powers; she never sits still or stands still long enough to reflect very seriously. Life is a joy to her, but not a duty. Love too is joy; it's fun. Hurrah for love! And love is such a sane thing. Suicide? Insanity? Nonsense! Rosalind is too healthy in mind and morals, in brain and body for that. It is quite unnecessary for people to go mad about love, and healthy, properly educated people don't. People who live out of the parlors and drawingrooms, who breathe the pure, out-of-doors ozone, and who know the trees and brooks and the flowers and stars by name and subtle kinship, who are familiar with the deer and squirrels and the butterflies and the birds and the wind

and rain and sunshine and with healthy-minded men and women, cannot go mad with love. Love is food, not poison. Love is sanity, not madness. Love is life, not death. Love should not make a fool of a man or a woman; it should make of him a more manly man, of her a more womanly woman. Love is natural, normal, rational, noble, Rosalindish.

This pretty Rosalind has no high ideals of life, except that it's very sweet and jolly, very wonderful and lovely to live. Does she think that it is all of life to live? Well, so it is, if one live the real life, the full, complete, abundant life. Rosalind has no motive in her living, except it be just to love and be loved, to be pure and true and happy, as the bird has no conscious motive when it sings, or the flower when it blooms, or the sweet star when it shines. But the birds sing for our ears, and the flowers bloom for our eyes, and the stars shine to make our dark skies splendid; and we live, motiveless or not, for the great world in which we live. If life were nothing more than this free, happy-go-lucky existence of careless, happy lovers, then might Rosalind become the model and the heroine of every pure, sweet girl, who would pass her life away in the sunshine of laughing ideality.

CHAPTER III

THE HEROINE-DAUGHTER

Miranda

With what a multitudinous imagination is this Shakespeare endowed! So many heroines of love has he created for us, or dramatically delineated! And what an infinite variety of characters is here! But these people of his creative fancy are as dissimilar as are people in the world about us, as unlike each other as God's men and women are, and have been from the beginning. How can a poet create a Juliet, an Ophelia, a Beatrice, a Rosalind, and do more—create a Miranda? Well, genius is about as inexplicable as divinity; it is as like divinity as anything that pertains to the soul-stuff of a man.

In The Tempest, Miranda is a robust, healthy child of nature, a splendid girl, happy as the birds that sing above her head, sweet as the flowers that swing their censers at her feet, pure as the stars that laugh their glory on her hair. Society has not spoiled her. Happy soul, she does not know what society means. Physically and mentally she is a well girl. She has

not been contaminated by the salon, nor corrupted by the frivolities of her own sex. So innocent is she of all guile, so unsophisticated withal, that she does not suspect the sweet naïveté of her confession to Ferdinand, though it reveals the very philosophy of her beauty of countenance, form, and soul.

"I do not know
One of my sex; no woman's face remember,
Save from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen
More that I may call man, than you, good friend,
And my dear father."

This unspoiled girl, ideal in her filial devotion, and in the pure innocency of her love for the noble Ferdinand, and who knew nothing of those hypocritical blandishments and flatteries of social life, which spoil simplicity and naïveté with affectations and deceitful arts of coquetry, may well have elicited from her lover that sincere acknowledgment, which constitutes her the paragon of Shakespearean womanhood, the purest goddess in the pantheon of his brain, the most admirable, lovable creature in all the teeming paradise of his luxuriant imagination.

"Full many a lady
I have eyed with best regard; and many a time
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear. For several virtues
Have I liked several women; never any

With so full soul, but some defect in her
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed
And put it to the foil. But you, O you,
So perfect and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best!"

Ah! here, if ever need shall be for heroism, here may be found the rare combination of virtues, which she must needs possess, who, when duty calls, will act the heroine. Not that Miranda's unquestioning obedience and worshipful devotion to her father, who has become but little less than a god to her filial imagination, not that her most innocent, frank and womanly confession of love for Ferdinand, constitute heroism. But one so pure, chaste, intelligent, well-balanced, healthy in body and mind, one so natural, strong, ingenuous, sympathetic, dutiful and womanly in every way, could not refuse to make any self-sacrifice that love or duty might reasonably demand of sane and high-souled womanhood. If she is not the heroine, it is because she has not, as yet, had occasion to prove it. She is the ideal heroine in all the sweet and noble possibilities. How infinitely superior is this happy, healthy, unspoiled, unaffected, frank-hearted, splendid girl to the soft, sighing, falsely educated Juliet, or the poor, frail, all-too-confiding Ophelia! How much more valuable to the world is such a woman! How incomparably

more valuable is the love of such a woman to any man braver than a Romeo, or more evenly balanced than a Hamlet! Here shall we find in happy combination all that may be demanded of woman in the heroism of life, in the duties and devotions of daughter, sister, wife, and mother.

Nothing finer has the poet done than in the portrayal of Miranda's filial love, admiration, and reverence. True, she had seen no other man until Ferdinand appeared to rouse the latent passion of which she did not know her woman nature was possessed. But had she known all wise, great men—all warriors, courtiers, princes, kings—scarcely could she have known such another man as Prospero. That father was himself her ideal of a man. He taught her by his own combination of high virtues what to expect and demand of every man in character. But had not this lesson, taught her by her father's own nobility, made it difficult, if not impossible, for any other man to measure up to the ideal, which in its perfection must needs first excite a woman's admiration before it can inspire her love? It may be argued that Miranda's love for her father, her daughterly awe of his power and high virtues, her glad obedience, deference, and worshipful rever-

ence were not moral qualities that had ever been put to the test by the influences of worldly frivolities, by the fierce currents and counter currents of fortune, or by the temptations of social life. It is not the aim of the poet to portray this daughter-heroine under the trying ordeal of adverse circumstances, but to show the beauty of daughterly love and loyalty unspotted from the world, in its original unspoiled sweetness and nobility, leaving us to imagine from what a high, divinely beautiful ideal of filial duty and devotion the blandishments and hypocrisies of worldly society may drag a woman, if they once get their grip upon her holy naturalness. If Miranda was never called upon to act the part of the daughter-heroine, nevertheless no doubt of her heroism can exist in our mind, and occasion only is required to bring forth in glorious manifestation every virtue of the heroine. That father cannot ask of such a daughter any act of devotion, which she has not the heroism to render. It is well now and then to look upon a heroine who has not to suffer and to be sacrificed, if in her presence we are conscious of the strength and goodness of her personality, and feel that though she may never be called upon to prove it by deeds, she is nevertheless a heroine.

Cordelia

We see the test of filial loyalty more fully manifest and more startlingly accentuated in the sublime tragedy of King Lear, where yawns the awful, fathomless chasm between the unnatural Goneril and Regan and the incomparably true, honest, self-sacrificing heroine, Cordelia. Here filial love is put to the test, to the severest, unkindest, most cruel test.

King Lear of Britain was advancing in years, and as he felt the burden of royal affairs press more and more heavily upon him, he proposed to divide his kingdom among his daughters.

> "Know that we have divided
> In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent
> To shake all cares and business from our age,
> Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
> Unburdened, crawl toward death."

It evidently was the purpose of the king to bestow these realms according to desert based upon his daughters' love for him. Or, in truth, his generosity was to be measured by their flattery. Two daughters, Goneril and Regan, were most rhetorical and extravagant in their expressions of love, going beyond the bounds of truth and sincerity, and indulg-

ing in the most fulsome and inconsiderate flattery. It greatly tickled the pride of this silly old king to hear these bombastic avowals of impossible affection. But modest, high-minded Cordelia, the other daughter, listening to such declarations, which she knew to be nothing but insincere flattery, resolved that she would not enter a contest so humiliating and ignoble. She loved her father too tenderly and sincerely to make a fool of him and a deceiver of herself by claiming that she loved him to the exclusion of all others, even of a future lover or husband. Moreover, she was not skilled in dissimulation and the art of flattery. She loves more than she can express, hence she resolves: "What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent." She is not lacking in filial tenderness and deep emotion, but her womanly instincts, her high sense of honor, her appreciation of what is due the dignity and majesty of a king inspire her with a horror of an appeal to his vanity for any personal gain of wealth or power. Hence she is perfectly frank in her confession, muttered to herself:

> "My love's
> More ponderous than my tongue."

Goneril and Regan were already highly married, the former to the Duke of Albany, the

latter to the Duke of Cornwall. Two suitors, the duke of Burgundy and the king of France, were rivals for the hand of Cordelia. The successful suitor might expect a rich dowry with the fair lady, at least her rightful share in the division of the kingdom. And such a dowry had Cordelia the right to expect she would be able to bestow upon her chosen lord. The flattering tongues of deceitful and ambitious Goneril and Regan had won for them most generous proportions of the king's domain. Finally it is Cordelia's turn to tell the king how much she loves him. Swollen with silly vanity by the flatteries of his other daughters, he turns expectantly to his favorite Cordelia.

Lear. Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interested; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters?
Cordelia. Nothing, my lord.
Lear. Nothing?
Cordelia. Nothing.
Lear. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.
Cordelia. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your Majesty,
According to my bond; nor more nor less.
Lear. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little
Lest it may mar your fortune.

Cordelia. You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right and fit;
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty;
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.
Lear. But goes thy heart with this?
Cordelia. Ay, my good lord.
Lear. So young, and so untender?
Cordelia. So young, my lord, and true.

The king was in a rage. His inordinate vanity had been stung by Cordelia's dignity and frankness. She would not insult him by flattering words. He imagined, what she could not imagine, that flattery was the measure of honor, duty, reverence, and love. In his wrath the king disinherited Cordelia. Burgundy at once revealed his base and ambitious character by withdrawing his suit, showing that his love was to be measured by her dowry, not by Cordelia's personal worth. The king of France, with nobler spirit, still pressed his suit and in his admiration cried: "She is herself a dowry."

After bidding her father farewell the disinherited Cordelia departed, and in her depar-

ture, poor illusioned Lear lost the only daughter that truly loved and honored him. Having surrendered his power and possessions to his false and flattering daughters Goneril and Regan, and Albany and Cornwall having ascended to the control of the kingdom, the old king soon began to reap the harvest of his pride and folly. His daughters began to degrade and humiliate him, ceased to treat him with filial respect, no longer recognized his royalty, stopped at no insult, and virtually closed their doors upon him. It was soon manifest that these unnatural daughters poisoned their husbands with a contempt for their father and instigated them to intrigue for his destruction. The conditions which the king made as to his own rights and privileges were finally repudiated by these ungrateful children and he was denied the honor of a certain stipulated number of servants, attendants, and followers and was reduced to abject dependence upon his daughters' niggardly bounty. His presence was no longer welcome; the insults of those who should have honored him were no longer endurable. Departing from their homes, he went forth a wanderer, without shelter from the storm, and for companions his fool and what appeared to be a beggar and a madman. The ingratitude and

cruelty of his flattering and favored daughters so enraged him and so preyed upon his feelings that reason forsook him, while his motley garb and crown of weeds and straw and his incoherent mutterings told the sad story of his pitiable imbecility. Then was it that Cordelia, disowned and disinherited Cordelia, heard of her father's condition with deepest emotions of pity and sorrow.

The unnatural daughters who had treated Lear with such brutal indignity were soon at enmity with each other. Albany and Cornwall were scheming each against the other for the supremacy, and were bent on the capture and destruction of the old king, inspired by the fiendish Goneril and Regan.

The cruel treatment which Lear had visited upon that true and loyal daughter never for a moment quenched her love and veneration. Queen that she was, and he but a dethroned king and lunatic, the companion of fools and beggars, her heart yearned to serve him in his humiliation and misfortune.

In the meantime Cordelia had married the king of France, and the French army invaded England to thwart the unholy and ambitious intrigues of Goneril and Regan in their effort to destroy King Lear and seize all power. When Cordelia is informed that the British

are approaching and a battle is imminent, she replies:

"'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning and importune tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right;
Soon may I hear and see him!"

This is the daughter who could not ignobly flatter her poor old father even for so vast a proportion of his kingly realms as he was ready to bestow upon her for it. She who could not express her love in words now expresses it in deeds more eloquent than language. For his sake and in obedience to the promptings of her filial love and veneration, ignoring and forgetting his humiliation of her, she inspires her royal husband to take up arms against Lear's ungrateful and traitorous daughters and their husbands, Albany and Cornwall.

It is learned that Lear is in Dover, the camp of the French army. Search is made for him at the request of Cordelia and he is found and conveyed to a tent in the camp where Cordelia sees him, praying as she looks upon his sad condition,

"O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature."

As he sleeps she bends over him and tries to waken him by her caresses:

"O my dear father! Restoration hang
Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!"

When he awakes bewildered, she asks him tenderly, "Sir, do you know me?" He takes her for a spirit and would kneel before her, but she pityingly cries:

"O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:
No, sir, you must not kneel."

His mind seems to clear a little and he realizes the meaning of Cordelia's request, but feebly replies:

"Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind."

Still do the clouds slowly clear away; the light, as at the dawn, creeps into the darkness of his mind. He looks into his Cordelia's face; he seems to recognize her, yet he fears to say it:

"Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia,"

to which Cordelia replies: "And so I am, I am."

What scene more tender, noble, and pathetic has either Shakespeare or any other dramatist ever depicted! In all the wide realms of romance where is the filial affection and heroism of a daughter more exquisitely, more tenderly, yet more magnificently portrayed? But, alas! it remains for this noble Cordelia to further prove her filial heroism by a devotion that reaches its climax in martyrdom. In this, one of the most sublime tragedies of literature, death follows death in rapid succession. Cornwall is killed by his servant; both Goneril and Regan prove false to their own husbands; and then Goneril poisons Regan and stabs herself to death. Lear and Cordelia have been captured and imprisoned with the order that they be speedily dispatched. Though this order is countermanded by Albany, whose sympathies have been with Lear, and a messenger is sent in all haste to prevent the execution of the order, it is too late. Poor Cordelia has been hanged in the prison, and the messenger meets Lear bearing forth her dead body in his arms from the prison where he had slain her hangman. And there, bending over her poor lifeless form, trying to resuscitate her, once more his reason reels. But death comes to his

relief as, bowed upon the form of that daughter who loved him too deeply for words and too sincerely for flattery, he falls asleep forever, his hoary head at rest upon the bosom in which no cruelty, no unkindness of his, and no pride or ambition of this world could ever quench the sweet and holy fire of filial love and devotion.

Of all the daughters of Shakespeare's drama, Cordelia is the most perfect heroine in her devotion to the honor and majesty of her father, in her sweet injury-forgetting magnanimity, and in the depth and honesty of her self-sacrificing love.

Against the dark background of her sisters' ingratitude, flattering deceitfulness, and base, unnatural cruelty, shine the daughterly faithfulness, the high-minded, unfaltering devotion, and the tender, heart-breaking solicitude of Cordelia, with a splendor that awes imagination beyond the power of sighs and tears, and becomes something so sublime that pity of her seems an insult to soul-greatness. Poor Cordelia! No, no, our lips refuse to form the unworthy lament. Poor Lear, poor Lear! But great, noble, glorious Cordelia! Happy, beautiful Cordelia! Saint Cordelia! Paragon and patron of the daughter-heroines of romance!

CHAPTER IV

THE HEROINE-MOTHER

Constance

There may be found in the artistic demands of the drama itself the reasons why woman, as daughter or mother, does not lend herself to keenly interesting dramatic representation or to great variety of poetical and romantic situations. Be that as it may, we find not a single one of Shakespeare's greatest plays, whether comedy or tragedy, that derives its interest from any situation into which dramatic art may have placed a mother, or from which it may have rescued her.

If we except Volumnia and Constance, where are the great mothers in these comedies and tragedies? Constance of Bretagne in her devotion to the political interests of her son, Arthur, is truly a majestic character. All the resources of her powerful nature—love, passion, intellect, ambition, pride, eloquence, the instinct of royalty—are consecrated to Arthur's rights, and to the establishment of his claims on the Duchy of Bretagne and the throne of England. She is

one woman against a host of warriors, courtiers, princes, and kings, who are plotting the downfall and ruin of her "pretty Arthur." And what a magnificent war she wages against Arthur's powerful enemies! But though her weapons be the most various and trenchant that ever a royal woman wielded, and her championship of her son's legitimate claims could never have been excelled by the passionate and eloquent devotion of a royal mother, she struggles against fearful odds and she struggles in vain. In reality, she had fought the injustice and cruelty of three kings—Henry II, Richard Cœur de Lion, and John—and all to bring fair Arthur into possession of his own. It was the great struggle of a great mother, but of a mother too whose maternal affection was tinged with romantic superstition and royal ambition. Constance had doubtless caught the spirit of her people, and had come to see in her Arthur the reincarnation of the hero of the Round Table, or the other Arthur, who was to come in fulfillment of the prophecies. She therefore invested his personality with a romantic, if not a supernatural, character. She saw in him a beauty, greatness, and power that were not his, save to imaginations that dreamed dreams and saw visions. Her love was not simply a mother

love; it was a royal-mother love—the affection of a mother who thought in terms of crowns, scepters, and thrones. One mother may exhaust her imagination by dreaming that her boy will become a good mechanic, a prosperous farmer, a skillful physician, or a distinguished lawyer. Constance could dream of nothing for her son but sovereignty, dominion, empire. She was born to such dreams. And we can imagine that no mother of royal blood was ever more heroically devoted to the honor and glory of her son than was she to the ducal and kingly exaltation of Arthur.

But is not the heroic element in the maternal affection diminished, if not tainted, by the ambition of Constance, and does not that ambition contain a good-sized proportion of self-interest, which becomes very manifest in her passionate eloquence and in her final disappointment and despair? Heroism is absolutely disinterested. Was the enthusiasm, the motherly devotion, the almost hysterical ambition of Constance as absolutely disinterested, for instance, as Cordelia's daughterly devotion? Did she for Arthur's sake eliminate self, sacrifice self as completely as Cordelia eliminated and sacrificed self and all self-interest for her father-king? That Shakespeare has drawn a most imposing figure in the

character of Constance, a woman of power, unbending will, high ambition, passionate eloquence, vast mental resource, keen sensibility, haughty pride, and indomitable courage, is conceded. And that all this woman's attributes were bent on one achievement, consecrated almost fanatically, certainly frantically, if not monomaniacally, to the royal advancement of her son, is gloriously evident in this play. That Constance, however, thought only of Arthur's rights and glory, and that in all her intensity of devotion to his promotion she completely effaced herself, is not so clearly evident; but that the heroic element is wholly destroyed by what of self-interest and personal royal pride and ambition Constance may have injected into the struggle will not be claimed. She was a heroic mother, whose grandeur and majesty were worthy of even a higher aim and purpose than the coronation of her Arthur, and of a higher heroism than her magnificent struggle to be honored as the mother of a king.

VOLUMNIA

It is quite worthy of reflection that we have to go into the historical region to find the mother-heroine. Although Shakespeare works as much romance as is permissible into the delineation of the characters of Constance and

Volumnia, these characters are nevertheless historical; and in the case of Volumnia the poet has not departed to any great extent from Plutarch. Is this a confession on the part of Shakespeare that, while his genius was capable of creating a purely romantic and ideal lover, wife, and even daughter, it never attempted to create the ideal mother? In all these plays, what woman that is purely romantic or ideal in conception and entirely the creation of the poet's imagination approximates as nearly to the perfection of a mother as Miranda does to the perfection of a daughter, or as Portia does to the perfection of a wife, or as Rosalind does to the perfection of a sweetheart? Volumnia is a historical personage, but as he has done with Cleopatra and with Constance, Shakespeare has clothed her with a degree of romance that brings her character within the limits of this discussion.

Here is a mother with whom modernism is not familiar, just as modernism is not familiar with collosi, parthenons, and triumphal arches. It may be objected that Volumnia as a dramatic character has no message for the motherhood of this age, as, indeed, Constance has not, and all because the world has passed beyond the necessity for a Coriolanus, and is no longer interested in Arthur and his ilk. If

we can succeed in translating ourselves to the fifth century before the Christian era, and in adjusting our ways of thinking to the environment that conditioned the achievements of Coriolanus, we may be able to appreciate the mother-heroism of Volumnia. But to translate this matron to London, Paris, Berlin, Washington, or even Saint Petersburg in this twentieth century of the Christian era, would be as intolerable an anachronism as it would be to transfer Egyptian hieroglyphics to a modern newspaper, a Greek trireme to the Atlantic mail service, or the Temple of Diana to Central Park, New York city.

Here is a mother to bear and nurse a Roman general, a mother to be thought of as we think of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, or of Olympia, the mother of Alexander the Great, or of the traditionally austere and patriotic mothers of Sparta. Here is a mother who wastes no tears over her "pretty Arthur," but with the instincts of the lion's dam training her whelps to sniff the air for blood, she glories in bearing sons for battlefields, and laughs with pride to see them borne back to her in their dented war-harness crimsoned with their own hearts' price of victory. It was a tender tribute Benjamin West paid his good Quaker mother, when he said, "Her kiss made me a

painter." But it is a different spirited mother that can say to her son,

> "Thou hast said
> My praises made thee first a soldier."

Keep in mind that those old Roman ideals were consistent with Roman genius of the hardy, republican days.

It was this ideal Roman mother that boasted she had let her son, when he was tender-bodied, "seek danger, where he was like to find fame." Her exultation over his prowess in battle even at that tender age reveals a characteristic of motherhood which it would take the old Roman sentiment to appreciate.

> "To cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man."

It was for such a mother's imagination to create for itself such an ideal of a son; and to fashion her Marcius to that iron ideal was the ambition of Volumnia. But that military ideal of manhood, that manhood of battle and "terrible swift sword," belonged to the old republican ideal of patriotism, of country, of civilization, of Roman supremacy. Volumnia was true to that ideal when, with an eloquence

and patriotism worthy of any age that ever was or ever shall be, she said:

"Had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action."

In Volumnia we find a higher and more disinterested mother-devotion than any of which Constance was capable. The Roman mother's ambition for her son's greatness was animated by a patriotism that raised it to a sublime virtue, far above any to be found in the nature of Arthur's mother. Volumnia would have her son become great for Rome's glory. What were crowns and thrones, hereditary claims and kingly titles, that danced before the ambitious eyes of Constance, but cheap baubles, compared with the splendid, patriotic vision of her country's glory, of Rome's supremacy, that inspired Volumnia in fashioning the character of Coriolanus? To bring her "pretty Arthur" to a throne, Constance would sacrifice the peace of Bretagne, and for his sake she let her people perish and her country waste its blood and treasure. But for Rome's glory Volumnia lived and trained her son to greatness, and in her country's good, for which his greatness wrought such splendid deeds, she had reward. Nay, she let her son

perish to save Rome, and gloried that he by perishing was great enough to save his country. The proud consciousness of being the mother of Coriolanus, the hero and saviour of Rome, she would not have exchanged for all the hereditary titles that the world's "pretty Arthurs" may claim and sacrifice their country's life to win. After all, is not Volumnia's deep and soul-mastering conception of the identification of her son's life with her country's destiny, an eternally noble virtue and attitude of heroic motherhood? Is not the patriot-mother the mother-heroine? And should not the son of such a mother exult in the spirit that bears and trains and consecrates him to the greatness and glory of his country? To Coriolanus Volumnia was "the most noble mother in the world." So great, august, majestic was she in his thought, that when she bowed to him in her supplication for Rome, he exclaimed with a noble veneration,

> "My mother bows;
> As if Olympus to a molehill should
> In supplication nod."

