

therefore two. First, the instinct of self-abasement, which inhibits the supreme combative efforts that war demands. This instinct of self-abasement (here conceived in harmony with the *régession* of Professor Ribot) opposes the instinct of self-preservation with pacifism, as it opposes the sexual instincts with prudery, and economic instincts with glorifications of poverty. Second, the various pleasure-seeking, familial and economic instincts conflict with and block the instincts that involve self-sacrifice for the group. The

continuity of tribe or nation has always demanded this sacrifice of individual motives to group motives, and the nations surviving have been those in which this sacrifice was made. With the security of the group assured, selfish motives have time to grow. Gradually they become stronger than the group motives, and this is the first cause of the decay of nations. Without discipline inside the group, there is no strength against rival groups. Such might may not make right, but it makes history.

THE WOMAN WHO WRITES

BY WINIFRED KIRKLAND

I

I OFTEN wonder how other women write. Workers in art material are chary of revealing processes that might save other workers wasted effort and vain experiment, or, better yet, provoke challenge still more conducive to success. I venture to believe that any woman's literary product is a matter of constant, and often desperate, compromise between writing and living; and some examination into the wherefore of this fact may throw light on the nature of writing processes, if not also on the nature of woman-processes. Since there are scant data for analyzing the methods of other women-writers, I give only my own, the experiment and experience of a woman who has chosen to earn a living as a literary free lance.

Such conclusions must necessarily be personal and practical, pretending to

no theories except those made by immediate need. Driven to earn to-day's bread and butter, I really have no time to study the superiority of prehistoric woman in the struggle for existence. Nor can I give undivided attention to the achievements of my sex as promised by the feminist millennium, when my 9 A.M. problem is to write a story that shall please some editor, presumably male. I do not know whether or not woman's intellect is the equal of man's; I know only that mine is not.

While observation teaches me that every woman worker may gain by adopting to a certain degree the methods of men, the feminist promise of an eventual equal productiveness is to me a promise barren, if true. So far as I can see, individual men and women have, alike, just so much vitality. If women devote this vitality to doing what men do, they will have just so

much less to devote to being what women are. As a writer I aspire to write a book; as a woman I shall forever prefer to be a person rather than a book.

In an examination into the psychology and methods of the woman-writer, two things should be clearly kept in mind. The first is that of all professions open to both sexes, writing should furnish the most reliable conclusions in regard to the relative accomplishment of men and women; for from Sappho's day to ours a woman has been as free to write as a man. Life is the only university in which a writer can be trained, and that university has always been strictly coeducational. Neither have there ever been any restrictions, commercial or social, to bar a woman's way to the literary career. It follows that any restrictions that exist must be imposed, not from without, but from within, must be due to the nature of the creature, physical, mental, and spiritual.

The second fact not to be forgotten is that of all the professions practiced by women writing is the one most intimately affected by a woman's personal life and philosophy. It is far easier to detach yourself from your own daily-ness for the purposes of music, painting, or science, than to separate yourself from the book you are writing, which is necessarily self-expressive. Consequently a woman's literary productiveness is far more precariously dependent upon her peace of mind than any other form of professional activity. There are too many mute Miltons, too easily silenced, among my sex; but on the other hand — a fact equally due to the feminine fusion of living and writing — history has shown, perhaps will always show, that woman's most valid intellectual achievement is in literature.

As a writer-worker, I have found no

way of getting even with my limitations except by frankly shouldering them. The body my soul bears upon its back is a heavier burden to carry than a man's, and I find I cannot accomplish the pilgrimage if I give up my own little jog-trot for a man's stride. All that happens is that I lose my breath, and break my back, and have to lie down by the roadside to be mended. But when I do keep my own small pace, I have time and strength to pick a few fence-row flowers, too fine and frail and joyous for any striding man to notice.

