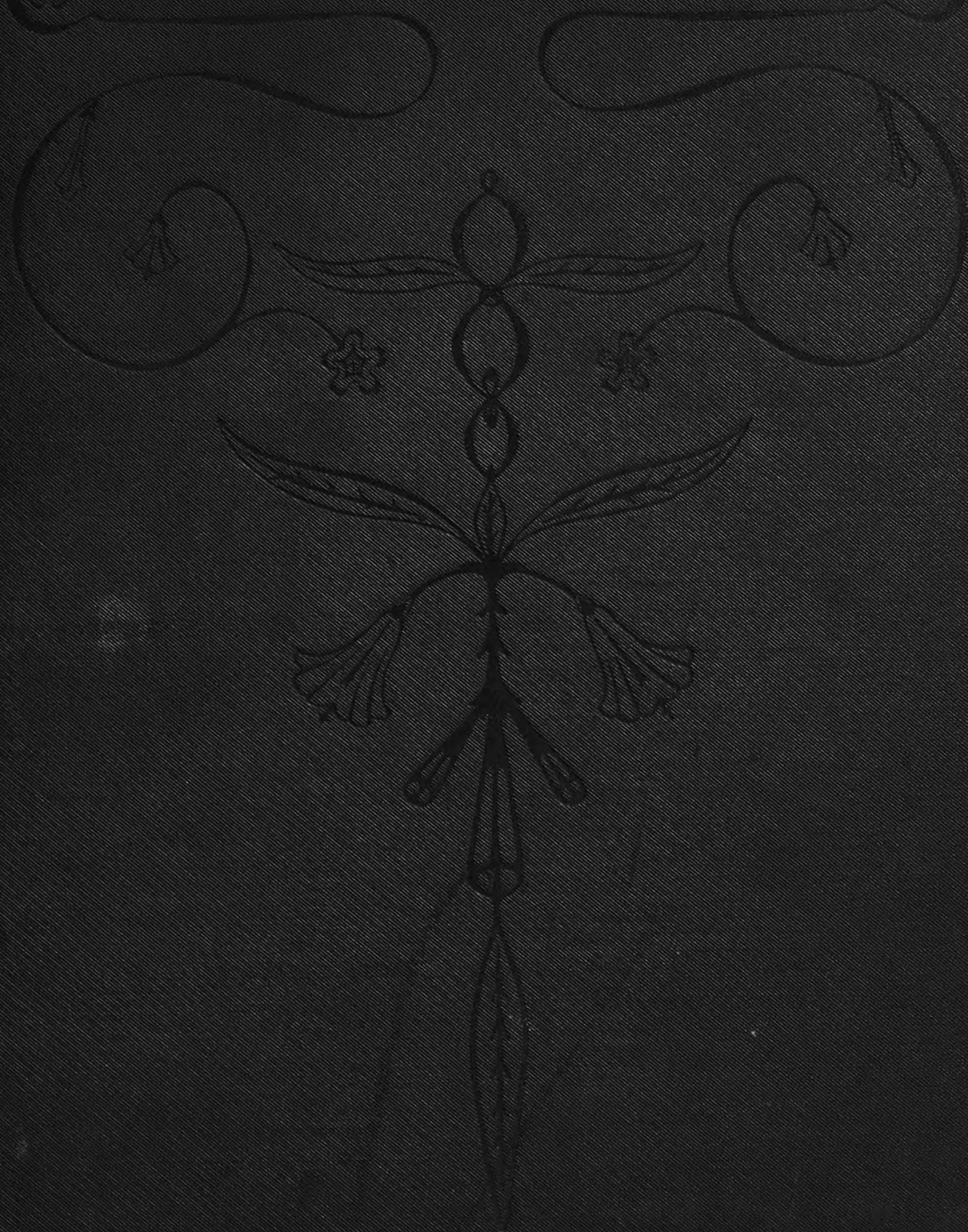


OLD DAYS IN CHAPEL HILL

HOPE SUMMERELL CHAMBERLAIN



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OLD DAYS IN CHAPEL HILL



CORNELIA PHILLIPS SPENCER

OLD DAYS IN CHAPEL HILL

*Being the Life and Letters
of Cornelia Phillips Spencer*

BY

HOPE SUMMERELL CHAMBERLAIN
With Illustrations by the Author



CHAPEL HILL
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TO THE MEMORY OF
DANIEL HARVEY HILL, LL.D., LITT.D.
1859-1924

"I had such reverence for his blame."

General report 25 Feb 27 M.S.D.

916509

FOREWORD

IN BEGINNING this book my idea was to present a life in the round by means of authentic records more than usually full, and freely laid open for selection. No thesis, no opinion, no sentimental prepossession was to be the centre of arrangement. I wished also to compile a veracious narrative of times which are being swallowed up in the dark backward of the past. But as the gathered letters and journals of Mrs. Cornelia Phillips Spencer were pondered upon, a center emerged, and events were seen to crystallize around it. Her life was seen as an effort planned, and an object attained, and then the joy of present achievement died away into a memory which always turned back to what had seemed to the doer the best accomplishment of her life.

This effort, this achievement, was the reopening of the University of North Carolina after the Civil War, and the life of Mrs. Spencer thus became the story of an institution. Its early growth, its closing, its reopening, its later efficiency were woven into the description of her own experience. This is extraordinary, for she lived in an era when the influence and personality of women was little emphasized. She had at no time any personal connection with the University, save that of residence in the village of Chapel Hill, and yet if she had not bestirred herself the University would not be what it is today.

To her contemporaries Mrs. Spencer always stood out as she is shown in her correspondence, intrinsically the equal in intellect and worth of any American woman, although she worked in a narrow room. That this generation is losing sight of her is due mostly to the crowd-

ing events of that last two decades. It is a joy to restore the vividness of her memory—to recall her services, of which the real substantial fruit is being enjoyed by many at this present time.

A book like this is never made by one person unassisted. Beside the free access to Mrs. Spencer's papers which included diaries and journals covering the greater part of her life, the dedication of the volume records the strong encouragement from Dr. D. H. Hill without which it would never have been written. Many friends have looked over their boxes of old letters. Mrs. Josephine Wakefield of Banner Elk, North Carolina, and Mrs. Agnes Johnston of Orange County, North Carolina, have sent packets of letters which were most essential. Mrs. Spencer's niece, Mrs. Lucy P. Russell of Rockingham, North Carolina, has supplied material, awakened memories, and assisted with the reading of the Spencer correspondence. Miss Cornelia Spencer Love, of the Library of the University of North Carolina, beside committing to me the quaint little old trunk containing the great collection of her grandmother's papers, has performed the tasks of the last critical reading of the manuscript and of making the index. And last but not least, I wish to thank Dr. W. K. Boyd, of the Department of History at Duke University, for many suggestions, but especially for the full discussion and verification of all the historical allusions in this book, to which subject he generously gave of his time.

HOPE SUMMERELL CHAMBERLAIN

1509 HILLSBORO STREET,
RALEIGH, N. C.
January, 1926.

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OLD DAYS IN CHAPEL HILL

I

BEGINNINGS

THE SUBJECT of this memoir, Mrs. Cornelia Phillips Spencer, lived in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where the State University has always been. She came there near enough to the earliest days to hear and to write down the story of its first organization. This account is in a newspaper article published by her in 1868, and we shall abridge it to state its main points.

North Carolina, immediately after the end of the Revolutionary War, was busied as were all her sister colonies in setting her own internal affairs to rights. In the new State Constitution of that era was an article specifying the establishment of a State University. It was William R. Davie, the able young revolutionary hero who afterwards became Governor, who pushed this project, until in the year 1789, backed by his great influence, the necessary legislation passed the General Assembly. Davie was a graduate of Princeton, something of a scholar, and deeply interested in the cause of education. He was appointed chairman of the Board of Trustees, who rode out in the pleasant spring-time of that year to choose a suitable place where they might build their institution.

At a cross-roads in the forest that then prevailed over all central North Carolina, at a place where the main travelled road from Petersburg, Virginia, crossed the road from the western outposts of the Blue Ridge, leading drovers and their cattle to Fayetteville, North Carolina, the head of river navigation—at this spot these men halted one April day at noon. Mrs. Spencer says:

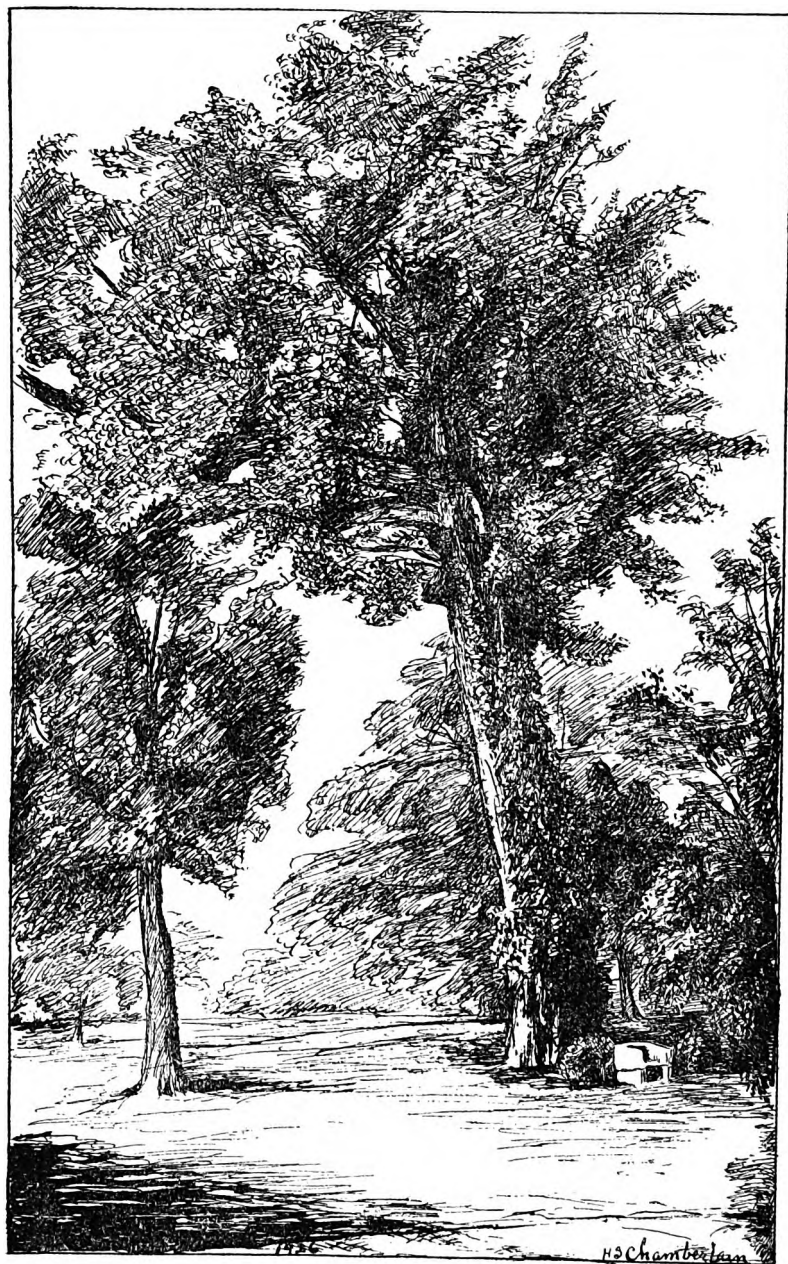
They stopped at Chapel Hill to lunch, taking their refection, as I have been told, at the foot of the great poplar which now stands in the Campus. They fell in love under these benignant circumstances with the beauty of the spot. They resolved to look no further. Chapel Hill was certainly a local habitation and had a name before the days of the Revolution, for ruins of a chapel of the Church of England were plainly visible forty years ago, (1828) on the lot then belonging to Dr. Mitchell. The old tavern occupied for many years by Mrs. Nunn must have been a roadside inn, if not actually in Revolutionary times very soon after. Whatever determined the choice must have been fortunate. The situation is central, retired, and how beautiful! Its hills and groves and glades are indeed fit to surround the walls of an academe—beloved haunt of the Muses, sacred to all gentle and classic companionship. Who ever lived there that did not love the very air that breathes over it?

After the first buildings had been built, few and simple, Joseph Caldwell, a New Jersey man, a graduate of Princeton and a Presbyterian minister, came to North Carolina about 1796 to lead a teacher or two in the instruction of his handful of students. He was at first called "Presiding Professor" but was elected President of the University in 1804. He was a leading spirit from the first, meeting the vicissitudes of the little college, hardly established. He stood like a rock for strict discipline in times when atheism was the fashion, and the uncontrolled youths who came from isolated plantations had to be reduced under authority. Gradually he drew to him a faculty which was truly respectable, and not inferior to any in America of that early day in its personal quality, although very few in number. He was a Federalist, dignified with the stateliness that Washington loved to maintain. He was courtly in manner and proud, even in that lonely hamlet. His little circle was

isolated. The people around had not developed any culture at all. Some of Caldwell's faculty were leaving now and then for wider opportunity, among whom was Denison Olmsted from Yale College, who went from the chair of Mathematics at the University of North Carolina to assume the same duties at his Alma Mater. The President also had opportunity to better himself, but he remained, improving his curriculum from year to year.

It is said by those who have studied such things that the little University of North Carolina under Joseph Caldwell was a pioneer in giving science, as then extant, a portion of the importance which it has lately obtained everywhere. Dr. Caldwell was proficient in mathematics, especially applied, and would have preferred teaching this branch to being president, but he was not allowed to choose. And this is where the link occurs which connects Mrs. Spencer's life with the village of Chapel Hill. Her father became one of the early professors of mathematics in the University of North Carolina.

James Phillips was born in England at Nevenden, in Essex, a tiny village about twenty miles north-east of London, on April 22, 1792. His father was Rector of the parish, and he had three sons of whom James was the youngest. When James was about seven years old his mother died. In 1800 his father had moved to Roche in Cornwall, and here married again. His eldest son died here, and there being children by the second wife, she began to be hostile to her husband's older sons, and practically drove them from their father's house. So permanent and so entire was the breach then made that neither of the brothers ever saw their father again, although he survived in that same living until the year 1831. Rev. Richard Phillips was what was called an



THE DAVIE POPLAR

"Evangelical" in his opinions. He used the Olney Collection of hymns in his church services. He is also said to have been a friend, or to have belonged to the circle of the poet Cowper. But he passes out of sight when his two sons go their outward way, doubtless with anger and a sense of injustice rankling in their hearts. When James Phillips and his brother Samuel were thus forced to shift for themselves, Samuel Phillips entered the English navy, while James went to work as a clerk or book-keeper in the town of Plymouth, when he was about seventeen years old. He afterwards became a tutor, or usher, in a school there.

Plymouth, situated on the eastern side of that long peninsula which stretches down at the south-western corner of England, was a most important seaport during the wars with Napoleon and the French. It was constantly full of soldiers and sailors with whom James Phillips chiefly associated. He learned military tactics during these war years but he did not learn dissipated habits. His one aim and object in life was to get an education. While he was teaching boys their Latin grammar he was himself studying the higher mathematics without a teacher. Mrs. Spencer tells how delighted he was as he beheld the truths of Euclid unfold to his mind during his solitary vigils, and how he then and there saw his vocation, and claimed mathematics for his chosen science. While he lived in Plymouth James Phillips once saw the great Napoleon himself, pacing the deck of the English man-of-war "Bellerophon," just before he was to be conveyed a captive to St. Helena.

When wars were over for a time in all Europe, Samuel Phillips was discharged from the navy and the two brothers decided to emigrate to the United States of

America. They crossed to Le Havre and took passage for New York, where they arrived without adventure in the year 1818.

Late in her life Mrs. Spencer mentions certain old copies of Homer and Virgil, Caesar and Tacitus, as having been brought to the United States by her father, and being still in her possession. By their knowledge of these the brothers seem to have secured immediate employment as teachers in a boys' school; and only a little more than a year later we find them in charge of their own private academy for boys in Harlem. Here James Phillips found time for more mathematical research, and made friends with fellow mathematicians in New York and vicinity. He also joined an enthusiastic mathematical club in the city. In 1821 he married Judith, or Julia, Vermeule of Plainfield, New Jersey. This lady was the seventh child of Cornelius Vermeule and Elizabeth Middagh. She was connected on both sides with very old and respected Dutch families, colonists of New Jersey and New York. Her brother, Rev. Cornelius Vermeule, was at the time of her marriage pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem. This church was already more than a century old, and had been served, formerly, in 1670, by the first of the Vermeule name, recently emigrated from Holland. It was at her brother's house in Harlem that Julia Vermeule met her husband. The Middagh family antedated the Vermeules in America by a few years, and Julia Vermeule's ancestry was derived from Holland, Belgium, and France, whence some of her ancestors sought refuge in Flanders on account of their Protestant faith. Both her grandfathers had been officers in the Revolutionary armies. Her father went into the service as a private, and came out with the rank of

captain. Her grandfather Vermeule was a fervid patriot. In the year 1777 he allowed a fort or block-house to be built upon his farm at Plainfield, and a camp was located there. He boarded the officers of one of General Washington's regiments stationed there, never asking or receiving any compensation.

At the lowest ebb of the American cause, when the British held New York and vicinity, Washington himself often stayed at Cornelius Vermeule's and would ascend the hill nearby to look out over the country, and spend hours of silent thought beside a great rock at the summit. After the Revolution, when Julia Vermeule's father and mother were married, a handsome present was sent them by General and Mrs. Washington in recognition of the kindnesses shown him by both families during his campaigns in New Jersey. Mrs. Spencer says of her kinsfolk in one of her diary reminiscences:

I never knew either family intimately till my mature life. . . . I think the Vermeules were always most religious, serious, thoughtful, belonging to the old Dutch Reformed Church. The Phillips were more worldly and pleasure-loving, clever and good-natured. Socially more agreeable in their way than the Vermeules in theirs. I would not judge either.