No higher proof of a mother's heroism can be imagined than Volumnia's training of Coriolanus to be a great Roman for Rome's glory, and then sacrificing him on the altar

of a lofty patriotism to save Rome. And no higher tribute could be paid to such heroic motherhood than was paid Volumnia in the self-sacrificing, Rome-saving, but mother-honoring act of Coriolanus.

CHAPTER V

THE HEROINE-WIFE

PORTIA

THE most interesting characters in Shakespeare's drama are wives. Beauty, wealth, and elegance combined with genius and mental accomplishments do not often clothe the strong and self-sacrificing character of a heroine. If the poets are too prone to array their heroines in the splendid attributes that appeal to the plebeian imagination, and represent all the patrician embellishments of culture as the immediate jewels of the heroic soul, in the character of Portia Shakespeare has succeeded beyond all others in showing that the noblest womanhood and highest heroism may be very consistent with an aristocratic breeding. He has succeeded in portraying a woman adorned with all the graces, refinements, and advantages of honor, riches, beauty, high birth, wit, intellectuality, education, and the world's flattery and applause, without being spoiled by them. He gives us a charming portraiture of a woman possessing all that a woman can wish for, aspire to, or possess, who, instead of becoming the slave and victim of their in-

fluence upon her diviner self, is capable of subordinating them to an intuitive purity, a refined and exquisite sense of feminine propriety, and the dictates of a sweet will which maintain in her heart that most exalted and exalting consciousness of which woman can virtuously boast—"queen o'er myself."

Among these portraits drawn by Shakespeare Portia wears a beauty and a grace superlative. Most fortunate of men, Bassanio, to have wooed and won so fair a lady, such an incomparable woman, such a perfect incarnation of wit and wisdom, beauty and sense, sentiment and virtue! The wives of Shakespeare's plays are the most highly finished creations of his genius. And in the wifely relations of woman, the poet finds full scope for his powers in the illustration of the virtues of highest feminine heroism. It may not be so apparent that Portia is a heroine as that she is simply a most gifted and intellectual woman, a passionate lover of Bassanio, and that she is his true, affectionate, and admiring wife. Nevertheless, is there not a fine, sweet self-abnegation, an absolutely pure and unselfish heroism in a strong, superior woman surrendering herself unreservedly to the will of him whom she loves? To become a wife woman becomes a heroine. With what self-

abandon does Portia surrender all to Bassanio —her great wealth, her estates, her name, herself!

"Myself and what is mine, to you and yours
Is now converted."

But beautiful as she is, rich, accomplished, patrician-souled, what an heroic love is hers that she can say to Bassanio,

"And all my fortunes at thy feet I lay,
And follow thee, my lord, through all the world."

But to be still more worthy of him whom she loves, of the man whose wife she is to become, she has a most heroic ambition. It is the old, old story of a true woman's merging her own destiny in the destiny of her lover-husband. To exalt him, and herself in him, she depreciates all the splendid gifts which she brings to his enrichment in her possessions and her personality and longs to be more, infinitely more, than she is for his sake. Is not this the heroine in woman-life? And what words can more eloquently reveal the greatly loving soul of such a heroine than the passionate confession of Portia:

"You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am; though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better, yet, for you,
I would be trebled twenty times myself;

A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich;
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account."

With what a dower would she enrich her husband! With what a dower does she enrich him! While the strongest virtues blend in her character—intellect, philosophical acumen, logical sense, pride of birth, patrician instinct, the love of learning, and the judicial temper—yet does Portia remain sweetly, tenderly, domestically feminine. She is a rare combination, indeed; in her we see the beauty of a Cleopatra, without the Egyptian's sensuality; the virtue of an Isabella, without her austerity; the wit of a Beatrice, without her flippancy; the tenderness of a Juliet, without her sentimentality; the clinging, confiding devotion of an Ophelia, without her weakness of will; and the innocency of a Miranda, without her rusticity. This strong-minded woman has a most gentle disposition, and with all her fine intellectual powers trained to high thinking, she is capable of loving with a most ardent soul. If she lives in the same mental atmosphere as a Madame de Staël, a Harriet Martineau, a George Eliot, she dwells in a warmer soul-clime and is not stifled, as they would be, by the sweetest perfumes of the

Arabia of romance and love. She is not cold and masculine, but is so warmly feminine, that among the real historic women of great intellect, we do not find her equal, and we shall search the world of romance and poetry in vain to discover her parallel. Here is a woman who is not conscious of any unwomanly humiliation, when with her queenly intellectuality, her superb self-command, her aristocratic training, her noble will, her sparkling wit, and her radiant beauty, she yields to the womanly promptings of her womanly instincts, and gives herself, all her rich, abundant and splendid self, to the man whom she loves, and whom she is proud to call her lord. Yes, there is a very sweetly subtle element of heroism in this. For such a woman to become a wife, in all the tender devotion and self-effacement of a true wife, is to be a heroine. The very genius of Portia accentuates the heroism of her being so wifely a wife, so completely and unreservedly absorbed in the man whom she so highly honors as her husband, the ideal of her heart's affection, the comrade of her life.

If the trial scene in the Merchant of Venice reveals the subtlety of her mind, the opulence of her learning, the righteous balance of her judgment, the strength of her reason, the

eloquence of her tongue, and the majesty of her character, it does not leave us simply admiring her accomplishments. Rather does it remind us of the fact that she has condescended to act this role wherein she displays her genius from the promptings of wifely affection. Portia is a representative heroine-wife. For they live and move and have their being in the divine world of marriage, the earthly heaven, we call home, these transcendent creatures, these superlative women, these true, pure, self-sacrificing wives of the sons of men.

Lady Macbeth

Is it possible for the imagination to project upon the canvas of pure ideality a consistent portrait of a wicked heroine? Is such a conception possible as a woman lost to every virtue but fidelity to her husband's bed and to her husband's greatness? And if so, may such a creature become heroic, truly heroic, in her mad ambition for her husband's honor? In the sacrifice of all the sweet and tender feelings of her sex, all the gentlest, holiest instincts of womanhood to that almost savage, diabolical ambition, may she become a heroine? Can there be a fiendish, murderous heroism? There can be such an ambition.

But is it possible for such an ambition to become heroic, or to possess any real element of heroism? If so, then even a Lady Macbeth may have had back of and underneath all her ambition and wickedness a heroic spirit. We cannot read this masterpiece of Shakespearean tragedy without amazement that a wife would so completely sacrifice herself, so nearly unsex herself, so deliberately demonize herself for another's promotion to a throne, as Lady Macbeth is made to do, that her husband may become king of Scotland. There is nothing weak, sensual, or contemptible in this woman. She is powerful, fierce, commanding—the incarnation of wile and will, the embodiment of daring and determination—though she is physically a small, rather delicate woman. Masculine? No; she is a form of devilish femininity. She tries her utmost to unsex herself, to be unfeminine and mannish in the execution of her ambitious purposes, but she cannot. She is a woman, a bad, wicked, ambitious, fiendish, lost woman, but a woman. Therein lies the subtle art of Shakespeare. There is no inconsistency in this character. In real life when a woman becomes ambitious it is with a woman's ambition; when she becomes angry it is with a woman's anger; when she scolds she scolds like a woman; when she

raves she raves like a woman; if she swears she swears like a woman; if she plots she plots like a woman. So Shakespeare never forgets that Lady Macbeth is a woman, nor can we forget it. She thinks nothing, says nothing, attempts nothing mannishly. Her nature, her instincts, however depraved they may become, are never masculine; they are always feminine. Therein lay her power and her influence over Macbeth; that influence was a woman's influence. No other could have driven Macbeth to the fate that ruined him. He might have resisted—nay, he would have resisted—the demoniacal ambition and murderous suggestions of any man. But a woman, a wife with a woman's wit and a woman's will, with a wife's affection, and a wife's devotion to what she dreamed to be his highest destiny, he could not resist. Is there not to be found in this wreck and ruin of a once majestic womanhood a single imperishable jewel of wifely heroism? When the tomb of the venerable Bede was opened, there upon his breast lay a ring; the flesh of the hand that had worn it was a little heap of dust. At the skeleton neck of a dead and mummied queen has hung a ruby or sapphire, which shone still with undiminished luster in the earth and ashes, to which death had dissolved the once beautiful body. The

priceless jewel of heroism is still shining there in the dead, ruined, self-sacrificed and self-damned womanhood of Lady Macbeth! It would seem that before the temptation came upon them to win the throne of Scotland at any cost, a strong and tender affection united Macbeth and his wife. And even during the horrible development of this tragedy, expressions of endearment pass between them. She hails him, "Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!" But even more tenderly, forgetting all titles and dignities, she seems fond of the expression, "My husband." After receiving his letter she reveals her appreciation of Macbeth's naturally tender nature; when meditating upon what his letter conveys, she says:

> "Yet do I fear thy nature;
> It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
> To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
> Art not without ambition, but without
> The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
> That wouldst thou holily."

This is, indeed, a high compliment paid to Macbeth by his wife. She has proven the natural gentleness of his nature, and has experienced all those endearing attentions, all those amiable relations of which only a man "full o' the milk of human kindness" is capable. She does not imagine him capable of catching the nearest way to the throne, which

to her devilish purpose lies through blood. Quite a pathetic tone fills her words of wifely complaint as she finds the sins which they have committed are gradually separating them, and his brooding upon the horrors of his crimes seems to drive from Macbeth's mind all thoughts of her, as they are surely quenching forever all tender affections and turning to gall that "milk of human kindness" of which his nature was at one time full. It may have been this loss of what once made them happy in each other's confidence and love that prompted the wretched wife to moan:

> "Naught had, all's spent,
> Where our desire is got without content;
> 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
> Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy."

Here Macbeth enters, and with a tender tone of chiding she addresses him:

> "How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
> Of sorriest fancies your companions making?"

This reveals on her part a desire for his companionship, which she feels she is losing. Her solicitude for his mental condition after Duncan's murder, and especially after the murder of Banquo, shows an affection that even their crimes cannot destroy, while her woman nature melts with pity as she beholds his condition at the banquet, where the ghost of Ban-

quo appears. After that appalling scene in which Macbeth by his almost frenzied fear was in danger of divulging their crimes, she does not upbraid him. All the unnatural harshness with which she chided him for his cowardice and hesitation and urged him on to commit murder, seems now to have forsaken her, and left her tenderly solicitous. Realizing his well-nigh insane condition, she gently admonishes him: "You lack the season of all natures, sleep." It is the last word she speaks to him in the tragedy. It is a word of kindness spoken with a breaking heart to the man for whom she has sacrificed all, and all in vain. Before the crimes which they had committed had filled Macbeth with the fear and horror which destroyed his love for his wife and made him quite indifferent to her death, he was accustomed to greet her as "Love," "My dearest love," "Dear wife," and "Dearest chuck."

This once gentle-spirited man, though brave soldier, this kind and affectionate husband and this ruddy cheeked, quick-witted, eloquent, imperial-willed little wife, whom her husband fondly called his "dearest chuck," or chick, were most unreservedly devoted to each other. Shall we say too unreservedly devoted to each other? If the same may not be said

of Macbeth, surely it must be said of Lady Macbeth, that her ambition was not a selfish ambition. She does not seem to have dreamed of her own honor, nor can we think that for her own promotion to a throne she could so abjectly, so criminally have sacrificed herself. It was for her husband, and, psychologically mysterious as it all is, it was for her love of him that she ruined her own life, sacrificed her own soul, immolated her own womanhood. Call it a barbaric, a savage, a demoniacal heroism, if you will, but it was a heroism for all that, a misguided heroism. It was that which, when sanctified and guided by judgment, intelligence, conscience, and the fear of God, makes the world's grandest heroines and most noble heroes, but which, when unsanctified and unbridled by conscience, truth, and holy purpose, makes possible such a tragedy as the ruin of Lady Macbeth, and her once brave, gentle, and devoted consort.

Lady Macbeth was not a coarse-fibered, naturally base-minded, cruel woman. She was quite the reverse. She was a loving wife, and had been a tender mother. Nothing is more impressively emphasized in this tragedy than the fact that she had to pray for the cruelty to do a base deed. Crime did not seem natural to her; it was unnatural. And before

she could commit it she must herself become unnatural. It was not in her woman nature to be cruel; her rosy cheeks are a physiological revelation of a psychological condition—health of mind, no less than health of body. She had by nature a happy, contented, kindly disposition. Criminal women, as a rule, do not have rosy cheeks. Before she could commit a horrible crime she felt that the supernatural powers—infernal, if you please—must first unsex her. No naturally cruel, criminally inclined woman would stop to ask for supernatural power to become cruel and murderous. Moreover, it forces itself upon us all through the development of these ambitious plots that Lady Macbeth is constantly "screwing her courage to the sticking point." She is in an abnormal state of nervous tension, of excitement bordering on hysteria, if not out and out insanity. It is not a naturally vicious, brutal woman that refuses to slay Duncan because he looks like her father. Ah, there the true, gentle woman asserts herself, the woman that cherishes the memory of her father, and is so touched and melted by the face that looks like his that she rushes from the chamber of the sleeping king and confesses,

"Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't."

Such resemblance would not have affected to pity a hard, debased, and naturally criminal nature. No, Lady Macbeth would have struck Duncan the fatal blow and never thought of or cared for his resemblance to her father had she been a vicious, cruel woman by nature. That little redeeming incident shows that she is not her real and natural self in all this horrible business. Again, while she is under this fearful and abnormal strain, keeping her own courage screwed to the sticking point by sheer force of will, the tension becomes so great that her nerves snap and even her power of volition fails. This could not take place save in a sensitive soul. A coarse-grained, hard, brutal woman would not faint upon hearing Macbeth describe the murder of Duncan as Lady Macbeth faiuted. In sighing, "Help me hence. Ho!" and in fainting, that poor creature revealed feelings still existing in her heart which were a credit to her womanhood. And, finally, remorse such as only a woman with a tender conscience can feel overcomes her. Does reason forsake its throne? No; for one moment reason returns to its throne. By an almost superhuman effort Lady Macbeth has defied reason, she has crushed conscience beneath the heel of her iron will; she has strangled her natural

affection; she has silenced the voice of judgment; she has quenched the light of heaven, and now she reels to the verge of insanity, but she catches herself for an instant, poises, erect, majestically conscience-smitten before she plunges into the abyss. Reason returns, her soul rises, grand, God-fearing, judgment-stunned. Then that little "spark of celestial fire," conscience, flames up fitfully; it is all that is left of her ruined womanhood! O that walking and muttering in her sleep! O that little hand with its blood-stains, its "damned spots" that will not wash out as she once vainly imagined they would! O that smell of crime and murderous death from which "all the perfumes of Arabia" will not sweeten her little hand! Poor woman! She is a woman, after all, and, pray as she would, no power in heaven or hell could quite unsex her.

The last dreadful act of self-destruction, conscience alone made possible. Had she been a hard, calloused, criminally inclined, and naturally depraved woman, conscience would not have stung her with remorse, that little hand would not have terrified her with its ineradicable stain, its foul odor of murder. Had she not had still living within her heart a conscience, that heart could not have broken.

Conscienceless hearts do not break. O that Lady Macbeth had for one brief moment

> "Stood erect
> Caught at God's skirts and prayed"!

But no, she stood erect, a woman, conscience-appalled, and hence not far from the Kingdom, almost redeemed, but then she faltered, staggered, and plunged from God to doom—a suicide on the bloody altar of an insane ambition for her husband's greatness!

What a misguided devotion was hers! Had she not fallen a prey to the wicked lust of power, had she but directed her extraordinary mental resources, her quick intelligence, her presence of mind, her superb self-control, her tremendous will power, her absolute self-effacing devotion to her husband's advancement, and her original tenderness of conscience, wifely affection, and valor of tongue to promoting the highest interests of her husband "holily," she might have proven herself one of the most renowned heroines of romance or history. And, had she so elected, she might have made the titles "Glamis" and "Cawdor" as proud in glory as those of any king, and the name "Macbeth" as immortal in the world's admiration as it now is and ever will be in universal infamy and execration.

Hermione

No test of wifely heroism can be more severe than the cruel ordeal which the unfounded suspicion of a jealous husband may impose upon her, and which her very nobility of nature demands that she shall endure. No adverse circumstance, no loss of place or fortune, no danger of physical harm, no, not even death itself can put as fierce and terrible a trial upon a woman-soul as her own husband's suspicion and false accusation of infidelity. Great indeed is the womanhood that can bear it, suffer it, and forgive it. Did ever husbands treat their wives with more cruel cruelty than did Leontes, Posthumus, and Othello? Did ever wives suffer more heroically under cruelty than Hermione, Imogene, and Desdemona?

In the charming play of The Winter's Tale Shakespeare represents Hermione, the wife of Leontes, the king of Selicia, as falling under her husband's jealous suspicion. In his "diseased opinion" she has been criminal in her familiarity with Polixenes, king of Bohemia, the lifelong friend of Leontes and now a visitor at his court. No one doubts the queen's fidelity but he. All—lords, ladies, servants—regard these suspicions as "dangerous unsafe lunies i' the king." Hermione seems to think

it beneath her dignity as a woman, wife, and queen to deny the base charges of her lord, or even to take them seriously. But, finally, roused to the sad appreciation of the king's seriousness and of the wrong which his accusation places upon her, she replies, but with a tenderness that expresses loving pity rather than bitterness and anger:

> "Should a villain say so,
> The most replenish'd villain in the world
> He were as much more villain: you, my lord,
> Do but mistake."

Polixenes hastily flees to save his life, though manfully protesting his innocency and the unsullied honor of the queen. Hermione is thrown into prison. There her child is born.

When the babe is presented to the king as his child he cruelly disowns it; orders it from his presence, and commands that with its mother it be burned! But, softening in his feelings, he finally bids one of his lords, Antigonus, to bear the child beyond the limits of his dominions to some strange distant region and,

> "leave it,
> Without more mercy, to its own protection
> And favor of the climate, . . . some place
> Where chance may nurse or end it."

In due time the queen is brought to trial for the infidelity and treason with which she

is falsely charged. But Apollo having been consulted, this sealed-up oracle was opened and read in the court of justice: "Hermione is chaste; Polixenes is blameless; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his innocent babe, truly begotten; and the king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found."

Leontes impiously denounces the oracle as false. Suddenly the news comes that his young son, Prince Manillius, has died, grieving for his mother. At the report Hermione swoons, and apparently dies. She is borne from the court and the intelligence comes that she has indeed expired in grief. As these woes gather thick and threateningly about him, remorse smites the king. He has offended Apollo by his profane treatment of the oracle.

He awakes from his jealous hallucination, repents of the grievous wrongs he has done his wife and infant child, and looks with broken contrite spirit upon what he regards as his poor dead wife, foully murdered by his own cruelty. In fact, however, Hermione only fainted, was borne to the home of Lady Paulina, her faithful and heroic defender, guardian, and adviser. There the king saw his queen, still in her swoon, and he was deceived into thinking she was dead. It is a strange

story, but sixteen years pass ere the king is undeceived. Hermione lives in secret companionship with Lady Paulina. In the meantime the babe that was carried away to Bohemia by Antigonus, fell into the hands of a kindly shepherd, in whose cottage she grew to young womanhood. Perdita was her name, and she was "the most peerless piece of earth, I think, that e'er the sun shone bright on." In course of time it chanced that Florizel, the son and heir of King Polixenes, saw and fell in love with the shepherd's daughter. He was so infatuated that he did not consider her low estate, but was determined to marry her. His father objected, fumed, raved, and threatened. Hence the couple ran away to Sicily. In the meantime the good old shepherd revealed what had been found with this changeling when he picked up the precious bundle in the pasture where Antigonus had left it. With the babe was "the mantle of Queen Hermione's and her jewel about the neck of it, the letters of Antigonus found with it, which they knew to be his character." Then the very likeness of Hermione was stamped upon the beautiful features of Perdita. The revelation comes to both Leontes and Polixenes, who meet in joy and reconciliation with Perdita and Florizel, the daughter of the Sicilian king, and the son

of the king of Bohemia, happily united in their presence. And now it is reported that Julio Romano, the famous Italian artist, has executed a marvelously lifelike statue of Hermione for Lady Paulina. This statue Leontes is most anxious to look upon, as is Perdita, who has mourned with broken heart since she heard of her mother's tragic fate. When all are assembled in the gallery, the curtain is removed from the statue, and so lifelike indeed does the marble form appear that it seems to breathe. Leontes is spellbound in its presence, and as he looks upon the form that seems to be living, expressions of love and contrition break from his lips. He will not let the curtain close upon the statue. As he stands transfixed, a thrilling climax is reached in the scene and incident. Paulina bids the statue descend from its pedestal, when lo! the living Hermione steps down, falls upon the neck of her lord, Leontes, and reveals herself as his still noble, loving, and forgiving wife. And here mother and daughter meet, in fond embrace, each as having risen from the dead.

Imogen

Medieval tradition furnishes the material for the play of Cymbeline, which presents to our admiration one of the noblest, sweetest

heroines of dramatic literature. Imogen, the daughter of Cymbeline, the king of Britain, has fallen in love with and married Posthumus Leonatus, "a poor but worthy gentleman." It was the cherished desire of the queen, who was Cymbeline's second wife, that Cloten, her son by a former husband, should marry the fair princess. This union also seemed to be a consummation as devoutly to be wished by the king. Hence Imogen's marriage to Posthumus so enraged the queen that she determined to do away with the princess by poison. The king likewise was so incensed that he banished his impecunious son-in-law, who sought refuge in Italy. Before parting, the newly wedded lovers plighted their faith anew, sealing their ardent love by gifts of rare value. Imogen presents a precious jewel, with the words:

> "Look here, love;
> This diamond was my mother's; take it, heart;
> But keep it till you woo another wife
> When Imogen is dead."

Posthumus clasped around his lady's arm a golden bracelet and departed. In far-off Italy Posthumus fell in company with one Iachimo, a villainous Italian, who offered to lay a wager that the wife of whose beauty and virtue Posthumus had proudly boasted was not

all that he took her to be, but was, like all women, susceptible to the influences by which any gallant might seek her favor. "I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring, that commend me to the court where your lady is, with no more advantage than the opportunity of a second conference, and I will bring from thence that honor of hers which you imagine so reserved." Posthumus fell into the trap and foolishly accepted the proposition, wagering the very ring which his wife had presented him as a pledge of her eternal fidelity.