I turn sharply from my own figures of speech to Mr. W. L. George's airier fancies, to the most vital facts of feminine existence brushed so lightly by the masculine intelligence that it can say, '*in passing*, that we do not attach undue importance to woman's physical disabilities. . . . I suspect that this is largely remediable, for I am not convinced that it is woman's peculiar physical conditions that occasionally warp her intellect: it is equally possible that a warped intellect produces unsatisfactory physical conditions. Therefore if, as I firmly believe that we can, we develop this intellect, profound changes may with time appear in these physical conditions.'

My own warped intellect, belonging to a woman who must write stories for a living, points out that, if it has taken æons of differentiation under the guidance of Dame Nature to accomplish my own personal physical disabilities, I can hardly afford to wait for æons of differentiation under the guidance of Mr. George to accomplish my own personal physical freedom.

Looking at things as they are, I find my body constantly pushing upon my work; but it is possible to treat a body with a certain humorous detachment. It is possible to say to yourself, this is a headache that you have, don't do it the

honor of letting it become a heart-ache, your own or — far more fateful peril — your heroine's. It is quite practicable for a woman to live apart from her body even when it hurts, quite practicable to give it sane and necessary attention, while keeping the soul separate from it, exactly as if she were ministering to some tired baby; this course is one of the only two solutions I have ever discovered of the problem of preserving a worker's spirit in a woman's body. The other solution lies in the frank concession to certain physical incapacities as the price one pays for certain psychological capacities.

A woman's talent both for being a woman and for being a writer is measured by the force and the accuracy of her intuitions. My intuitions in regard to the people about me, when duly transformed into story-stuff, have a definite market value. If I did not possess them, I could not conceive, make, or sell a single manuscript. Supersensitive impressions necessitate the supersensitive channels by which a woman's outer world connects with her inner one. If I will have woman's intuitions, I must have my woman's nervous system. So long as I think telepathy the best of sport, I must consent to give house-room to its delicate machinery, even to the extent of keeping cool when that machinery gets out of order and buzzes with neuritis or neuralgia or insomnia. The additional fact is only superficially paradoxical, that when the woman-worker takes the disorder of her nervous machinery thus philosophically, it is much less likely to have any disorder.

The fallibility of a woman's body seems beyond disputing. If a man does dispute it, it is because he never had one; if a woman disputes it, well, personally, if I can't be as strong as a man I should like to be as honest as one! The fallibility of a woman's intellect

is a little more open to argument, but only a little. I keep to my primary assumption that I am not trying to see further than my nose, or to voice any observations but my own. Among the men and women of history and among those of my vicinity, I cannot see that woman's brain is the equal of man's in originality, in concentration, or in power of sustained effort. As a worker, I find that I can write for only a few hours and no more: beyond that limit stands disaster for the woman, and, far more perilous, disaster for the writing. In regard to my brain as in regard to my body, the primary condition of doing my work at all lies in recognizing the truth that I can't do so much work, or do it so well, as a man.

In all matters that can be weighed or measured, a man's endowment is superior to a woman's; but, on the other hand, a woman's endowment consists in the quality and the quantity of an imponderable something that can not be weighed or measured. The chief difficulty about analyzing a woman's brain is that it is so hard to separate her brain from the rest of the woman, whereas men are put together in plainly discernible pieces — body, mind, and soul.

The perfection of a woman's intellect depends upon the perfection of its fusion with her personality. A woman amounts to most intellectually when she amounts to still more personally. She cannot move in pieces like a man, or like an earthworm. It needs the whole woman, acting harmoniously, to write. A man can retire into his brain and make a book, and a good one, leaving all the rest of his personality in confusion; but a woman must put her whole house in order before she can go off upstairs into her intellect and write. It follows that a woman's artistic achievement is for her a harder job than a man's achievement is for him, which

would make the other fact — namely, that the woman's book when written is never so great as the man's — seem additionally cruel, if we could not discern that the best of women-writers have, in attaining that best, reached not one result but two: impelled to clean all her spirit's house before she can feel happy to write in it, a woman-writer achieves both a home that people like to visit and a book that people like to read. Is it not true of all the greatest women-authors that we think of them as women before we think of them as authors?

