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ON LEARNING TO PLAY THE 'CELLO

BY DORIS STEVENS

ONCE upon a time, when I was a student in Oberlin College and Conservatory, I had a suitor who played the 'cello, a subordinate accomplishment among many talents. He could sing. He could preach the gospel. He could direct a chorus. And finally, he contemplated going to Africa to convert the heathen.

Of Spring evenings we played "Tristan und Isolde," "Parsifal," the Venusberg music from "Tannhäuser," and the bridal chorus from "Lohengrin," I at the piano, the suitor at the 'cello. I remember feeling that the piano, as an instrument, was entirely inadequate for venting one's emotions. Strings seemed to me far more moving and compelling.

Also, I heard the suitor sing. As a singing man, he was more skilled than as a 'cellist. He had a rarely beautiful voice. And on occasions I heard him preach, and he seemed to me to be very eloquent. He discussed with me the romance of going to a foreign country to convert the heathen. He conceived me to be a desirable colleague in that undertaking. But at sixteen—he was twenty-five—I had other ideas.

Now, if my yearning to play the 'cello, which may have been born at that time, was stimulated by my rather cautious attachment to this versatile young man, why did I not yearn also to sing, to preach,

and to convert the heathen Hottentots? I must add, in case you say at once, Aha! it was the fact that you did the 'cello and piano together!—that I also sang in the chorus which he directed, and played the organ (by special permit from the Dean) when he preached. So it cannot be said that my preference for the 'cello was based on the joint quality of our performance. No; there was something inherent in the appeal of the 'cello itself.

The suitor did not become 'cellist, preacher, or choral director. And he married another girl. Some time then passed, and in the course of the usual student Winter concerts, there came to play to us May Muckle, the English 'cellist. I remember the occasion vividly. She was tall, dark, impressive, and came on the platform with a peculiarly awkward, lumbering gait, which aroused in me enormous enthusiasm. A certain degree of awkwardness captivates me to this day. Whether the 'cello enhanced her natural size I do not now remember, but she seemed of heroic size. And she did not dwarf the instrument. The warm 'cello in her hands was like a great ship come into a safe and welcoming harbor. She and the instrument were at peaceful ease with each other.

I remember also how beautiful her head was as it bent to the instrument, and that

her thick brown hair was bobbed. This was the first time I had ever seen a woman with bobbed hair, and I was greatly excited by it. Her head may not have been exceptionally beautiful, but to this day it stands out in my memory as something of great stark beauty. I know at this distance that it was probably because it was the first woman's head I had ever seen that was unfestooned by wads or wisps of hair. But that is another story. I formed a warm, secret attachment to the English 'celliste, whom I never met, and whom I never heard play again. As I write, I remember a great deal about her as a person and all the lovely pictures she made for me, and practically nothing about the quality of her playing.

II

The following year I confessed to Hans—head of the 'cello department of the conservatory, my desire to learn the 'cello. "Ah," he exclaimed, "hands made for the 'cello! I will teach you." But since I was already doing the full college course plus piano, voice, dramatics and athletics, it never seemed possible to find the time to take it on. Out of college, the suffrage for women agitation stirred me deeply, and my interest in the arts, as such, was shoved into the background. Or perhaps I put it there. I am not sure which.

On a grey November day I found myself sitting opposite Maud Powell, the violinist, on a train bound for Denver, where we were both to perform. Maud Powell was to give a concert, I was to ask Colorado women to give their backing to the national suffrage amendment. Miss Powell and I fell to discussing one thing and another. Again, I dragged out my secret yearning, which by this time was creaking considerably from disuse, as do all unfulfilled yearnings.

"A wonderful instrument!" said Miss Powell. "A most soothing instrument! You must be very tired. Are you, then, very tired?"