Iachimo proceeded to England, bearing letters of introduction and commendation to Imogen from her husband. On his arrival he sought and obtained an interview with the princess. Muttering to himself,

> "Boldness be my friend!
> Arm me, audacity from head to foot,"

the yellow Iachimo began his attack by trying to undermine Imogen's confidence in her own husband. He insinuated that the life of Posthumus in Italy was far from what the life of a faithful husband absent from his wife should be. Then by soft blandishments he tried to secure her favor and boldly attempted to take liberties with her, which she repulsed, to his chagrin. Finally, convinced that she was proof against all his arts of seductive gal-

lantry, he apologized, and, owning that her Posthumus was not as he had represented, but was a true and loyal husband, and, withal, a man of noble spirit and superior attributes, he regained her confidence. But now he invents a ruse by which to obtain circumstantial evidence which he may use to convince Posthumus that he has been unduly familiar with his wife. He has failed to shake Imogen's fidelity, but is determined to win the wager by foul and infamous trickery, even though it cost the infinite suffering of his innocent victims. Hiding himself in a chest, which Imogen consented to have brought to her room for safe keeping, thinking that it contained precious jewels, when night came on, and the princess had fallen asleep, the villain crept out of concealment and took a memorandum of the contents of the sleeping apartments. Then he stealthily unclasped and appropriated the golden bracelet which Posthumus in parting from his bride had placed upon her arm in token of his love and in pledge of his undying loyalty. Armed with these seemingly strong and convincing evidences of his unwarranted familiarity with Imogen, this rascally Iachimo returned to Italy and easily persuaded Posthumus that his wife had proven unfaithful. Whereupon the distracted and

jealous husband gave Iachimo the diamond ring which had been wagered, and bade him also keep the golden bracelet which he had brought to Italy with the false claim that the princess in her infatuation had taken it from her own arm and given to him. Posthumus, now fairly inoculated with the virus of jealousy, resolves upon revenge; his love turns to hatred and he becomes as cruel as he was formerly tender and affectionate in all his feelings and purposes toward the gentle and innocent Imogen. His poisoned mind brooded upon the ways and means for entrapping and destroying her. He wrote to the old servant, Pisanio, to persuade him to kill the princess. And now two assassins are bent on her destruction—the wicked queen and her own husband. Nay, another has vowed to destroy both her honor and her life: Cloten, the despicable and rejected suitor, is a third would-be assassin. Posthumus invented a most unmanly and cruel subterfuge to secure the death of his pure and unsuspecting wife. He wrote her a letter full of affectionate expressions, bidding her meet him at Milford Haven, scene of certain military movements in the conflict between the Romans and Britons. Pisanio was to accompany her, and, all unknown to her, he was there to dispatch her with his sword and send

to Posthumus her handkerchief stained with her own lifeblood. Imogen is filled with transports of joy in anticipation of meeting her beloved Posthumus, and, innocent of any suspicion as she is unconscious of any wrongdoing, and ignorant of her husband's jealousy, she is all eagerness to hasten to the rendezvous. "O for a horse with wings," she cries. Arrived at Milford Haven, Imogen looks eagerly but in vain for her beloved. A strange foreboding finally seizes her, as she scans the now serious face of the old servant, Pisanio.

"Where is Posthumus?" Her heart seems to sink within her as she asks the question. Pisanio revealed the wicked, heartless plot against her life, but refused to execute the will of Posthumus. He handed Imogen the letter which he had received from her husband, in which he accused her of infidelity. Stunned by the false and cruel charge, for a moment she seemed to meditate self-destruction, but catching herself in all the courage, faith, and dignity of her pure and innocent womanhood, she sighed,

> "Against self-slaughter
> There is a prohibition so divine
> That cravens my weak hand."

Pisanio could not, nor would he, slay the

innocent and foully slandered girl, and she was too heroic and womanly to slay herself. But what is to become of her? That is the question with both Imogen and Pisanio. The old servant suggested to his mistress that she might disappear, and he would send her blood-stained handkerchief to Posthumus, to satisfy him that she had been slain. Then she might disguise herself as a boy, secure service with the Roman general Lucius, and by some means get near Posthumus in Italy, where she might fondly hope to see him, and possibly convince him of her innocence. The suggestion appealed to her, and she agreed to follow it. It was the act of a true heroine. Young as she was, unaccustomed to the hardships and dangers of the world, it took a brave heart to face the trials that awaited her. But her very purity, innocency, and unsuspicious, confiding nature seem to have permitted no thought of danger or evil consequence to enter her mind. She assumed the attire of a boy, and ventured alone into the great, strange, rough, and tragical world. In the development of the play Imogen is forced into many trying and delicate situations. Wandering about the country, she comes to a gloomy cave which she enters; there she finds food to satisfy her hunger, and there she is discovered by

three rough mountaineers, who have long made the cave their dwelling place. They treat her kindly and accept her as a brother. In the final outcome two of them prove to be her own brothers, who were stolen in infancy. She mingles with soldiers in camp, on the march, and on battlefield; she serves the Roman general as a page under the name of Fidele; but never does this heroine compromise her modesty or even reveal her femininity. All who met her regarded her as a modest, beautiful, and lovable boy. In the course of events the Romans were defeated by the Britons. Posthumus, who seems to have softened in his feelings and to have regained his love for Imogen, was with the Roman army. He soon decided, however, to desert the Romans and to fight for Britain, for Imogen's sake. Repentance and remorse were slowly crowding out the bitterness, jealousy, and spirit of revenge which had long filled his heart.

Valiantly he fought for Britain, and much had he to do with gaining the victory in that final bloody battle. Strangely enough, in this war Posthumus met Iachimo in single combat, worsted him and stripped him of all his weapons. Then did the base Italian seem to repent of the wrong which he had done, for as he lay on the field, swordless and helpless, he

became conscience-smitten and confessed to himself:

> "The heaviness and guilt within my bosom
> Takes off my manhood: I have belied a lady,
> The princess of this country, and the air on't
> Revengingly enfeebles me."

After the decisive battle, in which the Britons were victorious, the Italian prisoners and the defenders of Britain's cause were assembled in the presence of Cymbeline. Among them were Lucius, the Roman general, and his page Fidele, or Imogen in disguise, Posthumus, Iachimo, Pisanio, the servant, and the three mountaineers whom Imogen had met in the cave. As soon as Posthumus was presented, Cymbeline ordered him to prison, not knowing what he had done that day in his own good cause. While in prison Posthumus prayed for death to relieve him of the torments of his accusing conscience.

When it was revealed to Cymbeline that Posthumus, disguised in the garments of a humble peasant, had fought with greatest courage and had helped the three mountaineers win the battle in which the Romans were defeated, he ordered his release from prison. Once more he stood with the other heroes and with the prisoners, in the presence of his father-in-law, the king. When the question

arose as to what treatment should be accorded the captured enemies, Lucius, the Roman general, made but one request.

"This one thing only
I will entreat; my boy, a Briton born,
Let him be ransomed: never master had
A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,
So tender over his occasions, true,
So feat, so nurse-like: let his virtue join
With my request, which I'll make bold your highness
Cannot deny: He hath done no Briton harm,
Though he have served a Roman: save him, sir,
And spare no blood beside."

Thus spake the Roman general in behalf of the boy Fidele, who stood there—the lovely Imogen in disguise. Cymbeline was strangely moved as he looked down upon the boy.

"I have surely seen him:
His favor is familiar to me. Boy,
Thou hast looked thyself into my grace,
And art mine own. I know not why, wherefore,
To say, 'Live, boy': ne'er thank thy master; live:
And ask of Cymbeline what boom thou wilt,
Fitting my bounty and thy state, I'll give it;
Yea, though thou do demand a prisoner,
The noblest ta'en."

After a whispered conference with Cymbeline, the page, turning to Iachimo, says,

"My boon is that this gentleman may render
Of whom he had this ring."

Then Cymbeline breaks forth:

"That diamond upon your finger, say
How came it yours?"

Then and there the base Italian confessed:

> "By villainy,
> I got this ring."

Then the whole story of the diabolical plot which he had invented and executed was told. To the astonished and enraged Posthumus, Iachimo abjectly kneels:

> "Take that life, beseech you,
> Which I so often owe; but your ring first;
> And here the bracelet of the truest princess
> That ever swore her faith."

At the startling revelation made by Iachimo, Posthumus is overcome with sorrow, and, calling down upon himself all curses, reproaching himself as

> "most credulous fool,
> Egregious murderer, thief, anything,
> That's due to all the villains past, in being,
> To come!"

he breaks forth in sobs that shake his strong and manly form:

> "O Imogen!
> My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
> Imogen, Imogen!"

Soon the truth is known. Imogen discloses her identity, and rushes to the arms of her remorseful and repentant Posthumus in loving and forgiving embrace.

This Imogen was a heroine if romance ever created a heroine and to this day "is best

beloved in all the world of song and all the tide of time."

Desdemona

Many a student of Shakespeare will claim that Othello is the most awful and impressive tragedy of this superlative dramatic poet. A noble Moor, Othello, has won the affection and has recently married Desdemona, the daughter of Brabantio, a Venetian senator. Young and susceptible and, withal, "a most exquisite lady," Desdemona was bewitched by Othello's eloquent recitals of "the battles, sieges, fortunes" he had passed. When the enraged father discovered the marriage and accused Othello of using witchcraft in winning the affections of his daughter, the Moor confessed:

> "She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
> And I loved her that she did pity them.
> This only is the witchcraft I have used."

The father was reconciled to the situation, and with his blessing the newly married, desperately in love with each other, started upon what promised to be a happy life. But through the machinations of Iago, a fiend incarnate, this union, wise or unwise, at least happy, ended in most cruel tragedy. Ambitious to secure official promotion, Iago was maddened

with another, one Cassio, who was appointed Othello's lieutenant, while he was kept in the humble position of a mere ensign-bearer. To avenge Othello's partiality for Cassio, and to secure Cassio's downfall and his own preferment, Iago enters into a most diabolical program of ruin, involving reputation, character, happiness, honor, and life.

To undermine the reputation of Cassio, Iago proposes nothing less fiendish than an attack upon the very honor of Othello's wife. He will poison the Moor's mind with jealousy, and thus ruin his happiness and the happiness of "the sweetest innocent" Desdemona, while he blasts the character of the lieutenant whose position he covets.

> "To get his place and to plume up my will
> In double knavery—How, how? Let's see:
> After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
> That he is too familiar with his wife."

That he himself was jealous of Othello and was bent on terrible revenge seems evident. Into this happy life crept the viper of revenge, to poison it with suspicion, jealousy, murder, death. While Desdemona was dreaming only of a future of domestic bliss most cruel villainy was plotting the ruin of all her happiness. It was when this beautiful girl,

the very soul of honor, the embodiment of womanly sweetness, was breathing her hope and confidence into the listening ear of her Othello, that the demon Iago was maturing his plans.

> "The heavens forbid,
> But that our loves and comforts should increase
> Even as our days do grow!"

Alas, this blissful hope was soon to be quenched in gloomy suspicion and black jealousy. Iago poisons the mind of Othello with the suspicion that Cassio, his lieutenant, is too familiar with his wife. "Look to your wife." The fiend stops at no limit. He gives false and suspicious interpretations to every act of Cassio. When the lieutenant is dismissed for becoming drunk by the very plottings of Iago himself, and solicits the good offices of Desdemona on his behalf that she may persuade Othello to restore him to office, the fiend uses the incident to create jealousy in the mind of the Moor.

Little by little the poison is injected, and does its fatal work. And yet so innocent does his Desdemona appear, and so unconscious is she of any wrongdoing or of any suspicion against her, that Othello seems again and again to doubt the accusations and insinua-

tions of Iago. But so fertile is this scoundrel in diabolical invention that one form of the poison does not cease to work before another is injected into the mind of the now jealous and raging husband. Through his own unsuspecting wife, Iago secures a handkerchief, which Desdemona drops by accident, a handkerchief which Othello had given her as a precious heirloom. Iago sees that this handkerchief is left in Cassio's room. Cassio picks it up and hands it to his mistress to have the pattern of it copied. Iago informs Othello that Desdemona has given this handkerchief to Cassio. The jealous husband even sees it in the possession of Cassio's mistress! This further confirms his suspicion and kindles anew his jealousy and rage. Iago makes the foulest accusations against Cassio and Desdemona, falsely telling Othello that he had heard Cassio in his sleep use language that proved his guilt and Desdemona's dishonor. This Othello was now all too ready to believe. He begins to treat his wife harshly and insultingly. She is bewildered, but in her innocency she does not, and she cannot, suspect the cause. Grieved and astonished as she is, she attributes her husband's irritability to the cares and perplexities of his official duties. But now the Moor is so fatally poisoned with

jealousy that all the hot blood of his race is on fire with revenge. He commands Iago to assassinate Cassio, and he resolves to put his own wife to death.

He demands the handkerchief of Desdemona, but she is unable to produce it. She has lost or misplaced it. But she does not think Othello's demand is serious enough to give it any heed, and while he is demanding the handkerchief she, all innocently, but to Othello very suspiciously, is pleading that Cassio may be restored to his favor. When the Moor's jealous rage prompts him to strike his innocent and ingenuous wife, she says with forgiving meekness and astonishment, "I have not deserved this," and, leaving his presence with bewildered mind, she sobs, "I will not stay to offend you."

When he solicits another interview with her and demands that she look him in the face, so strange and fierce and suspicious an aspect do his features wear that she is startled and piteously cries, "What horrible fancy's this?"

As, at his command, Emilia, Desdemona's friend, Iago's wife, leaves the room, poor Desdemona falls before the infuriated Moor.

"Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words."

Othello cries, "Why, what art thou?" With breaking voice she answers,

"Your wife, my lord; your true and Loyal wife."

Still does the innocent Desdemona fail to understand her husband's meaning; she even thinks he is accusing her for some wrong her father may have done him. "I hope my noble lord esteems me honest."

When his further insinuations end with the cruel exclamation, "Would thou hadst ne'er been born," she sighs, "Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?" But with all these insults heaped upon her, Desdemona utters no bitter word of reproach. With the sweet spirit of conscious innocency she denies all the base, horrifying accusations of the insanely jealous Moor, but still hopes to regain his confidence and love. Alas, her hope is vain. She has warning of Othello's intent to do her injury, and retires to her couch, evidently suspecting it will be never to rise again. Her suspicions are well founded. The Moor stifles and stabs his wife to death, after covering her sweet face with tears and kisses. The cruel deed is accomplished. But now as the alarm of this foul murder summons all who hear it into the presence of Othello, he learns the horrifying truth that he has murdered his in-

nocent wife. The plot of Iago is unfolded to his comprehension. Emilia, the wife of Iago, herself an innocent tool of her fiendish husband, explains all the suspicious circumstances which had been used to poison Othello's mind, and when, in justification of his awful deed, the Moor cried, "She was as false as water," the brave Emilia replied, with spirit:

> "Thou art rash as fire to say,
> That she was false. O, she was heavenly true."

As Othello becomes convinced of his terrible mistake, of the awful cruelty of his murderous deed, he can but cry in anguish and self-reproach, "O fool, fool, fool!" Then, asking for the world's charitable judgment, "Of one who loved not wisely but too well,"

> "of one whose hand,
> Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,
> Richer than all his tribe,"

he smote himself with the same dagger that was stained with the blood of his pure, confiding, innocent Desdemona. He fell upon the very bed where she lay, breathing out his life with a confession of his love.

Poor Desdemona! Not only was her heroism put to a severer test than either that of Imogen or Hermione by the jealousy of her husband, but, alas! she also suffered all they could have suffered, and did not live to enjoy the happi-

ness of her vindication, but suffered murderous death at the hand of him to whom she was true and faithful, before he found out the villainy that had been perpetrated on him by Iago, or discovered the awful injustice of his jealousy. Othello is a tragedy; it ends in catastrophe, in death. A Winter's Tale is a comedy, ending happily, as Cymbeline may also be considered. We rejoice over the triumphant vindication of Imogen and Hermione, and, in spite of the dramatic power of the tragedy of Othello, we can but wish the Moor had discovered the plot of Iago before it was too late, and could have received his wife, fully vindicated to his joyful arms, before he choked and stabbed her to her death. Of course we are aware of Desdemona's innocency all the while, and know how unfounded is Othello's jealousy, and we rejoice in her purity and fidelity. But, realizing the injustice of Othello's suspicion, we cannot resist the feeling—"The pity of it, O the pity of it! Will not some good angel of happy circumstance tell the truth, unmask the hideous plot, thwart Iago's wicked cunning, and save this sweet woman, this innocent and faithful wife?" But no, it is the purpose and art of the poet to carry to its tragic climax of consequence Iago's villainy and Othello's unfounded

suspicion. Our sympathy and pity are not less profound that Desdemona is not an Imogen or Hermione. She has no such strength of personality, no such force of will, no such self-control, dignity, and judgment as these remarkable women possess. There is more of a Juliet and of an Ophelia in her moral and mental characteristics. She is sentimental, impressionable, and pliable. She lacks self-reliance and self-assertion. Her passion wants the balance of command. She loves unthinkingly, impulsively, and without judgment. She is a fond and effusively affectionate creature, but her heart is beyond the control of her head. She is the incarnation of feminine impetuosity, but perfectly pure in her emotionalism. Her desire rushes to adoration. This was the first cause of her terrible and tragic suffering; she impetuously, almost hysterically, gave her heart to the wrong man, and she did it from a wrong impulse. She fell in love with a great, splendid animal. It was a physical infatuation, and yet she knew not that Othello was only sensuously lovely to her eyes. Othello should have married a Cleopatra; it would have been animal meeting animal, lion meeting lioness, at least. Or Isabella would have made him a good wife in her Venus de Milo grandeur, in her cold, imposing,

statuesque dignity; for she would have conquered his animalism and cooled his hot Moorish blood by the philosophy of her early-acquired austerities of the nunnery. But for this great brute to marry the gentle, tender Desdemona was for the lion to lie down with the lamb in the most militant and premillennial sense. Desdemona, then, was the victim of a threefold conjunction or conspiracy of evil forces: first of her own strength of passion and weakness of will—of her sentimental infatuation with an animal man; second, of Iago's villainy; and, third, of Othello's brutal jealousy.

Let us not refuse Desdemona our sympathy, or even our admiration, because she was so blind in her infatuation that she could not grasp the reality or meaning of her husband's unreasoning suspicion. She was not a woman of high and commanding intellect; she did not reflect, much less reason; she only felt. But how deeply, tenderly, passionately, and yet innocently she felt! If she did not spurn the accusation and the accuser, it was because she could not believe suspicion against her possible. She manifested no sense of injured dignity, because she had no such dignity in her unsophisticated nature as made the character of Hermione majestic. She did not resent

with scorn the insult of the charge against her wifely fidelity, because she hardly knew what infidelity meant, what a base thing it was, and, therefore, what an insult it was for a man to accuse his wife of infidelity. Poor Desdemona! She was more to be pitied than Imogen or Hermione, because she was so helpless; she had such meager resources of personal power, dignity, logical acumen, and will to fall back upon. She had not force of character sufficient to repel an attack upon the integrity and purity of her affections. If this poor, tender, confiding girl once wakens to the reality of her situation, to the full and cruel meaning of it, it will kill her. But, ah! Othello's act anticipates all that. Had she once become disillusioned, had Othello become impossible to her, she would have ended all, as did Juliet, or else, like her poor, weak sister, Ophelia, she would have gone mad. If the villainy of Iago had not been detected, and if it had succeeded in robbing her of Othello's love, she would have died of a broken heart, had she not died of the Moor's fierce dagger. Yet in it all how pure, trustful, and innocent she was! Unworthy of her as Othello may have been, misplaced as was her confidence and love, blind as was her almost unnatural infatuation for this black and shiny animal, she was true to her husband,

and in her fidelity so sanguine that she never dreamed that her patience was such a virtue as patience, or that any circumstances could destroy their mutual love, much less lead on to crime and tragedy. She was not conscious of being a heroine; she was hardly conscious of being a grossly injured, brutally treated woman, and could not have been conscious of the shame and ignominy of her situation, or of the fact that she was doing anything that was praiseworthy and magnanimous. Desdemona seems capable of nothing but of loving Othello with all the passion of her womanhood, nor had she awakened from her blissful dream when death ended the dream or prolonged it forever.