Of fiction-makers in our own tongue the greatest man is Shakespeare and the greatest woman is Jane Austen. In personal revelation both were signally reserved, the woman the more so, seeing that she did not even burst into the hieroglyphics of a sonnet sequence; but of the two our first thought of the woman is 'dear Jane,' and of the man, 'dear Rosalind' — or Beatrice or Mercutio. A man, possessing a separable intellect and an imagination so original that it can sometimes create what he personally is little capable of experiencing, may sometimes write one thing and be another; but not so a woman. On the other hand, has any woman ever attained such greatness that, at the mention of her name, we think of the books she wrote before we think of the woman she was?

It is true that professional women who direct their toil on the conviction that a woman's brain is of the same quality as a man's sometimes produce work that approximates a man's in quantity. But sober observation of such women does not make me want to be one. I see them too often paying the penalty of being lopped and warped. Again I cannot see that, while such women attain their Ph.D.'s and M.D.'s and LL.D.'s, they ever attain the highest rank in literature. Imaginative

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writing seems to demand inexorably that a woman-writer be inexorably a woman. On the other hand, I have reached as a brain-worker the conclusion that, while my head is different in substance from a man's, I get most work out of it when I copy a man's mental methods. My brain is a vague and volatile mass, shot through with fancies, whimsies, with flashes of intuitive and illuminative wisdom, and it is a task surpassingly difficult to hold all this volatility, this versatility, to the rigors of artistic expression, to the stern architectonics of fiction. To the degree that a woman shall succeed in imposing upon the matter of her intellect the method of a man's intellect, to that degree shall her work show the sanity and serenity of universal, and sexless, art.

To impose upon a woman's intellect a man's discipline and detachment is excellent in theory; it is staggering in practice. Convention and his own will make a man's time his own. A woman's genius is for personality, or achievement within herself; a man's is for work, or achievement outside of himself. Now it takes time to be a person, and it takes other people. A real woman's life is meshed in other people's from dawn to dark. These strands of other lives are to her so vital and precious that for no book's sake will she ever break them, yet for any book's sake she must disentangle them. A woman-writer's life is a constant compromise, due to the fact that if she does not live with her fellows, she will not have anything to write, and that if she does not withdraw from them, she will not have time to write anything. I do not know how other writing-women manage their time. I know that to attain four hours a day at my desk means that I must be revoltingly stern with myself, my family, and my friends. One pays a price for retirement, but one

need not pay too heavily. A solution lies in retaining those relations that mean real humanity, while cutting off those that mean only society: I do not play bridge, but I do play with children.

Of course, it always seems plausible to solve the problem of time to one's self by running off to some strange place, but this never works very well. The reason is that such isolation is sure to prove evanescent, so that you have to keep packing your trunk and moving on to new exile, because human tendrils are so strong and stealthy that they push their way through the thickest walls you can build, and twine themselves, wherever you hide, about the fingers that want to write. In order to write a love-story of your own invention, you run away from some friend's too insistent love-story at home, and the first thing you know you are deep in the love-affairs of your poor little chambermaid. You escape home worries only to have some stranger's troubles batter down your hotel door. You might as well stay at home and put up with the truth, that if you care enough about people to wish to write of them, you will care enough for people to wish to live with them, abroad no less than at home. Besides, boarding is bleak and blighting. If I were a boarding woman, presently I should feel too chilly to wish to write; my fancies and my fingers would be too numb for expression. I need a home with its big warm peace and its little warm frictions before I can feel cosy enough to want to chat with a pen.

There is a somewhat different alternative to home existence; I have heard of communities duly arranged for the requirements of writers, where they enjoy a kind of club-like privacy and security from interruption. But are not such communities confined to the near-great? Are real writers any more than

real persons attracted by such an abnormal existence? Writers who shun life and people are exactly the sort that life and people shun. Personally, I run away from an author whenever I hear one coming. Of the really great ones, I am desperately afraid, and of the not-so-great ones, far more so.