Now, I seemed to myself to be in a high state of vital energy. And so I said, "I'm not aware that I'm tired." As I look back upon this time I might well have been, what with organizing and agitating from Maine to Louisiana and from Oregon to Florida. I traveled in those days with a solitary dress-suit case and quantities of purple, gold, and white banners mounted on poles, which, because of the poverty of our treasury, one frequently toted without service from a porter. And, as for the itinerant vaudeville artist, there were many one-night stands. But it was very gay and exciting, and honest fatigue was easily slept off in the early twenties.

Miss Powell examined my hands. "Very supple," she said, "and with your knowledge of piano you will be able with a moderate amount of practice to play ensemble music quite creditably in six months." The task of adding a 'cello to my baggage of banners loomed before me, but under her encouragement I warmed to the prospect.

"Tell me," I said, "why would a person, if tired, be drawn to the 'cello? Why do you emphasize that point?"

"The 'cello is restful to the nerves," she replied. "Now, if I had a daughter who wanted to play the violin, I would advise strongly against it. You see, every note you draw on a violin is an attack upon the nerves. The violin is pitched against gravity, and is therefore completely nerve-wracking to the system. If I had my life to live over, I doubt if I would ever touch the instrument. There have been times when I thought my nerves could not possibly stand any more irritation. The violin is a devastating instrument. But the 'cello is played downward. It is pitched with gravity. And so, you are probably unconsciously seeking to play an instrument which will soothe your tired nerves."

At first all this seemed slightly mystical to me. But the more I thought about it, the more captivated I became with the idea of soothing the tired nerves which

I had not known were tired. Banners, political conventions, deputations, picketing, and what not continued exigent, however, and the 'cello remained only a vagrant hope, returning to haunt me from time to time—probably, according to Miss Powell, in moments of fatigue and frustration. Eventually the suffrage battle was over, and the 'cello pushed itself forward. Shyly, I mentioned it to some of my friends and family. Usually an eyebrow was arched. I got no encouragement.

I let it be known around the household that I was going in for æsthetics, and that a 'cello would be appreciated as a Christmas present. Again, no enthusiasm. I got a motor-car instead. It was doubtless an excellent idea. But I don't in the least care for motoring.

III

Convinced finally that it was folly to wait longer upon friendly encouragement, I walked out into the morning sunshine of New York, the camping ground of the greatest musicians of the world, to hunt for a 'cello. Immediately New York became a No Man's Land. Where to go?

I learned that there was an old 'cello for sale in a pawn-shop just back of the Metropolitan Opera House. I went there. The 'cello had been sold. When would the broker have another one? Not the slightest idea. 'Cellos didn't come his way often.

I next visited a flashy music-house somewhere in West Forty-second street. "I'll just abandon looking for an old 'cello," I said, "I'll get *any* 'cello." By now I was determined that the sun should not set on another day without my possessing one. But the indifferent clerk said they had no 'cellos assembled. They could assemble one in a few days, however. This seemed to me to be an insult to any instrument. After all, it wasn't a cracker-box! I now had ideas about, at least, a fairly well-seasoned instrument. I left without ordering.

I hurried to Aeolian Hall. That temple

must be a place where they can direct you to anything, I felt. "I want to buy a 'cello," I said.

"Try Schirmer's in East Forty-third street," said an indifferent young lady at the information desk. "They sell all kinds of instruments."

The afternoon was diminishing. I almost ran to Schirmer's.

"We do not keep 'cellos," said the elderly salesman.

"Where can you direct me? Where can I get one?"

"Sorry," said the old gentleman, "I'm afraid I can't tell you."

I leaned against the counter somewhat limp, wondering what to do next, when a woman customer beside me, who had overheard my query, said, in what seemed to me at that moment one of the sweetest voices I'd ever heard, "If you'll pardon me for saying so, I know where you can go."

"Thank you so much," I said.

"I have a son who plays the 'cello," she continued, "and he got his at Friedrich's in Fifth avenue. We have bought musical supplies there for a long time, and found them very satisfactory."

I thanked her warmly, and proceeded to the enchanted place.

"I would like to buy a 'cello," I said to the charming young woman who approached me, reflecting, as I said the word boldly, how fortunate it was that a woman was going to wait upon me.