Mrs. James Phillips was well educated for that time, and indeed for this. She had been taught Latin, French, and Greek, and had a most active mind and excellent literary taste. She wrote well. There is poetry still treasured which was written by her to celebrate family occasions. She was a reader of the most solid, thoughtful books. She enjoyed such difficult works as Edwards' *Freedom of the Will* and she used her Greek Testament in preference to the English all her life. She was tall, slender, and graceful, and was different from her hus-

band in being somewhat temperamental, while his disposition was always equable.

During the five years that Mr. and Mrs. James Phillips lived in Harlem three children were born to them, of whom Cornelia was the youngest. It comes with a little shock to those who know how the history of this woman belongs to the history of North Carolina, to hear that she was born outside the state. True it was, however, that Cornelia Phillips was born in Harlem, New York, March 20, 1825.

The story of how the Phillips family cast their lot with the University of North Carolina is as follows. Professor Olmsted was leaving the University. Professor Mitchell, who had been teaching mathematics, wished to be transferred to the Chair of Chemistry and Mineralogy. Dr. Joseph Caldwell, himself an enthusiastic mathematician, was anxious to choose the new professor with care, so that the department should be built up. Many candidates applied, but the choice had at last narrowed to two, one of whom was James Phillips, highly recommended by Dr. Adrain of Rutgers College, who was a friend of Mr. Phillips, a mathematician, and also an old friend of Dr. Caldwell. The trustees left the final choice entirely in Dr. Caldwell's hands, and he, influenced by Dr. Adrain's letter, decided upon James Phillips. Mr. Phillips was influenced in leaving a prosperous school and adventuring into the unknown in far-away North Carolina principally by the consideration that he would have to teach only his chosen subject there. He found it tiresome to spend so many hours drilling the classics into the minds of beginners. When he was notified of his selection to the Chair of Mathematics at the University of North Carolina he and his brother sold

their establishment at once. Samuel also was married by this time. He went to western New York, and afterwards to Detroit, Michigan, and in old age returned to New York City. These brothers never saw each other again.

It was during the spring of 1826 that James Phillips and his little family took their tedious way southward. No accounts of the journey survive in the family papers, but Mrs. Mitchell made the trip as a bride in 1819, returning with her husband to their southern home. She wrote a long and detailed account of this journey to her mother in Connecticut, and as transportation could not have changed very greatly in seven years, in those days before railroads, we will quote Mrs. Spencer's abridgement of Mrs. Mitchell's letter :

Mrs. Mitchell says that they found the journey not nearly so fatiguing as she expected, the distance, accurately calculated, being 815 miles. This letter is dated January 1, 1820. She continues . . . From New York, on Monday morning, December 20, we went to Elizabethtown, New Jersey, by boat . . . From Elizabethtown to Trenton by stage, and by stage again to Philadelphia, stopping a day there to visit the sights of the city . . . Thence by boat we went to New Castle down the Delaware River, and a stage took us to Frenchtown, where a steamer being in readiness . . . we were soon sailing down the Chesapeake on a fine moonlight night. . . . At sunrise Thursday we found ourselves in Baltimore, where we visited the Catholic Cathedral while breakfast was preparing. Went on board the boat "United States" for Norfolk at nine o'clock, and the day being warm and pleasant we had a delightful sail to Norfolk. . . . We arrived at Norfolk at one o'clock on Friday, and finding the stage waiting we could not stay to dinner, but away we went eleven miles to the Dismal Swamp, where we entered a canal boat 20 feet in length. 'Twas sunset of a rainy Christmas Eve when we entered this boat, and in it we were drawn along for 22 miles at the rate of four miles an hour. A

North Carolina gentleman on board said the Dismal was infested by runaway negroes, and that Christmas was always a holiday for the slaves, so the gentlemen judged it a prudent precaution to put their firearms in order. With three pistols on board we were to make great resistance in case of an attack from banditti. There being five locks and three bridges to pass, and it being night, we were till ten o'clock getting through the swamp, then instead of finding a stage ready to take us on to Elizabeth City, N. C., we found that the driver, being tired of waiting had gone off without mail or passengers. . . . A one horse gig and a cart for the baggage being procured, our party walked and rode from the end of the canal to a tavern a few miles distant. Here we staid for the rest of the night, sending on to Elizabeth City for the stage to return for us, which it obligingly did, and breakfast was eaten in Elizabeth City. Going on to Edenton we dined there late in the afternoon of Saturday, which was Christmas Day . . . The steamboat from Elizabeth City to Plymouth had left, however, so it was necessary to go across the Albemarle Sound in an open row-boat, with four oars, and the water being pretty rough, and the boat leaking badly, one of the gentlemen bailed constantly, while Professor Mitchell steered . . . Mr. Mitchell commends my intrepidity, she continues, and thinks he will send me to sea as a sailor. After an uncomfortable passage of seven hours we touched Plymouth about sunset, Sunday, and immediately unpacked our trunks to dry our clothes. On Monday morning we went to Williamston by stage, then to Tarboro', and then to Raleigh. But we arrived there too late for the Chapel Hill stage. We hired an extra stage, and I heard Mr. Mitchell tell the driver to drive us well, for he was armed. He then whispered to me that the driver was strongly suspected of being a murderer, and with this comfortable assurance we plunged into the woods leaving all civilization apparently far behind us, and taking the whole day for the twenty-eight miles, reaching Chapel Hill December 29.

The Phillips family may have gone by a different route. Their journey was in the spring, but at any season it was a long, jogging adventure by packet boat and

stage with upsets and delays, and coming down through Virginia over roads and through swamps not until yesterday really tamed by modern highways. In the course of time they too reached Raleigh, and went on to the new little University, "a raw poor beginning, just cut out of the forest!" His daughter says that when Professor Phillips first saw the tiny village of Chapel Hill, with its institution numbering less than a hundred students, he wished himself back in Harlem, but having burned all his bridges he could not return. He soon grew reconciled to his situation, and early found a congenial friend in his chief, President Caldwell, whose enthusiasm for mathematics equalled his own.

In the year 1830 Dr. Caldwell returned from Europe whither he had been sent the previous year by the State of North Carolina to purchase books and apparatus for the University. Upon his return he constructed an astronomical observatory to house a small telescope. This was the first observatory built in America. He also brought back at this time a model railway engine and some lengths of track, bought in England. There were also mechanical and mathematical instruments and many books, and Professor Phillips soon became absorbed in these, and in his work, and no longer wished for change. Mrs. Phillips seems, however, to have been more discontented, regretting her distance from her old home and friends, dwelling on thoughts of them. She would return for long visits from time to time. But she also found an important place to fill in the life of Chapel Hill. She taught a school for her own and other people's children. She and Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Hooper, all faculty ladies, conducted a Sunday school in the University Chapel on Sunday afternoon, a service which lived in

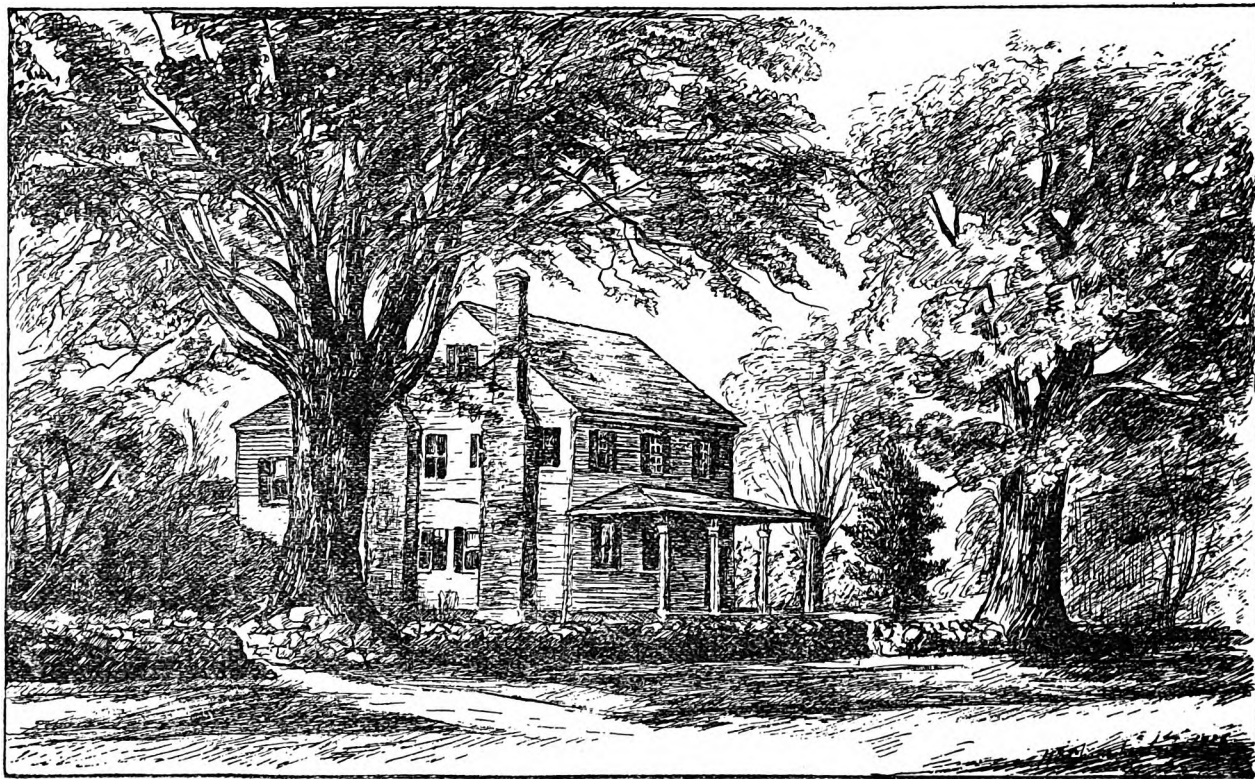
the memory of its old scholars as a source of good influence. Mrs. Phillips had a great desire to do good in all ways to all men. She would visit the homes of the poorest and plainest of her neighbors, would read to them from the Bible, and was free-handed with any other help that seemed needful.

Professor James Phillips was a man heavy-built and sturdy, with an iron constitution. He was feared by the students because of his burly appearance and brusque speech. He did not joke, nor mingle freely with his students, as some did. He was also a most exacting teacher. He never would give help with any problem, and his theory was that all such requests showed simple laziness in his students. He remembered how he had learned his own mathematics all alone; he forgot how surely the mathematician is born and not made. Thoroughness was his hobby. He made manuscript translations of many foreign works in his line, which had not yet been put into English, for instance, of La Place's later works. His colleague Dr. Mitchell might browse over the whole field of literature and science, but he himself was a specialist. Bluff and hearty, a man for company at first, he soon grew more serious.

In the year 1832 Professor Phillips became interested in reports of the work of an evangelist named Nettleton, who was preaching in Virginia, and during the vacation of that year he and Professor Hooper together made a journey to hear him. This preacher then visited Chapel Hill in the autumn and a great religious awakening came to both village and University. Professor Phillips, although always a professing Christian, had now a fresh religious experience which made him afterwards unwilling to admit that he had known any-

thing about the Gospel in his youth. He became exceedingly earnest, preaching, praying, and holding meetings in and about Chapel Hill, and especially at New Hope, a Presbyterian church seven miles from the village. Here he acted in all things like a minister, only that he would stand in front of the pulpit, and not in it, to speak his discourses, and that he could not administer the Sacraments.

In 1833 Orange Presbytery met at New Hope Church, and Dr. William McPheeters, that fine old Presbyterian divine, who was both schoolmaster and city pastor at Raleigh, proposed to Professor Phillips that he be licensed to preach by that body; saying to him that he must either be licensed or silenced. He did apply to the Presbytery, was licensed, and in due time ordained as pastor of New Hope Church. He was ever afterward one of the most zealous preachers of his new denomination. He shared the work of the University Chapel with Dr. Mitchell and others of the faculty. In the summer vacations he would go on long evangelizing trips through the state. He made as deep and as thorough a study of the best works on divinity as he had formerly done of his mathematical authorities, and his mind assimilated them in the same way. Once established in his mind and accepted, he never afterwards questioned them, but made them the foundation of his religious thinking and worked out his beliefs into practice and conduct. Having thus two absorbing professions, Professor Phillips continued his busy uneventful life without a break until the day of his sudden death. He was so earnest and so sincere in seizing every opportunity of speaking a word in season, that he served a parish as wide as his acquaintance. In a letter written by him in 1845, acknowledging a wedding



THE PHILLIPS HOUSE

fee, he takes occasion to admonish the young husband that, "No family is properly founded save on the Rock of Ages, no hearts are really happy, though joined, unless the peace of God bless their union." That this letter was valued is shown by its having survived all the periodic letter-burnings from that day until this.

II

NEIGHBORS AND THEIR CHILDREN

THE CHAPEL HILL to which the Phillips family came in that year 1826 was a tiny village. In its midst was the University Campus with little visible there save three buildings each three stories high, unornamented, of plain red brick. These formed three sides of a quadrangle in the center of which was a wooden belfry, and a well. There was also a chapel called Person Hall from the name of a benefactor. The main street, Franklin Street, ran east and west beside the campus. A few residences faced on this thoroughfare, which was crossed at intervals by short streets or lanes giving outlet to a few other homes not immediately facing the highway. There were several shops, a tiny ramshackle hotel, a livery stable, and that was all. Outside began not only country, but unbroken forest, the sea of tree-covered land which flowed all over North Carolina at that time. Clearings bore a small proportion to the extent of wooded acres. As Mrs. Spencer wrote:

The surrounding square miles of country near Chapel Hill are undulating and varied in a small but pleasing way. It is the spot, geologically speaking, where the crystalline granites and slates which extend under the hill country join softer rocks and sandstones. Water runs east from Chapel Hill, and it is generally speaking two hundred feet higher than Raleigh. The oak in several of its varieties grows there in stately beauty. Pines and other forest trees give contrast. The many northern slopes and southern exposures of this broken country permit great variety in wild flowering plants. Species from both east and west grow near to each other, each finding its proper habitat near Chapel Hill.

The stage road crossed the main street at right angles, and by 1830 there was a daily stage between Raleigh and Pittsboro which passed through Chapel Hill. The few roads which connected with the outside world, which seemed so far away, were quagmires in winter and early spring, lines of billowy red dust in mid-summer.

In the year of Professor Phillips' coming to North Carolina, Dr. Joseph Caldwell was president of the University, and the faculty consisted of Elisha Mitchell, Nicholas M. Hentz, and William Hooper, who taught respectively, Chemistry and Mineralogy, Modern Languages, and the Greek and Latin Classics. There were also several tutors, young men employed as assistants. These, with the faculty families, and half a dozen ladies of the village, made up all that might be called society in Chapel Hill. Childhood there seems to have been a sweet normal experience, more so than in most familiar American annals. The Phillips children were a healthy trio, and study and play were for them so well balanced that in all the mass of Mrs. Spencer's papers, supplemented by her brother's reminiscences, there never occurs any repining, or note of regret regarding that happy time. Charles was the elder of Mrs. Spencer's brothers. He was by nature forceful, positive, and almost overwhelming in championship of his own opinions. Samuel, the second brother, was equally able, but of a quiet spectator humor. Cornelia was akin to both natures, but resembled Charles most. It was because of this that she and Samuel seem to have been somewhat more congenial, their complementary qualities preventing the friction due to strong natures.

When the little Phillips children were added to the handful of young Mitchells and Hentzes and Hoopers who played under the spreading oaks of Chapel Hill, no doubt they enjoyed the freedom and the outdoor life. Their new playmates were congenial. They felt no regret; for young children do not remember what they leave behind. Dr. Mitchell had a family of three girls, one to correspond in age to each of the Phillips children, and all these played together as one family. The atmosphere of that sunny time was well preserved in the children's stories told by one of the Mitchell girls to her daughter. These tales were permeated by the doings of her sisters and of her playmates, "Cornelia and Charles and Sam Phillips," always mentioned in the order named.

In a series of letters written in 1904 to the sole survivor of her childhood friends, Miss Margaret Mitchell, Mrs. Spencer says:

I count it as one of the blessings that attend these later years, that you, old friend, are still to be spoken to, hailed as we go down the road. "When did you and I first meet?" O Margaret, how those days and times and friends have been swept away as with a flood! It must have been in the "dark ages" I guess. I was about fourteen months old when my father and mother and their three children arrived in Chapel Hill the last of May, 1826. You were a baby then, in your nurse's arms, while I was older, trying to walk. My first recollection of you, or rather of your Father's house, was about 1829, I guess. I had been paying you all a visit . . . a heavy rain which I dimly remember led your mother to send my attendant maid, Caroline, home without me, and with the proposal that I should stay all night with her girls, Mary, Ellen and Margaret. I recall that delightful getting ready to go to bed with you, and the sad sequence of my Father's arrival to take me home. The taking me out of bed, and bundling me up in a shawl, and my Father carrying me home through the

dark. I have never forgotten the barking of the dogs in the village, and the sense of security I had in my Father's arms as we went along through the grove.

Then I remember playing with the little Hentz children, and also Nancy and Jane Taylor. Also with Betsy Hooper, and with Julia Anderson, a lovely little girl with liquid black eyes, the Hawks' eyes¹ from her mother's family.