PART III

WOMAN-HEROIC IN THE BIBLE

CHAPTER I

THE SCRIPTURAL TYPE OF HEROISM

THE true greatness of a people and the real glory of national life are to be found in the character of its womanhood. Who can ever read Carlyle's Heroes and Hero-Worship without a feeling of disappointment and protest? In his philosophy of history he superciliously overlooks, if he does not contemptuously ignore, all the heroines. There is the "Hero as Divinity, Odin"; "The Hero as Prophet, Mahomet"; "The Hero as Poet, Dante, Shakespeare"; "The Hero as Priest, Luther, Knox"; "The Hero as Man of Letters, Johnson, Rousseau, Burns"; "The Hero as King, Cromwell, Napoleon." But the heroine in any capacity whatsoever he does not seem to have discovered. Indeed, he failed to find the heroes—for of all these names mentioned there were not more than three or four real heroes among them—Dante, Luther, Cromwell, and, possibly, Knox. Moreover, when Carlyle searches for the philosophy of history he finds this: "Universal history is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here." But

what of the great women who have worked here? Have they had nothing to do with universal history? The Frenchman, Lamartine, and the German, Heine, have gone more deeply into the philosophy of history than this Scotchman, Carlyle. The former says with a true French gallantry, and a historian's unprejudiced veracity: "There is a woman at the beginning of all great things"; and Heine, with his Teutonic love of fact and instinct of justice, says: "When I read history and am impressed by any deed or occurrence, I often feel as if I should like to see the woman concealed behind it as the secret spring. Women make history although historians know only the names of men." A woman at the beginning of all great things? Are you searching for the beginning of Jewish nationalism? Watch that woman Jochebed as she hides her babe in the bulrushes of the Nile. Are you looking for the beginning of Christianity? Listen with reverential awe as the angel whispers his message to the soul of Mary, the Virgin of Galilee. Would you know how the gospel received its first welcome to England? Study the life of Bertha, the Queen of Kent. Are you interested in the beginning of the Reformation? Behold Ursula Cotta there in Eisenach as she takes young Martin Luther by the hand and assures

him that in spite of his poverty he shall have a university education. Are you inquiring into the beginning of New-World discoveries? Hear Isabella of Spain promise Columbus to finance his expedition for the westward quest of India. Are you asking for the philosophy of the beginning of Methodism? Contemplate the character and devotion of Susannah Wesley, who puts five of her sons through Oxford University, among them John and Charles. Is the beginning of the independence of the American colonies your study? Consider the advice that Mary Washington gives to her son George when he is determined to join the British navy, go to sea, and be drowned—in oblivion. It would appear, Thomas Carlyle, that the women have had something to do with this universal history. In the higher type of heroine, higher than the mythological type or the Shakesperean type, there must meet and blend the spirit of courage, the spirit of righteousness, the spirit of self-sacrifice, and the spirit of benevolence and altruistic helpfulness. Heroism is not simply courage or valor in the presence of danger. A bandit, a train-robber, a burglar, an assassin may be brave without being heroic. A pirate, a prize fighter may have courage without heroism. Herodias had nerve and strength of will and purpose, but

she was not a heroine. Jezebel was a woman of power, but was without heroism. Cleopatra possessed a splendid genius, but was not heroic. Heroism must and ever does contain a large element of moral greatness. The hero or heroine loses sight of self in a purpose to confer benefits on others—on individuals, on one's country, on the world. Heroism aims to do good, to do right, to lift the fallen, to defend the weak, to liberate the oppressed, to comfort the sorrowing, to alleviate misery, at cost of self, of treasure, pain, or life. Heroism has inspired every great benevolence, every just revolution, every battle for freedom, every moral reformation. Heroism inspired and then led the exodus. Heroism gave inspiration and impetus to the Reformation. Heroism sent the Pilgrims to New England. Heroism fired the soul of the American Revolution. That same spirit in the commou walks of life has inspired men and women to sacrifice themselves for the common good, to pledge their money, lives, and sacred honor to the triumph of justice, the enthronement of right, the liberty and sovereignty of the people. Such men and women are as true heroes and heroines as any that have scaled the heights of fame or sought and won reputation at the cannon's mouth. It is remarkable that history

has not furnished us a Plutarch to set forth in imperishable biography the characters and lives of the great women of the past. The fairest, most gallant, chivalrous literature in the world is Hebrew literature. It is high-mindedly true to Jewish womanhood. Can as much be said of Latin literature, of Grecian, or Indian, or Chinese, or Egyptian, or any other ancient literature? Who were the great women, the heroines of Rome or of Athens? True, now and then the vast superiority of a woman compels the poet's or historian's recognition of her genius: a Sapho, an Aspasia, a Cornelia, a Volumnia, or a Semiramis rises into immortal distinction. But these names are gathered from three great civilizations. And but one or two of these stand for anything more than intellectual power and brilliancy. Cornelia and Volumnia of Rome may be recognized as true heroines. Turn to the Hebrew race—who were their heroines? The Bible is jeweled with their names. Here is the only book that has come down to us from antiquity in which historic womanhood is treated with any but scant respect, veneration, and honor. Here is the only religious book of the ancients that thinks it worth while to preserve the records of the great deeds of great women, the only body of national reli-

gious literature to acknowledge that woman has been a history-maker, or that history has ever been glorified by heroines. Honor to the Jew, the Jew, who, above the proud Roman and above the haughty Greek, has revered and honored a holy heroic womanhood! We need no regenerated Carlyle, no converted Plutarch to present illustrations of womanly heroism; we open the Bible, and here are our ideal heroines, heroines real, historic, and representative, delineated by pens divinely guided, by hearts of sympathy and high appreciation. It is not the stage, it is not the drama, after all, that holds the mirror up to nature. The Bible alone does that. The stage does not represent nor does it interpret real life, real character, real men and women. It portrays a life more or less false, fictitious. So too must it be said the novel lacks reality, is often false to human nature, and is fundamentally and philosophically fictitious. In the Bible we find reality and ideality, the real ideality and the ideal reality which is truth in character and life. The improbabilities and the impossibilities of romantic literature, of the novel, have no inspiration for noble souls. They do not place before the aspiring man or woman a real standard of moral excellence; it is always a false standard, often delusive and dangerous. But here are

possibilities, here are probabilities, here are undying realities of character and life in this Bible. And here only in the real do we find the ideal, and here only in these ideals do we find the real, the immortal real. The Bible not only exalts woman, but places a crown of special honor on the brow of woman in her relation to the family. With all the classic writers before us we find therein no such high respect paid to motherhood, no such honor and veneration demanded for her, as is found in the laws of Moses and the Proverbs of Solomon. "Forsake not the law of thy mother." "A foolish man despiseth his mother." "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

CHAPTER II

THE HEROINE-MOTHER

Eve

In studying the historic mothers of the Bible what a wide range and variety of character, experience, and influence are presented for our consideration! We see the devoted mother, the self-sacrificing mother, the pious mother, the worldly and wicked mother, the ambitious mother, the spiritual mother, the proud and happy mother, the sad, heart-broken, disappointed mother. They are all here. So true to human nature in all the delightful and distressing realities of life is this honest old Bible!

Doubtless it is true always and everywhere not only that great men are what their mothers have made them, as Emerson declares, but also that if great men make great nations, then, in the final analysis of the philosophy of history, great nations are what mothers have made them. History begins in the soul of a great mother—shall we say of the greatest mother? There is nothing more touching and pathetic

in literature than the motherhood of Eve. Should Eve have the world's pity and veneration, the world's commiseration and congratulations, the world's loving smiles and sympathetic tears? Yes, these and more—its everlasting admiration and honor. What a proud distinction goes with the title, "Mary, the mother of Washington," or "Abronaton, the mother of Themistocles," or "Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi"! But incomparably greater is the significance of the words of Holy Writ applied to the first woman—"Eve, the mother of all living."

We turn our thoughts in retrospective contemplation to that far-off event of the introduction into this world of human life. We would look with reverent imagination upon humanity's original mother and read her thoughts, interpret her feelings, know her heart? What was it to be the first woman, the first wife, and the mother of all living?

O, the joy of life! The happiness of love! The glory of nature! The wonder of the world! Marvelous indeed must have been the experience of the first woman in whose heart and mind were awakened the emotions and inquiries, the sentiments and speculations which are even to this day the most awe-inspiring and profound that can engage the human

intellect and imagination. The first woman to know life and love; the first to look with amazement and fear, with curiosity and delight, upon the multitudinous manifestations of nature in plant and flower, fruit and tree, stream and plain, vale and mountain, and firmament of sun, moon, stars, and infinite blue! What creature, human or angelic, ever before or since could have been subjected to such a conflict of ideas and feelings, of anticipation and dread, of contentment and alarm, of hope and fear, of peace and perplexity, of admiration and awe as must have been experienced by Eve, "the mother of all living"?

The first woman to enter this vast, strange, magnificent, yet awful world must have been created with a stout heart, with a courage, self-poise, mental force, and authoritative power of will which has never since been required of, if possessed by, any woman of this long earth history. The first woman, the first wife, the first mother, Eve, was the world's first, if not the world's greatest, heroine. What must the strength of such a mind have been that she was not destroyed by the fierce emotional agitations aroused within her being by the first temptation, by the first sin, by the first vision of crime and death! This old world, so full of tragedy and tears, has become familiar with

sin and wrong, with death and war. History is but a story of wickedness and a record of evil. But how she must have stood appalled, paralyzed with dread and fear, who was the first of all women to look upon and experience the sorrow of the introduction of sin into this world with its attendant miseries!

Yes, the truest heroine that ever suffered temptation was Eve. Alone she stood, motherless, daughterless, sisterless. Even with the comradeship of Adam, what must have been that unutterable longing within her soul, that sense of void and solitude, that yearning indefinable for counsel, comfort, pity, sympathy, hope, which was but a psychological demand for feminine companionship! It baffles imagination to picture all the possible moods of that woman-soul in its dread loneliness. Has God ever exacted as much of any other woman? If Eve was the first to fall, she too was the first to be tempted. Brave indeed was the man who first went forth to contend with savage beast; though the beast destroyed him, he remained the first hero to face brutality. Great courage had the man who first bared his breast to the shock of the ocean's wave; though he went down, conquered by the anger and treachery of the sea, he remained the first hero to try the awful deep. By the authority

of Holy Writ, woman was the first of earthly intelligencies to receive the attack of the tempter. The feminine soul was the first to face the storm and shock of demoniacal antagonism, and, though she fell before her soul's enemy, overcome and overwhelmed, Eve remains the first heroine to be subjected to the fearful ordeal of temptation—a preeminence undisputed even by any hero in the history of man. No, alas! Eve was not the first to be tempted *without sin.* But there was a heroism in her submission to the very trial that overcame her. And if she was the first to sin, she was the first to suffer, while her woman's tears were the first to fall in cleansing repentance upon the very title page of human tragedy.

But it is as the mother of all living that Eve occupies the most exalted seat in the realm of woman-heroism. She was the first to suffer for mankind. Death itself could not have been more awe-inspiring and fearful to contemplate than motherhood. What heroine of siege or battle, of travel or adventure ever braved as much of suffering and danger as did she who was the first to dread and then endure the mystery and agony of motherhood? But the honor of it! Yes, the glory that crowns the brow of Eve shines with a splendor second only to that which weaves its eternal halo

about the head of Mary, the mother of our Lord.

Whether this picture of Eve be traditional or historical, fanciful or real, allegorical or biographical, it is the only attempt in ancient literature to honor the memory of "the mother of all living." According to the mythologies, the origin of the human race cannot be traced back to a tender, suffering, and heroic motherhood. Evolution finds no place for Eve in its hypothesis, and recognizes no individual mother of all living to honor with its veneration. It has no place in history for the origin of the human family in a mother's wonder and heroic pain. That race alone which was honored by the purest womanhood of antiquity could boast the chivalry that dreamed the magnificent dream of woman's surrender to the heroic endurance of the peril and sorrow of motherhood in giving common origin to the nations of mankind. Honor to the Hebrew race, which, if it has done no more to honor her memory, has exalted Eve in its tradition and literature as the "mother of all living."

And what mother does not venerate the memory of her who had the heroism to become the first mother? Only a mother can know what that first mother must have suffered, what must have been her dread and apprehen-

sion! How her soul must have trembled within her! How she must have longed for a sympathy indefinable that only a sister-woman could have bestowed upon her in her lonely and fearful state! How she must have wondered, in a sad, pathetic wonder, at the awful mystery of her condition! And, affrighted with the consuming joy and pride and triumph of the maternal instinct springing up in her soul, how she must have gazed in amazement upon the world's firstborn as he lay helpless in her weak and trembling arms! O the mystery of life, of birth, of awakening mentality, of growing childhood, of developing manhood, of disease and death, and the silence, and the earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust! The mystery of tears! The mystery of pain! The mystery of sin! The mystery of death! The mystery beyond death! How the mysteries must have overwhelmed that first mother's imagination! Sad, awe-struck, bewildered woman, who has not pitied thee! Who has not honored thee! What a lot was thine! And yet was this thy temptation and thy sin—the ambition and the heroism of motherhood? Wouldst thou be like God and have man come from thee fashioned in thy likeness? What ambition greater than this has ever animated woman? Had angel ever

such an ambition, an ambition to produce his like? What greater sorrow has ever filled the heart of a daughter of Eve than the sorrow of childlessness? If this was thy sin, O mother of us all, was the danger and the pain of motherhood the penalty imposed upon so daring, so almost godlike an ambition as that of being the authoress of a race? And wast thou willing to pass under the cloud of this great mystery, willing to suffer and even to submit to the dread ordeal of threatened death, to be a mother? Honor to thee for all that was sinless in thy motherhood! Too long has the heartless world ignored thy claim upon its most chivalric honor and veneration. To have been Eve was to have been the greatest of women, the most heroic heroine of them all.

Was there no Eve, no historic personality corresponding to this scriptural portrait of humanity's first mother? And must our science deny to any one woman the honor which is given by Holy Writ to Eve? Or must we believe that in the order of evolution man sprang from several original mothers of the races that inhabit the earth and that the many divisions of the human family had their several origins in the various countries of the world either simultaneously or at not very widely separated periods of time, and that

those original mother-types were but little higher than the bestial apes? Has it come to this in our study of the origins, that we must surrender the exalted and exalting idea that man was created but little lower than the angels, in the beauty and nobility of the divine likeness? May we no longer rationally believe that the mother of all living was beautiful as an angel, as the living, heroic daughter of God?

After all, are not the poets as true to nature and to life as the scientists and philosophers? Is not the imagination of a David as trustworthy as the speculative fancy of a Darwin? Which gives to man the higher dignity and glory of origin, the theory that man was made but little lower than the angels or the hypothesis that he was made but little higher than the apes? The Eve of Paradise Lost is the Eve of Hebrew tradition and of inspired history. And with what a glory does poetry clothe the "human form divine"! In describing the animal creation, Milton thus gives preeminence to our first parents:

> Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
> Godlike erect, with native honor clad,
> In naked majesty, seemed lords of all,
> And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine
> The image of their glorious Maker shone.

In his sleep, during which Eve was formed, Adam dreamed that he beheld God fashion her:

"Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained
And in her looks, which from that time infused
Sweetness into my heart unfelt before,
And into all things from her air inspired
The spirit of love and amorous delight."

By a poetical conceit that may not be without scientific foundation, Milton gives to Eve the Anglo-Saxon beauty of the blonde rather than the traditional Oriental characteristics of the brunette:

She as a veil down to her slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Disheveled.

Again he describes "The flowing gold of her loose tresses." To Adam she is "Heaven's last, best gift." Even the Satanic tempter is so charmed with Eve's loveliness that he is quite disconcerted and hesitates to execute his cruel purpose of temptation.

Her heavenly form,
Angelic, but more soft and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture or least action, overawed
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.

Warranted by the Sacred Oracles, the holy traditions, it is with such charms of beauty, grace, and dignity of high intelligence, perfection of womanly instincts, and sum and combination of moral attributes and angelic virtues that the poetic imagination clothes this "Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve."

And must this glorious ideal be surrendered for some pitiable, hideous, filthy monstrosity which in passing over the differentiating line between brute and man is neither beast nor human, but is hardly to be distinguished from the chattering ape, incapable of the hope or fear, the joy or sorrow, the dread or heroism of human motherhood? Must humanity surrender the noblest heroine of poetry or romance, of tradition or history, and immolate Eve on the altar of evolution?

Art, like poetry, has treated this heroine with a dignity which science and theology have almost jeeringly avoided. Dürer, Raphael, and Michael Angelo have represented Eve as the very paragon of physical grace and loveliness.

But sad indeed it must seem to every generous soul that this awful and sublime character, this august, lonely, but majestic woman, should have been so contemptuously neglected by literature in general; sad that this mother of our race, from whom all genius has caught

its heavenly fire, all greatness has inherited its impulse and power, and from whom all histories have sprung, all destinies have received their initiative, and all immortals their immortality, should have recognition only in the Hebrew traditions and in theologies which treat her memory with execration. Not even do the poets or the prophets of Hebrew literature deign to rescue her name from ridicule and contempt. Not once is her name even mentioned by the writers who succeeded the author of Genesis. And Paul mentions her only incidentally, and that, with his Jewish training, only to blame her for her part in the moral catastrophe of the fall. No word of pity or of praise, no extenuating argument, no sigh of sympathetic commiseration is to be found in all the vast library of sacred lore. The historian does not think it worth while to record the number of days allotted her on earth, the place of her death, or the locality of her lonely grave. But the world's neglect, ridicule, contempt, and blame have made the mother of all living the heroine of all heroines.

Sarah

If Abraham is to be known as the father of the favored race and chosen people, the original progenitor of the Jews, why should not

Sarah, with equal veneration, be recognized as Israel's mother? Why may she not share with Abraham the honor and glory of the fulfillment of the promise of God, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"? The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives Sarah her share of this honor and glory when, after referring to her faith in God's promise, he concludes: "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable." "Therefore!"—on account of Sarah's faith did Abraham become even in his old age the father of the faithful. And was she not *"therefore"* the glorious and heroic mother of the faithful?

In the shadow of every great man stands, hidden from the careless observer, that great man's mother, at once his mother and the inspiring genius of his life. In every new epoch of a people's history, whether it be political, moral, intellectual, or military, will be found a mother giving to a son not only the genius for his work and mission, but also the spirit, purpose, and ambition of it. Perhaps no race owes more to its mothers than the Jews. And to no mother of their many great and heroic mothers does Israel owe more than to Sarah. When Abraham is called to become the pro-

genitor of a peculiar people, the very character of that people is left to the molding, fashioning influence of motherhood. That whole delicate story of Sarah's ambition for Abraham's power and fame and favor with God which inspired her self-abnegation in Hagar's favor is a story of the rarest heroism ever known. O, that was more than surrendering wealth, honors, life itself! It is a strange, pathetic legend coming to us out of paganism, out of barbarism, out of times and conditions less enlightened than our own, but it is all heroic on Sarah's part, with a heroism, a self-sacrifice, that must ever evoke the admiration of all those noble, sensitive minds that understand.

Was it this very heroism, by which Sarah would sacrifice her womanhood that sprang up within her soul as a living flame from a single ember and became the faith which made her a mother? Isaac was the son of a heroine, of the greatest heroine since Eve. And where do we find the philosophy of Isaac's destiny? In the influence of that mother. Even in her instinctive insistence that Hagar and Ishmael shall leave the tent of Abraham she has an eye to the future of Isaac. Is she also concerned for that promised seed of Abraham which shall be as the stars? Has she the

instinct, the self-consciousness of a mother of a race no less than of the mother of Isaac? Here is a problem for Abraham with Isaac and Ishmael growing up in his tent. Sarah has to solve the problem, and it is a serious one, involving the character of a race. When Ishmael makes faces at Isaac, does the quick-eyed mother foresee the time when the older boy may taunt and ridicule and denounce her son? With an inspired jealousy that mother comes to the rescue of her boy and of her race. Foreseeing the strength and pride and insolence of Ishmael, she begins to fear that he may usurp the place of honor in the father's pride and crowd Isaac off the stage of history. Abraham seems to be oblivious to the jealousies that may spring up between the boys, and does not think that possibly some day this Ishmael may strike Isaac the fatal blow, for the hot blood of the future Arab is in his veins. Sarah rightly interprets Ishmael's sneer and saves Isaac, saves Abraham, saves her race. She is the mother of the heroines of Israel.

Much sympathy has been expressed for Abraham in the trial of his faith when he seemed called of God to make a sacrifice of Isaac. But what of Sarah the mother? In this strange incident may we suppose that

God adopted this method to eradicate a cruel superstition from the mind of Abraham? Is it not possible that Abraham believed in human sacrifices: that he had imbibed the fanaticism from the surrounding religions before he knew the true worship? Indeed, were not his ancestors of Chaldea fire-worshipers, and may not the cult or religion of Moloch and of Chemosh which demanded the offering of human sacrifices have come down from Abraham's forbears?

Was it in the blood of Abraham in that earlier time, and was it God's purpose by this trial at Moriah to forever eradicate the superstition from his blood? Be that as it may, Abraham, who seems not to have hesitated, or even, like Jephtha later, to have expressed his grief at the thought of offering up his own child as a sacrifice—Abraham after that trial never showed a symptom of the human-sacrificing superstition which may have hereditarily lingered in his blood. But Sarah, what of her? Can we for a moment imagine that she was in ignorance of Abraham's purpose to offer up Isaac? Not if we still have faith in the moral integrity of Abraham. Was it none of her business? What! and shall this father slay his son even at God's command, and give no warning to Isaac's mother? Can Abra-

ham honestly, humanely, righteously keep this a secret from Sarah? Evidently he kept it a secret from his servants, and even from Isaac himself, until the last moment. But could he have slain Isaac without giving his son any warning? Could he have slain the boy without revealing his purpose to that boy's mother, without preparing her for it and helping her to meet the terrible trial? We cannot believe it. Sarah must have known what Abraham's purpose was when he departed with Isaac and the servants. Poor woman! demand not of her all the stoical strength of Abraham. She is a woman and a mother. Isaac is her all, nay, to her imagination, he is the world's all. And now must her hopes be dashed to the ground, the hopes that came with the coming of Isaac, the hopes for Abraham's promised posterity?

What a disappointment! What a test of faith! It must have been a severer trial to Sarah than to Abraham, to mother than to father. And sits she alone there in the tent sobbing, praying, wondering? O, the mystery of the ways of God! If she knew it all, that poor mother, and moaned the hours away and prayed alone there for her boy and for Abraham and for herself, and still had faith in God—the good, just God and Father of us

all—and if she did not rebel, ah, there was the grandest heroism of the whole mysterious incident! But she did it for her God as many a mother has surrendered her son for her country; she did it for religion as she thought, as many another has sacrificed her boy for liberty. But let us not forget this mother crouching and wailing and praying in the tent alone while Abraham and Isaac are on Moriah. Let us not forget the heroine who by faith bowed to what she with Abraham interpreted as the will of God.

Rebecca

Come on into the next generation. To whom does Jacob owe his success? To his mother, Rebecca. Isaac was a good-natured, mild-mannered, peaceable man, rather a negative character and lacking in initiative force. Knowing that it takes two to make a quarrel, he never got mixed up in any serious misunderstandings with his neighbors, who did not hesitate to impose on his amiability and rob him of his rights whenever the opportunity presented.

Well, he liked the boys, but evidently had very little discipline or authority in his management of the family. The will, the dominant if not the domineering will, of that do-

mestic establishment was Rebecca. Call her a schemer if you will, she schemes for vast, universal results. She had no right, some will say, to favor either one of those twin boys, Jacob or Esau, to the undoing of the other. But her mother instinct saw that Jacob was the fitter of the two for the history that had to be worked out by that chosen race. Faults enough there were in both of the boys, but no one will claim that the mother was mistaken in the character of her sons when she chose Jacob for the preemiuence. And who shall say that Rebecca did not choose as wisely and with as motherly a consideration for Esau as for Jacob? What if Esau had tried to fill the place that Jacob came to occupy in history? What a misfit he would have been! What if Ishmael had taken the place which Isaac was called to fill? It was proper that these selections should have been made as they were if there was a demand for a race such as was to produce men like David and Solomon and Isaiah. But Esau was a greater success where Rebecca's sagacity and scheming succeeded in fixing him than he would have been in the place to which heredity had accidentally assigned him. The mother who has the heart and brains, the courage and wisdom to train, educate, and place her sous for

the positions in life where they will make the most of themselves will be as true to the boy for whom she chooses the plow or the anvil as to the boy for whom she chooses the bank, the pulpit, the editor's chair, or the senate. Rebecca was as faithful to Esau as to Jacob. It would have been unmotherly cruelty for her to let Esau be crushed under the burden of responsibility which even a Jacob, a tenfold greater genius, had scarce the brain power and moral strength of fiber to bear without reproach. Not an ideal mother? No, but a sagacious mother; a mother of very keen insight; a mother with very stalwart, independent convictions as to the fitness of things; a mother who knows her boys through and through; a mother who realizes her own responsibility for the best this world is to get out of her sons; a mother who seems to know in some deep, strange, unerring way that she is accountable to all future ages for the fitting of those boys of hers into God's plans, the ordained program of history. Is not this the justification of Rebecca, that she believed God had ordained Jacob to be the successor of Isaac as the head of the racial line by which all the families of the earth were to be blest? God replied to her anxious inquiry: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of

people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." Concerning this revelation of God to Rebecca, Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Romans, and there claims that Jacob's supplanting Esau was that the purpose of God might stand. And, anticipating the ethical difficulty, the question of the justice of Jacob's securing Esau's birthright, Paul asks the question: "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." If, then, Rebecca was but carrying out the purpose of God in directing the stream of the Abrahamic descent from the wild, rough, animalistic Esau to the brainier, more highly developed and civilized Jacob, is there unrighteousness with Rebecca? God forbid. God's justification is the justification of Rebecca, who, as the agent of Providence, saw to it that of her twin sons the elder should serve the younger, brawn should serve brain, and Jacob should become Israel. This mother's affection for Esau and her solicitude for his welfare were not destroyed by her special and divinely inspired guardianship of Jacob's interests. She with Isaac took grievously to heart Esau's marriage with Judith and Bashemath. She had not lost interest in Esau when she could have "grief of mind"

over his mesalliance with these daughters of the Hittites.