"Just a moment," she said, and instead of returning with a prospective 'cello she returned with a man. "Aha," I thought bitterly, "they probably let this nice young woman sell strings and bows and pitch-pipes and other minor appurtenances! The important work is done by men!"

I pulled myself together and said, less boldly than before, "I should like to buy a 'cello . . . not very expensive . . . one good enough to begin on."

"What size would you like?" asked the snappy salesman.

"Oh, do they come in sizes?"

"Oh, yes." And, as I hesitated, he inquired, "How old is the *child*?"

I was totally unprepared for such a question, and became miserably confused. Through my misery I perceived that the size of the instrument bore a direct relation to the size of the performer. I make no apologies, but it seemed utterly impossible to tell the snappy salesman that I was the child, and so I answered, in a far-away voice, which sounded alien to my ears.

"Why . . . about twenty."

"Well then, you want a full size 'cello."

"Yes," I said, quite gaily now, and enormously relieved, "a full sized one." Mercifully, at this point, he disappeared into a back store-room to hunt for it.

"Here are two very good 'cellos," said the snappy salesman, returning, "made in Germany."

I surveyed them solemnly, deciding that I would have to choose the one whose looks I liked the best, since I could distinguish them in no other way, and I was assured, that being of equal price, they were of equal quality.

In this moment of meditation, the snappy salesman said, "How do you think he would like this one?"

My voice utterly failed me, which was no excuse for lying further. But I had gone too far to retreat. This thing swept over me like a deluge. There I sat, lamentably helpless and shame-faced, aiding and abetting society while it transformed me into a male child of twenty! It was bad enough to have permitted the child business to go by unchallenged. But now, to have its sex so glibly established seemed just too much. But as I say, my voice was swallowed within me. Meekly, I said, "I think he would like that one," signed up, and hurried out.

Out in the cool Spring air my confusion fell away. I walked gaily home in the twilight. I thought the city never more beautiful. And I felt friendly toward every stranger I passed.

IV

That night I went with a party of friends to see Gilbert and Sullivan's "Patience." I sat next to Max Rosen, the violinist, to whom I proudly announced that I had that day purchased a 'cello and intended to learn to play it. Would he recommend a teacher. "That's very interesting," he said. "Just why do *you* want to play the 'cello?" Little did I know that this question would be put to me incessantly from then on. My instinct, however, served me faithfully at the outset. "And why not?" I said. At which point, happily, the curtain rose on the third act of "Patience."

You may remember that this is the scene in which the middle-aged grotesque comedienne enters alone, carrying a full-sized double-bass viol. Before she had proceeded with her comic song, the party, led by Max Rosen, burst forth into hilarious merriment. See how I would look! See how funny it all was! To the spectators not in the know, it sounded like mild mutiny. Necks were craned in our direction. I was silent, registering deep contempt. Besides, was I not now an authority on sizes? And was not the double-bass before our eyes at least twice the size of the 'cello? And, in a superior manner, did I not say to myself, If anyone in this company had vitality enough to undertake an entirely new instrument when past thirty, would I laugh at them? I answered myself virtuously that of course I would not.

However, succumbing to the determined gleam in my eye, Max Rosen did recommend a teacher. "He has no pupils, but he might find it amusing to teach you. Now if you will consult with Dr. X—(a dental surgeon), he will tell you how to reach him."

"How does he know about him?" I asked.

"Well, you see, he once worked in Dr. X's office."

"A dentist?" I inquired.

"Well, not exactly. You see, it was this

way: This young man was a 'cellist. He fell in love with a young woman who didn't think much of artists (Something to her opinion, no doubt, I thought). She thought there was no future to an artist's career, that he wouldn't make enough money, and what not, so she persuaded him to take up another profession. He happened to be a friend of Dr. X. He studied dentistry, and Dr. X, who, by the way, is one of the world's best—tutored him in all the new and advanced dental methods and ultimately took him into his office, where he became a high-grade expert. He never gave up his 'cello, but pursued it as an avocation. Then the girl speedily fell out of love with him and left him. He abandoned dentistry and went back professionally to the 'cello."