And I remember with you those heavy old barouches which our mothers used. Heavy, ugly, but as you say they gave us a great deal of pleasure and are to be remembered with gratitude. A favorite drive of my mother's, Charles driving, was around the *race track*! Do you remember that? Think of Chapel Hill having a race track! It was where the railroad station now is, on part of the same ground.

My next recollection of you is connected with M. Bourgevin's² French classes (he took such a great deal of pains with us) and of how my brothers used to draw me, in a little sled which they had made, to your house for them. That was when snow was on the ground. I remember I was as proud of going to say my French lesson as ever Miss "Morleena Kenwigs" could have been!

Mrs. Spencer says elsewhere that the families who came in from the country and settled around the infant University were very plain or even rough and vicious people. They came mostly to take boarders or to live by some dependence on the needs of the students. In the

¹ Reverend Francis Lister Hawks, D.D., of New Bern, North Carolina, was born in 1798, graduated at the University of North Carolina, wrote the *History of North Carolina* from 1584 to 1729, became an Episcopal clergyman and served churches in Baltimore, New Orleans, and in New York City. He was at last Rector of St. Thomas' in New York City, dying in 1866. He was an extremely handsome man with bright dark eyes. His daughter married Walker Anderson, a member of the University faculty for years, and he was Dr. Caldwell's assistant, in 1833.

² M. Bourgevin was one of the series of French tutors who came to Chapel Hill to teach their language and literature. They were usually refugees from political trouble. Another was M. Marey, very accomplished, but whose vice of drunkenness ended his career. M. Harrisse will be mentioned later. He was the last, and he became a historian of some note after his return to France.

early years of the last century horse racing, cock fights and gambling, hard drinking, and here and there a murder were the usual accompaniments of the lives of the common folk around Chapel Hill. The thirties and forties were years when all the population in the Eastern states was thinned out and drained off to occupy the broad prairies of the West. Innumerable North Carolina names are found in Indiana and southern Illinois, as well as in Missouri, Mississippi, and Texas. The Quakers went west for free soil, and the planters for rich bottom lands. Mrs. Spencer speaks of this migration:

Another of my earliest recollections is that of frequently seeing long processions passing through town, of white covered wagons, full of beds, buckets and babies, with lean men and women, tow headed children and yellow dogs walking beside. "Movers" we children called them. We always made a rush for the front door or gate to stare at the exodus. "Going out West," was the invariable reply to all queries. Something pathetic about their appearance still lingers in my mind as I recall them.

About the middle of the summer of 1826, after the Phillips family had come to Chapel Hill, a boy called Andrew Johnson came in over the Raleigh road, was fed by the hostess at the old tavern, and rested and refreshed himself at the spring in the hollow called the "Roaring Fountain." This future President of the United States was just then escaping from the master in Raleigh to whom he was indentured to learn the tailor's trade. He was born there in 1808, and returned as President of the United States in 1866. He told this story when attending Commencement at the University at that time. Another future President had already graduated at the head of his class in 1818. He also went to Tennessee. His name

was James Knox Polk. And so nobody knows when important future events cast their shadows before them, for in spite of the old adage they do not betray themselves.

At the time when Professor Phillips came to Chapel Hill, no question of the institution of slavery seems to have been raised in his mind. He bought a married couple, "Aunt Dilsey" and "Uncle Ben," almost directly after he arrived. Their names recur over and over as our narrative goes on, and the relation between them and their white folks was ever of the kindest. After emancipation this couple remained with their former owners, and in 1866 Dr. Phillips gave Dilsey her first freed-woman's wages, the first five-dollar gold piece that came to him just after the war. This woman was loved, supported, petted, and in old age tenderly nursed by her former owners.

As to the early setting of Mr. Spencer's home, we have her account in a letter to a daughter of her old playmate, Ellen Mitchell:

When your grandparents went to housekeeping in earnest, they sent north for their furniture. They had a mahogany secretary, and a little workstand with drawers and brass mounting that always stood by your grandmother's chair on the right side of the fireplace. I used often to see Mrs. Mitchell sitting there, so neat, so precise and so cheerful. They also bought well-made tables and chairs. No sofa in that house. People did not spend more money than they could help, in those days, on furniture. Bric-a-brac was unknown.

I do often feel amazed and ashamed when I recall the entire lack of conveniences, and even of comforts or of anything beautiful in our ways of living at Chapel Hill. Lack of transportation facilities was the great obstacle. A box of books could be hauled across the state from Petersburg or from Fayetteville with less risk than a piece of furniture. I have heard my mother say that she felt so jealous when Mrs.

Mitchell showed her that neat mahogany secretary, and that pretty workstand!

"Brother Sam," writing to his sister late in the eighties, says:

Oh for a full inhalation of the breath of the New Year, about 1834 or '35, or of a May, or an October in those years! It would be more enlivening than a mint julep, or an apple-toddy!

No education is perfect which does not permit a child to know the natural objects about him thoroughly. Children should be as much interested in the intimate knowledge of their home garden, in

"The fairy things that pass
"In the forest of the grass,"

as in far prospects. Naturally they will be so, and Chapel Hill was full of this minute loveliness. Besides woodsy banks where yellow jessamine grew, and coves where rhododendron and kalmia flourished, all the little streams, the rocks and the woods were known thoroughly. In after years those free ranging days of childhood were recalled fondly by these brothers and their sister, down to the extremity of age. Here is what "Brother Sam" calls "A little Cameo of Chapel Hill":

At some time in the century from 1735 to 1835, Joe Hooper and I went fishing one Commencement for horny-heads and minnows, down Hooper's Branch. If I were at Chapel Hill this Commencement I should choose to take a fishing line and follow the Branch again; but alas, what changes in the last century! The fish have forsaken that branch. It has not so much water in it as formerly. There were then some respectable holes at the roots of trees where a minnow or a horny-head or a small cat-fish might have a great deal of fun, until one of the Hoopers or the Phillipses came along.

In another letter he writes:

I was at Mangum's Creek, and I decided to ride home along the creek bank. It was a most charming evening. The tender foliage had every shade of green, and where the plow permitted, the ground was enamelled with violets, phlox and Houstonia. I shall never forget that ride. Returning from Adee's place I saw in two or three patches about one solid acre of phlox in bloom. The little hillsides within the plowed field blended with it. I never saw such a quantity.

These great sheets of blooming pink phlox are a lovely springtime habit of some old fields in central North Carolina.

Mrs. Spencer cannot refrain from continually putting down in her journals little visions of her old home. They occur most frequently in her later years, after she had left North Carolina.

The look of the woods in summer, plum trees with red fruit along the road, blackberries shining out, pink and purple partridge peas along its dusty border. Everything limp and wilted at midday, but standing straight and dewy in the morning.

A winter scene:

The distant hills, the pines, the woods, everything my mind's eye rested upon were in their winter's best aspect—soft and calm, grey and yellow and sunny.

I watched the clouds this evening, as they formed and changed and passed. I thought of every feature of my old home, of its streets, houses, groves, hills, and streams. The stories of the neighborhood, and the movements of population in the far past.

This last is a text whereby we may revive all that Mrs. Spencer would have wished to keep alive, all that she tried to preserve, by writing it down in her records,

so long unexplored. Turning over the great trunkful of her letters and papers, tracing their connections, it becomes a game to piece together phrases and allusions, and a sentence here and there, to make a picture of a whole society, to find out about those who formerly held the torch for us and passed it to our immediate predecessors. But as Mrs. Spencer says:

We cannot keep these old University Presidents and Professors, these men whose influence remains until today—and yet they are forgotten—before the world's eye, by simply saying again and again that they were great. The world will cynically ask, What did they do for us? And even if these questions are answered satisfactorily, the world is apt to turn from our old gossip to those who are still speaking aloud to us.

President Joseph Caldwell, after his return from Europe, tried with all his might to interest his state in transportation. He wrote what he called the "Carlton Letters" in which, in simple popular language, he advanced the feasibility of building a tram road which should go through the center of the state, with as many branches as you please, and give the farmers a means of hauling their produce to a market. This plan, practical for the time, was set forth in a dialogue between the writer and a simple farmer, and couched in homespun phrase. But how could the ignorant isolated farmers to whom it was addressed know anything about it? How could they understand it? So many of them could not read. And so the little book remains one of the naïve fruitless beginnings of which North Carolina can count a good many.

Dr. Elisha Mitchell, next to President Caldwell in distinction, was a remarkable figure. Born in Connecticut, he was a Yale man, and had been a tutor there after

his graduation. Classmates of his were Judge Longstreet of Georgia, Judge William Badger of North Carolina, and Denison Olmsted who had just returned to his Alma Mater as Professor of Mathematics. Judge William Gaston, of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, heard, presumably through Judge Badger, of this brilliant young man, and took pains to secure him for the University. Professor Mitchell was an ordained Congregational minister, but had never held a charge. His great passion was an overmastering curiosity about all facts whatsoever. Settled in a comparatively new and unrecorded country, he was in pain until he had explored it, geologized and botanized it. When vacations came he mounted his horse and fared out on long journeys into every part of the state, until he knew a great part of what was to be found in its boundaries. He was a chemist and a mathematician, a classical scholar and a student of literature in several modern languages. It was said of him that he could fill any chair in the University of that time except that of Law, but this versatility of his was his undoing. If he could only have settled upon some one thing of paramount interest to him, he would surely have left more than a local reputation. His wife was as well educated as himself, a woman also of executive ability.

Dr. Mitchell was a magnificent tall figure of a man, a real athlete, with domed forehead and piercing dark eyes. He was so busy, so interested, so happy in it all, that life seemed a delightful excursion to him.

Professor Hentz was a Frenchman, a native of Alsace. His wife was from New England, a highly cultivated woman. These were people who would have been distinguished anywhere. From the first they were the intimate friends of the Phillips family, and when in 1830

they left Chapel Hill they seem to have looked lovingly back to what Mrs. Hentz called the "kindness, warm feeling, hospitality and union of Chapel Hill." Professor Hentz was called by Dr. Mitchell "the foremost entomologist of America," this study being pursued by him by way of a hobby. Mrs. Hentz was of a literary turn, wrote verses and a play or two, and after she left Chapel Hill produced several novels, books successful in their time, but long forgotten. Mrs. Spencer says that her story *Lovel's Folly* contained half a dozen Chapel Hill portraits, delineating especially the dignified, family-proud house-servants at Dr. Caldwell's, types which must have been very interesting to this New England woman. Both of the Hentzes could draw, and painted in watercolors.

Dr. Caldwell had lost his young wife and baby shortly after he came to Chapel Hill. It was his second wife with whom he was living when the Phillips family arrived. She had been a widow, a Mrs. William Hooper, of Hillsborough, North Carolina. She was a native Scotswoman. Her first husband was the intimate friend of James Iredell, and a son of William Hooper, the signer of the Declaration of Independence. Mrs. Hooper had moved to Chapel Hill after her widowhood to educate her sons. Her son William took a degree at Princeton after graduating at the University of North Carolina, and had come back to take the chair of Latin and Greek. It seems to have been the custom for each professor to be a clergyman in some Protestant denomination. Professor William Hooper was first an Episcopalian, but afterwards went into the Baptist Church, becoming unsettled regarding the proper mode of Baptism. He lived to be extremely old, and died long after the Civil War,

within the memory of those now middle-aged. He was a charming and cultured man, a revered and beloved divine, and a ripe scholar.

With each year the University prospered, and the village folk became more civilized, until by the time Dr. Caldwell died, in 1835, the faculty were eight in number, and the students numbered 165.

This is the home, and these the companions to whom the Phillips family were introduced in the spring of 1826. It is worth mentioning and easy to understand, that from the first this little University community was raised well out of the common rut, and above the dead level of other places of its size, by its central interest. It was always considered a most satisfactory place to live. All the older folk who began their lives there unite in this testimony. When they left its shady groves they felt that they had left Arcadia behind them. This may be true of other college towns, but it is signally true of Chapel Hill. Now and today, and from the first, it has always been the most worth-while, and the least "Main-streety" of all North Carolina communities.

III

AN OLD-FASHIONED EDUCATION

EDUCATION began early for the group of children in Chapel Hill. There were not any public schools of any consequence in North Carolina until long after the Civil War, and so our young people had to be taught by private effort, at home or at pay schools. The little folk of whom we are speaking fared better, as regards intellectual pursuits, than almost any others in the state by reason of the academic atmosphere of their home, and the many good teachers who were available.

Dr. Mitchell had educational theories which he borrowed from John Stuart Mill's father. He wanted to make his daughters prodigies of early attainment. When his eldest was but six years old he wrote his wife to "push the girls along in learning." That was the way it was done then in the Mitchell, Hooper, and Phillips families. The children could read almost as soon as they could speak, were born reading as they often said, while Latin came immediately after at an exceedingly early age. Cornelia Phillips was stimulated in this way. A letter from the papers of Dr. Mitchell, written by his wife to her mother in Connecticut, dated September 19, 1830, tells of the education of her girls, which was the same, or nearly so, for their companions. "Mary" referred to, was eight years old. "Ellen" and "Margaret" were eighteen months and three years younger respectively.

Mary has been through the first eight books of Caesar twice . . . Every geographical and historical reference has been carefully explained to her. In accuracy of knowledge of Latin she is not surpassed I am sure by any child of eight years

in Connecticut. She knows a good deal of geography both ancient and modern, some arithmetic, something of botany, and by the aid of Mrs. Phillips has a very thorough acquaintance with the history and geography of the Bible. She has reached the nineteenth Psalm in learning by heart. She is reading Roman History, as well as story books aloud to me. She writes, makes her own bed, sweeps, is up every morning at sunrise. Her health is excellent. She romps about the house and yard four hours a day. I have bought twenty pairs of shoes for my three young scamperers since last fall.

It may be added in this connection that these four girls, Mary and her two sisters, and Cornelia Phillips, remained perfectly strong and healthy for the greater part of long and useful lives.

When Cornelia Phillips was five years old she wrote out a sentence from the Psalms, "O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good!"

This was my first attempt at writing continuously with my childish hand. I was so proud of having done it, and my Father and Mother praised me so much for my attempt that I have never forgotten how those crooked letters looked, up and down hill. I wish I had kept them. I would like to have that line on my tombstone, my first and my last message.

I remember also that Dr. William Hooper, who was a teacher with the power to inspire his pupils with enthusiasm, once voluntarily undertook to conduct a class of children along the way of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand. I was the youngest of the class, and though it seems absurd to say that a little girl of eleven could have been reading Greek in any appreciation of the author, yet it is true that I have never lost the impression made upon my childish mind by that immortal narrative. The extraordinary perils and hardships of the march, the deep snows, the unknown nations, the mountains, the perpetual fighting, the disastrous feast of poisoned honey, and the final triumphal arrival at—The Sea! The Sea! Such effect must be largely due to the teacher's skillful way of putting

things, for all this is still vivid in my memory after more than fifty years.

We recited in the brick "office" in Dr. Caldwell's yard. The class consisted of Dr. Mitchell's two eldest daughters, a son of Dr. Hooper, my two brothers and myself. I toiled on considerably in the rear as we pursued the flying Greeks. One chance I lost. Some words went down the line and came to me. "Now Cornelia!" cried Dr. Hooper eagerly; "beat 'em all, and you shall go to my garden and pull as many jonquils and hyacinths as you can carry home." I opened my mouth and was going to give the translation, for I happened to know it—when my Brother Charles snatched it from me, and saved himself—and I went mourning home without any jonquils.

A further account is found written in 1907, by herself:

My life has been rather uneventful, spent quietly, at the feet of the University, in the remotest town of the quietest county of the most backward old state in the Union. There are no adventures, enterprises or changes of importance to narrate, regarding my youth.

In old Chapel Hill, life's ways and thoughts outside of what books could give were thoroughly provincial, no doubt narrow.

Children were taught at home. Any learning for them, outside certain established educational lines, was considered queer, i.e., revolutionary. Education was highly esteemed, carefully provided, but it must go in the way the Fathers trod. Latin and Greek and French were the first foundations, ancient history, ancient geography in preference to anything modern. The old was considered better than the new. Dead languages were considered preferable to the living.

Dr. James Phillips and his wife, who did have some aspirations which might have been called altruistic, if the word had then been known, directed the education of their daughter very much along with that of her brothers, with this difference, that as they grew up theirs was expanded while hers remained stationary on the lines of its earliest direction.

When one wearied in those early days of the wanderings of Ulysses, there was Telemachus to take up the tale, or the

pious Æneas to place his achievements in the best possible light. Or there was Ovid, so easily understood, and so fascinating because of that. Later came Horace, dear old heathen, and there were the dramatists and the historians of ancient Greece and Rome. For a change the French stage was given, and French sermons, and Mme de Staël's *Corinne*.

Later still the English language and literature had some attention, and also algebra and elementary chemistry.

In another connection she says that she "formed her literary taste, in her teens on the British essayists." She was always a voracious and omnivorous reader, and it was early that she discovered her favorite form of literature in the many volumes of annals, letters, and biographies published in England during a century before, and beginning with Boswell's *Johnson*, her favorite of all books.

She adds:

All educational work was slow and done without any thought of training for mind and body as training is understood in this day. There was a good deal of simple happiness, and much converse with the woods and hills and streams, the wild flowers and fruits of the country, mixed with the books. The children grew up strong and healthy, ready for any work that might offer.

Again she speaks of the "crumbs that fell from the University table" being her "portion." These crumbs must have been abundant and nutritious.