With all of Rebecca's solicitude for the safety of Jacob when Esau was threatening to get even with his brother for supplanting him there may have been very good reason for her anxiety with regard to Jacob's own feelings toward the "daughters of the land" in which they were dwelling. Not only was she heroically determined to save Jacob from Esau, but with a determined mother's will she was resolved to save him from marrying in another race and thus corrupting the Abrahamic blood. "And Rebecca said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" If Jacob is to follow the example of Esau and marry a heathen, then for me life is no longer worth the living.

Jacob may never have seen his mother again. He went off to his uncle in Padan-aram and there served Laban for fourteen years, married Leah and Rachel, and tarried longer still. In the meantime doubtless Rebecca had died. Yes, long years had passed, and Jacob had dreamed his dream at Bethel and had wrestled with the angel at Peniel and

had become the father of many children and had been reconciled to Esau and had become rich and powerful, but when he returns to Isaac, his father, now an old man of one hundred and eighty years and soon to give up the ghost and be gathered unto his people, no mention is made of Rebecca his faithful, devoted, heroine-mother. She doubtless had fallen on sleep long before Jacob's return. Her old nurse, Deborah, had died at Bethel, whither she had gone, we may conclude, to be near Jacob after Rebecca's death. And may not this dear old nurse have told Jacob many things which his mother bade her say to him? To her dying day her mother-heart must have followed the destiny of Jacob with fond solicitude and with many a prayer. And did she yearn for him and long to see his face before she died? It took heroism for that mother to send her favorite son away even to save him from marrying among the daughters of Heth, and she was destined to endure his absence to the end of her days. But for his sake, and for the sake of Israel that was to be, for the glory of her blood and race, for the glory of the future of which she may have had the vision, she made the heroic sacrifice. And Jacob became Israel, and Israel the people of God, and the people of God the cus-

todians of the oracles of heaven, and the oracles of heaven the promise of redemption. Eternal honor crown the brow of that heroic mother—Rebecca!

Rachel

As we advance to the next generation, we find another character standing out in all the splendor of a unique and magnificent manhood. He is as brilliant in intellect as he is amiable in temper, magnanimous in spirit, and chaste in life. Joseph was the noblest of all the sons of Jacob, and his mother was the beautiful Rachel. Considering the influence of Joseph in his time, the fertility of his genius, his statesmanship, diplomacy, and patriotism, his command of the most critical situation in the development of Israel, we ask, could a son of Esau by a daughter of Heth have filled so large a place in history? What would have become of the seed of Abraham if Esau had succeeded Isaac and not been supplanted by his brother Jacob? What if there had been no Joseph in Israel at that most critical period in the development of the chosen people for their mission to the world? Surely, all must have gone amiss if Esau had not been put aside. Is not Joseph's greatness a justification of his grandmother's partiality for Jacob?

But Joseph was emphatically his mother's boy. Rachel, with the highest instinct of highest womanhood, unburdened her heart to Jacob when she said, "Give me children, or else I die." The pitiful prayer only angered Jacob, but "God remembered Rachel, . . . and she conceived and bore a son . . . and she called his name Joseph." Jacob was proud enough of the lad, and his partiality should have spoiled Joseph. But one feels that this boy, this clean, pure, gentle boy, this young man of honor, this ideal gentleman, this chivalrous courtier, this magnanimous statesman, this Joseph *sans peur et sans reproche,* owes everything to that mother who had prayed to be his mother. In her heroic devotion she trained him to be every inch a man. And he was a man whose very reverence for womanhood his mother Rachel had inspired within him. He never forgot what he owed woman because he never forgot as an honorable man what he owed the memory of his mother. Though he was but fourteen years old when Rachel died, he seems to have inherited his mother's spirit. Joseph was evidently a man of noble physical presence, who had inherited his handsome features and graceful proportions from his beautiful mother. But his mental and moral attributes which distinguished him as a man beau-

tiful within, adorned with all the graces of handsome manliness and imposing character, were, no less than his physical attractions, the gifts of a mother whose very dignity, patience, forgiveness, gentleness, loyalty, and power of love she seems to have poured into the soul of her beautiful boy. And we may suppose that the fourteen happy years of her motherly influence over Joseph must have fashioned him to a comeliness of character, to an attitude of moral grace, dignity, symmetry, and poise that the years could no more change than time could change the noble proportions of the Apollo Belvedere. Yes, there was a marvelous heroism of motherhood in Rachel's confession, "Give me children or else I die." And was she not a martyr to the very heroism of motherhood? She died at Benjamin's birth. "And it came to pass as her soul was departing that she called his name Benoni"—"son of my pain." It was as "they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath." Back to this heroine mother many a great man traced his ancestry. Through Joseph such heroes as Joshua, Gideon, and Jephthah could boast lineage from Rachel. And through Benjamin, Rachel became the ancestress of Saul, the first king of Israel; of Jonathan, the friend of David;

of Jeremiah, the prophet, and of Paul, the apostle of our Lord.

Jochebed

As history crowds toward the fullness of time and there approaches in the evolution of the divine plan of world-saving the dispensation of symbolism, the demand arises for an emancipator, a lawgiver, a deliverer, a national leader, a scholar, a prophet, a hero of heroes. In placing such a man as Moses (composite in his many-sided greatness as was Cæsar, Napoleon, Michael Angelo, Pericles, or Washington) in the forefront of the world's advancing moral movement, God uses the influence of the heroine-mother.

The heroine as mother, the mother as heroine! There she is, behold her, with all her pride sacrificed to material devotion, crouching among the flags that grow along the brink of the Nile and committing her beautiful babe (a goodly child) to the little cradle of bulrushes floating on the water near to where the daughter of Pharaoh comes to bathe! That mother has succeeded in hiding the marvelous boy for three months. The edict has gone forth that every son born of a Hebrew mother shall be cast into the river. And so Moses has been thrown into the river, but

that mother's heroic care and devotion and that mother's wit have kept the child from perishing and saved him for a wonderful future. So it thrills us to again read the story as found in the Holy Writ:

And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.

And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.

And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses.

His education in all the wisdom of the

Egyptians followed, and that, in the providence of God, was but a preparation for the mission to which Moses was called. When at last the summons came for action and devotion, great as were his political possibilities, his financial, worldly prospects, his hopes of official preferment, his opportunities for reaping applause and satiating any thirst for fame, he "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." There was the greatest hero of his age, the greatest genius of his age, the greatest man of his age. Who made that greatness possible? Jochebed, the servant of Pharaoh's daughter, the heroine-mother of Moses. It is a barbarous name to our ears—Jochebed! but by interpretation it is appropriate, for it means "glorious." Yes, glorious woman, glorious heroine, glorious mother! To have been the mother of Moses was greatness enough for any woman.

But Jochebed was the mother of heroic Miriam and the mother of Aaron, the first high priest of Israel, as she was the mother of Moses, Israel's leader, deliverer, and immortal lawgiver. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews places Jochebed, though not by name,

among the immortal worthies of his national portrait gallery, assigns her a place among the "great cloud of witnesses" who look down and cheer us in the race by the inspiring memory of their own triumphant achievements of heroism and of faith. But why have not poets sung the praises of this glorious Jochebed?

Was there a more devoted heroine-mother of all that mighty race? Was Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, of more heroic mold and spirit than she? And yet a thousand times will one hear their familiar names with praises sung or spoken to once that one will hear the name of Jochebed. The world might better have spared a Joseph, a Jacob, an Isaac, an Abraham, than a Moses. He overtops them all in brain and power, in history-making will and force of eternal, universal influence. To have saved him to the Jewish race and to the world was for that mother to have imposed a debt upon the ages that must bankrupt all gratitude to pay. To have kindled this mighty moral luminary, to have fashioned it and fed its young fires to the heavenly intensities, and then to have hurled it out to sweep in awful flame the orbit that encircles worlds, was for that woman Jochebed to have done what some great mother sun hath done when from her heart of fire eternal she has thrown a new world flaming

into space to abolish night and make it morning everywhere.

Hannah

In Samuel, the illustrious judge and prophet of Israel, we have learned to venerate one of the most genuine, incorruptible, perfect, and admirable characters in the public life of antiquity. Greek and Roman annals will be searched in vain for his superior, if for his parallel. And the child who became to Israel the prophet and the ideal judge was a gift of God granted in answer to the prayer of Hannah, who heroically pleaded for the honor and glory of motherhood. Here was the same high and holy womanly instinct asserting itself in the heart of the modest, devout, affectionate, and intellectual Hannah that stirred the soul of Rachel when she cried, "Give me children, or else I die." Is there need of such mother-heroism, and even of mother-martyrdom, in this age, when too many women, with a pagan viciousness of sentiment, would destroy that mother instinct which is the most precious jewel in the crown of Hebrew womanhood? Is there a surer, sadder sign of the decadence of a people than the loss of woman's highest virtue, the heroism of motherhood?

Modestly, pathetically, yet heroically, had this noble daughter of Israel prayed for a

man child. Fasting and sorely weeping and silently praying, she vowed that if God would honor her with the honor of motherhood, she would give her son unto the Lord all the days of his life. "And the Lord remembered her." Hannah called the boy Samuel—"asked of God." That mother's influence gave noble fashion to the character of her son. If, as Herbert Spencer has affirmed, the child takes most of his nature from his mother, then Samuel's nature was the gift of a mother richly endowed with a rare combination of intellectual force and refinement, and of spiritual graces and attributes. Even the great judge and prophet bore upon him to the end the impressions of his mother's pious and heroic devotion. Hannah, the heroine-mother, promised God that if she were blest with a son, she would give him to the Lord and consecrate him to his service. Faithful to her vows, when he was but three years old she took the boy to Shiloh and presented him to the priest Eli for education and training in the service of God. It took a heroine to make such a sacrifice. Was not Hannah the first of that long line of heroine-mothers who have given their sons and daughters to God for his service? Even to-day are not mothers sending their children to India and China and Africa and

the far-off islands of the sea to serve God as missionaries in the redemption of the heathen world? There, indeed, is a mother-heroism such as Hannah possessed when she gave Samuel to the Lord. But that mother knew it was for Samuel's good, for Israel's welfare, and for the glory of God that she should thus give up her son as a sacrifice to high and holy service. A very sweet and pathetic phase of Hannah's self-sacrifice is revealed in the record that, she went up to Shiloh every year to see him whom she had "lent unto the Lord," and every year the dear mother carried with her and presented to Samuel a new coat made with her own patient, motherly hands. Ah, these great men, they know, if the world does not always know, how much they owe their mothers, their patient, self-sacrificing, hopeful, heroic mothers! Samuel knew how much he owed that mother, the devout Hannah, for all he came to be and to do in his country's history. Alexander the Great knew what he owed his mother, so did Napoleon, Goethe, Wesley, Lincoln, Washington; each knew what an infinite debt he owed his heroic devoted mother for all his greatness.

CHAPTER III

THE HEROINE-WIFE

The Ideal Home

It is the heroine-wife that rises before the sociological student of the Bible into a beauty, dignity, and glory transcending all wives of classical literature, of pagan society, of human religions and nationalism. What is the wife of India as compared to the wife of Israel? What is the wife of China, what was the wife of Greece, or Rome, or Egypt, or Babylon as compared to the Hebrew wife? What home life can equal that ancient Jewish home life? What country or people ever looked with equal veneration upon the sacredness of the marriage relation? Where in any social organism has the family been so conspicuously and essentially the social unit and the foundation of the national character? Upon the home rests the nation; upon the family ideal rests the home; upon the sanctity of marriage rests the family ideal, and upon the equality and oneness, the mutual and reciprocal love and loyalty of husband and wife, rests the sacredness, the inviolability of the marriage relation. Not

only shall man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they be one flesh, but the exhortation comes from the Word of God: "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own selves. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." This Christian view of marriage is but the ripened fruit of that vital seed truth planted in the heart and life of man at his creation and nourished with more or less care and carelessness, success and failure through the centuries of patriarchal and Jewish history struggling up to full flower and fruitage against the influence of many discouraging environments.

Though monogamy was the true marriage relation instituted by the Creator, and man was originally taught to recognize it as the only lawful and ideal basis of the family organism, nevertheless that divinely ordained ideal has come to its historic reality through a long process of evolution. Though the purity of the Jewish home life has become proverbial, and no people have ever treated the institution of marriage with greater reverence, yet it cannot be denied that even that people

of God in the examples of some of their most illustrious progenitors violated their own marriage laws and ignored their own family ideal by the sin of polygamy. It must be said, however, to their glory as a people, that in modern times, if not from the captivity, polygamy, like idolatry, has disappeared from the domestic and religious life of the Jews and with no other race has the wife come to be held in so high and holy an esteem, or disruption of the home and the disgrace of the family through domestic infidelities and loose divorce sentiments, customs, and laws been more bitterly and persistently discountenanced and condemned. Christianity has had a great influence upon Judaism in this purification, exaltation, and safe-guarding of the home life. The Christian home should be and is the Jewish home perfected and sanctified by the light of Jesus Christ and the favor of the Spirit of the new life. The marriage relation, for ages held more or less sacred by God's peculiar people, received a new sanctity by the presence of Jesus Christ and his first miracle at Cana of Galilee, and through Paul, its chief apostle, Christianity pronounced afresh the universal honor of the sacred rite. Aside from its debt to the gospel itself, to no institution is civilization more deeply indebted

than to the home. That institution is the chief glory of the Anglo-Saxon world. What is this, however, but affirming that the sacredness of marriage lies at the foundation of good and enlightened society and of free and stable government? Nothing will so endanger the beautiful and majestic fabric of civilization as the moral degeneration of the home life, the decline of the people's reverence for wifehood and for the rite of marriage, a growth of flippant divorce sentiment, and a demand for lax divorce laws. Whatever lifts from the brow of wifehood the glittering diadem of honor, the crown of holy veneration, and sets the blister of contempt and dishonor there will bring shame and reproach upon the nation. The nation cannot outlive the home; the home cannot outlive the holiness of marriage, the holiness of marriage cannot outlive the honor paid to wifehood.

The wives of the Bible are representative—not ideal, but representative. If they were ideal, they would not be representative. They are real, historic, and belong to Eve's family. Their lives are lessons of inspiration and of warning. Of heroic wives there are not a few. But often in their heroism they may be found to lack other qualities which are essential to perfection. Hence a heroine-wife may fall far

short of the ideal wife, and her heroism may be the only characteristic that preserves her from oblivion and gives her a niche in the pantheon of fame.

Sarah—Wife of Abraham

We have seen the mother-heroism of Sarah in her devotion to Isaac, and her glorious motherly instincts were inseparably united to a wifely devotion which filled her with ambition for Abraham's greatness. Surely, that was a providential union. No great man ever had a wife who became a greater power for success in his own life. What loyalty, what supreme confidence, what love united them! In her wifely heroism she obliterated herself in the supreme desire to see the promise of God fulfilled in Abraham. It was for Abraham's sake that she longed for the honors of motherhood. It was for his sake, and at her own, not his, suggestion that Abraham was induced to ignore the ancient law of marriage and take Hagar into his home. Did ever wife before or since make greater sacrifice of self in her ambition for her husband's historic preeminence? What her sufferings were, her humiliation, shame, bitterness of pride, conflict with envy and jealousy, we may not know,

but it could not have been less than painfully heroic, heart-breakingly heroic.

Abraham has ever been looked upon as the heroic pioneer of sacred history. In that portrait gallery of the immortal heroes of faith preserved in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, his portrait hangs conspicuous. "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went." In the old, old record of Genesis the story runs: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him." There is the great first pioneer in what has come to be the world's most progressive civilization destined to culminate in the Kingdom of God upon earth. But in that old record this bit of significant history is justly preserved: "And Abram took Sarai his wife." Ah, there is the heroine of

that original pioneering movement! Sarah was the first of those thousands of wifely heroines who side by side with their pioneer husbands have pushed back the frontiers, made way for the march of empire, the progress of humanity, the migration of races, the colonization of wilderness places, the populating of new worlds, and the coming of the kingdom of heaven. How much the world owes the wife of the pioneer! What heroines have they been—these self-sacrificing wives of the first settlers, of the frontiersmen of civilization! The hardships of such women! Their burdens and cares, their deprivations, their dangers, their sufferings, their sublime faith, their abounding hope, their fortitude and courage! What devotion to husband, home, liberty, and conscience! What belief in man and Providence, and in the greatness and glory of the future! This has reached beyond the power of poetic genius to worthily immortalize in verse, and has given a philosophy of human progress almost too deep for the historian to fathom. Think of them—those wives of the Mayflower and of Plymouth Rock; those wives of wild American forests and plains; those wives of the first pioneers of New England, and Virginia, and Canada, and the great West; those wives of the Puritans and Huguenots, of the

Pilgrims and the Cavaliers; those wives of the humble immigrants who have filled the new world and pushed its mines and mills, its farms and factories, its churches and its schoolhouses, its cities and its States onward from the Eastern to the Western sea! Think of them, ye poets and philosophers and orators, and give them their meed of merit, their just tribute of praise. And when the State histories are written let the names of these heroic wives of your pioneers jewel their pages and let the historian be true to the deepest philosophy of our national development and greatness. That pioneer life of Abraham was made endurable, possible, successful by the heroism of Sarah, by the inspiration and comfort of her companionship, by the wit and wisdom of her wifely counsel, by the tenderness of her love, by the self-sacrificing, self-effacing intensity and constancy of her devotion. How different in character is the wife of Lot! Her name has become synonymous with hesitation, indecision, vacillation. Her name was a proverb in Christ's day: "Remember Lot's wife." Had she been as true to Lot as Sarah was to Abraham, Lot might never have pitched his tent toward Sodom, nor would she in the destruction of the cities of the plain have turned back

to perish. By contrast how the character of Sarah shines forth in all the splendor of its wifely heroism!

A very charming story of Sarah's beauty comes down to us from rabbinical tradition. Of Abraham's journey to Egypt we have the scriptural record; therein we learn of the peril which threatened Sarah on account of her beauty, and how she and Abraham had to resort to a subterfuge to save her from insult and wrong. The tradition embellishes the incident by relating that as Abraham approached the country he locked the beautiful Sarah in a chest and tried to enter the chest as property. The customs collector said, "Pay us the custom." He replied, "I will pay the custom." They said, "Thou carriest clothes in the chest," and he answered, "I will pay for clothes." Not satisfied, they said to him, "Thou carriest gold," and he replied, "I will pay for my gold." Still curious, they insisted, "Surely, thou bearest the finest silk." He calmly assented, "I will pay custom for the finest silk." Finally they cried out, "Surely, it must be pearls that thou takest with thee," and he said, "I will pay for pearls." But as they could not mention anything of value for which Abraham was not willing to pay custom they insisted that he open the chest and reveal

its contents. The chest was opened, and behold! the whole land of Egypt was illumined by the splendor of Sarah's beauty—a beauty far more glorious than the beauty of pearls.

In considering the biblical incident, of which this is a traditional gloss, we are forced to admit that it is not demanded by Christian ethics that a wife shall so compromise her own honor as to indulge in such a subterfuge as Sarah was guilty of when she represented herself to the Pharaoh and later to Abimelech as the sister of Abraham. There is no casuistry by which we can justify either Abraham or Sarah in these instances of deception, although a Jewish rabbi once said to the writer in extenuation of this fault of the patriarch and his wife, "There is no commandment against lying." Thus he excused the deception on the Jesuitical sophistry that the end justified the means. One thing is true—and Abraham made this a justifying argument—that Sarah was his sister by his father though not by his mother. She was his half sister. But even this willingness to sacrifice one's integrity in wifely devotion to one's husband, though going beyond the requirements of righteousness, cannot be other than heroic. Some may look upon those instances of deception, which, after all, contained a part-truth,

as only contests of wit against wickedness. It may have caused Sarah's cheeks to burn with shame to deny her wifely relation to Abraham. She may have hated the half-lie, and she may have felt the sting and humiliation of denying what she was proudest of, that she was the true, lawful, and loving wife of the man who asked her to swear she was only his sister. How to reconcile these deceptions, and the later relation of Abraham with Hagar, as suggested and condoned and even justified by Sarah, we know not, but we cannot doubt that this wife's heroic devotion was capable of any sacrifice, even of honor, virtue, or life itself, that circumstances might demand of her. Every act of heroism may not be morally justifiable. But it may be heroic in spite of its being unjustifiable and even irrational. Call Sarah's suggestion of concubinage to Abraham as a method for satisfying her ambition for his prophesied posterity an immoral act, call her denial of her wedded relation to Abraham unrighteous, justify or leave without justification these incidents in her life, the heroism of the woman, her abject heroism, cannot be denied. Mistaken as she may have been, or as she was, in her moral philosophy, she was willing to do anything, anything to please, to honor, to save the life and promote the great-

ness of her husband. And this she did with the light she had. And to the last she was Abraham's loving, devoted, self-humiliating, heroic helpmate.

Nothing in all that patriarchal tradition is more beautiful and pathetic than Abraham's devotion to the memory of Sarah. With infinite care did he select a last resting place for Sarah when she died in Kirjatharba, an hundred and seven and twenty years old! And there beside her did he sleep at last "In the cave of Mach-pe-lah, in the field of Ephron—which is before Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried and Sarah his wife." As the grand old patriarch is laid to rest beside his wife how all her heroism is revived in our memory by the meeting at that tomb of the men whose very existence her heroism made possible. "And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Mach-pe-lah." Isaac and Ishmael! Abraham and Sarah! The cave of Mach-pe-lah! What memories, what prophecies, what destinies center here and radiate hence to all ages, all peoples, all worlds!