II

Writer-communities imply too much of the placard. I wish I might never have to dangle my profession on a label. I am always embarrassed when I am forced blatantly to expose it — for example, to the frank questions of the doctor's secretary, or of a customs official. 'Profession?' they ask, and I cringe before the admission, 'I am a writer.' I don't feel ladylike when I say the words. On such occasions I would give my entire remuneration for an *Atlantic* essay to be able to say, 'I am a laundress.'

Personally, I am only too glad to forget that I am a Grub-Streeter, if only other people would forget. No matter how obscurely one has ever appeared in print, one pays the penalty of the pinnacle ever after. Surely one is no more responsible for the tendency of one's talents than for the color of one's hair. I write because I have found it my best way of making a living, — and also because I can't help it; therefore why cannot people accept me as simply as if I were a dressmaker? I should be embittered by the curious attitude of people toward the literary calling, if it were not as funny as it is puzzling. Once, at a tea, an imposing matron hurtled from the front door to my corner, crying out, 'Can you talk as you write? If so, please do!' I was dumb with discomfort for the rest of the afternoon.

The subject of attitude toward the writer is worthy of digression and top-

ical analysis, for there is a difference among friends, family, and general acquaintance. Now, it is not often that I wish to talk as I write, but the occasions when I do, while rare, are painful and urgent. It is precisely on these occasions that my friends fail me. Essays are a long while in being born, and while they are in process I would give much for some one with whom to talk them over. It is not after a thing is published that a writer needs appreciation: it is before, and especially before it is written. For twenty friends who will loyally enjoy anything I write, I cannot count three who will listen when I talk. Yet the ideas are exactly the same whether uttered by pen or tongue. No friend is so valuable as one ready to attend and sympathize during the incubation and parturition of an idea. And yet the majority, knowing too well the author's temperamental uncertainties, are perhaps to be forgiven their preference to wait until the editorial christening. So much bigger to most minds is print than person. A writer's best friends are prone to treat her with the affectionate inattention they would give to a Blind Tom. Yet I would rather my friends never listened to me, than that they always did; it is much cosier to be considered an idiot than an oracle.

If friends are prone to take the writing more seriously than they take the writer, her family, on the contrary, share her throes too intimately to take their poor sufferer lightly. Few authors experience the popular fallacy of a doting family audience. A shuddering apprehension of the potential effect upon editor and reader makes kinfolk intensely critical. The agonies to which any sympathetic household is subjected when one member of it is writing a book are such as to make them question whether any book is worth the price of its creation. A writer's family also lives in the constant, but usually groundless, fear

of being written up. There is both humor and pathos when dear Granny retires into a corner with some foible she knows you admired in infancy. Relatives are always a trifle uneasy in the presence of the chiel amang us takin' notes. I doubt if any success quite compensates for the discomfort of being blood-kin to a writer. True, a family can sometimes be discovered passing the book or magazine around among the neighbors, but they don't wish you to catch them with it in their own hands. Friends and family are alike in their complexity of attitude, being insistent that other people shall admire you, but afraid of making you conceited if they admire you themselves. The danger of conceit can be safely entrusted to editors and reviewers, not to mention the disillusion that sickens any author on comparing the finished book with the fancied one.

But if a writer is comfortably without honor among her intimates, she is more than honored by the attention accorded by chance acquaintance. The attitude of the average person toward print as print is enigmatic. Not all people place the pen on a pedestal, but all regard the penman as somehow different. I once essayed retirement at a little village hotel. I was promptly established in a room made sacred by the previous occupancy of another lady author. Her name I had never before heard, although I heard it daily during my sojourn. Her sole producible work was a railroad advertisement of some remote garden-spot in California, but it had been enough to confer a halo, as well as to win more substantial reward, for I afterwards found out that, solely for the literary aroma she diffused, the lady had been allowed to remain two years without paying a cent of board. Unfortunately I did not discover the fact until I had paid my own board for two months. The incident disproves

the charge that the United States has no popular respect for the fine arts.