It does not always happen that a woman's brothers remain her most intimate friends for the whole of a long lifetime. This Phillips family has not often been surpassed for clear intellect, and it was quite as much distinguished for family solidarity and family affection. Cornelia Phillips and her two brothers were knit together in a threefold cord. She loved them all her life devotedly,

while they gave her the best that was in them. Charles, the elder brother, inherited his father's strong bent toward mathematical studies, while Samuel had a more judicial, more philosophic mind. Both entered college and graduated together in the class of 1841, sharing between them the first distinction. With them there graduated a number of men who did good work in the service of North Carolina, among whom Calvin H. Wiley, the builder of the public school system of North Carolina, might be named pre-eminent. John W. Ellis, who was governor of the state at the outbreak of the Civil War, was another classmate. Upon graduating Charles Phillips found it hard to decide finally upon his career. Mrs. Spencer has noted as the worst fault of her own, in common with her brothers, that the variety of their interests made it hard for them to leave one good thing and grasp another. Charles Phillips read medicine for a while with Dr. William Jones, Chapel Hill's new physician, who had come straight from two years medical training in Europe. Then he suddenly set his heart upon the ministry as his chosen profession. He went immediately to Princeton College to study theology, but also took some mathematics because he loved it. Then President Swain, who had by that time succeeded Dr. Caldwell, importuned him to prepare further, and to return as his father's assistant. Applied mathematics became Charles Phillips' specialty, a branch very important to a new country just building its railroads. Samuel studied law, and began to practice in the North Carolina courts, keeping his residence at Chapel Hill. Both these men were large and powerful of build. Samuel was the more regularly handsome. He and Cornelia resembled their father most, but she was never at all a pretty

woman, if pink and white regularity of feature constitutes beauty. Her face was too strongly marked for a woman. She had a rather heavy nose which she considered a real affliction. Her figure was tall, and rather full, though not stout. Her eyes were her great beauty. Old friends have written of the beauty of Miss Cornie's eyes, and of her quick merry wit. Except for habitual ear-aches upon taking cold, Mrs. Spencer was never sick in her whole long life. From her mother she drew the desire to express herself in writing. From her mother also she learned good housewifery, although in those days of many servants it was more the overseeing that was needed. But Cornelia could do fancy cooking, she could sew beautifully, for in those days all sewing was done by hand, and "tiny stitches set in straight rows" were expected of all truly "lady-like women." She loved to sew. In an early letter she says, "Ma seems to think I am good for nothing but to stitch shirt-bosoms and make buttonholes for our lawyer, Sam." Again she says, "I glory in my white sewing."

She had a marked talent for drawing, developing it as an amusement for her later years, rather than in her youth. She played the old-fashioned dance music merrily and tunefully. She had an ear for songs and hymns. She drew a vignette of the University which was reproduced on all the old ball programs, and each year she did the engrossing of the names upon the college diplomas. Her handwriting is exquisite. Her earlier writing is perhaps more carefully limned, and was doubtless written with a quill; but from the first letter to the last diary her even script goes on the same, plain as print, and with scarcely an erasure or a blot. Her books of extracts

begin when she was eighteen. Into them she copied those literary selections which seemed to her worthy of verbatim memory.

One receives an impression of her mind at this time from these copy-books. She is reading the very newest books. She admires Macaulay as young folk used to do "because of his definiteness." "He seems to hold the key to the history of the world in his hand." Carlyle also she copies frequently, although she is told that "his work is considered heady and rough," and indeed the then reigning literary style is very leisurely. She reads Coleridge, Ruskin, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Horace Walpole, Boswells' *Johnson*, Daniel Webster, and N. P. Willis. She is frequently setting down Thackeray's cynicisms, good cautions for an exuberant young person.

Long years after it was said of her by an old pupil, Judge Hannis Taylor, who wrote a great book on the English Constitution: "She is a woman of a remarkably strong mind and character, and with more education, real education, than any woman I have ever known."

As soon as Cornelia Phillips was past her middle teens—and girls matured early enough in those days—she began to enter into all the jolly companionship and pleasant gossip of the little college community. The University had grown remarkably both in numbers and reputation. It was no longer a struggling little backwoods college, but students came there from the entire southwest. A little Latin and Greek did not sober the nonsense of those girls of Chapel Hill. Away from home, as one of them declared, you could conceal your knowledge and be thought as ignorant as other young folk, and at home nobody thought it strange for girls to study.

Now and then a snow would come south, and the young men came with improvised sleds to take the ladies sleighing. Commencements were regularly recurring festivals. There were speakings, there were parties where the whole friendly faculty society assembled. These last always included select upperclassmen, and visiting ladies. In the wonderful trunkful of papers, invitations to these parties are found, written in fine slanting hand-writing on tiny sheets of hot-pressed paper.

A merry laughing time it was, but I fear quite fruitless and unprofitable. . . .

And again I seem to smell the pennyroyal and see the orange asclepias and yellow evening primrose in the fence corners, to hear Bob White calling from the wheat stubble. Summer vacation times in Chapel Hill in the Forties! All of us sweetly doing nothing through the long hot days—going to the University Library, and bringing home lots of books, novels, histories, biographies, etc., lying down after dinner to read. Going out later to find our Aunt Dilsey sitting at her cabin door smoking her pipe—perhaps patching something for Uncle Ben. The very cats and dogs languidly stretched out under the shade of some pleasant bush. Lotos eaters we were in those Forties and Fifties.

The very first piece of Mrs. Spencer's handwriting which has been preserved is a poem, or rhymed epistle, written to her father in 1842, when she was seventeen years old. Dr. Phillips was an inexorable mathematician who said of himself that he cared not at all whether he was contemplating the orbit of a comet or the fall of an apple, provided that he could calculate the law of its motion by his science; and he had been urging his daughter a little too zealously along his chosen path. She says of herself that she never cared particularly about mathe-

metics, and so to ward off his solicitude and damp his expectations she wrote him this little rhymed letter :

Refraction and reflection, Pa,
Canvassed with so much learning here,
Light's beautiful phenomena,
Are all but lost on me I fear.

These rays of light, all polarized,
Angles and planes of incidence;
These bodies long since crystallized
Exerting each its influence;

Chromatics and photometers,
Mirages too, "Similes Maribus,"
Adsorption sines, thermometers,
And many such *coeteris paribus*—

Tell me I pray you if you please,
Does all this scientific lore,
Deepen the blue of skies and seas—
Make brighter landscapes than before?

Where'er you roam, at home, abroad,
Has life a "graver sweeter charm?"
Does science bring you nearer God?
Or free your soul from all alarm?

If not, this deep research, how vain!
How vain such useless lore to crave,
That rescues not from toil and pain,
Nor saves one votary from the grave!

IV

A "YOUNG LADY'S" FRIENDS IN CHAPEL HILL

AFTER Dr. Joseph Caldwell had died, at the very beginning of 1835, there was selected to succeed him a man whom one might consider a strange choice for the position of President of a university. This was David Lowrie Swain, popularly called "Governor" Swain, and never "President," being given the title of his highest state office. This new President was in the prime of life, and by reason of early poverty and later success in politics, joined with a certain wise simplicity of demeanor, and a fervid love for the Union, he may be compared with Abraham Lincoln in early life. He had, however, many more worldly advantages than Lincoln, for he came of excellent people, widely connected, he fell early into the hands of a good schoolmaster who taught him both Latin and Greek, and he even persevered so far with his education as to reach the University. He was a mountaineer by birth and is described as a rather grotesque figure in his youth. He roomed while at the University with Leonidas Polk of Raleigh, he who was later called the "Fighting Bishop" because he was at the same time Bishop of Louisiana and a Confederate Brigadier-General. Lack of money prevented young Swain's remaining long in college. After only eighteen months we find him living in Raleigh, and studying law. A few years later he married Eleanor White, daughter of the Secretary of State, and granddaughter of Governor Richard Caswell.

The first step of his public career was representing Buncombe, his native county, in the Legislature. At this time he obtained state aid for building the French Broad Turnpike. He was then appointed Judge of the Superior Court for a far eastern district where politics had run so high that no local man could command support. After that he was Governor of North Carolina for three terms; he saw the old State House burned and the new Capitol begun, he helped to launch the undertaking of building railroads in the state, and after his last term as Governor sat to represent his county in the Constitutional Convention of 1835.

When Governor Swain asked his friend Judge Nash to support his application for the appointment as President of the University, after Dr. Caldwell's death, the Judge was thunderstruck. However, he talked the matter over with another trustee, Judge Cameron, and the latter took quite a different view. He said, "As Governor Swain has always swayed and managed men so perfectly, perhaps he is the very man to do as well with unruly boys." Not until 1838 was Governor Swain finally placed over the University and installed. He then moved to Chapel Hill to rule over a faculty all his seniors in age and his superiors in scholarship, who had been teachers all their lives. His selection as President of the University was, to his faculty, a deep chagrin. His personal appearance was a great contrast to the elegant dignity of Dr. Caldwell, for he was tall, ungainly, and shambling. His face was large and long of feature, his expression solemn and sheepish, though with a quizzical twinkle often visible upon it. Largely self-taught, he was neither a great lawyer nor a great speaker. His specialty was history, or rather the collection of the raw

material of which history is made. This pursuit he followed more as a hobby than as a serious object of study. But his knowledge of these details of history and of political questions was undoubtedly very great.

It is no wonder that Dr. William Hooper left the faculty just then, feeling outraged at the successor selected for his reverend step-father. No wonder that he sneered openly and said, "North Carolina has given Governor Swain every office he has ever asked for, and now she is sending him to college to get an education." But Governor Swain's long administration of thirty-three years, just beginning, was to be a success. Mrs. Spencer sums him up:

All through life he showed sagacity in judging men, prudence in managing them, and charity in judging them. He saw clearly, he acted cautiously, and he felt kindly. He was one of those notable men who find success in life from their habit of always making themselves agreeable.

Added to this he had a discreet financial sense. Every dollar he expended had to render up full value received. The students at his accession rejoiced to see a man whom they felt sure they could bedevil with impunity, but Governor Swain took everything as it came with exceeding calmness. Of course the students nick-named him "Old Bunk" from his native county of Buncombe, which was then merely the name of a place, and not a synonym for inflated oratory. His second nick-name was "Old Warping-bars," from his loose-jointed frame. This last comparison is lost on the present generation, who never saw the two wooden bars loosely united by a shackling cross-piece, which could be leaned up against a convenient wall, to hold the hanks of measured warp, spread across, upon the parallel rows of pegs.

He said himself that when he first came to Chapel Hill he received many a fling from his students, who made fun of him openly. He added that he always "revised himself" if needful "in the direction to which the jibe or the caricature pointed;" "*fas est ab hoste doceri*" he would add with a merry twinkle of his eye.

Governor Swain knew the state thoroughly. He had worked with all its prominent men, of whom there were not many in such a small population. His memory for the details of family connections, names and faces, was as tenacious as was Dr. Mitchell's regarding the location of a rare plant or fossil. When a student went up for his customary interview with the President, after matriculation, the conversation between him and Governor Swain would be like this: "Your name is Archer, sir?—Archer—and you are from over in Blank County? Oh yes, I knew your father—knew him mighty well—he used to run for the Legislature against old Captain Smith—*sometimes* he used to beat him—well! —Now, young man, we have had twelve Archers matriculate here since this University was first opened, and only three of them graduated! Better mind your book, sir, for you don't come of a first rate breed of pups." Governor Swain took pride in the fact that in almost every case he could tell a student more of his own family history than the boy had previously known. "You see I know more about you than you know about yourself," he would conclude.

Governor Swain introduced some improvements into college affairs. He was the first to stand for temperance and to procure legislative enactment against the sale of liquor within the environs of Chapel Hill. He required the Bible to be taught as a subject of the regular cur-

riculum. He hired an English gardener to lay out the campus and beautify the village. He initiated the custom of giving a senior banquet to the boys of each graduating class, and he insisted on weekly faculty meetings. Heretofore the near-by trustees had had much to do with the minutiae of discipline, but by his influence Governor Swain changed this ruling, so that he and the faculty wielded the widest discretion.

Governor Swain had a great liking for things done with elegance and in style. While he himself was as plain as possible, yet he had a handsomely furnished home, kept good carriage horses, and spent his money not profusely but carefully. He never gave money away, but he "would always assist his poor neighbors with a loan, which he never distressed them to pay." Dr. Caldwell had been isolated in the village. Governor Swain loved and fostered its beauty and prosperity. Chapel Hill is peculiar in the state for the stone walls which have been used to bound the divisions of land. It was Governor Swain who first had the campus enclosed with walls laid of loose stones. Dr. Mitchell, who was a farmer's son from Connecticut, was called in, to show how a wall might be made of the gathered fragments, and he is said to have built up the first rod of it with his own hands. When many rose-vines were allowed to trail over these and partly cover them, and ivy was planted in other places, the effect was to give a look of permanence to the place. Few of the original walls are undisturbed at this time, but the custom has been long established of using stone instead of picket fences. Mrs. Spencer further says of her old friend:

Governor Swain was called far too lax in discipline. He always thought of the parents at home, and there were often

collisions with Drs. Phillips and Mitchell, who had been trained to Dr. Caldwell's methods. When however he finally pronounced sentence it *was final*. This homespun Governor had a dignity which sat well upon a plain man. However he might laugh and joke with the sauciest student, he had a limit, and the boys never overstepped it.

He believed in numbers and in the attrition of a large society. He trusted the boys much more than his predecessor had done, and he made the college popular. He was a good advertiser, and under his administration numbers were added to the institution. He never wanted to change his faculty, and he would buy neither new books nor new apparatus. His aim was to turn out good material for lawyers and political leaders for the South, and he under-rated high and deep scholarship. They used to say that the only use Governor Swain had for a library was to put it in the garret, for all the collections were housed in this way, just under the roof. . . .

The most important factor in any man's career is the woman whom he makes his wife. Mrs. Swain possessed her husband's entire love and confidence to the last hour of his life. In many respects she deserved it, but in some she did not. Her weakness was her children, and she spoiled them all systematically, never allowing the slightest criticism of them. She made it her business to conceal their shortcomings from their father. She was aided in this by a set of pampered negroes whom she also indulged on the same ground that she spoiled her children, because they were hers. And so Governor Swain's family servants were a by-word for wickedness, and his children grew up to bring him infinite anxiety and sorrow.

In saying this I have said all that I intend as to the shortcomings in the administration of his affairs. Making every deduction on the score of too great indulgence, . . . he was a great man. He ruled his four hundred wild boys on the whole, wisely. . . . That tall ungainly figure, that sonorous voice, those nervous trembling hands, that look of infinite benignity and sympathy turned on all who approached him, we all know . . . We all know the melancholy that often wrapped

him like a garment. We do full justice to the sagacious good sense that marked his long successful administration.

When Dr. Hooper went away, Professor Manuel Fetter came in his place. He was a native of Pennsylvania. Then Reverend Mercer Green, an Episcopal clergyman, came from Hillsborough, North Carolina, to teach English, or as they called it *belles lettres*. Those Greens had that air of gentility which is not dependent upon tailors or upholsterers. Mr. Green shared the chaplaincy of the University with Dr. Mitchell and with Dr. C. F. Deems, a brilliant young Methodist, who was later pastor of the Church of the Strangers in New York City.

Everybody, villagers, students, and faculty, went on Sunday to both services, to the Chapel in the morning, and to the village church in the evening. Mrs. Spencer somewhere says, "Whoever preached at one preached at both services. After awhile the Methodists began to hold meetings of their own, where they could shout if so inclined."

It was then that Dr. Green planned and built the lovely little Episcopal Church which still is standing, flanked by a larger new one. He began on faith, without funds, but money came slowly in, and it was dedicated in 1848. Judge William Battle and other Episcopal heads of families had come to Chapel Hill by this time, and there was a flourishing church. Dr. James Phillips was stirred to emulation by this, but proceeded differently. He collected every cent of the needful money first, and had it in the bank before he made a brick. The Presbyterian Church was dedicated in 1849. Dr. Green afterwards became Bishop of Mississippi. He lived until his eighty-ninth year, breathing ever love and benediction, begging his friends and children to pray that he

might not be having all his good things in this life, so happy did he feel himself in his lot.

Professor Hubbard was another new man, and came to teach Latin. He was also an Episcopal clergyman, and was from Connecticut.

Of the older folk one has been left out, Mrs. Nunn, who kept the hotel or tavern, and the student's boarding-house, until the forties, when Miss Nancy Hilliard succeeded her at this business. Mrs. Nunn died at ninety-two. She was a spirited old lady. She remembered all about the Regulator's War, and said she had been on their side, "as good a Whig as ever hopped." Here is a quaint memorial of her funeral:

Do you mind you of Dr. Mitchell's funeral sermon over old Mrs. Nunn? Full of humor it was, I do not say fun, but humor, Dr. Mitchell's kind of humor, or humors. He was explaining Mrs. Nunn's carelessness about religious matters, and ascribed it to her being married, a mere girl, to a man three times her age, who was soaked in the unbelief of the Revolutionary armies, taken by induction from the French Liberals. There are a great many curious connections which are not history, and are not biography, but are most interesting, though generally forgotten.

These reminiscences, these chains of circumstances abound in Mrs. Spencer's papers. Is it true that all interest has faded out of them forever?

Miss Nancy Hilliard, who was in her day one of the institutions of Chapel Hill, earned an income of many thousands of dollars a year as mistress of the student's boarding house. Freely she received, and freely she gave.

She would keep the best table in the whole state, far too good, those said who did not board with her. She would give a poor student his board for months, or even for years. If

one of her especial pets got into trouble, she would put on her bonnet and walk over to plead his cause with Governor Swain. "You must let him off," she would say, "he's such a little *young* boy!"