I confess that this gloomy tale left me with little zest for taking on that teacher. However, days have a way of following each other, each one bringing new hope. Also, remembering my experience purchasing the 'cello, I did not welcome a repetition. What if I did go to several teachers, and each one were to ask me how old the *child* was, and was *he* talented, and this and that? No, plainly I couldn't bear it. And so, on the morrow, I telephoned to Dr. X. that I would like to meet the prospective teacher. Where could he be found?

"Oh," said Dr. X, in alarm, "he has not yet been prepared for this. I shall have to see him and explain to him about you."

"What in the world is there to explain about me?" I demanded with some irritation. "I merely want some one to teach me to play the 'cello. You say this man is an excellent artist. Now he will, or he will not, teach me. I will, or will not, take lessons from him, but I think it is important that at least we look each other over and if no instant antipathy manifests itself we can start at once."

This simple direction left Dr. X aghast. Finally, however, he agreed to "prepare" the young man and send him to my home.

That afternoon as I entered my apart-

ment-house the doorman said, "Two musicians have gone up to your apartment, each with a large instrument."

"Two?" I asked, mystified.

"Yes. I think one came down, but the other one is still up there."

Whoever started the legend that door-men are sophisticated? Any man is suspect with them. And an artist? Well, plainly, the image of one was inflated to the size of two in this case. Tiresome people!

On entering I encountered a very frightened young man. Whether he was just "prepared" or whether he possessed the true soul of an artist, I do not know. At any rate, he concealed any astonishment he may have had. He seemed to think it quite natural that anyone should want to play the 'cello.

I took my first lesson then and there. And the 'cello which I had purchased in such haste and confusion was sent back and replaced by one of the teacher's choosing.

Like all beginners, I proceeded eagerly, the moment the first lesson was over, to practise. This consisted of drawing the bow mournfully across the open strings, steadily and carefully. Absorbed in this, I did not notice the housemaid enter. Selma was an uninhibited Swede. With an uncontrolled laugh of derision, she offered, "But why do you play such a big fiddle? Why don't you learn to play the mandolin? I play the mandolin."

"That's very nice," I said stiffly. "But you see, it's the 'cello I want to play. This is a 'cello, not a violin."

She laughed stupidly, and exclaimed in the latest slang, "Oh Boy!"

Charlotte Ives, an actress friend of mine, dropped in for tea. The sight of me at the 'cello threw her into hysterics. Trust the stage, too light-headed about its own exhibitions, to fail to understand creative exhibition in a less facile art, I thought testily. What I said was, "If you had a particle of creative ability in you, you wouldn't find it so funny in me." She only laughed the harder.

Soon I began to divide all humanity into two classes: those who cheered and those who jeered. I need hardly say that my approval went lustily to the former. I reflected that I never before knew how easy the assortment was. The dull and diminishing in vitality were all for having one die, if not actually, then creatively, at thirty. And a woman past thirty who would undertake such a cruel and unusual instrument, was, well, peculiar, foolish or perhaps dangerous, according to the nearness to death of the judge.

"Your motto," said F. P. A. at dinner, one night, "should be, When a 'cello needs a friend." And after dinner he drew forth his harmonica and showed off to me. This was probably the stoutest cheer I ever got. One artist to another. It was heartening. I played my first scale for him during an intermission between numbers on the harmonica. I think Frank was more interested in his own accomplishment than in mine. But so was I in my own. That he was interested at all won me forever.

Meanwhile Dudley Malone was returning from three months abroad. I had embarked upon my adventure during his absence. Before going to the pier to meet him, I rehearsed my one and only étude. Then I carefully put the 'cello in a conspicuous place in the living-room and departed for the pier. Dinner over, we talked of many things. Would he inquire about my progress? Would he ask me to play? Now I scarcely heard what he was saying, so eager was I to see some sign of interest. After all, I had been depending upon the cold world for interest, and here in the bosom of the family it would be different. It grew late and I could bear the uncertainty no longer. I was longing to show off to the beloved. (Never before, nor since, did I venture so far.)