Print is prone to induce curious revelations from strangers. You write, perhaps, a story that tries to be true to simple human emotions, and the next thing you know, somebody in Idaho is writing you all about his wife or baby. It is touching, but quaint. I have come to be a little suspicious of letters from strangers that purport to be simple letters of appreciation. I used to be very much flattered by them until my brief notes of thanks drew forth such unexpected replies. It appeared that the writers of the letters were writers of other works as well; they were sending these to me forthwith; would I kindly read and comment? My experience is, I gather, not unique. A writer-friend whose published poetry is marked by peculiar sanity, has received from more than one unknown source effusions so bizarre that they can emanate from nothing but a madhouse.

It is easy to silence by silence these unseen acquaintance, but others nearer by demand tact. Among these are people who tell me stories they want me to tell. They never can understand why I don't use the material. As a matter of fact, raw romance striking enough to impress the lay mind is much too striking for a writer's employment. Truth that is stranger than fiction is what every story-teller must avoid if he is to write stories true enough to be read.

What I more and more discover is that nine tenths of the people one meets want to write, that seven tenths of them have at some time tried, and that not more than one tenth of them perceive why they have failed. Since they think the impulse to write more distinctive than its accomplishment, and since they feel that they have the impulse in all its glory, they regard with a half-contemptuous envy the person who actually does write. They regard

creation as purely inspirational, and look askance at a worker who goes to her desk every morning like a machine. For all I know, they are right. A good many people think that the only reason they are not writers is that they never tried to be. Others think they would have written if they had only been taught how, if they had had the opportunity of certain courses in college. Still others think there must be some charmed approach to an editor's attention. Who introduced me, they frankly ask. When people talk like this it requires some self-control to repress my conviction that any person who could have written would have written, and my knowledge that the only introduction I ever had to any editor was made by my own manuscripts.

Friends, family, and general acquaintance have, I find, one impulse in common, the desire always to hound down the autobiographic. They read, beam brightly, look up at me, and say, 'Oh, here is Aunt Sarah's chicken-pen!' Actually it is an old well I once saw in Brittany. 'Oh, here is the story of old Mr. Gresham at his grandnephew's funeral. Don't you remember I showed you Elsie's letter about it?' I never saw the letter, never heard of old Mr. Gresham, and the chapter in question describes the antics of a four-year-old at his father's wedding.

'Here is Saidie Lippincott to the life!'

I gasp, 'Who is Saidie Lippincott?'

'Don't you remember you met her at Rose Earle's tea when you visited me four years ago?'

There is no possession people are so unwilling to let one have as an imagination. In private friends will tear a book to shreds to discover some portrait they can recognize; and in the case of authors famous enough to be dead, critics rake the ground wherever they have trod in an effort to prove that the

folk of their fancy were drawn from the earth rather than the air. There seems no means of convincing a reader that in a writer's head are constantly a thousand faces he has never seen or heard of, all subtle with story, all begging for a book, and all so real that they often make his daily waking seem a dream.

III

There is no denying that there is autobiography in all fiction, but the relation of the two is not so superficial as the mere introduction of facts and of characters from one's daily life. The actual relation of experience and its expression is deep and intricate, and, especially for the woman-writer, pervasive. As one must adjust one's work to a feminine body, to a feminine brain, and to distinctly feminine social relations, so one must take into account as still more determinative a woman's spiritual characteristics. However potent the impulse to write, the impulse to live is deeper. I have dwelt on the negative side of this problem, the uselessness of fleeing to strange places to escape other people's burdens; but it is impossible to over-emphasize the positive side, the difficulties of staying at home with the burdens that Providence has provided. However intense the joys and sorrows of the people the woman creates, the joys and sorrows of the people she loves will be still more intense. It needs both poise and vitality to be equal to the demands both of fancy and of fact. The mere external tangle of hours and seasons that any human relations necessitate is nothing compared with the spiritual tangle of one's sympathies. The instinct to soothe and succor and the instinct to think and write meet in a daily, an hourly, variance. Heart and head are equally insistent in their demands, and equally vengeful if unsatisfied. Books

cry to be written, and people cry to be loved, and to whichever one I turn a deaf ear, I am presently paying the penalty of a great unrest and discontent. To preserve the balance of attention between the needs of her head and the needs of her heart is the biggest problem any woman-writer faces. I have discovered no ultimate solution; it is rather a matter of small daily solutions, in which at one time we sacrifice the friend to the book, and at another the book to the friend.