There were a succession of village physicians, from Dr. Yancey who drank, and made it necessary to send sometimes twelve long red-clay miles to Hillsborough when someone was seriously ill, to Dr. Jones, who looked exactly like that handsome picture of Lord Byron, but who was not proud of the fact, and took offense if it were mentioned. Dr. Jones had been educated in France, was a remarkable physician, cool, taciturn and efficient, a hard student, and gifted with a certain healing touch.

Merchants had moved in also. John Carr, father of Julian Carr of Durham, North Carolina, well known as a successful man and philanthropist. Then Newton, and Hargrave, and Mickle; names that come in many a time. Mrs. Spencer writes in 1890 of the methods of lighting, etc., of her youth:

If any one would like to compare the domestic comforts fifty years ago with those of today, let him begin with the lights. In summer we had to go across the yard to the kitchen for a *chunk* to light up with. And what blowing and puffing to coax a blue flame to catch upon the candle wick, what dripping of tallow and sperm before this could be accomplished. One tallow candle on the supper-table. Try it and see the effect. Two sperm candles in the parlor of an evening, two for the scholar bending over his books, and a tallow candle in a flat candlestick to run about the house with. In the blessed present I never see a brilliant light flaring that I do not feel sorry for the poor old eyes of a century ago, that had no such aid, not even the clear brightness of kerosene.

The first stores were better stocked, however, than they would be in later days, for there was no way to

obtain manufactured goods save to wagon it in from Petersburg or Fayetteville, no supply save the stock which happened to be in the hands of the merchant. Among the candles and calicoes, Mrs. Spencer tells us that they even managed to sell a little general literature in one of the stores:

On a platform down the middle of Newton's store a few books were kept. Among them was Fanny Kemble's *Journal* in two volumes. When my mother went shopping, she always took me to keep me out of mischief, and I would slip behind that platform and read this book. I thought it wonderful, and continued this stolen delight till I had finished both volumes.

Slaves were plentiful in Chapel Hill, for this was long before emancipation. Mrs. Spencer writes:

When Judge William Gaston had dared to predict the outcome of slavery in his famous address at the Commencement of 1832, everyone applauded his oratory, but left his wisdom unattended. It is a curious process to leaf over a long series of newspaper files of the Forties, and later, to see how this "Peculiar Institution" came to be more and more taken as a part of the decrees of the Creator, and more and more defended as the years were added to the years.

We have already been introduced to Aunt Dilsey and Uncle Ben. There were interesting darkies, college servants, Davidge, "Dr. November," who had been Dr. Caldwell's carriage driver, and had later, as he boasted, blacked boots for senators and made beds for governors, and even waited upon more than one President of the United States visiting Chapel Hill in his time. Then there was Dave Barham who served Dr. Mitchell as janitor for twenty years, and always recalled that he had never had one hard word from him. Quoting Mrs. Spencer:

Much of the high aristocratic feeling of the community found its home among the old slaves who had been in their places for half a century. It made them proud to see themselves untouched amid changes and upheavals. They considered themselves the *Patres Conscripti* of Chapel Hill.

Once two old cronies had met, and were enjoying a satisfying gossip over the changes and the doings of their old home town. The daughter of one of them, reproving the pair, said, "Aren't you two 'most done talking it over by this time? Why, you have gone clear through to the niggers and the dogs!"¹

Cornelia Phillips spent her long girlhood with little absence from home. She came to be acquainted with very many of the best in the state as they came and went. She liked people, enjoyed traits and oddities. Character for its own sake interested her, and in her full experience of all who frequented the University she was laying the foundation of her love for, and future service to, her chosen cause of education in North Carolina. She had a genius for friendship. In the first of her letters which have survived we find echoes of gay doings, jokes, serenades, picnics, wild-flower hunts, autumn excursions after hickory-nuts and wild grapes; with always mention of long walks at all seasons, a pastime as regularly followed as in Miss Austen's novels. From quite early in the for-

¹ In speaking of the negroes of Chapel Hill, Mrs. Spencer does *not* mention the one perhaps most interesting: George Horton, a slave, born in Chatham County in 1798, who was hired as a servant to the college, and who could write melodious verse. He would make verses for the students to send their sweethearts, fifty cents for an ordinary poem, seventy-five if there was a great deal of adulation included. (Family tradition.)

Horton could read and write, being self-taught. He published two small books of poetry before the War. He went north after the surrender with a northern officer, dying, some say in Boston, some in Philadelphia. One of his volumes is preserved in the Boston Public Library. Neither one is at Chapel Hill.



CORNELIA PHILLIPS SPENCER

ties there remains a letter written to her by a girl friend who was visiting in Hillsborough, which says:

How I long for the time when we shall reassemble in that "den" of yours, and talk over all our interesting adventures! You must treasure up everything funny. . . . It really seems as if more interesting things were transacting in my absence than in a whole twelve month before.

It was a society of a "dozen families and their doings." The first one of that jolly circle of intimates to marry and leave home was the second of Dr. Mitchell's daughters, and it is to her that the succeeding two letters were written. In these girlish letters we can catch the gay insouciant atmosphere of Cornelia and her world at that time.

December 7, 1844.

MY DEAR ELLEN:

I was just beginning to think it high time for that promised letter to be making its appearance, when on the dismal, first day of vacation Sam handed it to me: it is not worth while, is it? to say how pleased I was with its contents, nor how sincerely I hailed it as the commencement of a long and pleasant correspondence. Suffice it to say, that I read it four times, and expect to give it a fifth perusal when I finish this.

I had followed you in fancy to your new abode, and helped you make your arrangements, disagreeing with you in one instance—as to whether that table should not have been on the *other* side of the fireplace! But I confess I never dreamed of anything half so *funny* as your sitting down on the floor surrounded with those mysterious *male* habiliments. I shall laugh at it twenty years hence. I have been brought up to make and mend all the varieties, and should have been as bold over such an investigation as possible. But I can readily conceive you, holding at arms length and viewing with a slight shudder some *nondescript* and then and there firmly making up your mind as to the utter impossibility of your grasping it intimately enough to put a patch in or a button on!

As to the bottles of medicine, if they are found to invade in any *inconvenient* number *your side* of the room, I advise you to get a real *big* bottle and empty the contents of a dozen or so in it. You will find it an infallible prescription for making them keep their distance.

You were perfectly right in your conjecture about my part of the attendance at Senior Speaking. I could not make up my mind to endure it again, and so, much to the amazement of *sundry* staid at home those three afternoons and hemmed silk pocket-handkerchiefs.

There were the usual assortment, some funny that were meant to be so, and more that were *not*, patriotism enough to keep the country from ruin for a century to come, and more "stars and stripes," "revolutions," "bloody despots," "laurel crowns" and "tyrants hurled" than would suffice for two or three reasonable outpourings.

The students melted away as imperceptibly as usual, and by Saturday everything was settled down to the ancient quiet of the winter vacation. Is there anything new in all this? certainly not—but you must pay the universal penalty of engaging a correspondent from the classic hill—Something dull! I did go out as soon as I could without swimming to collect *material* for this very letter, but "deil a bit" could I find . . . Let me see—what *was* there?—Mrs. Moore has gone to Pittsboro for two or three weeks, and Miss Rebecca is waiting for Brother Hugh to come and take her home. Miss Pannell is here, and if you ask like Pa, who is *she*? I will give you the two answers he received. Ma said, "Bishop Otey's sister-in-law," I said, "Miss Nancy Hilliard's aunt." Then Mrs. Lucas and Mr. and Mrs. Ryan are moving to Hollands, and Mrs. Scott is not moving at all, and Mary Hooper is coming home, and Mrs. Swain has left home, and Miss Nancy Hilliard is talking of a "candy-biling" and—and—in short you see my dear how we are overwhelmed with novelties and varieties and incidents. Another piece of news I have left out, is that the sun is shining out, bashfully and hesitatingly to be sure, but still shining, and that is a great point gained for people who have not seen his face in the last two weeks. I have heard it said that he will take advantage of the eclipse next Monday to

disappear altogether, and "leave the world no copy." Ah! I see we are to have a splendid day, barring the wind which was so unmannerly as to send a man down street just now in a brisk canter after his hat.

Ma and I took a long walk the other day to Glenburnie—Glenburnie no longer. Mr. Waitt has had the barbarity to clear the stream of those picturesque rocks, and the large one stands alone in the midst of the most insipid flat creek that ever rippled over a bed of fine gravel, and he has cut a road all along there, and so completely changed the face of nature that the place was hardly recognizable. I sat me down, and as a friend of mine once observed, *mused at it*. The glen is suggestive now of nothing but a carding machine for which it has been thus desecrated. No romance nor nothing about it. Apropos of romance, I hope you and your captive eagle (at your boarding place) get along neighborly together. Poor fellow! he must sigh for his mountains, and if he could do anything but scream at his fate, would no doubt beg you to consider how differently he would appear serene in solitary state on his native cliff. I am glad not to have seen him in his cage, for Wilson has filled me with unbounded enthusiasm about the "Lightning glints," the "Storm wheelers," the "Cloud cleavers." I do not remember to have seen the poetry you refer to, but Ma has, and she says she thinks you quoted it correctly. It promised well, and I should like to come across the rest of it. The "burying his talons in his brain" is I suppose what might be called poetic license.

Did you ever read the *Fudges in England*? One of the persons speaks of a *serious* cookmaid,

"Of some sect

Not particular I fancy in any respect,

But desirous, poor thing, to be fed with the word,

And to wait, as she said, on Mrs. Fudge and the Lord."

I thank you kindly dear Ellen for your invitation to come and see you, but why did you *postpone* my visit? How do you know, since things strange are constantly occurring, but that I may be *at home* myself. Just think of that, and in your next, be sure to ask me to come *immediately* even if you are board-

ing! I do not think you will soon get tired of your present way of living, at least I fancy it would be the very thing for me—so delightful not to have to think, what shall we have for dinner. . . .

You see that I have written to Ellen Mitchell, and so far kept in bounds that if the Doctor¹ should happen to be *looking over* he will see nothing whereby he might set me down for being either *Red* or indeed *Blue*. Give him my best respects, in which all the family join. Ma desires her love to you. Adieu, may you live a thousand years in happiness and peace.

Very sincerely yours,

CORNELIA PHILLIPS

P.S.—I do not think I have mentioned any of your family, but as I know that Mary wrote you this week, I did not think you in want of information, and I have not seen any of them for several days.

CHAPEL HILL, February 27, 1845.

MY DEAR ELLEN:

I have not the least idea of flattering you when I say that I am at this moment luxuriating in the notion of a good long talk with you. The sky is just cloudy, and the air just cool enough to make indoors agreeable. Pa has gone to faculty meeting, to assist in overhauling some unlucky scapegraces. Ma is sitting upstairs with Charles who childishly enough has thought proper to take the measles. Sam is in Hillsboro, attending his *first* court. I am alone in the parlour, before a blazing fire, settled to my liking for the rest of the afternoon.

You know Mary Shaw is here. Well! what with walking and talking and no slight amount of laughing she and I bid fair to be quite intimate. She looks very well, and seems very gay, though that may be only a reflection from me for I feel that for the last few weeks I have been what the Highlanders call "fey," my spirits are so topsy turvy. Ever since I was sick—now I see you looking incredulous, but I actually have been quite sick, and oh! sad to relate, was sick when Mr. Bridgers was here. When I was in Raleigh, he did not sc

¹Dr. J. J. Summerell of Salisbury, North Carolina, married Ellen Mitchell. He was for forty-five years a trusted physician there.

much as speak to me, and notwithstanding he was very profuse of apologies and regrets when he was here, yet I have a shrewd suspicion that he never would have called if he had not received the authentic information of my being safe in bed. I think you must have done him vast injustice by rating him of "third magnitude" for according to all accounts *first* would never satisfy him. As to the wife you were speaking of, he has found her in one of those rich Miss Martins of Rockingham. He said he would come through again in April. May the fates send me another ear-ache about that time, for I can fancy it extremely distressing to be obliged to sit quite still while he expatiated on her charms and his happiness.

Did you see Mr. Hayes? I almost fell down with surprise when, a night or two ago, just after prayers, there was a knock at the door and I walking out confidently, expecting nothing more than a servant at such a time, encountered *him*. You may be sure I glowered considerable. He was very pleasant till the stage was ready to go, and then because he would not stay, I thought that after all he was not so very agreeable.

What did you think of Mary Hall's being engaged? Margaret talks very positively, and I—"Non equidem invideo, miror magis"—Spiteful? Mag reasons thus. Mrs. Hall and Mary have often talked of, and quoted a Mr. Harrington since their return. Rich too he is, and a sort of cousin, and is, or if he is not he ought to be, very much in love with Mary. Well! and then Mary has come back with a handsome ring, and a new bracelet, which if he did not give her, I should like to know who did? There's a clear case for you. Now though not gifted with as much clairvoyance as my friend Mag on this occasion, still I can affirm as to the existence of said ring and bracelet, and am tolerably sure that I should like to know who was the donor, for we are still in the dark as to that important affair. Give me the light of your opinion on this delicate point.

Apropos of engagements here's a wedding for you. Married by the Rev. Charles Deems, Mr. John Newton to Miss Nancy Utley—and that is all I know about it. I have not even heard what the bride was dressed in, charitably supposing she

was better dressed than the lady in the song which is sung to have on "a white gauze veil and a green glass breastpin."

Mary Washington will trade herself away for a name and a ring on the twelfth of next month. Great preparations as befitting the noble pair. Julia Scott has gone up to do her share of the *fixin'*.

Mr. Green received a letter from Mary Owen lately asking him for a recommendation to a school, and I have heard that he and Governor Swain talk of Saint Mary's in Raleigh, where she might be teacher of something or other. I rather think it a bad choice for her, for even if Mary should be found competent to teach there, would she not be unhappy, ill-suited to so aristocratic an atmosphere?

Next thing you hear will be that your sister Margaret is down with the measles, for after running all over town I hear it has put up at *your house* for a time, there being ten there to have it.

Margaret has been reading Allison's *History*, and Mary Shaw is to undertake it when she has finished. I do wish you could have seen Mary Shaw the other day, when Mag brought down the first volume, to show her the size and the close print. She stood them pretty well, but when Mag proceeded to inform her that there were four more, just such volumes, Mary broke out, "Now that's too bad, for Maria Nash's copy didn't have but *three volumes!*"

Mary Hall, Anne Swain and I having picked each other up at intervals along the way, fell in at Mrs. Fetter's the other day, and while there, conducted a most edifying conversation trying to recollect instances of when most children had come, at *one time*. Mary knew of some lady who had had three. Somebody else told of four once upon a time. I said, I thought, I wasn't *quite* sure, but I had seen somebody somewhere, who *said* that once, somebody had had *nine!*

Instructive, wasn't it? I came away assured that it does not always take wit to produce laughing.

I hear my dear that you are inclined to "allycholy." I ought to impart to you some of my present superabundance of laughing spirit. Don't I beg of you, get into a low way. It's a very bad habit, easily formed. I never did take Mr.

Bridgers'² word for anything, and shall not in this instance when told against the *companion of my childhood*. No never! But as I was saying, don't get melancholy, or we shall send for you to walk with Mary Shaw and me, and we would put you in a fair way of recovery.

I suppose you have heard of the grand row in college last week. The trustees who were sent for don't seem to have been as hard upon the delinquents as the faculty wanted. Instead of expelling they only dismissed.

Tell your sister Mary that if she wants to save the lives of several grey gossips here, she will come home and be married the first of April next, that being the day set and fixed for her by general acclamation! Ask her if she is conscious of owing me a letter?

My best respects to the Doctor. Very sincerely and affectionately,

CORNELIA PHILLIPS

Mrs. Spencer felt that she never made the fullest use of her opportunities, which seemed to her very great. Often she strikes this note, often she speaks regretfully of her lack of early development, both mental and moral:

I hate myself as a child, I must have been uncommonly wayward. . . My youth was like waste-baskets full of trash. . .

I was once as full of silly jokes as anyone. Some of them I remember and am ashamed of them! I prefer the undergraduate's stateliest views on the probable destiny of the English language, to his facetious description of a "coon hunt or a candy-pulling." The truth is that few very young people are good at jokes. Let them beware of attempts to be comic.

Mary Shaw, that dear girl friend of Cornelia's, married in 1849 and very soon after died. This was the first real sorrow that came to sadden the youthful circle. Cornelia wrote an old-fashioned "Portrait" of her, and

² R. R. Bridgers was a graduate of the University of North Carolina in 1841, a builder of railroads. He was from Edgecombe County, North Carolina.

recorded it in her journal, and added a simple little dirge, or lament:

'Tis June the month of light and bloom
The month of many roses.
I heed it not, the silent tomb
Our sweetest flow'r encloses.

The sun upon the rippling streams,
Throws many a golden arrow,
But Mary's eye no longer gleams,
The grave is cold and narrow.

The winds are playing through the trees,
That fringe the broad old river.
Our Mary's voice was like the breeze
And that is stilled forever.

Beneath this little poem is written by the old woman of eighty years, who was then living far away from Chapel Hill:

Fifty years since I wrote this foregoing tribute to the friend of my youth. I remember her still. But so many losses and sorrows have been seen and felt in half a century that the grief that Mary Shaw's death gave me seems now very faint. "All, all are gone,—the old familiar faces."