Deborah—Wife of Lapidoth

But it may be claimed that the intellectual

woman does not make a good wife, or that a faithful and devoted wife, having the happiness and honor of her husband and the interests of her home at heart, cannot give attention to things intellectual, literary, and political. The strong-minded woman, it will be urged, has not the domestic instinct; or, if she be of a domestic temperament, she can have no relish for those studies which bring the mind in touch with the great thought-movements in the world of art and science, letters and government. But we shall find a wife in Deborah, who, like a Queen Victoria, or a Queen Anne, or a Queen Mary, wife of William III, or like an Elizabeth Barrett Browning, was great-souled and broad-brained enough to be interested and absorbed at once in her love of her husband and of her country, in the welfare of her home and the progress of the world, in her domestic duties and her intellectual, moral, and social responsibilities. Deborah was the wife of Lapidoth. She may have been her husband's intellectual superior, but, from the fact that her name is historically joined to his, and doubtless by her insistence, we may conclude that her honor and affection for him were in no measure lessened by her evident love of her country and people or by her poetical genius, or her judicial temper and legal

learning. The very fact that she is mentioned as the wife of Lapidoth would indicate that her husband was a man of note and standing and of sufficient repute to give a dignity to her marital relation. Here was a woman whose genius and heroism, whose learning and patriotism reflected honor upon her sex, while it shed a luster upon her country's history and gave immortality to her own and to her husband's name. Deborah was gifted with a fourfold genius—judicial, military, poetical, and prophetic. If there were no incidents in her home life or in her wifely relations which give a dramatic interest to her biography; if there came to her no great sorrow, no sore test of her fidelity, no temptation to her virtue and honor, no demand of sacrifice for home or husband, she was nevertheless the patriot-heroine, and, as the prophetic judge and "mother in Israel," an example to the wifehood of her country. By her literary tastes, her poetical feeling, her judicial acumen, her courage in danger, her loyalty to her people and her home she became the national ideal which exalted wifehood to its highest dignity and influence in national life and proved the marriage relation to be in no way hampering or embarrassing to the most perfect intellectual development of woman or to the most

complete culture, liberal learning, and patriotic interest in national affairs—not in the least degree a hindrance to the most loyal exercise of the domestic instincts and functions. Deborah was one of the strong and splendid souls of antiquity. Few, if any, in all the annals of Israel assume a more heroic form than she; nor does any other race or time furnish her parallel. Her austere virtues and martial prowess, mingling with her finer graces of learning, her poetic exaltation and her gift of prophecy, gave her a rank above Sappho or Aspasia or Semiramis or Cleopatra. Not one of these women combined in herself all the high and commanding traits of character which made Deborah the noblest heroine of her time.

We have no record of her beauty or physical charms as we have of Sarah's, Rachel's, Rebecca's, Sappho's, and Cleopatra's. Hence the tradition of her heroism borrows nothing of false glamour from her storied loveliness, from a sensuous beauty which is often made to cover and excuse a multitude of sins. Yes, she was a strong-minded woman, but none the less feminine for that. Weakness is not necessarily feminine, nor is masculinity necessarily strength. It took a strong woman, but a woman, to save Israel in her day. She was

mentally and morally the most heroic-formed personality of her age. How bravely she stood against the corrupting, degenerating tendencies of her people! Since the death of Joshua Israel had suffered many vicissitudes of fortune. Her very judges were corrupt and corrupting, and when they were upright the people would not heed them, hence the wrath of God came upon the disobedient people who suffered humiliations, defeats, oppressions and cruelties untold at the hands of their enemies. And now Israel is subject to Jabin, the cruel king of Canaan, whose chief general is the inhuman and brutal Sisera. God's people are sorely oppressed by this ancient Weyler, whose soldiers insult and shoot their arrows at the maidens of Israel as they come to the wells to draw water for their cattle and their domestic needs. These outrages continued and increased until they became intolerable even to this patient and afflicted people. "Twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." But there was not a man among all the tribes of Israel to resist these cruelties, to organize successful opposition to Jabin and Sisera and to lead God's people out of their cruel and humiliating subjection. It was left for a woman to furnish the brains, the courage, and the heroism to check the encroachments of this

tyrannical power, hurl the oppressor from the land, and give the people rest. This woman was Deborah the wife of Lapidoth. She was a prophetess and judge in Israel, incomparably superior to her predecessors, who with few exceptions had been men of weak will, inferior intelligence, craven spirit, and debauched morals. For once a pure, fearless, patriotic, godly judge commands the love, confidence, and veneration of the people. And as she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim (like Plato in his grove at Athens), the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. Evidently, they saw in her, and in her alone, a deliverer. As the oppression continued and increased, the people began to cry unto God for deliverance from the power of Jabin and the cruelties of Sisera. Then was it that this heroine arose single-handed to command the situation and make a bit of history to be remembered for all time. True, she had a general who knew his duty, but who lacked the genius of initiative, the courage of his convictions, and the heroism of a patriot. He hesitated to lead his army against Sisera. He was afraid of the "chariots of iron" and the swarming hosts that came up against the land, although God had commanded, promising to deliver Sisera into

his hands. Hear him, hear the soldier and general of Israel, hear him cry to a woman, to the prophetess and judge, to Deborah the wife of Lapidoth: "If you will go with me, then I will go." Had ever a nation's courage sunk so low as that? Had ever the man, the patriot, the soldier proven himself a more abject coward? What is the hope of the country? It is a woman; it is Deborah. O, what a soldier! "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go." With such a coward as Barak at the head of the army how can the people hope for deliverance? Nay, how can Deborah hope for victory against Sisera with only a Barak to lead her soldiers to the field? But, *"I will surely go with thee"*—it came like the thwang of a mighty bow-string, like the blare of a battle-trumpet, from the lips of Deborah. "And Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kadesh." The army was gathered. Away they marched to the battle—Barak with ten thousand men, "and Deborah went up with him"—Deborah more than the whole army of ten thousand men, with Barak thrown in! And Deborah sent her men into the fight with this command: "Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand; is not the Lord gone out before thee?"

It was a great fight and a complete rout of the enemy and a glorious victory for Israel. They fought from heaven that day: "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." What power is at the command of Deborah in this battle! She marshals the forces that control the heavens; the legions of the sky obey her will; the Lord of hosts honors her faith, inspires her heroism, blesses her high resolve, hears her prayer and delivers Israel with a mighty deliverance. And in the providence of God all the human glory shall be given to woman. Barak was informed before the battle that the honors of the real victory should not be his. Deborah was bound that her general who would not go to battle unless she went with him should surrender the glory to a woman. Right enough she was, and she seemed to throw it at him with a righteous toss of her head: "The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." And he did. This Jael, the wife of Heber, was far from our modern ideal of a gentle educated leader in society. She was without what we call refinement and culture. She lived in the tent, gypsy fashion, had never entered a house, a drawing room, a schoolhouse, a church. She did an act that any woman might shudder to think of to-day. But it was fair play then. It was heroic,

patriotic then. Who shall contradict the prophetess when she says, "The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman"? If the Lord ordained Jael's act, let him be responsible. And if anyone is disposed to question the ethics of that performance with the nail and hammer, let him argue it out with God and not with the poor, brave woman who completed the overthrow of the monster Sisera. Strange it is that sentimentalists, who never question the righteousness of defensive war, who think it justifiable in battle for one man to chop off another man's head with a battle-ax, brain him with a bludgeon, disembowel him with a sword, tear him to pieces with a cannon ball, or sink him to the bottom of the sea with a torpedo, find it necessary to explain Jael's action on other than righteous and patriotic grounds.

The woman simply killed the brute who had been the terror of Israel and of the women of Israel for twenty years. The battle was not over until Sisera was killed, and whether killed with sword or spear or battle-ax or hammer and nail, the old fiend got his deserts and he justly got them at the hand of a woman, nay, at the hands of women—Jael and Deborah.

Sing, O Deborah, sing your song of triumph, and all brave men and virtuous women will

join in your song! You have as much right to sing of Sisera's overthrow and death as Miriam had to sound the loud timbrel over Egypt's dark sea and celebrate the drowning of the proud hosts of Pharaoh.

"And the land had rest forty years." Honor to Deborah, the heroine-prophetess, the heroine-judge, the heroine-poetess! Honor to the woman capable of such wisdom and learning, such vision and judgment, such courage, faith, and heroism, and of such a song as Deborah's!

Huldah—Wife of Shallum

Though separated from Deborah and her times by nearly seven hundred years, there were many virtues adorning the character of Huldah which associate her in our thought with the former patriot-heroine of her race. The times have changed. The simplicity of the age of the judges has given place to the pomp and circumstance of monarchial government. The people have risen to a great enlightenment. Israel has enjoyed the prosperity and the national independence and power which were secured by a David's genius, and it has witnessed the glory of Solomon; the literary, æsthetic, and commercial splendor of his reign. The Jews have seen the temple rise in all its storied magnificence, the house of

cedar and gold. They have attained the highest art in music, architecture, and literature. They have become a nation of students, scientists, and philosophers. They have brought religious symbolism to perfection. They have produced great men, men of genius and of deeds; poets, warriors, statesmen, scholars, and seers. But, alas! they were not competent to hold the proud heights which they had gained. It took the kingdom one hundred and twenty years to rise from the anointing of Saul to the glory of Solomon's forty years' reign, but no sooner had that favored people reached their loftiest eminence than they began to reel and stagger to their national fall. Long indeed was that process of decline from the division of the kingdom to the final subjugation and captivity. Now and then, to relieve the blackness and terror of the political storms through which Israel and Judah passed, would rise a virtuous king to give the people light and hope. Alternately rising and falling like a ship tossed by the winds on angry seas, the chosen people are driven toward the rocks of inevitable national ruin. The ship now seems for a brief interval to be riding on the crest of the wave, lifted from the trough in which it has been foundering through corrupt administrations; the clouds part; the sunlight

breaks through, the storm ceases and there is a calm. Josiah is at the helm of the ship of state in Judah; "And he did right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left."

A brief renaissance was about to dawn upon Jerusalem, and one of the most potent influences at work in cooperation with the piety of Josiah was the genius, learning, and patriotic heroism of a woman—Huldah, the wife of Shallum. This Shallum was a man of no mean extraction; he stood near the throne and was doubtless, like his father and grandfather before him, keeper of the royal wardrobe. Of Huldah's ancestry we know nothing, but it seems to have been her distinction to be known as the wife of Shallum. But there can be little doubt that Huldah preserved her husband's name from oblivion and the ages since have known Shallum only as the husband of Huldah. This woman had grown up like a lily in a cesspool. Among a degenerate and degenerating people, she is in no sense the product of environment, but a single star in the black sky, a white rose in the desert, an angel flying through the night. Huldah had no such mission as Deborah. She may have possessed none of the more nearly masculine attributes

of that heroic judge and prophetess of the earlier and ruder times. If Deborah was amazonian in her force of character, fitted for the judicial throne and even for the battlefield, we have reason to believe that Huldah was of a finer, more delicate and gentle mold. If her genius was less rugged than her sister's, it was not less brilliant and refined. In the cultivation of her mind Huldah had the advantages of a learning which did not exist in the time of Deborah. In natural power, in original stature, the latter seems to overtop the former as a Venus de Milo does a Venus de Medicis. But in her refinement of power, in her education, in her intellectual aptitudes and attainments, in her piety, prophetic wisdom, heroic patriotism, and simple religious devotion, she seems in comparison with Deborah as the pearl to the ruby, as the lily to the thorny rose, as the nightingale to the eagle, or as a Queen Victoria to a Queen Elizabeth.

In such an age and among such a people for a woman and wife to rise above the social degeneracy, above the universal ignoraunce, sensuality, and idolatry, and aspire to things virtuous, intellectual, religious, and patriotic, is to be a heroine. The old learning which had passed into decay, the ancient culture and refinement which by the masses had long been

forgotten, education to which society was indifferent, the prophetic vision to which the whole nation had become blind, were all sacred things to this holy heroine. It was evidently the ambition of Huldah not only to acquire knowledge and attain true culture with all its promises of blessing and enjoyment, but also to disseminate learning among the people. Her connection with the college at Jerusalem would seem to indicate that she was a teacher, devoting herself to the education of the youth and possibly applying herself to those investigations in nature and science, philosophy, history, and literature, and to that mastery of the languages which were included in the higher learning. To be a student, a scholar, an educator, and a true prophetess was to be a heroine; and had no other mission been given her, that alone should have distinguished her as the highest ideal of Jewish womanhood in her age. But a crisis had come in the affairs of Judah. Josiah furnished his people with an opportunity to regain their lost integrity and the nation to rise to a new purpose and power. The renaissance began with a general and thorough renovation of the temple and a restoration of the old ceremonial worship. The neglect of the temple had resulted in its sad deterioration; it had suffered such abuse as

to have rendered it quite unrecognizable as Solomon's house of cedar and gold. Carpenters, masons, and builders were set to work repairing the house of God. In cleaning out the rubbish that had accumulated in the building, then three hundred and sixty years old, Hilkiah found a book. It was a book unknown to a people who should have been familiar with it. It was the Book of the Law, long lost, buried in the rubbish, forgotten; the book which had been a lamp to the feet and a light to the path of their fathers. It was a curiosity even to the high priest—such a curiosity indeed that he sent it to King Josiah. Shaphan, the scribe, was intrusted with the literary curiosity by Hilkiah. And when he presented it to Josiah the king asked him to read it, which he did. It was evidently the first time that either the king or his scribe had ever read the Book of the Law. It was like a new revelation. The reading profoundly moved the king; he became interested, then excited, then alarmed. He rent his garments, called for the learned men to seek the Lord for an understanding and interpretation of the wonderful book. The so-called scholars were at their wits' end. Their combined wisdom and learning was insufficient for the task set them by the king. In their extremity they gather

up their learned robes and start for the college: their only hope is Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, who is dwelling in the college of Jerusalem. See them there, the scribes and scholars and savants of the kingdom bowing to the acknowledged superiority of a woman! For this supreme moment had Huldah all unconsciously been preparing herself. Nay, had not God been training her for this crisis? Quickly, unhesitatingly, eagerly, clearly, does this remarkable woman interpret the law to the scholars who sit humbly at her feet. Faithfully as a seer does she tell them for the king and the nation the will and the purpose of God concerning them. Never did a woman render her country a greater, more heroic, more patriotic service! It took a heroine to say what Huldah said that day as she sat in her chair in the college of Jerusalem. It took a heroine to send such a message to the king as she fearlessly but loyally sent to Josiah. It was for the time at least the salvation of the nation. Huldah's interpretation of the will of God as found in the Book of the Law made that book once more a lamp to their feet and a light to their path. On receiving Huldah's message the king immediately set on foot a thorough campaign of iconoclasm. He swept away all the forms

and instruments of idolatry. He reinaugurated the old, divinely inspired temple service. The people caught the inspiration. They turned away from their idols and returned to the worship of their fathers' God. "And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant." Wonderful results of a woman's patriotic devotion, sanctified learning, and prophetic heroism! Honor to Huldah, the prophetess, the wife of Shallum! And did she not enter into the joys of that glorious revival of the old-time religion? Was her name not spoken by all, from peasant to king, with greater veneration than ever? Was there a

woman in all Jerusalem worthy of such honor as crowned her name? Could any citizen have entered more heartily, more gratefully into the celebration of the newly restored temple service than she? What a day that was, the day appointed for the celebration of the long neglected and quite forgotten passover! "Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem." And what a day that must have been to the faithful Huldah, true patriot of her king and country, first scholar of the age, patient student of the law, kindly educator of the youth of Judah, greatest woman of her time, yet happy and contented as she dwelt there in Jerusalem in the college, to be known and honored and loved as Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum!

Abigail—Wife of Nabal

Of all the heroine-wives in this world she who is bound to an ugly, churlish, drunken brute of a husband, and yet remains patient, loyal, and devoted, commands, if not our highest admiration, at least our profoundest sympathy and commiseration, and often the

truest veneration due to the heroine. When such a wife is gifted with the rarest excellencies that can adorn womanhood; is rich in mental endowments and spiritual graces, is wise, good, intellectual, sagacious, witty, gracious, noble, queenly, and beautiful, what an heroic sacrifice she makes when she unwittingly gives herself to a fool! And though she learns her mistake when it is too late to correct it, if she patiently submits to her fate and tries to make the best of it, we may at first inwardly protest, but in the end we must admire, even if we pity her. Abigail was a heroine. As a woman she had a fearless, heroic spirit. As a wife her infinite superiority to her husband made her devotion to him such a self-sacrifice, such an immolation of self on the altar of tragic duty as is rarely demanded of any heroine. In comparison with such a patience and forbearance as she was called upon to exercise, in comparison with her sacrifice of womanly dignity, pride, and noble feeling, any losses of fortune, any encountering of dangers, any test of her honor, any trials and temptations of her wifely virtue and fidelity would seem but trifles. She who could live with Nabal and still be as true to all his interests as was Abigail could endure anything demanded of a heroine.

This woman was remarkable for her beauty and accomplishments. It means much for one to be so highly gifted that the historian and poet make note of her endowments and preserve the memory of them in the national literature. Abigail "was a woman of good understanding and of a beautiful countenance." These divine gifts do not always go together, but when they are found associated in one personality what an enviable charm and power do they give to a woman! Alas, how often is beauty only skin deep! What a deformity is the woman who has beauty without brains, grace without goodness, comeliness without character—a splendid animal without a soul! She is a rare gift of God to this world of whom it may be said, "She is a woman of good understanding and of a beautiful countenance." As the saying goes, in the lottery of life Nabal drew a prize; Abigail drew a blank —a fool. That is the meaning of the name "Nabal"—fool. It must not be supposed that Nabal was a mental fool. But that he was a moral fool Abigail soon learned after she married him. We know not why so charming a woman married this boor. It may be that his wealth and the glamour of his pedigree attracted her. "The man was very great." Nabal was rich and belonged to the house of Caleb.

He had the blood of the ancient heroes in his veins, and was an aristocrat—but a mighty mean man for all that. Abigail was too good, infinitely too good, for such a man, even with all his sheep and pedigrees. But having once pledged her troth and united her life and destiny with his, she was too true a woman, too devout a Jewess, too noble a heroine to separate from him in violation of the most sacred laws and traditions of her religion and of her race. To be Nabal's wife was Abigail's martyrdom.

One incident in her life worthy of a place in history gave opportunity for the exercise of her womanly wit and wifely fidelity, and immortalized her name and heroism in story. Nabal and his men were shearing sheep in Carmel, when David in his wanderings came into the neighborhood. His followers, a brave lot of fellows, about six hundred in number, fell on good terms with Nabal's shepherds and saw to it that in the little warfares going on no harm came to them or their flocks. Indeed, by the confession of one of the shepherds, David's soldiers were good fellows who had been as a wall of defense to them in time of danger. Of course for all this Nabal should have been duly grateful, but, as the sequel proved, he was too much of a churl to be

grateful to anybody for anything. David and his men needed rations, hence the future king sent a small detachment of his men to the rich farmer and sheep-baron with his compliments and assurances of friendship and peace, accompanying his courteous salutations with the hint that the smallest donation of provisions which Nabal might be disposed to send to his little army would be gratefully received. Nabal spurned the whole matter with supercilious contempt. "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?" Think of such an answer coming from a man who was shearing three thousand sheep in Carmel! Of course the red-haired, hot-headed David was wild when his servants came back empty handed with Nabal's impertinent reply. He quickly girded on his sword, bade his soldiers get ready for a fight, and, leaving two hundred with the stuff, he led four hundred toward Carmel, determined to destroy Nabal and every man child that pertained to him before morning. In the meantime one of the faithful servants revealed the whole situation to Abigail. What a compliment that was to her intelligence and to her influence in Nabal's

household! She had impressed her very servants with a sense of her wisdom and superiority. Instead of going to Nabal with the news that David was coming with mischief in his heart, the servant hastens to Abigail, believing that she had more sense and ability to meet the situation than her churl of a husband. And he was right. Immediately this Jewish matron was transformed into a diplomat, an intercessor, and a heroine. She knew what to do and immediately did it, without asking leave of Nabal. "What a pity," she must have been saying in her heart, "what a pity David did not send his servants to me! I should have had sense enough to appreciate his kindness to us and our shepherds, and I should have sent him food for his little army. Of course I should. Why didn't Nabal do it? O, the fool!" What a hustling and bustling among the servants! What a hurrying and skurrying, lading the asses with bread and wine and parched corn, and dressed sheep, and great clusters of grapes and cakes of figs! And away the servants hasten, Abigail following, to meet David. And not a word to Nabal! There was courage for you: the courage to assume responsibility, the courage and genius of initiative! Taking counsel of her own "good understanding" and of her woman

wit and fearlessness, without asking advice of servant or husband and without the loss of a moment of valuable time, this strong-souled heroine hastens to meet him whose prowess had terrified Saul and whose greatness was to rule a kingdom. Nor does this heroine's heart quail as she catches sight of David and his armed men. Four hundred soldiers are coming, eager for slaughter. This woman with her servants, swordless and harmless, does not hesitate or have any fear at the sight. Quickly she leaps off the ass and falls before David and begins to intercede for Nabal. Not for herself, no, brave woman, heroine-wife! She pleads to have the blow fall upon her, not upon her husband and his sons. And what a plea was that! Sagacious? Diplomatic? Of infinite wit and wisdom of phrase? Yes, but the outgushing of an honest heart, sincere, absolutely ingenuous. And the sweet womanly deference and dignity of it! She has a right to claim that if David's servants had come to her there would have been no trouble; she would have sent them food as they well deserved for all their kindness to Nabal and his shepherds. Her plea was not unmixed with very diplomatic flattery. Or shall we say the woman was wrought up to a prophetic frenzy and spake like a seer in predicting David's

triumph over his enemies? Did God that moment give her the vision and the utterance of a prophetess? Nay, did not Abigail in that exalted moment forget all her own interests, even the interests of Nabal, in her noble plea for David to withhold his hand from shedding blood? What finer, nobler utterance had ever fallen on David's ear or stirred his poetic soul than this prayer and admonition which followed Abigail's prophecy of David's triumph over Saul: "And it shall come to pass when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offense of heart unto my lord either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid." Well, who could have stood out against such a plea? Certainly not David. Then and there he surrendered. Yes, he surrendered to superior sense, to superior virtue, to superior heroism. Abigail is the divinely inspired conqueror of David!

"And David said to Abigail: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day

from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand." And having accepted her gift of food for his little hungry army he sent her to her home with his blessing. Thus did Abigail show herself superior in "good understanding" to both Nabal and David. She undid the mischief which her churlish husband had wrought, and she prevented the mischief which David was about to do. She had to furnish brains for both men. And it took a brave heart for that wife to do the deed which has made the name of Abigail immortal.