"Wouldn't you like to hear me play for you? I have my first piece. . . . It will take only five minutes. . . ."

I realized I wasn't getting what might be called a warm reception, but I would not believe it. I didn't want to believe it.

So I gayly persisted, "It's really quite pretty."

Since no verbal protest was uttered, I covered up the beloved's uneasiness and my own disappointment by a show of activity, assembled the bow and 'cello, and proceeded to play the simple melody. In between notes I had only presence enough to glance up once rather timorously, and thought I detected an anxious look on the face opposite me. I finished. There was a heart-breaking silence. And then, "Have none of the neighbors complained yet?"

I tried to laugh, but the laugh fell away somewhere inside me.

It must be set down that Dudley Malone subsequently softened. Perhaps it was his gallantry that called forth some defense of a woman derided. Certainly it was not art. Perhaps it was that my interest in the 'cello was shared by the great.

"You have always," he said, "been an admirer of Havelock Ellis. I thought it would interest you to see what Ellis has to say on the subject of 'cello playing," and he presented me with a copy of Ellis' "Impressions and Comments, Third Series." After the so late implied hostility, I regarded this overture as practically a guarantee of peace with honor. I think I fell into unbecoming gratitude, as we women have a way of doing over belated approvals. And then I hunted down this mystical theory in Ellis' volume:

. . . The woman violinist, however well she may play, so often looks rigid and strained; she reminds one of the second-rate strong man of the music halls, who, indeed, performs the feat, but at such an obvious cost one wishes he had attempted something less. For, whatever the art may be—whether playing at music or playing at life—there is no mastery until ease is attained.

The 'cello has not to be similarly supported, and the 'cellist sits in the attitude of apparent repose which suits a woman. A man usually looks a little awkward with a 'cello between his knees, like a man nursing a baby. It appears to demand no exorbitant muscular effort; but to respond to it emotionally is what a man can with difficulty do in the 'cellist's attitude without looking a little ridiculous, although he can triumphantly do so in the violinist's. So it is that most of the famous women who play the violin cultivate a coldly professional air, but not the men; and so also most of the famous men who play the 'cello, but not the women.

I realise it afresh this evening as I watch Guilhermina Suggia playing Schumann's rather mysteriously beautiful violoncello concerto. Leaving aside the question of technical achievement, the emotional response to her instrument is more sensitive than a man's can well be. The instrument seems to become part of herself. Her movements are larger and freer, with all the charm of skill combined with instinct; her enraptured Oriental face is lighted with a joyous smile. The vision answers to the music.

In Havelock Ellis' earlier series—each time he sets down in his impressions and comments a word about the 'cello it is in the month of May, which interests me—he writes rapturously and even more mystically of his reaction to woman and the 'cello:

She is girlish and slender, this great master of the violoncello. An attractive figure to look at as she comes on the platform, with her great beautiful instrument and her tragic Egyptian face, the brown hair that half falls and half curls round her head, wearing an embroidered wine-coloured overdress with long hanging sleeves and underskirt of bright grass-green silk, most like a playing angel from the heavenly choir of some Florentine or Venetian Paradise. She is always grave and simple, she knows how to smile, but when her instrument is against her shoulder she is absorbed in her art and only speaks by her expressive eyes. She plays the concertos of Schumann and Lalo and a truly Spanish little Sérénade Espagnole by Glazunov. She is so serious, the artist within her is so intensely alive. At times, when she bends back her head and long bare neck, and the blood-dyed drapery strays from the extended arm, she seems crucified to the instrument; with arched eye-brows raised there is almost an expression of torture on her face, one seems to detect a writhing movement that only the self-mastery of art controls, and one scarcely knows whether it is across the belly of the instrument between her thighs or across her own entrails that the bow is drawn to evoke the slow deep music of these singing tones.