CORNELIA PHILLIPS' LOVE STORY

THERE is just here a gap in Cornelia Phillips' personal records for five or six years, which has to be filled from others' knowledge. Most of her circle of girl friends had married and gone. She herself was in a sense what we moderns would call a "College Widow," a girl who had known and liked so many young men that she could not settle down to contemplation of matrimony with any one. Once she had engaged herself during this period, but she broke the affair off hastily, as not sure of her heart. She "experienced religion," as goes the expressive old phrase, at some time during these silent years.

Both her brothers were married during this interval. Charles married the sister of Judge W. H. Battle, who was living in Chapel Hill as Professor of Law. Laura Battle was a woman of rare sweetness, a tiny fairylike person who preserved to the end of a very long life of care and motherhood her keen open-eyed delight in all loveliness and friendship. This is the "Dear Laura" of so many of Mrs. Spencer's most interesting letters throughout her life. Charles was married in 1847. In 1848 Samuel married Miss Frances Lucas, a beautiful woman, also of excellent family. Her characteristics were thoroughly domestic. She adored her husband, and lived only for her family. These two brothers' families were settled within a stone's throw of their parents' door. Their children were soon a growing tribe, for "Auntie" to pet, to cuddle, and to chide.

It is the same Chapel Hill, only larger, and more prosperous. Instead of the hundred and fifty students of Dr. Caldwell's best years, there are now four hundred and more. The faculty is three times as numerous. The village and immediate environs number two thousand souls.

But the winds of change were blowing. The Phillips family, and indeed all the older folk of Chapel Hill were determined Whigs, but that Democratic party which Thomas Jefferson had started had finally captured the state and elected their first governor in 1852.

In the class which graduated in the summer of 1853 at the University appear a good many names afterwards well known to North Carolina people, and several which come continually into Mrs. Spencer's later story; among them, most important, was James Munroe Spencer of Alabama, whose name she was to bear. This young man was a first honor graduate, although he had no oration assigned him at Commencement. He was older than most of his class, being only a few months younger than his future wife.

Let her tell the story of their courtship in her own words, written ten years after, in 1862:

I went with the children today for a walk, and coming back by the left bank of Tenney's mill pond, I thought how when I last walked there it was a sheet of ice, covered with skaters. That was in January, 1852. Then and there I first got acquainted with my dear *Magnus*. We walked over that ice together, and walked on home together. I can recall our talk, and his looks and tones, so vividly. It seems but yesterday, instead of ten years.

On April 30, 1862, she writes again:

Nine years ago this day, Magnus Spencer and I took a walk together which ended in our engagement that evening.

He always called it our "courting day" and we remembered it as warmly as we did our wedding day.

James Munroe Spencer, nick-named "Magnus" or "Longus" because of his tall stature, was long remembered by his friends as a man to be counted worthy of any esteem. When it was asked of those who knew him whether he had been the equal of his wife in mentality, the answer invariably was that he was a man of fine mind and character, equal to any one of his associates. He was one of those who come into the world so well able to discern both mentally and morally that they seem to need little discipline. There are some people like that, and Mr. Spencer was one of them. Also they are said, whether rightly or wrongly, to die young. He was in every way a fitting mate for his wife. His family was respectable and had already lived for two generations in Alabama, so that they must have been early settlers in that new state. His talents were legal, and Governor Swain said of him that he was a most promising young lawyer. To judge him by the few mementoes that are left, his daguerreotype shows a grave strong face, with a splendid forehead, and already an expression of endurance, or of suppressed pain. His little account book shows an exact soul in money matters, and thrift was far from being a common virtue in the Southwest of the fifties. Sure it is that he filled his wife's heart with a love for him that never abated.

After he was graduated from the University in 1853 he returned home, studied law, hung out his "shingle," and found himself sufficiently established to return to Chapel Hill and marry his wife in 1855. They were married on June twentieth of that year.



JAMES MUNROE SPENCER

The young couple took a long leisurely trip to their new home, via Wilmington, North Carolina, by sea to Charleston, South Carolina, thence to Atlanta, Georgia, and up into Tennessee where they visited a married sister of the husband. They arrived at their future home in the early autumn.

Greene County, Alabama, is half way down the western side of that state. The name of their town was Clinton, which is still a small place. James Spencer had several brothers and a sister living near there, and Mrs. Spencer seems not only to have been ideally happy with him, but to have enjoyed her new kinsfolk. She began to write long letters home, and the Phillips family must have found some compensation for her absence in these letters, so interesting and detailed. They were letters which whetted the appetite for more, letters which you could laugh at, argue with, agree with and which were treasured and re-read when others had lost their timeliness and faded out of mind. Her letters have long kept their qualities, and it has seemed difficult willfully to destroy a sheet of her handwriting.

Wherever she counted a friend, she loved to write to that friend at intervals. But for these married years only a few letters remain, of the dozens she must have written. She says that she herself destroyed them, as being too piercingly happy, too poignant, to keep and contemplate after her widowhood.

In quoting a letter from her to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Charles Phillips, we will first explain that in the fifties little girls and grown ladies as well wore visible *pantalettes*, reaching to their ankles. These were considered entirely as objects to be decorated, and were dized out with embroideries, braidings and what not. Ladies were

always busied with their white embroideries, for these and other uses, because machines had not yet been invented to make such trimmings.

CLINTON, ALABAMA, *February 2, 1857.*

DEAR LAURA :

I took dinner with Magnus' cousin, Mrs. Parham, a fortnight since, and I told her I meant to write and tell you all about her, so that you might be as discontented with your husband's wife as I am with mine, upon comparison with her.

After dinner she took us (the ladies of the party), leaving the men to smoke in the parlour, into her room; and the conversation turning upon embroidery, Mrs. Parham went to her bureau, and produced a good sized bundle, which upon inspection was made up of worked bands; six pair of linen pantalettes for her Laura, worked three and four inches deep, and a skirt for herself, fine cambric, worked five or six inches deep, with chemise bands and sleeves to match in any quantity. I could only raise my eyes and cry out, "Who did it?"

"Why I did it, of course, every stitch," said Mrs. Parham. "But when?" we all cried. "Oh at odd times, since the long evenings set in."

Now Laura, Mrs. Parham does every stitch of sewing for herself, husband, four boys, and a daughter; cuts out every garment worn by fifty negroes, and makes many of them; and she had, hanging on a line in a spare room, twenty pairs of stockings for Dr. Parham, and the children aforesaid, knit by herself, and no one of which had been ever worn, as she kept so much ahead of their needs in that line.

Her house is as neat as wax, garden and yard ditto, lettuce and peas already sowed. Upon my word how she does it I cannot tell. One little thing she dropped gave me an inkling. Somebody, speaking of a late breakfast—"Dear me," says Mrs. Parham, "Don't you eat breakfast by candle light these short days?" Well I suppose it's *drive, drive* all the time, and that's my consolation. As to reading or anything of that sort, if she ever gets through "*Godey's Lady's Book*" it's as much!

Indeed she said, to me "Cousin, I can't enjoy reading—I have so much to do and to think about, I am really unable to fix my mind on a book." I dare say she'll be dead before she is forty, and then, "Whose shall those *things* be?"

When the brief episode of her married life was over she looked over all these letters, in 1862, after she had returned home to her father's house in Chapel Hill. She says:

I have this day been looking over some letters I wrote home, from Tennessee and from Alabama. I cannot help thinking them very good letters on the whole. They recall a great deal of happiness. I seem to have been very full and minute in my accounts.

Letters from her father, Dr. James Phillips, have also been preserved, written about this time to his daughter. They tell of his preaching trips, of the events of the College, and in one he gives an account of the untimely death of his little black cat:

Among the deaths which have occurred here since you left, I suppose all have forgotten to tell you of the little black cat. I saw as I was passing Sam's law office to college this morning, a defunct animal of the feline species, resembling ours, and subsequently I saw it thrown out into the street. I suspected what had occurred was that Badger's sons, who room at the office, had perpetrated felicide; and as his blackness has not shown himself at the table or on the premises since, I apprehend that he has died by the hand of violence.

He had a fine black coat, long sharp claws, ate everything you gave him, loved me, bore ill will to mice and other cats, and as for courage, no cat could be less *puss-ill-animous* than he. Peace to his ashes!

The Phillips family were lovers of cats, and one after another petted, disdainful pussies are delineated as regular cat characters in Mrs. Spencer's correspondence.

Governor Swain writes long letters to her, beginning formally, "Dear Madam," telling how no one can fill up the diplomas as she used to do, of how Everett has visited Chapel Hill, and complimented the University, and later, how Buchanan was to be present at the Commencement of 1859, and how wonderfully everything in Chapel Hill was improving, how "the village in my cruises around it, I find looking better than I have ever seen it before."

In the second letter at hand from her new home she is writing to Mrs. Charles Phillips:

CLINTON, ALABAMA, *December, 1858.*

. . . These planters live right well in some respects, and in others don't live at all. I was at a dinner at Col. M—'s. Well! Silver and china and cut glass and turkey and jelly and what-not on the table, and *such* holes in the wall of the house all around where the chinking had fallen from *between the logs*, that I couldn't sit still, but kept on shaking all over like a dog, all the time I was there. No carpets on the floors of course. Dear Laura, it is a fact that I have often much ado to keep my face from expressing my thoughts, my surprise and my discomfiture at so many things I see. At cousin Sue's silver and china, (solid silver casters these folks have, they don't think anything of seventy-five dollars for a caster), fine table linen, and again, not a carpet anywhere on the premises. Plastering, (this is a frame house) fallen down anywhere—holes in the walls, holes under the doors, holes in the windows, and at Col. M—'s window curtains flapping in the breeze, and a roaring fire in the great fireplaces. I know I show my uneasiness. I shake and tremble, and get quite blue with the cold, and the people seem concerned and say they are afraid I *feel the draught*. I don't do anything else!

Now don't think I am exaggerating. When I first came here and noticed these things I didn't mention them at home, for I believe I was *ashamed of them!* but since I am getting more native as it were, I don't mind, I speak of these little discrepancies. I can laugh at them myself. At first they really

shocked me. Most of the rich people who settled here when it was all new had to live in log houses, perforce. Now they are old and rich, they think the log houses will still do well enough with a little addition here and there. When a daughter comes home from boarding school, she will insist on a carpet for the parlour, and a piano, and that's as much. Some of the houses in this neighborhood are good. Mrs. Adams' and Dr. Spencer's.

In the letters of the last three years of her married life occur continual references to her husband's failing health. "Magnus is not very well these few days past," "This morning Magnus looked miserable," come as early as 1857. Each letter written from Chapel Hill to her refers to the sickness of her husband, who is becoming progressively more and more disabled. "My regards to *Longus*. I shall be glad to hear he is better, these spinal lesions are hard to explain."

At one time was discussed an enforced move to a healthier climate, but later they recognized the uselessness of leaving their home. Magnus Spencer had what was then a most mysterious ailment. It would now probably be called tuberculosis of the spine.

In the year 1859 was written the only letter remaining in these files from the young husband. He is announcing the birth of a grand-daughter and namesake to Mrs. James Phillips: Julia James Spencer, born at Clinton, Alabama, June 1, 1859:

I suppose that Cornelia and myself are responsible, and we hope that all whom it may concern in and about Chapel Hill will be as well pleased as we are. . . . Cornelia is a little disappointed about the sex of the little stranger. She had labelled it James Phillips. As for myself, a girl is as good as a boy, any day.

This news seems to be meant as a surprise to the folks, for he adds: "Cornelia kept her own counsel in order to keep you from anxiety on her account. She has been perfectly well through the whole of it." In closing he describes his own health as "still feeble, but I can still scramble about."

When little "June" Spencer was nine months old, a letter written as from the baby to her cousin, Mrs. Spencer's eldest niece, was sent home. We will add it as an example of a letter written to please a child:

CLINTON, ALABAMA, *March, 1860.*

MY DEAR COUSIN, MARY CATHERINE PHILLIPS:

My mama had me in her lap, on the steps at the front gate, and my nurse Callie had gone down street; but presently I saw her, coming along by the garden fence, and I jumped and called her, and she came. She gave my mama a little letter, and my Mama looked at it, and laughed, and took me, and shook me, and put it into my hand, and said it was for *me*.

Now I never had a letter before in all my life, and I am nine months old. My Mama carried me and my letter in to where my Papa was, and showed it to him, and they both read it, and laughed and told me it was from you. They told me I must write back, and tell you I was glad to get it, and say you must write to me again.

I liked your letter very much. I want to come and see your play house, and your big doll, and Cousin Jim, and Cousin Will, and Cousin Alexander, and Cousin Cornie and Cousin John. Mama says she will take me to see you, and I am coming.

I could smell the violets in your letter before it was open. I go out every day and get a bunch of flowers for my poor sick Papa, and I gave your violets to him too. I brought him some yellow jasmine and he was glad to get it. He said to my Mama, "It makes me think of courting" whatever *courting* is, I don't know. My poor Papa, he lies down all

day, and cannot take me in his arms, nor walk about with me, and show me the little white snow-drops, and the baby rose-buds, like my Mama can. But I sit on the bed by him, I talk all I know to him, and open my mouth wide for him to pull my *toosies* out, and I pat-a-cake for him, and when my Mama makes something good, in a tumbler, for him, with a spoon in it, and sugar at the bottom, he always gives me some. I love the sugar at the bottom dearly.

I go every day to see Isabella milk the cow. It is my cow, and the calf, Alfred, is my calf. I have a white drake named Andrew, and his wife is named Phoebe. My turkey hen is named Ferebee, and my kitten is named Simmy. I have a box where I keep all my playthings, and I sit on the floor and pull them out all around me. I've got a little tiny gourd, an ear of corn, a big marble, and a big old key, a pin-cushion and some empty spools. I love to put my hands in my Mama's work-basket. I see heaps of pretty things in there, but she *will* take them away from me! I sit at table when my Papa and Mama are eating, and I beg for some too, and my Papa always gives me some, but my Mama says *no*, so I never ask her. I look at him, and he gives me everything I ask for.

I want to see my Grandpa and Grandma very much. I've only one Grandma, and I never saw her. Tell her I am coming to sit by her, and put my hands in her work-basket with lids to it, and pull out the pretty things. Mama says she wonders if there is any knitting in that basket now-a-days, and who is the stocking for?

Do you know your picture is here? Mama looks at it and says, "Dear little Mary." She says she wants to put my queer little face into a picture and send it to you all. But I am going to take it myself. You must tell Mattie Fetter I am coming, and I mean to sit on her Mama's lap, too, so I will! And tell your nurse, *Sunny* she must rub Baby Alexander up very bright, because I'm a real live baby myself, and I'm coming!

And tell Aunt Dilsey I love her right now, because my Mama loves her. She has got to love me when I come, and you must love me, all of you, when I come, and I'm coming! And tell your cousin Sue I'm going to put my ring, with the

red and white pretties in it, on my finger, and come to see her
as soon as I come. I am coming, my Mama says, "When blue
birds in the misty spring, and cloudless skies of summer, sing!"
That's my Mama's song.

Goodbye now my Cousin Mary.

Your little Cousin,

JULIA

VI

WIDOWHOOD

BY THE TIME that "Little June" and her parents went to make the promised visit to Chapel Hill, Mr. Spencer's disease had made such havoc with him that he was almost entirely confined to inactivity. She says in the journal of her early widowhood:

This room at my old home where my Dear sat so many long dark hours so uncomplainingly, through the fall of 1860. In this room, at these windows I sit and think of him—think of the last days of his life, of his love, of his patience and gentleness, of his sufferings.

He found the vitality to make the long tiresome journey back to Alabama in the fall, but after this return his mortal illness grew worse and worse. Short rallies gave hope to his wife, who could not face the possibility of his being taken from her. Not until the spring was he finally given up to die, by his physicians, and not until told of it plainly by them did she realize that he was not ever to recover. In an entry, the last in one of her journals, dated March 21, 1861, this desolate young wife, just facing the death sentence and the trial of her beloved husband's death, wrote "*Ad te Domini clamavi!*"

But not until June did he pass away. His wife was alone, far from her family and friends. She says that at first she could bear her sorrow better, because his suffering had been terrible at the last, and she wished earnestly for rest to come to his poor tortured body. Soon after, however, the full tide of her grief swept over her. Her great trouble came to her, in this strange sad spring of 1861, which, "besides innumerable violets and

jessamines, brought into bloom a strange enormous and terrible flower, the blood-red flower of war, which grows amid the thunders."

Although this couple talked much of the absorbing news, and agreed that there was more to come of it than people seemed to realize, either at the North or the South, Mrs. Spencer could not think of anything but her impending loss for more than a passing moment. Her intense nature was living each moment full and poignant. It is the story of an old, old sorrow, but it drips with tears even now.

Magnus Spencer had died on June 24, 1861, and Dr. James Phillips, writing on July 3 to his daughter, has just heard the news:

I have this morning received two letters from you, heart-rending ones indeed. What can I say to comfort you? It is the Lord. He gave and he has taken away. . . .

I do not know what course to advise you to take, save to beg and desire you to return home at once, if practicable. If you come hither at once you will have to trust much of your concerns to other management, but I would say, if you can make any suitable arrangements, do so at once, with as little delay as possible. An open house, open arms, and open hearts await you.

But as late as September 25, that same year, she is still in Alabama:

September 25—Dr. Spencer has been going over our possessions to appraise them.

September 29—These two days have been spent in a great agony of grief. I seem to be only just realizing my great and irreparable loss.

November 24—I took my child and went to Pleasant Hill Cemetery where they laid him. I stood by your grave, Magnus, and your baby has left the print of her little foot on the soil that covers you. I planted some of the shrubs and flowers

you loved so well about your resting place. It is the last work I can do for you.