Still was this wife's soul under the tense strain of the great responsibility which she had so independently and heroically assumed. She had to return to Nabal. What would the ugly, mean-tempered man say? Would he rebuke his wife? Would he scold and rage and create a scene? Well, the wife, the noble, high-minded, sensitive, beautiful wife, found her liege lord—drunk. God pity such women everywhere and always who have to call drunkards husbands! Think of the heroism of a wife who for his sake, and for his children's sake, and for the old folks' sake, and for God's sake, will still patiently, forbearingly, humiliatingly, hopefully, prayerfully consent to be called that mean, drunken churl's wife "until

death us do part"! Death soon parted Abigail and Nabal. That night, when the faithful wife, whose wisdom and heroism had saved him and his household, returned to find Nabal "very drunk" after a sheep-shearing festival, her "good understanding" kept her from saying anything about the incidents of the day until the next morning, when Nabal was somewhat sobered up. She had doubtless had sad experiences with this husband before when he was drunk and had learned to have no discussions with him on any subject when he was in his cups. She always appealed from Nabal drunk to Nabal sober. It took infinite patience to hold the tongue just when the tongue was under the whip and spur of "righteous indignation." It is often more heroic to be silent than to speak. O, these gentle, patient, suffering but silent heroines! Have they not the spirit of Him who, though reviled, reviled not again, and who as a lamb before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth? To suffer and be strong, strong enough to be silent and suffer—that is heroism of the finest, divinest fiber. When Nabal heard the story a mortal terror seized him, and in a few days he died as the fool dieth.

But to the last, Abigail was his faithful, suffering, humiliated, heroine-wife—his guar-

dian angel. What a waste of womanhood, what a waste of heroism was Abigail wasted on Nabal! No, not wasted; all that was there sacrificed in some sure and subtle way passed into the world's heroism, into the world's character, into the world's ideal wifehood and womanhood as they are and as they are to be. Abigail's heroism has a blessing of comfort and inspiration for many a heroine-wife, and it always will have. Worthy of all the honor that came to her was Abigail even when she became the beloved wife of David and lived to participate in his glory "and shape the whisper of the throne." Abigail was a queen indeed, and every inch a queen, without the worldly dignities that came with royal marriage.

Esther—Wife of Ahasuerus

The Jewish annals are rich in national heroes. During the long ages of their development and decline God's people passed through many vicissitudes which threatened their destruction, but to preserve them from ruin and to insure their future power and prosperity God raised up among them reformers, leaders, and deliverers, whose mighty deeds belong to the most stirring and eventful history of antiquity. Three great crises in particular furnished the occasions for the appear-

ance of great men to deliver the chosen race. The famine which threatened to exterminate the house of Jacob called to the front Joseph, through whose influence Israel was given a home in Egypt, where prosperity shone upon them in their rapid multiplication and in the increase of their substance. When, in later years, a Pharaoh came to power who knew not Joseph and afflicted Israel with oppressions which crushed them into poverty and servitude, and which could not but have ended in the destruction of their racial spirit and national hope, Moses came into history as their deliverer, ordained of God to lead them out of bondage and to the land of promise, where they were to become an independent and mighty nation blessed with all the arts of the highest civilization. After a national career of true greatness and splendor they became politically decadent, fell before their conquerors and were swept into captivity. For seventy years they suffered the humiliations and oppressions of that captivity. Then, happily, there arose among them in the distant land a deliverer in Nehemiah, who was the inspiring genius of their return to the Holy Land and of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of her sacred temple. Great indeed were the achievements of these men who, by their

patriotism, genius, and heroism, delivered their people from their distresses.

But with these names, among the most glorious in the history of Jewish heroism, must be mentioned another, and that the name of a woman—Esther, one of the sweetest and most popular names given to woman even to this day. It was her distinction and glory that by her heroism she saved her race from universal massacre and gave the Jew a place in a foreign land and empire which he had never before and has never since occupied. The Jews were in the land of captivity subject to Ahasuerus, whose powerful reign extended from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces. Esther was doubtless born in the land and was left an orphan to be adopted by Mordecai, the uncle of her father, who came a captive from Jerusalem and with whom she was living in Shushan. As a maid "she was fair and beautiful." Vashti, the queen of Ahasuerus, for some offense, fancied or real, had been discarded, and the king had commanded that all the provinces be searched for a virgin whose beauty and graces would entitle her to the queenly crown. Among the many summoned to the palace was the Jewish maiden Esther. These fair virgins were in training, according

to the custom of the land, for twelve months. By laws of purification, by education in dress and manners, they were prepared for the life of the royal palace. And it would seem that Esther immediately became the favorite of the keeper of the women, Hegai. He doubtless gave special attention to the beautiful and well-mannered girl in educating her for the part she was to act and in preparing her to win the prize in the contest, which prize was nothing less than a royal crown. Whether Esther went to the palace to enter this beauty contest from compulsion or from inclination is not recorded. In either case it must have been a sore trial to her to thus be separated from her home and people for a year, and it certainly must have cost Mordecai many a sigh that the light of loving Esther's beauty was withdrawn from his home. It is a touching and pathetic picture—Mordecai's solicitude about the dear girl and his lonesomeness during her long absence. This is a charming touch given to the picture by the historian who must have written it with a manly tear in his eye: "And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house to know how Esther did, and what should become of her."

The twelve months passed, and by the con-

test Esther was recognized as the most beautiful of all the beautiful virgins of the empire. "And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti." The most beautiful woman from India to Ethiopia! But Esther's intelligence was equal to her beauty and her virtue to her intelligence. Raised to this queenly eminence, she wore a crown with dignity and grace as if she had been born to royalty. And yet with all her honors upon her she lost nothing of the womanly tenderness and modesty which had characterized her from childhood. In the glare of a palace and in the light that beats about a throne she is the same Esther that has been the pride of her people and the joy of Mordecai's home. She did not forget Israel, nor did she sacrifice her Jewish convictions to pride of wealth and royal station. But she was a power for righteousness in the palace of Shushan. So superior was she in her physical charms, an ideal Jewish beauty, so brilliant, resourceful, and intellectual, so virtuous and womanly withal that the king himself became her willing subject and could rarely let an occasion pass for bestowing upon her any mark of his love and

favor that she might ask. Indeed, it was a common habit of this love-infatuated king to ask his beautiful queen to make known her wishes, that he might grant them even to the half of his kingdom. It was this wonderful influence which Esther had over Ahasuerus, gained by her transcendent beauty and womanly worth, that placed within her hands the power to save her people from destruction. And this power she exercised in the spirit of a wifely heroine, a filial heroine, a patriot-heroine. Mordecai, by whom she had been adopted and whom she had recognized as her father, had brought trouble upon himself and upon the captive Jews of the city and empire by his mean and haughty spirit. He refused to recognize with due respect and the customary salutation Haman, the chief man of the empire. This so irritated that dignitary that he finally, on the wily suggestion of his wife, Zeresh, planned the death of Mordecai and the massacre of the entire Jewish population. The mind of Ahasuerus had been poisoned against the Jews by Haman and his party, who charged that the Jews were disloyal and not obedient subjects, in fact, that they were a dangerous and threatening element of the body politic. Thus influenced, the king issued a decree that was to seal the doom of the Jews. On a cer-

tain day a slaughter was to begin and it was to continue from India to Ethiopia until the captive race was exterminated. Every man, woman, and child was to perish and all the property of the Jews was to be confiscated. It was from the execution of this cruel decree that Esther dissuaded her king and thereby saved her people. To her own husband, the king, to her father, Mordecai, and to her people, the Jews, she rendered a service which should place her name among the noblest heroines of all time.

It is noteworthy that Esther, even though she was a queen and married to one of another race, still cherished an undying love for her own race and for Mordecai, to whom she owed so much for all his kindness to her since as a little girl she was left an orphan in a strange land. Moreover, though grown to womanhood and elevated to wealth, honor, and power, she kept within her heart the spirit of filial obedience which had characterized her from childhood, "for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai like as when she was brought up with him," runs the quaint and simple record. It was this love of Esther for Mordecai and this spirit of obedience that found a way by which the queen often communicated with her foster-father though they did not meet or

see each other face to face after her coronation in the Shushan palace. The same charms of her wonderful personality which gained grace and favor with the king won the love and obedient attachment of all her servants and attendants in the palace, for they seemed ever willing to communicate to her any important news from the outside world and to bear any messages to and from her friends, especially to and from Mordecai. It was, therefore, due to her rare, unapproachable gifts, to her superlative beauty, and lovable attributes of mind and heart that all who knew her honored and loved her, and that she became her husband's heroic guardian when assassins plotted to take his life. Mordecai heard of the plot and by some means communicated the startling intelligence to Esther. She immediately warned the king in time to thwart the assassins, who were duly hanged. Evidently, Queen Esther informed the king of his danger in some official way through documents and through the agency of the proper functionaries of the palace so that the king did not know at the time that he owed his life to his beautiful and heroic queen and to the Jew Mordecai. But this he was to learn in time for the information to be of great service to Mordecai and his endangered race.

The decree of Ahasuerus condemning the Jews to extinction filled Shushan with consternation. There was weeping and wailing among the Jews. They with Mordecai mourned in sackcloth and ashes. Some faithful servant of the queen told her of Mordecai's condition. She in alarm, and with filial solicitude, inquired the cause. Now messages flew thick and fast between the daughter and father by the agency of faithful and attached servants of the palace. Mordecai hinted that Esther could not hold her peace at such a time and sent her the memorable words: "Who knowest whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

What can Esther do? Shall she hasten to the king and plead the cause of her people? That may mean her own death. For there is a law that makes it a capital offense for any person to come to the inner court of the king without his bidding. And if any such person, man or woman, shall presume to transgress this law, the penalty will be death unless the king shall hold out the golden scepter, which will mean that the offending person may live. Esther knew this law. And now the question with her is: If I go to him, will he hold out the golden scepter? For some reason the king had neglected her for a whole

month. Had Haman and his party reminded the king that Esther was a Jewess and must perish with the rest of the race? Had the king's affections been alienated? Was she also doomed? If she approached the king, would he refuse to hold out the golden scepter, and would that mean death? What a moment, what a crisis, in one's life! But what an occasion for heroism to assert itself! Is this woman equal to the emergency? Is she, indeed, by the providence of God, "come to the kingdom for such a time as this"? Yes, yes, a great heroine is incarnate in that beautiful woman, all her beauty enhanced by her high resolve. Her cheeks glow, her black eyes flame, her lips are compressed, her serene brow is shining as if a halo were resting on her hair, her form is proudly erect, her hands are reverently clasped, her face, angelic with inspiration, is lifted heavenward to the God of her fathers. The victory is won! The heroine appears! Esther is come to the kingdom for such a time as this! This message goes by the hand of some faithful attendant to Mordecai: "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink these days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise: and

will I go in unto the king which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." That message belongs to the holiest literature of heroism. Fit to be written in letters of gold! Let it be set to loftiest music! Give it the immortality of undying eloquence and song! Esther asks for the prayers of her people. Before she reveals her purpose to them she calls them to the old Jewish service of fasting, and she and her maids engage in devout religious exercises. It was in this spirit of religious enthusiasm, with her faith in her people's prayers and in her people's God, that she made the resolve, "I will go in unto the king, and if I perish, I perish." It was a great thing to say, "To plead for my people, to save my father's race, I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." It was a great thing to say, and for a woman to say it. It was a greater thing to do, and for a woman to do it. Esther went into danger, but she went there from her knees, and at that moment were not Mordecai and all her people on their knees before God? It is an awful but glorious scene! There she stands in the forbidden inner court—Esther, the most beautiful woman in the world, never so radiantly beautiful as now! Esther, the most fearless, cour-

ageous heroine in the world, arrayed in her jewels and royal apparel! What will the king do when he beholds his beautiful heroic queen? Is he alienated? Is he angry with her? Has he resolved that she too must die with her people? Will this act of hers only enrage him? Will he withhold the golden scepter and thereby seal her doom? It is an awful moment, the supreme moment of destiny for Esther and for her people. God be with you now, O lovely heroine! The king turns, his eyes meet the most beautiful eyes in all the world, never so tenderly and splendidly beautiful as now, supernatural with the light of love, of prayer, of hope. The scepter, the fateful golden scepter! Look! "The king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand." Saved! Honor to Ahasuerus! "So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter." Saved! Saved! She shall not perish. And when the eyes of the king once more look into those great, black, beautiful eyes of his Esther, eyes whose heroic and wondrous fire is now softened with her tears of gratitude and love, the old familiar tenderness masters him and with a sweet and manly emotion in his voice, he asks: "What wilt thou, Queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall even be given

thee to the half of the kingdom." Her cause is won. She knows by that dear old question, so often asked by the king, that she is still his own beloved Esther, still the pride of his eyes and the joy of his life. And she also knows by that promise of his which cannot be broken that she will have her heart's desire and that Mordecai and her people will be saved. From that moment Esther commands the situation. Her wit, her sagacity, her cleverness, her tact, her executive genius, are now in control, and what this woman wills God wills.

It must have been with a wondrous joy and satisfaction that Esther learned, perhaps from her king's own lips, that Ahasuerus by reading the documents discovered that Mordecai and she had saved him from assassination years before. Did the king ever ask her: "Why, my beautiful queen, my heroine-wife, why did you not tell me this before? Why did you allow your modesty to keep your very devotion to me a secret all these years? Why did you not tell me that you were my guardian angel in the time of danger and that you and Mordecai saved me from assassination by the conspirators?" One thing we know, the king was grateful with a gratitude that drew his beautiful Esther closer to his

heart than ever. And we also know that he was surprised to find that Mordecai's service had never been rewarded. But now he is determined to reward him as one whom the king delighteth to honor. Not only was the edict by which the Jews were to be exterminated revoked, but Haman and his house were destroyed, Mordecai was elevated to the highest office and honors in the gift of the king, and the Jews were granted a position of power and influence which gave them an enviable dominance in commerce and politics from India to Ethiopia. With what joy Esther must have witnessed the preferment of Mordecai which she had by her own heroism made possible! And all this good fortune which came to the Jews, by which they were enabled to hope for and prepare for their return to Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah, was the result of Esther's heroic devotion to her husband and king, to her father Mordecai, and to her people, the Jews. If the most important and impressive achievement of this heroine-queen was the rescue of her race from universal massacre, that must not make us lose sight of the service which Esther rendered to Ahasuerus in saving him from the results of Haman's wicked machinations and from the execution of that infamous edict

of extermination which, had it not been revoked by her heroism, would have stained the king's name with everlasting ignominy and brought upon his last days infinite sorrow and shame, upon his memory the execrations of all time. As David had reason to thank God for the good advice and heroism of Abigail, by which she saved him from staining his royal hands with the blood of Nabal and his house, much more had Ahasuerus right to thank God for Esther's heroism in saving him from the wholesale massacre and complete extermination of the Jews. And if the Jews remember with gratitude the patriotic heroism of Deborah, by which they were saved from the oppression and cruelties of Jabin and Sisera, much more should they keep in grateful and everlasting remembrance the heroism of Esther, the beautiful queen, who, in the days of their captivity, saved their race from extinction.

And is not one of the Jewish festivals, celebrated even to this day, a monument perpetuating the heroism of Esther with the delivering providence of God? As the passover keeps in memory the event of God's protecting care of Israel when the destroying angel smote the firstborn in Egypt, so Purim is a festival kept to perpetuate forever the memory of the

day when, by Esther's heroic influence, Ahasuerus annulled the edict of extermination, spared the Jews in captivity, and promoted them to high office, social station, and political power throughout his wide empire. By all the usages of that time, if not this, Haman and his party, assassins all, deserved their fate.

Esther saved her adopted country not only from a horrible massacre and the infamy of it, but she also saved it from a revolution which might have shaken the throne to its ruin and disrupted the empire. We may wish that Esther could have exercised more magnanimity than to urge the destruction of Haman's house and Haman's party throughout the land; we may wish she had forgiven the cruel machinations and intrigues of the party of Jew-baiters; we may even wish there had been no death penalties, no wars, no taking of men's lives in those far-off and less enlightened times; but what Esther insisted upon was as just and righteous in her day as is that which we insist upon concerning such matters in our day. With the light she had, and with all the light which the world had in her day, Esther acted the part of a blameless, irreproachable patriot and deliverer, and she will ever live in the righteous esteem and ad-

miration of mankind not only as one of the most beautiful women of history, but as one of the most devoted heroines that ever adorned her sex or jeweled the annals of her own race with splendor.

Ruth—Wife of Boaz

A line of great men, stretching through a history of nearly forty generations, begins with one of the most self-denying heroines immortalized in Holy Writ. Back to Ruth is traced the ancestry of such kings as Josiah, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Asa, Solomon, and David. She was the mother of Obed, the grandmother of Jesse, and the great-grandmother of the illustrious David, the poet-king of the Jews. Joseph, who took to wife Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a lineal descendant of Ruth down through a line of kings. This daughter of Moab brought a strain of rich heroic blood into the veins of Israel. Ruth belongs to an age anterior to Abigail, Huldah, Hannah, and even Deborah. Such an ideal of womanly virtue, filial heroism, and wifely devotion, rising out of the Moabitish heathenism of so remote a time, quite unsettles our notions of the influence of heredity and environment and even of the hypothesis of evolution so far as ethics, morality, and char-

acter are concerned. Taking into account the customs of both her native and adopted countries, there was not an act of hers in all her trying, soul-testing experiences as maiden, wife, widow, daughter-in-law, or mother that would not reflect honor upon womanhood even in this more advanced and enlightened age. It may never have entered the thought of Elimelech and Naomi as they left Bethlehem for the land of Moab on account of the long drought, that they would remain in the strange country until their boys should grow to manhood and that those Jewish sons of theirs would marry heathen women. As faithful Jews, those parents might have hesitated, nay, even refused to go to Moab, if they could have foreseen this intermarriage with Moabitish women. But, as the sequel proved, those sons, Mahlon and Chilion, could not have found better wives even among the daughters of Israel than they found among the Moabites. Nor, certainly, of all the maidens of Bethlehem could Naomi have had more affectionate, obedient, and heroically devoted daughters-in-law than Ruth and Orpah. It seemed a most happy alliance. And nothing in the sad experience of the early widowhood of these women is more deeply impressive than the tender love and honor with which they

cherished the memory of their husbands, their fidelity to them though dead, and the affectionate praise bestowed upon them by Naomi for their wifely devotion to her sons. "The Lord deal kindly with you as ye have dealt with the dead and with me," was Naomi's prayer. It was a sad lament that this poor widow had to offer: "The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." Death had taken her husband and her sons. And it seemed a strange, unaccountable providence that she and both of her daughters-in-law should have been suddenly left widows and, evidently, destitute. But in this time of distress how loyal are these women of Moab to their Jewish mother-in-law! One cannot read that exquisite idyl of the book of Ruth without discerning that Naomi herself was a remarkable woman, a woman of strong affection, of tender emotions, of great wisdom, courage, and piety. She had an extraordinary moral and religious influence over her daughters which bound them to her with strongest filial attachment and with a sincerity of honor and veneration that won them to her religion and to the worship of the God of Israel. There is no evidence that Naomi showed any partiality in her affection for her daughters. When she decided to return to her own coun-

try and people, and contemplated separating from Ruth and Orpah, her words of motherly advice, her kisses, her tears, were for both, and for both were her expressions of appreciation, gratitude, and praise. Does not Naomi rise before us as one of the true heroine-mothers of the Jewish race when we consider with what sacrifice she decided to return to Bethlehem? Her husband and her sons are dead, and now, deeply as she loves them, yet, as she thinks, for their sake, for their better marital prospects and for their future happiness, with motherly tears and caresses she advises her faithful daughters-in-law to return to their people. What regard for them does Naomi reveal when she sobs, "It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me"! And now she would relieve them of all responsibility for her own welfare; she would not be a burden upon them, though they were well and strong and dutiful. She would not limit their freedom nor make claims upon their care and attention which would be a hindrance or an embarrassment to them for all their future. Had she been a selfish woman, had she not been a true heroine, she might have advised, nay, commanded those young women to follow her; and upon them she had a right to

lean for support. But from all the obligations to obedience and service to which she had the right to hold them she tenderly released them, thinking only of their future prosperity and happiness rather than of her own. Naomi is a heroine as she stands there at the parting of the ways, a pathetic figure, but all so noble, so womanly in her loneliness. All she has left are Ruth and Orpah, and now she must part with them. It is in the gloaming; here the great silences spread their soft wings; here only the great good God listens and hears, hears the loving words, the kisses and the sobbing of women's voices. Naomi's arms are about her daughters, her dusky cheeks are wet with tears, her great soft eyes with their sad dreams and hallowed memories are looking toward the land of her fathers. She must return not as she had come—"full," but "empty" and alone; not as Naomi "the pleasant," but as Mara "the bitter." But there is another heroine in that little group. Nay, are they not all heroines? Poor Orpah—there shall be no blame put upon her. Naomi does not chide her. Both daughters volunteered to go with Naomi. "They said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." Again and again they lifted up their voices and wept. One

seemed as devoted as the other. And when at last Orpah took the advice of Naomi, doubtless prompted by her faith in Naomi's wisdom, and with tears and kisses bade her mother-in-law farewell and returned to her own people, she carried with her into obscurity the respect and honor of every person of sensibility who has ever read this beautiful and pathetic story.

But now the sweet, the noble, the affecting heroism of Ruth reveals itself. She cleaves to Naomi. Whatever may be her attachment for her own country and people, a deeper attachment binds her to this Jewish mother-in-law. Whatever her own attractions may be of womanly beauty, of virtue, amiability, and character that almost inevitably insure her a future happy and honorable alliance with some worthy son of Moab, she seems absolutely oblivious of her own welfare in her devotion to the woman whom she has come to love more than she can love herself or any other even of her own people. Perhaps Orpah was not capable of such love. Her affection was sweet and sincere, but her intellect was not as strong as her sensibilities were tender. Her convictions were not sufficiently superior to her emotions. In Ruth we find a rare combination of mind and heart, of intel-

lect and sensibility, of will and affection, of conviction and emotion. She has the moral strength of a heroine and all the intuitions of an ideal womanhood. And now nothing can move her from her high resolve. She is not yielding to her uncontrolled feelings: she sees her duty. Love draws her, but duty compels her. And it is a willing, loving, filial duty that she will perform at any cost to herself, a cost that only such a heroine can pay.