I share Ellis' enthusiasm for the 'cello and for the decorative value of women playing the 'cello. It seems to me, however, that he digs himself a pit when he tries to rationalize his enthusiasm. He loves woman. He loves the female form. He loves the 'cello. And so he finds the combination tremendous and awards to woman the 'cello which he loves. But I own that I do not see why woman must sit any more than man, except that the sitting posture is one capable of greater variety and so greater beauty. But this

holds for both man and woman. Ellis has custom on his side—madonnas—laws—literature. But I suspect it is only another case of the inflated mother-image crossing the view of the very highly civilized Ellis when he contemplates woman holding, not a baby but a musical instrument. Man may hold a great variety of things. If woman holds a musical instrument it must be a baby.

Ellis may be unconsciously aware of the fact that the body of the 'cello fits precisely into the form of an ellipse, which is an ancient female symbol. It is the form into which the entire body of woman fits. When a woman plays a 'cello the ellipse is set inside a triangle, which is another ancient symbol, the feminine symbol of love. But so does a man playing the 'cello make the outline of a triangle. And so it is, I think, that Ellis falls into his own pit when he turns into the female body everything he likes.

I am aware that this is a time when the theory that all inanimate objects have definite sex symbolism has been revived and popularly projected on the modern world. It is a fast and furious theory, and the 'cello could not hope to escape classification. Said my neighbor, Floyd Dell, of a cool summer evening in Croton, "I suppose you know, my friend, that the 'cello is a male instrument."

"No," I replied, "I'm ignorant of the sex of instruments."

"You'd better look into this, and see what it's all about," said the novelist-psychologist-philosopher. "Doubtless this reveals something very important in your life."

"I am unprepared either to dispute or defend your theory. Even if this were true, still I feel no less friendly to the 'cello than before. Are you by any chance suggesting that I, as a feminist, should have nothing to do with a male instrument?"

A few days later, at tea, when I commented to Konrad Bercovici on Ellis' somewhat mystical opinion, Bercovici remarked:

"Twenty years ago I wrote an article on sex in musical instruments. In that I advanced the theory that the 'cello was undoubtedly an instrument for the female. I go further than Ellis. I say that it is not only an instrument which should peculiarly appeal to women and which has been long neglected by women, but that as an instrument it is female."

My growing bewilderment at the controversial sex of the instrument which I was about to play doubtless showed in my face. For Bercovici continued patiently to unravel to me with great finality his early assertion. Bercovici is a musician of parts, and I was inclined to accept humbly his theory until such a time as I should become better acquainted with the 'cello and perhaps develop one of my own.

Soon after, however, William Rose Benét, the poet, said with equal finality, "It is clear that the 'cello is an hermaphroditic instrument."

Clarence Darrow was just impatient at such goings-on in a woman. "Do you go in for such nonsense?" he said. "I always thought you had sense."

"Let's see, how many avocations have you?" I asked gently. "Religion, biology, crime; you write a little—all in addition to being a lawyer. Why shouldn't I have an avocation that delights me?"

"What fool ideas you women get!" he snarled, half friendly, half irritated.

"Do you know the 'cello? It's so beautiful," I pleaded, with the same earnestness he once used urging me to see the River Jordan.

The lawyer spoke. "I know it's a stringed instrument," he said, and shrugged his famous shoulders.

I fall back upon my teacher's feeble praise. And when he plays the second parts of my simple études, the beauty of the ensemble makes me forget all unfriendliness. It is wide hearty joy. These ecstatic moments are brief, however, for he says I am not to have this luxury often lest I be overstimulated to play ahead of my technical development. He is too cautious.

Since my motto is not Carnegie Hall by Easter, I am not impatient and I am having a lot of fun, which is very important even to the woman past thirty.

V

Now enters an episode worthy of fiction. Romance is not dead in the modern world. "A man on the telephone left this number," said my perplexed husband. "Wants you to telephone him. Guess he wants to sell you a 'cello or something. I couldn't make out what it was all about."