November 24—The time for my departure from Clinton, Alabama, where I have buried the hope and love of my life, is drawing nearer and nearer. I have been taking down our books, many of which have not been touched since *his* hand placed them on the shelves. Every one of them eloquent of our happy life together, the sympathy and congeniality of our taste. From them flutters now and then a scrap of paper, something of his writing. I walk about among our chattels with a sinking heart. It is indeed all over, and life lies out before me in the future cold, and lonely, and blank.

I do endeavor to trust God, to commit my way into His hand, but how can I prevent this awful sense of desolation.

All through the life of Mrs. Spencer this act of taking down the books from their familiar shelves, after some great change and overturning of life, haunted her. It is her emblem of desolation. Some think of the closing door, some of the shuttered windows, but she always speaks of the taking down of the books. One can watch for it.

February 4, 1862—I have been away from Clinton now two months. I do not get used to the loss of my husband in the least degree. My tears lie as shallow as they did last summer. I wish I could believe that the dead are near us, loving us yet. . . . If Magnus can be the same spirit that he was when in the body, he must think of us.

While Mrs. Spencer always resisted the thought of mechanical devices and professional mediums, whereby some hope to communicate with the dead, and while she felt unwilling to deceive herself with talk of such mysteries, yet eventually she became convinced of her own communion with her dead. She believed that when the longing for their living presence became overwhelming, they did sometimes speak in the evening calm to the

hearts who loved them; did come insensibly and wordlessly to comfort. Many another has held this belief, felt it just as she did.

She was all her life a rememberer of anniversaries. She never lost sight of the important mile-stones of her own life, or of the lives she had loved. In her late years her journal grows fairly stiff with so many jewels of remembrance. Each recurring wedding day she will note, and when she was over eighty, feeling the weight of years and thinking back to the past, she says of the twenty-fourth of June, then returning:

I can see the pink cloud of crepe myrtle, the luxuriant shrubbery around the great old house where I saw my dearest die, the fields, full of cotton with blooms and opening bolls, across which he was carried to that country church-yard where all his family are buried. I see it today. I always think of him as young. What would he say to this bent, grey old woman!

May 31, 1862—What a vain futile life mine seems! When I look back upon it, mis-spent and wasted, and now my growing deafness is enough to blast the brightest lot. My hearing is going, and with it, youth, hope and love. There remains for me nothing but to sit at home and remember!

This is the first reference to her deafness found in her journals. Afterwards it became so complete that she was in a measure cut off by it. This gives us the idea how that handicap befell her, just when she would seem most in need of the stimulus of outside interest to help her break away from her consuming sorrow for her husband.

August 10, 1862—This is Sunday and I sit alone. I do shrink from going to church, it is such a wearisome form to one so deaf. The great battles fought lately near Richmond, the death of so many friends, the universal mourning all over the

land have made me think less of my own grief, as if it were selfish in me to mourn for such a peaceful and hopeful translation as my Beloved's was, when there are thousands round me whose loved ones have died horribly in battle, or lain lingering and mutilated in hospital. If my husband had been alive and well during this war, he would certainly have been foremost in it, and I would in all probability have lost him so—suddenly and unpreparedly. So many of our old friends and associates are already in the world of spirits. I humbly hope and believe that the old friends have met ere this.

September 7, 1862—The six years of my married life are sealed up henceforth. I have no one to recall them with, the happy adventures and incidents of those six perfect years with Magnus. I can see his smile, hear his footstep, recall just what he said and how. Such thoughts are continually welling up in my mind.

September 25—Today one year ago, I made the first entry in this little book by way of relief to a burdened heart. Why I write my thoughts I do not know, but it seems some relief to write them so. Today two years ago, Dr. Jones told me that Magnus' recovery was "Not probable" but I would hope, in spite of the Doctor.

Here, beginning here, the thought of grief recedes somewhat. She rises a little above her suffering. Her little daughter, who would be her treasure, she does not seem to regard at this time with the feeling that she herself was the one most necessary to direct the young life committed to her care. For some reason, although a woman of wisdom, Mrs. Spencer chose to distrust her ability, to suppose herself unable properly to train her child.

But there was another young widow in Chapel Hill, with an only child. This was Eliza Mitchell Grant, a dear friend of Mrs. Spencer, and she had a little boy about June Spencer's age. This little fellow died very suddenly, of diphtheria, and in mourning with and for

his poor mother, Mrs. Spencer seemed to awake to her own blessing in having some object to live for.

At New Year, 1863, she records in the same intimate diary:

Nothing to chronicle all this whole past year but fretting and repining, more than I had thought myself capable of doing. I am cold and dead to all that makes the secret life of religion. I shrink from recording all this, but this year must bring me more peace than did the last. But what can I do, what can I do! I shall never hear any more preaching. I shall never hear Pa pray in church again! I think more of having lost my husband than of having lost my hearing, and the latter is in reality the more enduring affliction.

By January 17th, however, she has found employment.

I undertook today to teach Baker Mallet, Hannis Taylor, and Stephen Skinner, boys whose parents are refugees here from the eastern part of the state. I was so elated to find that I could hear well enough to teach them. This employment will be the very best thing for me.

It was during this winter that Mrs. Spencer began again to keep a book of extracts. This time she does not stop with merely copying down bits of poetry and prose which strike her fancy, she begins to write her comments on life and literature. She has found that the inner world of thought and reading, with some self-expression in this way, can be made in some measure to compensate for the growing loss of outside stimulus brought about by her increasing deafness.

May 6, 1863—The country is mourning the loss of Stonewall Jackson's arm in the great battle this week.

May 14—He is dead, a dearly bought victory this last one. Jackson has been the hero of the war thus far.

So much of my life is dead and buried I feel sometimes half dead too. A sort of apathy and numbness possesses me, as if I cared for nothing here or hereafter. I suppose my deafness causes much of this.

July 4—I went with all the children to Mallett's mill pond. The girls all went wading, my girl among them. We sat on the bridge and ate plums. Governor Swain says he doubts if three-fourths of the people in Chapel Hill remember the date. I remember it in great sadness, for a great country torn to pieces and drenched in blood. It will never again be the day it has been to the country. Our children will not be brought up to reverence it. We will have no day for them unless it be the day peace is declared. We are not attached to the *present* government and perhaps never will be. The people of North Carolina will never celebrate *secession day*, at any rate.

July 26—Chapel Hill is mourning now for the results of the great battle at Gettysburg. A number of the best boys of this place were killed there. Vicksburgh gone, and Charleston will soon follow. Prospects look dark for the Confederacy. God help us!

August 29—North Carolina is seriously threatened with convulsion, and revolution in her own borders. One party clamorous for peace, on, it would seem, almost any terms, led by Holden and the *Raleigh Standard*, the other party as bitterly opposed to such views.

Mrs. Spencer was even now not entirely awakened from her despondent musings by the need for helpfulness to all about her. She says a few days later, "I don't care for anything that used to interest me."—"I am neglecting my religion and it is leaving me."—"I am not doing my boys any good, and I am without hope for myself." This, however, was her last lapse. When Little June was taken alarmingly ill, her mother roused forever from her ashes. The child recovered promptly, but soon after came the serious illness of her old father. By Christmas he was up and about the house again, and had fully

recovered, with almost his former vigor. The passing of this danger found Mrs. Spencer effectually alive, her resistance to fate revived, and she hereafter understood the need for resolute cheerfulness. New Year's Day, 1864, brought a solemn resolution:

I will begin this year with renewal of service to my God. My deafness makes me live such a self-inclosed life that I was becoming torpid. I pray God to rouse me, and keep me awake. While Pa was so sick, my mind turned much on the selfishness of my life.

February 29, 1864—I went to walk and sat by the "Roaring Fountain" on a stone, knitting and thinking. How time flies! Magnus will soon have been dead three years. I have not ceased to mourn him. I think my grief for his death has healed over. The scar throbs always, but there is no longer the bleeding wound. Looking over some old letters from Magnus I find I must destroy them. I seem only to have lived to lose him. There it was lying in the future, and I *walked right down on it*. I want to do all I can while I live to be busy and cheerful. Life can give me nothing as good as has been taken away.

April 14—I went with the little children fishing on Closs's creek. They had a merry time. The smell of the yellow jasmine is good for remembrance. The suffering and want and grief around me is enough to shroud the stoutest soul in gloom.

October, 1864—Have been looking over and burning all those old letters. How much I have forgotten of what lately interested me and filled my life. Will my married life seem also after a little more time like a passing dream? [And this sentence bears a note added in 1886.] Yes, yes! There are times when I would not have it otherwise, but not always, not always!

When a person has undergone, once for all, the deepest grief, the most harrowing loss which could come to her, there ensues a certain cool, careless rebound of a

heart which is broken and fears nothing. The whole trial of these three or four years just passed made out of Mrs. Spencer a very different woman. Except for her motherly ambition for her daughter, selfishness was gone from her horizon. She complains no more of deafness, or of any personal distress. She might say,

"Be done with your heart, and give it away,
Then build for your hopeless soul a house,
And laugh, and be kind and be gay!"

It was this same summer that Mrs. Spencer's hearing became so poor that she could no longer hear the church bell, as she passed by on the street just in front. During the next ten years she became progressively almost stone deaf. This condition had been produced by repeated head-colds, which she had always been subject to, but had not recognized as anything serious. There is mention of ear-ache in some of her early letters, and deafness was finally brought about by her chronic catarrh. In compensation for this infirmity, she became most alert in interpreting those to whom she was accustomed. She was an adept at asking questions which could be answered by a nod, or a shake of the head. She would state alternatives which made only one word, written on slate or paper, sufficient to give her the information she wished. She developed a sort of sixth sense in this way, although her lip-reading was confined to her own family. Even her little daughter began early to communicate with her in writing if there were any privacy in the message. This growing deafness drove her more and more in upon herself, as was natural. It made her confide her feelings to her journals.

In the first third of the volume we are beginning to consider now, one finds historical disquisitions, used

probably to instruct her classes; Biblical disquisitions, which only serve to show how inevitably religious terminology changes for every successive generation. In spite of *fundamentalists*, who cling to old formulas, old religious commentaries are the most *old*-fangled reading recognized. But after the first third of this volume she begins to record daily happenings with candor and brevity, adding her comments, and, in that day of strong feelings, setting down her feelings about them also.

The days were very evil, for the dwindling resources of the Confederacy were becoming known to all. Zebulon B. Vance, the popular young war-governor of North Carolina, was standing between his state's interests and the ever growing demands of the Confederate Government in Richmond, thus filling as difficult a position as an executive could. The Peace Party were agitating and embarrassing him at home, and the military unsuccess abroad weighed heavy on his mind.

The University had dwindled as boys went younger and younger into the army, until, from four hundred and fifty students of the years previous, the end of the war found only a score in college. In Chapel Hill, as everywhere, news was getting very uncertain. The newspapers did not publish news of disasters, but their accounts were contradicted by the so-called "grape-vine telegraph," the unverifiable, but often correct reports which the negroes obtained by means of their own, known only to their semi-savage secretive natures.

Out of the calm which later years brought to her, Mrs. Spencer comments on this chapter of her life:

Reading the foregoing, years after it was written, I make the remark that we are more prone, in our writings, to put down our gloomy thoughts and feelings than our brighter ones.

It is necessary to take all this with allowances. I suffered much, and the Civil War heightened every feeling of despondency and gloom. But I had many reasons for thanking God. I had a good home. My Father and Mother were devoted. I had my child. It all seems wonderful to look back upon. God led me on, and "I shall praise Him again, when I pass over Jordan."

VII

THE "SURRENDER"

THE SPRING of 1865 is coming on, and bringing into the quiet cove of Chapel Hill the first gusts from the universal storm outside.

March, 1865—During the War Governor Swain was Chapel Hill's chief medium of intercourse with the outside world. He was the only man who kept up correspondence with the men of action who were making history. The young men of his faculty had all joined the Confederate army.

He would go to Raleigh and come back with all the rumors, with Governor Vance's or Governor Graham's latest opinion of affairs. We were but simple folk in Chapel Hill. I think we a trifle overestimated his influence and importance, and he did too.

In the rush of national events in the spring of 1865, the strongest man among us was no more than a straw in a torrent.

Governor Swain used often to come to see Dr. James Phillips and detail his news, and the three of them, Governor Swain, Dr. Phillips and Mrs. Spencer, leaning forward intently to catch the conversation, were to be seen sitting on the wooden bench that furnished the front porch. But except for the sad news from time to time of some young man, who had enlisted at Chapel Hill, being shot in one of the great battles, there was no destructive evidence of the struggle perceptible, even as late as March 10, 1865.

Among the Vance Papers in the North Carolina Collections, there is a letter written to the Governor by Mrs. Spencer, begging him, in behalf of some poor women known to her, for a few pair of "hand cards." These

with many other tools and necessities were supplied to North Carolina during the Civil War by that vessel, the "A. D. Vance," which ran the blockade from England many times, and brought them over. In response, Vance duly sent the cards to be given to these women, to enable them to prepare cotton yarn for themselves and for the Confederate Army. A few weeks later Mrs. Spencer acknowledges the gift, and sends to buy, in addition, "what ten dollars will pay for" to add to the donation. Earliest in date of her own papers preserved in the State Archives above, is a subscription list in her own handwriting, as circulated by her in Chapel Hill. It has at the top a newspaper clipping, reporting from Richmond that the Texan soldiers of several regiments are bare-foot, and begging in their behalf for socks. To this cause every woman in Chapel Hill must have contributed in money, yarn, or knitting, or any combination of the three. Mrs. Spencer's own contribution is set down as, "Two pair of socks, one dollar, and will knit all the yarn I can get."

Somehow, as soon as any war gets under way knitting needles begin to fly in every woman's hands, but in these lean Confederate days it was not only socks that were to be made, but all sorts of cloth and necessary clothing, with little knowledge, little machinery, and no experience with which to begin. Spinning wheels were brought from garrets, and whirred again, hand-looms clacked in many a home where they had never worked before. It is about the middle war period, in 1863, when little June Spencer is reported as putting on her first "homespun" petticoat. The plentiful tables of the pre-war South were soon reduced in fare to bacon and greens, or corn-field peas, until then considered food fit only for cows,

served with fat middling and corn pone. Sugar was unknown; sorghum, with now and then a little honey, furnished the sweetening for "coffee," made of minced raw sweet-potato, parched brown in the oven and ground; while for tea they used dried raspberry, or "Yeopon" leaves. It was a time of vivid imagination applied to scrimping economy, a season of substitutes, of bonnets braided of corn shucks, of shoes with wooden soles for home wear, to save leather for the army, of smoke-houses scraped for saltpetre to make powder, and of anxious economy of salt. At the end of the war years there remained no garment which had not been at least three times turned, and no child of six years or more could have told a raisin from a dried persimmon, or knew the taste of "store candy."

In her book, *The Last Ninety Days of the War in North Carolina*, Mrs. Spencer pays her tribute to her fellow women of the Confederacy, and we may be sure that her own ingenuity and industry were no whit behind theirs. On the 23rd page of this book she says:

When I forget you, O ye daughters of my country, your labors of love, your charity, faith, and patience, all through the dark and bloody day; lighting up the gloom of war with tender graces of woman's devotion and self denial, and now in your energy and cheerful submission in toil and poverty and humiliation;—when I cease to do homage to your virtues and your excellencies may "my right hand forget its cunning" and my voice be silent in the dust.

In her own records of the war-time, however, it is not these privations and inconveniences that she notices. Her mind was on the real issues. She ignores these minor considerations. Her diary states:

Even so late as March, 1865, the quiet and peace of our daily life in this secluded place afford strong confirmation of

the truth of Macaulay's saying that in all great wars, it is after all but a small proportion of a nation which is actually engaged. I write now in the very crisis and turning point of our great southern "States Rights" struggle. The plough-boy sings in the field, the daily course of domestic life in general flows as smoothly as ever, except immediately in the track of armies. This winter Sherman has marched from one end of Georgia to the other without opposition, and this month has calmly walked with 40,000 men through South Carolina, and has taken Columbia—is now on the borders of our state, and is apparently about to march through it in the same way. Charleston and Wilmington have both been given up without a fight. The Southern Confederacy seems to be suffering under a stroke of paralysis.

The end of the War would seem to be at hand, its result our entire subjugation, with all its accompanying wretchedness. This state is filling up with South Carolina refugees. What is to become of them, or of us! The last mad proposition of our government—to arm the slaves—will only hasten the dissolution and ruin. I do not know but that the strong arm of the United States law and authority would be preferable to the miserable prospect in store for us under Jefferson Davis and his bankrupt, reckless crew. I have no confidence in them. I believe General Lee is the only man in whom I do place much confidence. But I do love the *South*. I did hope she would in some way compel a recognition of her rights from the North in this struggle, though I never fore-saw such a glorious future for her as our leaders and secessionists predicted. I look at the prospect of Reconstruction with extreme aversion, and if the Stars and Stripes wave again over our unhappy land, I for one should want to leave it forever.

I suppose that all this anguish, caused by the losses and blood-shed of this four years, will be as nothing to the profound bitterness of soul which will come upon us unhappy Southerners in case of Reconstruction. I have no doubt that to many of us death would be far preferable. I cannot contemplate the picture. I dare not!

March 20—Sherman has Fayetteville, and we have heart-rending accounts of the destruction of private and public property in that town. No rights appear to have been acknowledged, no respect paid to anything or anybody. We apprehend that his march will be directly on Raleigh. Women are insulted—outraged. Household property, furniture of all descriptions totally destroyed, provisions destroyed, negroes carried off, the whole land left a desert. All this we might endure if the end were to be *independence of the South*, but to endure all this, and yet be compelled to reunion. The thought is almost maddening!