And they stand alone in each other's embrace, Ruth and Naomi. Once more the disconsolate Naomi, and it seems with a supreme effort but none the less heroic, exhorts Ruth to follow Orpah and return to her people. Poor woman, with what a breaking, bleeding heart she does it! There comes forth from the sobbing lips of Ruth that strain of eloquent pathetic pleading that has no parallel in this world's poetry or eloquence: "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." There is nothing equal to this in Shakespeare or in the lines of the

tragic writers of the best classic ages. Who has ever read it or heard it sung to sacred music without the deepest emotion that rendered to it the tribute of most manly tears? That plea reveals the soul of a heroine, of a heroine worthy to be the ancestress of poets, warriors, and kings. Ruth loses sight of herself except as she joins her fortune and destiny with the mother to whom she consecrates her life. She sacrifices all her hopes of a second marriage; she plights her troth to Naomi; her soul weds the soul of the mother at the high altar of filial affection, of religious conviction, of supreme duty. That is heroism of the most exalted type.

Notice the sweet and tender delicacy of Ruth's plea: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee." As though the privilege of remaining with her and following after her to the end were very great, a favor beyond price, if Naomi would but grant it her. She does not seem to think that she is sacrificing anything, everything indeed, to her high and heroic sense of filial duty. In fact, she does not seem to think of obligation—it is all privilege. She is absolutely unconscious of performing a duty. She pleads that Naomi will grant her the blessed favor of going with her to Bethlehem.

It will break her heart to return from following after her. "Entreat me not to leave thee." The heroine is thus ever unconscious of her heroism. A self-conscious heroism is impossible—there is no such heroism. The self-consciousness of an action destroys its heroism. The heroism of an action destroys its self-consciousness.

That is a fine bit of tender color which the author of the book of Ruth gives to the poetical narrative when, without any praise of Ruth's eloquence or heroism, he leaves the record of the effect of Ruth's plea on the mind and heart of Naomi in the simple effective sentence: "When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her." Had Naomi a new revelation of Ruth's character, of her worth as a woman, of her daughterly devotion, of the depth of her love, of her will-force, of her self-sacrificing spirit, of her unconscious but splendid heroism? As hand in hand they turned their faces westward and started upon their journey their souls were bound together as never before—mother and daughter as never before—and both heroines in their mutual love and devotion.

Naomi had not been forgotten in her native village. Evidently, she had been a woman

held in love and admiration by those who knew her as a girl and as a young woman, and as Elimelech's wife and the mother of Mahlon and Chilion. Her return was an event in the little town of Bethlehem. The historian gives it a tender and pathetic setting: "So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?" It was in this strange land and new home that Ruth proved herself still the heroine whom she had revealed herself to be when at the parting of the ways in the land of Moab she clave to Naomi. The heroism of toil! Ah, many a woman in home, in shop, in factory, in office, in field, has demonstrated a heroism as worthy of the world's admiration and praise as the heroism of adventure, of danger, of battle. This gleaner in the field of Boaz is a heroine, here following the reapers and under the burning sun gathering the daily bread. And her love for Naomi makes toil sweet. She might have remained in Moab and have wedded beyond the necessity of such toil in the field. Heroism is never conscious of the humiliation of duty. Duty itself makes duty noble, exalting, divine. So, conscious only of satisfaction in her virtuous

toil, the heroine gleaned day after day in the harvest field of Boaz. Whatever the temptations may have been, nothing was more heroic in Ruth than her discretion and virtue when the necessities of toil brought her in association with the young men and young women of the harvest field. There is no higher type of heroine than the discreet, virtuous womau out there in the great world of toil, single-handed and alone, earning an honest wage for her support and for the support of those who are dependent upon her. Of all such Ruth is the patron saint. And about the white brows of all such gather the halos of God's favor, of humanity's honor and of all earthly and heavenly sainthood. No higher tribute could have been paid to the industrial heroism, the virtuous heroism, and the filial heroism of Ruth than the esteem in which she was held by the people among whom she had come as a stranger. They appreciated her devotion to Naomi. Her heroism opened their hearts to her. They loved her for all she was in her sweet womanhood and for all she had sacrificed for her mother-in-law. It was an unusual tribute paid to Ruth's worth as a woman when the women of Bethlehem, praising her virtue to Naomi, said, "Thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee is better

to thee than seven sons." And the tribute of Boaz, what a beautiful tribute it was! What a manly man it proved him to be! What a kindly, grateful common sentiment toward Ruth it revealed! "It hath fully been showed me," said Boaz to Ruth, "all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knowest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou hast come to trust."

And the crowning tribute came when Boaz, contemplating marriage with Ruth according to the law of his people, said to her, "All the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." So this heroine, a Moabitish woman, a young widow, toiling, gleaning after the reapers in the field, supporting herself and her mother-in-law by honest labor, becomes the wife of Boaz, "the mighty man of wealth."

One of the happiest features of this alliance, which had many happy features, was the delight with which the people received the proposal of Boaz to wed Ruth and the hearty approbation which they accorded the

union. This was a tribute to both Boaz and Ruth. "And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build up the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah and be famous in Bethlehem: and let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."

From that union sprang the line of kings whose deeds made Israel a mighty people; from that alliance came the genius which gave splendor to Hebrew literature, and from Ruth and Boaz there came through warriors, poets, seers, and kings the rich blood of Joseph, to whom Mary the Virgin was espoused when there was born of her in Ruth's adopted town of Bethlehem a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPREME WOMAN-HEROIC

Mary—The Mother of Jesus

If the brow of any mortal in this world-history of ours deserves a halo, it is the radiant brow of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The art which has circled her head with glory has expressed the universal veneration of mankind for the truly greatest woman of all time. If John the Baptist was worthy to be called the greatest man born of woman because he was the ordained forerunner and herald of the Christ, does not Mary become the greatest of women because she was ordained of heaven to be the mother of the world's Saviour? "Blessed art thou among women," said the angel; and every noble soul since then has repeated the angelic salutation, "Blessed art thou among women." As the solemn mystery pervaded her being and the Galilæan virgin became conscious of her heaven-appointed destiny, and began to realize what honor the Holy Ghost had bestowed upon her, she was lifted into a rapture of exultation and her soul broke forth with inspired joy: "My soul doth

magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever."

We are profoundly impressed by the sweet and modest nobility with which this divinely exalted woman bore the honor of that mysterious and holy motherhood. The very delicacy of her situation demanded of her a heroism which nothing in the soul of woman but her most womanly virtue, an absolutely perfect faith in God, and the most implicit confidence in the fair-mindedness of the world could inspire. Her own consciousness of purity seems to have made her naïvely oblivious to the possibility of any false or vicious

interpretation of her condition. And yet the awful apprehension may have dawned upon her gentle spirit that a corrupt world would pass her by with an incredulous smile or a contemptuous sneer. If so, her woman soul then needed the mighty bracing of an inspired heroism. Incredible as it may seem, the depravity, viciousness, and demoniacal cruelty of human nature have compelled that name, the Virgin Mary, to bear a two-fold odium—the odium of unchastity and hypocrisy, and the odium of fanaticism and idolatry. Which insult has been the more bitter and revolting it may be difficult to determine, the charge that she was an impure woman or the claim that she was divine. Which has done more to create doubt as to her real character, the imputation of weakness and depravity or the imputation of immaculateness and impeccability, it would be impossible to say. But the depravity of human nature never became more unspeakably little, cowardly, unmanly, vile, than when by direct or indirect charges, by affirmation or inuendo, such men as Voltaire, Paine, Ingersoll, Nietzsche, the madman, and Haeckel, the worse than madman, have attempted to befoul the name and malign the character of Mary, the mother of Jesus. It may have been withheld from her pure eyes

to see the shameful vision of her own traducing. She may never have imagined in her innocent womanly soul that the world would ever produce a man who could be unmanly enough to question her innocency and to insult her memory, else there might have been demanded of her more than a mortal heroism to contemplate the shame of it. Philosophy and criticism unblushingly bespatter with indecent insinuations, or with blatantly foul charges, the white fame of the best and greatest of women, it is only when honor has fled to brutish beasts, and these high studies have fallen into decadence and the brain of the scholar has begun to rot.

But let us believe that this Mary, the most nearly divine mother of human history, lived and died without having to bear the shock of such a thought as that men, chivalrous men, would jest at her motherhood, repudiate her claims with a sneer, and seek to brand her character and her name with indecent ignominy. O, angel of God, above the hiss and snarl, the jest and sneer of the world's infidelity, we hear again thy sweet and heavenly salutation, "Blessed art thou among women." The angel is still the best philosopher, the best critic, the best theologian, the best scholar, the best historian; and the world

listens believingly to his "Blessed art thou among women."

But have not fanaticism and superstition brought that name of Mary into as undeserved disrepute by raising up a Maryolatry which has been a blight to religion, an affront to Jesus Christ, a humiliation to the Church of God, and a stumbling-block to all true believers? To impute to Mary divine attributes and the office of intercession, to pray to her, to claim for her and even for her image the power of miracles, to worship her, is to insult her, because it is to place her before Jesus Christ himself and ascribe to her those divine virtues and prerogatives which belong only to the Son of God. Not one of these claims did Jesus ever make for Mary. Not one of these claims did ever one of the evangelists or apostles make for her. Nowhere in the Word of God is she credited with having performed a miracle; nowhere is the promise made that she will ever work a miracle; nowhere is the encouragement held forth that prayers to her will be efficacious; nowhere is man taught to adore and worship her.

The entire Protestant world holds the name of Mary in as hallowed veneration as does the Roman Catholic world, but honors her too highly and too reverently to worship her or

to credulously kneel before her image. All honorable men should cherish her memory too highly to question her purity or to affirm her divinity. Her name, the name of the best, the purest, the greatest, yet the most pathetic of Eve's family, is being rescued from the false and cowardly insults of infidelity and from the humiliating, revolting odium of fanaticism and superstition, and as never before since she became the mother of the world's Saviour does it shine with the superlative glory which the angel saw in that humble, holy Mary when he hailed her, "Blessed art thou among women."

That Mary fully grasped the truth of Christ's Messiahship and comprehended the vast significance of her relation to Jesus and of his relation to the world's redemption may be doubted, unless we are ready to believe that her spiritual vision was more penetrating than that of the apostles, who did not seem to understand even up to the morning of Christ's resurrection the true spiritual nature of his mission and Kingdom. That she with all who heard wondered at the story of the shepherds and the message which the angels brought to them on the morning of the Saviour's birth, and that "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart," does

by no means signify that she understood the mystery of the divine incarnation, or that she comprehended the nature of the Holy Child whom she folded to her bosom in that stable manger of the Bethlehem Inn. She was but a simple peasant girl, as innocent of education as of guile, to whom the subtleties of philosophy and the processes of logical reasoning were as foreign as her chastity and innocency were natural. It is, therefore, asking too much of her understanding, and more than is justifiable of her powers of spiritual apprehension, of her most acutely sensitive instinct, to demand that she shall, from the beginning, have a full consciousness of her mission or of the mission of Jesus. That she was from the Saviour's birth overshadowed and haunted by the strange fearsome mystery of the Child's nature and destiny and was thereby compelled to such a care of him as would make her life unnatural does not seem rationally harmonious with the facts that she was evidently not so completely absorbed in her attentions to Jesus as that she could not discharge all the duties of her home life as a faithful wife and as the equally affectionate and devoted mother of other children—James, Joses, Simon, Judas (not Iscariot), and the daughters who were known as the brothers and sisters of our

Lord. Mary's devotion to Jesus may have been no more sincere, tender, watchful, and motherly than to the others. But we may easily believe that as Jesus grew up in the home there developed in the heart of Mary and of Joseph, and of the brothers and sisters, a consciousness of an unusual presence. That Jesus was just like other boys, no more, no less, it is quite unnecessary for us to imagine. That there must have been occasional, if not constant, manifestations of superiority in the life of the Divine Child, it need not tax our reason and faith to conjecture. We have this glimpse into his early childhood and have revealed to us the mother's tender care for his physical and spiritual welfare: "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord); and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

What feelings may have been excited in Mary's heart by the visit of the Magi we cannot know, but there were so many extraordinary circumstances attending the birth of Mary's Child that her soul must have been filled with an unusual motherly solicitude lest any mishap befall him. The hasty flight into Egypt and the persuasion that they were directed by the angel of the Lord reveal with what a care Mary and Joseph were guarding the young Child's life. It is a beautiful comment upon the home life at Nazareth, and especially upon the motherly faithfulness of Mary, which we read between the lines of Luke's record: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." These words are found in connection with the going and coming of the family between Nazareth and Jerusalem in the performance of their formal religious duties, and would seem to open that family life to our view and to show with what devotion that mother watched over the welfare of her marvelous boy. It was in this connection also that the incident is related of Mary's three days' anxious search for Jesus, whom she found in the temple. Nor could she forbear telling Jesus with what sorrow they had sought him. True, there was

nothing remarkable in Mary's motherly concern and anxiety for her missing boy. Any true mother would have sought for her child with the same solicitude. There was no rebuke in Jesus' words to Mary: "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" These words addressed to Mary in the temple reveal what an intimacy existed between the boy Jesus and his mother. Had they talked of these matters heart to heart in the quiet of the little home at Nazareth? Had Jesus in holy, secret communings with his mother mentioned his "Father's business" so that the term was familiar to the ears of Mary? If when Jesus addressed these words to his mother the others "understood not the saying he spake unto them," the saying had a meaning for Mary as "his mother kept all these things in her heart." In Nazareth, by the great good sense of that mother's training, Jesus was permitted to live a perfectly natural life, in which he yielded happy obedience, and in the healthy atmosphere of which "he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

Nothing more is seen of Jesus in the record of his life until he is a man thirty years of age. Nothing more is seen of Mary for all these intervening eighteen years. But that

during those years she had been receiving revelations from a study of Jesus' character and life, and doubtless from special manifestations of his divineness, is quite evident from an incident at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. When Mary told Jesus that the wine was exhausted, had she a knowledge of Christ's power to do what Elisha did when by miracle he filled the vessels with oil, or what Elijah did when "the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail"? Had Jesus ever performed such a miracle in the little home at Nazareth? Had he ever increased the scanty loaves, or replenished the cruse of oil, or filled the wine jar, when in that humble carpenter's large family the provisions ran low? The Saviour's first public miracle was at Cana. But Jesus seems to have understood Mary to mean that she suggested an exercise of his powers; his answer implies this: "Mine hour is not yet come." Had they talked of these matters? Had Jesus told his mother, and told her alone, that he would show forth his power to the world by miracles? It now seems to be only a matter of the time, of the "hour," when he shall begin this work, and this alone seems to have been kept secret from Mary. Again, the remark which Mary addressed to the servants indi-

cates that she knew of his miracle-working power. "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2. 5). Yes, Mary was the first to know Jesus as "the power of God." She was expectant. The words of Jesus did not disconcert her. They seem to have assured her that he was about to manifest his power, hence she advised the servants to prepare for the miracle. The first miracle of our Lord was wrought, virtually, at the request of his mother! Here Mary's influence over Jesus, the power of a sweet and motherly persuasion, is manifest. The tender regard for his mother is also revealed by the Saviour in his complying with her suggestion as if to honor her. And well may we suppose that she rejoiced as Jesus "manifested forth his glory" in this "beginning of miracles." If Mary had not been prepared for this miracle by others which he had wrought in the privacy of their home life she must have been so impressed by recent events as to be ready for any wonderful sign that Jesus might give to the people in proof of his divine character and mission. Had Mary looked upon the Saviour's baptism in the Jordan and heard the voice of God from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? Or, if not, had the

scene been described to her by Jesus, or by others who had witnessed it, and had it all been talked over at home in the presence of Mary and Joseph and the astonished, mystified brothers and sisters? Was Mary acquainted with the incident of the Lord's temptation in the wilderness? Had she learned the story from the Saviour's own lips, while marveling at the recital of all the details afterward recorded by the evangelists? And had it touched her motherly heart, had her eyes filled with tears of compassion to see the wan face of her son and to hear him tell of his sufferings and of the fierce cruelty of the Satanic temptations? Had she looked into his eyes with motherly pride and studied his strangely lighted face as he told of his victory? She must have known these things and they raised new wonder, new questionings, and new conjectures in her mind. She knew also that Jesus had entered upon a ministry of teaching which was attracting the attention of the people. He was calling disciples and they were leaving their occupations to follow him. They came with him to the marriage feast in Cana, and their faith in him was confirmed by the miracle in which he changed the water into wine. As Jesus, therefore, enters upon his public ministry he is still so

attached to Mary and she so tenderly devoted to him that they are often found together, as at the marriage feast and during the visit to Capernaum with his brethren and disciples. When they seem to have been separated for some days, and the news is spreading that enemies are making bitter charges against Jesus and even plotting to destroy him, that influential officials are threatening to kill him, Mary, becoming alarmed for his safety, hastens to him, searching from village to village until she finds him. Though her Jesus is a grown man, Mary is as anxious about his safety as she was when she sought him sorrowing years before when he was but a lad. With all the rumors that were filling the air as to the conflicting opinions of the people and the sinister threats of men in authority, Mary's heart must have been sadly perturbed, and it must have been with a restless, heavy-hearted anxiety that she went out from the home with her other sons to find Jesus and assure herself of his safety. Certain writers have strangely forced into this scene a rupture between Jesus and his mother. They have erroneously concluded that the Saviour, by his reply to the messengers who announced that his mother had come and desired to see him, then and there coldly rebuked her anx-

iety and motherly interest in him, and ended the tender and intimate relation that had existed between them for the thirty years of his life by declaring that she was no more to him than any other person who believed in him. Nothing can be more strained and absurd than such an interpretation of the Saviour's language. In the midst of his discourse to the multitude it is announced that his mother and brothers are in the crowd and desire to speak to him. He takes advantage of the incident to enforce a great and precious truth; he catches up the endearing words, "mother" and "brethren," and, inspired by the tender emotions they awaken in him, and by the warm feelings which the very presence of that mother and his brothers kindles in his heart, he sets forth the winning, comforting truth of the intimate, loving, vital, spiritual relationship to him of all true believers. If Jesus was cold and indifferent when the presence of his mother was announced, how could he have put any warmth, tenderness, spiritual emotion, and heart-touching power into the words addressed to his disciples, "Behold my mother and my brethren"? If Jesus treats his disciples with the indifference that some would have us believe he treated Mary and his brothers that day, who would wish to be

his mother and brethren? But if, as was doubtless the case, it touched his heart with a sweet tenderness and gratitude to learn that with all the enemies that were rising up against him, with all the accusations and threatenings that were assailing him, with the clouds and the storm of the unbelieving world's opposition gathering about him, there was one who never lost faith in him, one who loved him with a mother's love, one who would be near him in trouble to comfort him and minister to him, one who anxiously sought to be assured of his safety and to assure him of her constant, abiding, eternal devotion—if this manifestation of mother love and loyalty warmed his heart with emotion, what a sweetness and pathos, what a tenderness and spiritual unction must he have put into the words to his disciples, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother"! It was as if he had said, "Between me and my disciples there shall exist as tender and loving a relation as exists between me and this precious mother and these brethren who come to show me their loyalty and love."

It may well be imagined how troubled in heart poor Mary must have been over the growing opposition to the Saviour's teaching.

Although the common people, in their sad condition of poverty, ignorance, and oppression, heard Jesus gladly, and the multitudes followed him and wondered at the gracious words that fell from his lips, and although every village and city could tell of his power, miraculously exercised in the healing of their sick, yet was there a sullen, an ominous, and a growing opposition to him manifesting itself among the official and influential classes. A political and ecclesiastical conspiracy was forming against him. Nor could poor Mary have been ignorant of this. As to the outcome of it all, as to what the Saviour's intention was regarding the establishment of his Kingdom and as to the character of that Kingdom, his simple peasant mother may not have had the courage of heart or the astuteness of mind to conjecture. It doubtless remained all vague and mysterious to her, as it did to the disciples. And the very mystery may have brought fear to her soul, and she may have had sad forebodings, even unexplainable premonitions of danger, evil, tragedy. Could there have been a more anxious, perplexed, heavily laden heart than Mary's as the events hastened on to the culmination of the Saviour's ministry? What was the burden of her motherly prayers during those dark days of

the gathering storm? What must have been the main topic of conversation in that little home over which the cloud of mournful apprehension was resting? Could Mary think of anything else than Jesus, and the danger he was in and of the possible outcome of it all? She who was so wont to keep her thoughts to herself, to ponder in her mother heart all she heard about Jesus from shepherd or disciple or angel, she must have hid much of her anxiety and fear, of her growing dread and foreboding of evil, in her own sad heart and borne alone with a wondrous faith and patience the great sorrow that no one could know but such a mother of such a Son. But Mary was a true, a transcendently great and self-effacing heroine.

In the final, awful scene on Calvary "there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother." What a picture of heroism! Where sneering Pharisees jostled snarling priests, and brutal soldiers mingled with the maddened, howling mob; where disciples, fearing to show themselves, had turned and fled; where all was dark, cruel, frenzied, blood-thirsty, tragical, there stood Mary nearest to the cross, her mother-soul all fearless, undaunted, magnificently heroic. And was it this mother's heroism that inspired the presence of the other

women, and of John, the only disciple that had not in cowardice forsaken Jesus and fled? Was it Mary's thought, "I must be, I will be with him and nearest him to the last"? And was the thought of the others, "Let us follow Mary and be with her in this awful trial"? Had not Mary insisted on standing by the cross of Jesus in all the danger and horror of that crucifixion, can we imagine that John would have stood there, or Mary's sister, or Mary Magdalene?

Again does Jesus show his appreciation of his mother's devotion, and, tenderly addressing her in his dying agony, he commends her to the care of John, the disciple whom he loved. Was not Mary's presence there a comfort to her dying Son? The loyalty, the fearless, dauntless, heroic, loving devotion of motherhood shone forth into the darkness of that appalling tragedy as the greatest thing in the world. There is nothing in history to equal it; of all heroic deeds of heroic women or of heroic men nothing parallels that last act of Mary's devotion—*"There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother."* And had not that heroism a blessed reward? Mary must have longed for one more look of loving recognition, one more word of comfort from Jesus. She must naturally have wished to know that

Jesus was aware of her presence, that he was conscious that his mother was near him and would be with him to the last. "Will he know I am here?" "Will he be able to see me and recognize me?" "Will he speak to me?" These questions must have filled her anxious, agitated heart. He does know she is there; he does see her; he does speak to her! O, so tender, so considerate, so comforting is that recognition! Yes, "Blessed art thou among women"! Here on dark and tragic Calvary, as in angel-encircled Bethlehem, and now in all the earth, and forever, are Gabriel's accents true: "Blessed art thou among women." And for thy faithfulness to Jesus Christ, the world's omnific Saviour, for thy wondrous and heroic motherhood, no less than for the heaven-imposed honor of which the Holy Ghost had found thee worthy—"Blessed art thou among women." For the Nazareth conception, for the Bethlehem birth, for the devotion of Calvary, thy song of exultation passes into prophecy and into music eternal: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." And with thee, heroine of heroines, holiest of mothers, shall heroic motherhood everywhere and always be called —BLESSED.