Yet in any crucial choice a real woman chooses living rather than literature. My brain itself approves this yielding of intellect to emotions for the very simple reason that, if I don't thus yield, the emotions denied will avenge themselves on the brain, and the book I write will be unnatural because I myself am unnatural.

Once I thought it impossible to write when people about me were in distress: I proposed to myself to wait until things should settle down. I perceived that things never do settle down; that for women who have human affections, there will always be somebody somewhere to worry about. It is rather inspiring to be a woman, because it is so difficult. With the winds blowing from every direction at once, one must somehow steer a course that will reveal alike to the reader who knows one's book and to the friend who knows one's heart, a halcyon serenity. A relative detachment from her own living is as necessary for a woman-writer as an absolute detachment is stultifying. Since for a woman expression is fused with experience, clean hands and a pure heart are for her the fundamental demands of art, and this fact means that she must be constantly scouring off her sense of humor with spiritual sapolio before she can effectively handle a pen. Be sure her philosophy will find her out in her book far more clearly than in a man's.

The natural fusion of a woman's brain with her emotions, resisted, leads to intellectual weakness; accepted, leads to intellectual strength. In the history of literature George Sand is the great example of a woman who won success by the masculine solution of detachment from experience, and Jane Austen, the great example of a woman who won success by the feminine solution of identification with her own dailyness. I am inclined to think the latter by far the greater artist, just as I am inclined to think that in literature rather than in any other form of mental activity will always be found woman's highest intellectual achievement, for the simple reason that woman's genius consists in personality, and for the expression of personality words are the only adequate medium. Jane Austen's example is the great encouragement for the woman who wishes to write without ceasing to be a simple everyday woman. Jane Austen was capable of a detachment that enabled her to write books that give no hint of the thunder of the Napoleonic wars even when she had two brothers on fighting ships. She was capable of an identification with her surroundings that enabled her to write novels of universal humanity and eternal artistry and to keep right on being everybody's aunt at the same time. She was sane and humorous in her novels because she was sane and humorous

out of them. She achieved fame because she had first achieved personality. Still, her fame is only a thin frail fire set beside the effulgence of a dozen men of her time.

Yet I would rather have been Jane Austen than Shelley or Wordsworth or Keats. It is perfectly just that men's books should be greater than women's, because men are willing to pay the price. Not to write *Macbeth* would I willingly give up an afternoon's romp with a baby. As a woman I reckon my spirit's capital, not in terms of accomplishment, but in terms of my own joy, and a baby brings me more joy than a book.

Men ought to write better than women because they care more; in a way women who write have the more impersonal outside-of-themselves impulsion, because inside of themselves they don't care. I acknowledge the urge of writing and I am willing up to a certain point to pay by means of a vigorous mental discipline and a certain self-saving from useless self-spending, but I don't pretend that writing satisfies me. Something descends upon me and says, 'Write,' and shakes me like a helpless kitten until I do write; but it's a relief when the shaking is over, and I am left to the merrier business of merely being myself. In other words, I am a writer because I can't help it, but I am a woman because I choose to be.

MERCHANDISE

BY AMY LOWELL

I MADE a song one morning,
Sitting in the shade under the hornbeam hedge.
I played it on my pipe,
And the clear notes delighted me,
And the little hedge-sparrows and the chipmunks
Also seemed pleased.
So I was very proud
That I had made so good a song.

Would you like to hear my song?
I will play it to you
As I did that evening to my Beloved,
Standing on the moon-bright cobbles
Underneath her window.
But you are not my Beloved;
You must give me a silver shilling,
Round and glittering like the moon.
Copper I will not take;
How should copper pay for a song
All made out of nothing,
And so beautiful!