I called the number. Believe me or not, as you will,—the "man on the telephone" was the college-cellist-suitor of the first paragraph of this story! His conversation ran something like this: "Yes, I read in F. P. A.'s column that you were learning to play the 'cello. . . . Delighted . . . Yes . . . No. . . . I don't play any more. . . . 'Cello in storage. . . . Love to have you use it as long as you'd like. . . . Quite old. . . . Viennese. . . . I've had it since my first lesson at fourteen. . . . Father before me had it. . . . Buy it? If you find you like it after you've become acquainted with it. . . . How much? . . . Decide later. . . . Wait till you know it. . . . Yes . . . I can bring it up tomorrow. So pleased you're to have it."

He came the following morning with the 'cello. I was touched. Also I remarked the boutonnière and was pleased. It was a happy greeting after fifteen years. He did not think it peculiar that I, past thirty, was going to play his 'cello. He acted as if he had expected something like it all along. Or perhaps he still thought of me as sixteen, my age when we met and played together.

The 'cello is mine now. It is a storehouse of beauty. It seems to me to have the power of a whole orchestra. Perhaps I endow it with memories. Anyway I no longer feel the pricks of the foolish. The instrument's deep beauty is eloquent and enduring and shrivels the easy prattle of the dead.

THE SWEDES AMONG US

BY NILS F:SON BROWN

Not so many years ago the more civilized Swedes back in Sweden looked down upon all Swedish-Americans. They ridiculed them; they laughed at them. The Swedes in America, they believed, had no culture, no refinement. They were yokels, and they dressed up in gaudy, funny looking, ill-fitting clothes when they came home to the old country with a few hundred dollars in their pockets. They were yokels who had picked up a few English words and mixed them barbarously with their rustic Swedish, and all they had to say was bragging about America, its opportunities and its democracy, which knew no class distinctions and placed them on the level of millionaires and even of the President of the United States himself. Why, you could go right up to the President and shake hands with him, and you did not have to tip your hat either! At home in poor, backward Sweden you had to tip your hat to a measly clergyman and even a sheriff.

So far as I can remember, I had never met a Swedish-American when I left Sweden, and I was twenty-four. The people among whom I had moved at home never mixed with such gentry. It was simply not done. But I can very clearly remember two Swedish-Americans nevertheless. It was a Summer about twenty years ago. I spent a couple of months at a lake where civilized people who did not desire to go to the stiff, fashionable watering-places owned or rented cottages. A beautiful and lovely place, where you were free to take off your collar and coat.

A few small peasants tried to eke out a meagre living roundabout. The poorest of

them, who lived in a miserable shanty, had a son and daughter in America, and the two had come home that Summer to visit their parents. You should have seen them! It was a very hot Summer, but the young man walked along the dusty roads in patent leather shoes, a heavy suit, waistcoat and all, a stiff high collar, and a black derby. The young daughter was dressed in a long satin dress of gaudy color, which trailed in the dust—the ladies wore long skirts then, as some one with a good memory may recall—and a very large hat with plumes and feathers of all colors. I suspect that the mountain of hair, which crowned her head, was not her own.

But this young gentleman and this young lady looked down upon us poor Swedes. We felt that they despised our shirt-sleeves, our bare necks, our tennis shoes, and our women's very simple Summer dresses. We did not come up to their standard at all. The young man was, I imagine, a carpenter in Minneapolis, and his sister a maid for well-to-do Americans in New York. As for us, we were only university students, engineers, artists, authors, doctors and the like. They had fine clothes—and we wore very simple ones out there in the country.

After studying these people for two months I despised them, I must confess. And I took it that all Swedes in America were of the same calibre. One day the following Winter I happened, for the first time in my life, to see a Swedish-American newspaper, one of the largest. It came regularly, I learned, to the students' club at the University of Upsala, my alma mater. I had studied this paper only ten minutes