Later:

Troops have been hurrying down towards Raleigh all the past week. Those that have passed this place have been chiefly Wheeler's cavalry. Our whole town turned out to feed them. The streets were lined with girls, offering smiles, food, and flowers. It gives me a cheering sensation to see so many gallant fellows—eager to fight and hopeful. But we fear they will be greatly outnumbered. In a few weeks they may all be retrograding in despair.

I feel, the nearer the crisis approaches, more than ever determined to *hope* for the South. I must believe in her ultimate success. I cannot give it up.

May 4, 1865—The most remarkable three weeks in the history of Chapel Hill has just passed. Three weeks of such excitement as a century may fail to reproduce. During the first week of April we heard daily rumors and reports from below Raleigh, where Johnston with a very insufficient force was endeavoring to hold Sherman at bay. An engagement took place at Bentonville, which, "though announced by our papers as a triumph for us, resulted in Sherman's effecting a junction with Schofield at Goldsboro." What a time of desperate hoping against hope it was for us. We could rely on nothing we heard. News from Lee's army round Petersburg and Richmond announced the last mortal struggle as begun there, and that we were successful so far. On Sunday morning, April 9th, Governor Swain left for Hillsboro, to see and confer with

Graham, leaving us all in a pitiable state of conjecture and uncertainty. Next day we heard he had gone to Raleigh, and next we heard that Johnston's army was retreating before Sherman, now advancing upon Raleigh, from Goldsboro.

Soon this last was confirmed by the sad spectacle of our retreating army. On the 13th the soldiers and the supply trains began to pour through. What a spectacle for us it was! Still they were all cheerful, and still confident. Next came a whisper of Lee's surrender—of the fall of Richmond and Petersburg.

Wheeler's men and Hoke's brigade, who were passing through, rejected it all as a Yankee lie, and so we kept on trying to hope. On Friday, the fourteenth, the renowned guerilla leader, Wheeler himself came in, and Governor Swain arrived at home, having been below Raleigh and had an interview with Sherman himself, and negotiated for the preservation of Raleigh and Chapel Hill. This trip of Governor Swain, as related to me by himself, is one of the most interesting chapters of history I have ever known. He brought confirmation of our beloved Lee's surrender, having seen the correspondence between him and Grant. At that news our hopes for the Southern Confederacy died out.

The surrender of Johnston might be delayed a few days, but was now inevitable. Our hearts died within us. Wheeler and his men laid low till Sunday, having pickets out on every road, and really seemed disposed to fortify the Hill and have a battle here. The whole town was busy night and day cooking and feeding the men. My heart yearned towards every one of them, though they carried off many horses and mules from the country round.

Sunday, April 16—Easter Sunday—Wheeler called in his pickets and moved off by two o'clock, and that evening, after an hour or two's silence and quiet in the place, a dozen Yankee blue-jackets dashed in from the Raleigh road and we were captured.

Governor Swain's visit to Sherman's camp, just before the advance on Raleigh, is likely to have saved that city and the University from pillage. He stood alone in

front of the Capitol at Raleigh, and surrendered the city to the officer in command. Then he was in his buggy and on his way to prepare to surrender his beloved University and to reassure the hearts of his fellow-townsmen.

Monday, April 17, was the day when we saw the foe in their numbers.

Kilpatrick's cavalry, four thousand strong marched in. Guards were set at every house and we in town were treated with the utmost civility, thanks to Governor Swain's personal influence. They remained two and a half weeks, and in that time the surrounding country was completely stripped of everything. Houses were ransacked and plundered; corn, oats, fodder, flour, meat, everything eatable carried off. My soul sickened to see the marauders coming in day after day from every road, loaded with spoils. Much of what was so ruthlessly taken was wantonly wasted. The negroes and prostitutes round town were enriched with clothing of every sort, and food.

General Atkins, commanding this brigade, and many of his officers, seemed to be gentlemen, and deplored all this as one of the inevitable accompaniments of war. They visited some of our families, and were extremely courteous, and were treated with courtesy. The brigade was composed chiefly of western men, Ohio and Michigan, and they talked moderately and generously. I saw none but privates, who all spoke and behaved well. Our guard was Oliver Fox, shoemaker, from Jackson, Michigan. But all their civility to us could not keep my mind from the country round us, where our friends were being robbed and insulted. I think I never spent a more wretched fortnight in all my life.

Meanwhile each day brought fresh rumors. Johnston had surrendered—He had not—President Davis was a prisoner—He had escaped—Hampton and Wheeler and Johnston were all at daggers drawing—Every wild and absurd story was afloat—Davis seen sitting and crying in the streets of Greensboro, etc. etc. Lincoln's death was classed among these canards, and

when his murder was ascertained beyond a doubt, it only added to the horror of the time.

At last, on the third of May, Atkins received orders to leave for Greensboro, and the cloud of locusts removed, except a guard of thirty-five men left for the University.

On May 5th came through Couch's Brigade of Infantry, and we were supplied with guards till they had passed. What an imposing and affecting spectacle is a moving army. What sights have we not seen in this quiet and remote village. And now the war is ended. Sherman and Johnston entered into a negotiation which has resulted in the surrender of all Johnston's army.¹ Hampton and Wheeler, however, have refused to give up. Many of their men joining, they rallied round President Davis at Greensboro and are said to have effected their escape, towards and beyond the Mississippi.

While the Blue-jackets were here, riding to and fro, triumphant, marauding, secure, every now and then came walking wearily by squads of Lee's army paroled—straggling homewards—footsores, penniless, despondent. Many of them had no homes to go to, their houses having been burned, their families left houseless. My heart went out to these brave men who had risked all and lost all save honor. I ran out to speak to them in every instance, to shake hands, to say a kind word, to offer them something to eat. We fed a number of them. Our Michigan guard seemed struck by our feeling for them, and said it was not so at the North—that soldiers received little consideration.

Some of Wheeler's men were here, and when the final news of Lee's surrender came as certain, said they had absolutely nowhere on earth to go, and knew not what to do. One of them said he had a twenty-five cent Confederate note, and that was all he possessed in this world. Lee's men told us that for four or five days before the end they had lived on parched corn, and Major Stedman of Fayetteville said that

¹ The final formal surrender of General Joseph E. Johnston to General William T. Sherman took place at the "Bennett House," a farmer's home upon the highway, about two miles west of Durham, North Carolina. This ended the armed resistance of the Civil War, and a monument has been placed upon the spot in commemoration of the event.

he and his men were so weak for want of food they could hardly sit in their saddles at the last charge. They all look wasted.

Oh, our God! What sins we must have been guilty of that we should be so humbled by Thee now! I feel a good deal as I did when my beloved husband died,—as if something I had watched and hoped and prayed for so long was dead—was dead. And I had lost an incentive to prayer, or to exertion of any kind.

May 7, 1865, Sunday—I walked this evening alone, all over the hill back of our house, where a regiment lately encamped. Not a blade of grass, nor leaf of any kind is to be found there. The ground is stamped as smooth as a floor. A profound depression has seized upon me. I see before us only humiliation, privation, and a life of continued toil. The southern land is ruined for this and the coming generation. I feel the overthrow of the Confederacy as keenly as if I had embarked in the cause of Secession with all my heart at first, which was not so.

The whole framework of our social system is dissolved. The negroes are free, leaving their homes with very few exceptions, and those exceptions only for a time. No one has any money, not many have enough to live upon until harvest. No one knows how we are to be treated by our conquerors. We lie quite at their mercy. The whole of this so lately flushed, defiant, scornful, hopeful South lies prostrate, cowed, submissive.

May 17—Governor Swain has gone to Washington in company with three other gentlemen so see what can be done towards restoring order, and obtaining decent terms. I hope he may effect something.

May 18—We hear that Vance is a prisoner in Raleigh, and also that President Davis has been taken. We must have been standing on very hollow ground all this four years past. The downfall has been so sudden, so complete, so irreparable. If I could, I would wish to leave the country for a time at least, but I have not the means. I must stay and work—work at least as well as a cripple can.

June 4, Sunday—Commencement week is gone by once more. What a sight for the old *habitués* of the place—four graduates, some ten or twelve students in all—two trustees present. Pa officiated in Governor Swain's place. The Chapel audience made up of villagers and children. I went up on Thursday afternoon, and sat looking out the windows to where the groves stood as thick and solemn as ever. The sun shining through the great boles, and down the grassy slopes just as he used to—all that nature can do still done with order and beauty—But where oh where are the brave hearts that should be thronging these silent places!

Virginia and Maryland and Pennsylvania and Tennessee are heaving with their graves.

There they lie, rolled in their blankets, in their bloody Confederate uniforms, and for what,—that President Davis—our Soldier President as the papers delighted to call him four years ago, might be taken in his wife's clothes, and carried a prisoner to Washington—that Holden¹ might be appointed our Governor, that the negroes might be freed with every circumstance of insolence and violence,—that southern property might be confiscated, southern people cowed, insulted, oppressed, robbed, all southern rights ignored. For this our boys have died—for this.

The delegations have returned from Washington, Holden's was triumphant. President Johnson's proclamation exhibits no spark of generosity—The northern press is in full cry upon the South as she lies bound, bleeding, helpless.

I can easily imagine that insanity is lying in wait for those who brood over the condition of our country, South.

I will not read another paper, nor ask another question, nor think if I can help it, on public matters.

In pursuing this resolution, Mrs. Spencer writes an opinion upon the southern literature of her day, which is worth quoting. She is reading whatever she can obtain, to divert her mind from these bitter musings. The reflec-

¹ See chapter xii for account of Holden.

tions that come next in this journal show her as possessing somewhat rare faculties:

Have been reading *Leisure Hours* by Martha Haines Butt. I was utterly disappointed, though I ought not to have been. I ought to know by this time that a Southern book is, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, the merest trash—the merest batch of blunders as to style and *grammar*. It is a very *faded* and feeble imitation of Fanny Fern. All her pertness without her ease, a would-be strained vivacity, utterly flimsy sentiment—I flung it down sickened to think of the unqualified praise I had seen bestowed upon it by Southern newspapers.

Oh beloved and Sunny South, Land that I love, more now in the day of humiliation, woe, and ruin than ever before, thy day of regeneration and renovation will never dawn till thou hast learned to dig deep, and lay thy foundations broad and firm—learned to educate thy children thoroughly—learned to distinguish gold from gilding, silver from tinsel.

Why—why are we fifty years behind the Northern people in our standards of taste—fifty years behind them as writers, thinkers, or workers.

June 8, Thursday—I walked with Miss Nancy Hilliard, Jane Cave, and June down to Reverend Mr. Mason's to spend the day. Very little pleasure, properly so called, but some amusement and food for curious speculation. Here are people who have had an independent and handsome property for years, living without any but the simplest comforts of life. "Comforts"—I don't call five, or eight, or even ten great feather beds in such weather as this comforts—not a chair but a *split* bottom in the house. Not a fork but a two pronged one. Not six tumblers. Not a set of table-ware of any sort. Not a carpet, nor a curtain, nor a napkin. Not one single article of luxury in the house. There is always something that chokes me about such places!

There are good shade trees about, good grass, and a prettily situated yard; but weeds in every fence-corner, fence high. You climb over a low place—left purposely, the rails worn white and smooth with climbing—into the garden. You find

there a wilderness of cabbages, and very little else. A great quantity of sage bushes, some mint, and lavender; a larkspur and a hollyhock or two. Rows of onions and a cucumber vine.

Weeds everywhere out of doors, flies everywhere indoors. You sit about, go to the water-bucket every half hour for a drink, pick up an old fly-specked newspaper. You find a copy of Spurgeon's *Sermons*, or Josephus, or *History of the World*, or some equally sprightly reading.

You watch the chickens in the back yard with feverish interest. Your eyes stray away to the hot fields over which the wheeling turkey-buzzards cast momentary spots of shadows, to the wheat fields ripe for the harvest.—You wonder if anybody ever does ride along that hot lane. You ask yourself why people must build their barns and stables within twenty yards of their houses. You watch that black wench churning under the shade of the locust or catalpa tree by the well—you are suspicious of the cookery going on in that black kitchen, where you see more flies than in the house.

You are summoned to dinner by half-past twelve. You sit down in a room containing two feather beds, an enormous chest, a loom, a red-painted cup-board, and an immense and exceedingly dirty fireplace. You sit at a small square pine table, sometimes used to sit on, sometimes to iron on, sometimes to cut out on. You have a square of bacon in a mountain of collard leaves at one end, and an immense dish of hard-boiled potatoes at the other, with a tin pie-plate full of corn pone.

A great negro woman, feet bare, sweat pouring down her face, and dress only partly pinned together and not overly clean, waves away the flies with a peach switch. The guests have cloudy glass tumblers. The mistress of the house, with her youngest child upon her lap, is accommodated with a tea cup. For dessert, we have cherry pie, crust thick and heavy, sweetened with sorghum, and plenty of milk.

Thus we dine in barbaric state. The knife and fork taken from your plate is wiped on an indistinguishable rag at the red cupboard door, and placed with your section of cherry pie. You are glad to get your own knife and fork back, as it was

an even chance she had not wiped your neighbor's for you. You feel a sort of attachment for it, still warm and greasy, after your play with the bacon and greens.

In this way live thousands of our Southern people, whom the Northern people perchance have envied because they have negroes to wait on them. How many such a meal have I eaten. Its only good side is that you are always welcome, heartily welcome. There is no embarrassment, no apology; everything about the house is at your service, and your visit is taken as a compliment. You leave pleased with the simplicity of the hospitality.

July, 1865—I suppose that everybody, even the lowest and most apparently hopeless, has a secret undefined hope or belief of being something better before life ends—they are not to go on forever in the same dull track, and it is this secret castle building that helps one over many a rough place. Now and then one sees the common sense of it, sees the long plain way ahead. Suddenly and for a few moments one realizes that for him there is only hard work, poor fare, and commonplace incidents; that others may ride in their carriages, entertain, spend, give, but for them nothing of the sort. As they worked and saved and pinched and contrived last year to make ends meet, so they will do this year, and the next—die doing so. But God has ordained that happiness shall always attend on earnest honest endeavor. I believe one can find as hearty a pleasure in turning upside down, and inside out, an old dress, and thereby making a fairly respectable new one, as in purchasing from a full purse a costly importation. But we must not make comparisons. I cannot believe that happiness is as unequally divided as luxuries.

And though behind me now is closed
The youthful paradise of love,
Yet I can bless with soul composed
The wanderers in that happy grove.

What God means for the black race, who can foresee. The change has come in their civil status. We at the South have nothing to crow over for these unfortunates.

In 1864 I read Bishop Hopkins' book on slavery. He took the ground that we have the right to hold the sons of Ham in bondage, arguing from Noah's prophecy. Fancy a besotted, grinding, hardfisted slave driver taking up a high moral tone as one of God's accredited agents!

With all this, I believe in God. I am not able to argue upon it. God is good whatever happens. He cannot do wrong. I trust in Him. I should be upheld by this in the hour of death, in the day of judgment. Let me have that anchor, and with joy shall I lift up my head.

But I feel sometimes such an impatience of my life and its narrow lot as I can scarcely describe. I want to go and see something better than I have known. From my window I see a pretty little near view, a vista of hills and woods, narrow and noways uncommon; but that sets me longing for wide rivers rolling among mountains, for lakes, parks, and some of the beautiful scenery that is so lavishly scattered in some parts of the world, but of which this part presents so little. I want to go, to take wings and fly and leave these sordid occupations. "Faithful in a few things," I need to have that rung in my ears every day.

I think sometimes it is cruel to cultivate tastes that are never to be gratified in this world, to learn a preference for beauties and elegancies and refinements that one is never to behold.

Condemned by fortune to a narrow sphere, why not learn to think that is best.

I have been all my life bringing myself to see and acknowledge the inevitable, to accept it, for if we have not what we like, we must like what we have. I am not unhappy—but oh, I could be so much more happy!

These feelings surge up, but I believe I do generally go back to my work, deeply humble, and thankful that I have my work, and that I can go to it. But I cannot help feeling that there are some rooms vacant and closed, some faculties rusting, some feelings getting narrowed. My life is passing in a closed circle of ideas, and some of its most precious faculties are being wasted.

VIII

ELEANOR SWAIN'S STORY, A ROMANCE OF THE SURRENDER

UPON the arrival of General Smith B. Atkins of Illinois in command of his brigade, to occupy Chapel Hill, there occurred in this same spring of the surrender :

A bit of by-play such as all Governor Swain's most sagacious prevision could never have anticipated.

General Atkins, who was a fine looking man of thirty, called upon the Governor a day or two after his arrival. He was politely received as he would have been at any house in the place, for the news of the assassination of President Lincoln had just arrived, and none of us knew what the fury of an enraged army might prompt them to do. Our heads were in the lion's mouth, and it behooved us to be careful.

In the course of the conversation, Governor Swain, wanting to show his military visitor Lord Cornwallis' order book, stepped into the adjoining room and asked his daughter Miss Ellie to go upstairs and get the book and bring it to him in the parlour.

The young lady did so, perhaps not unwilling to have a look at the Yankee General. She threw up her head and marched in with great display of hauteur. An introduction was unavoidable, which was more than the Governor had intended. They "changed eyes" at first sight, and a wooing followed on that first meeting which greatly incensed all who looked on, including the Federal Army, and gave Governor Swain and his wife as much uneasiness as anything short of a death in the family could have done.

While the army remained in Chapel Hill, though the General's surrender was obvious, no one could do more than speculate upon the probable issue. Neither Mrs. Swain nor the Governor knew what their daughter would decide, because they refrained from asking her.

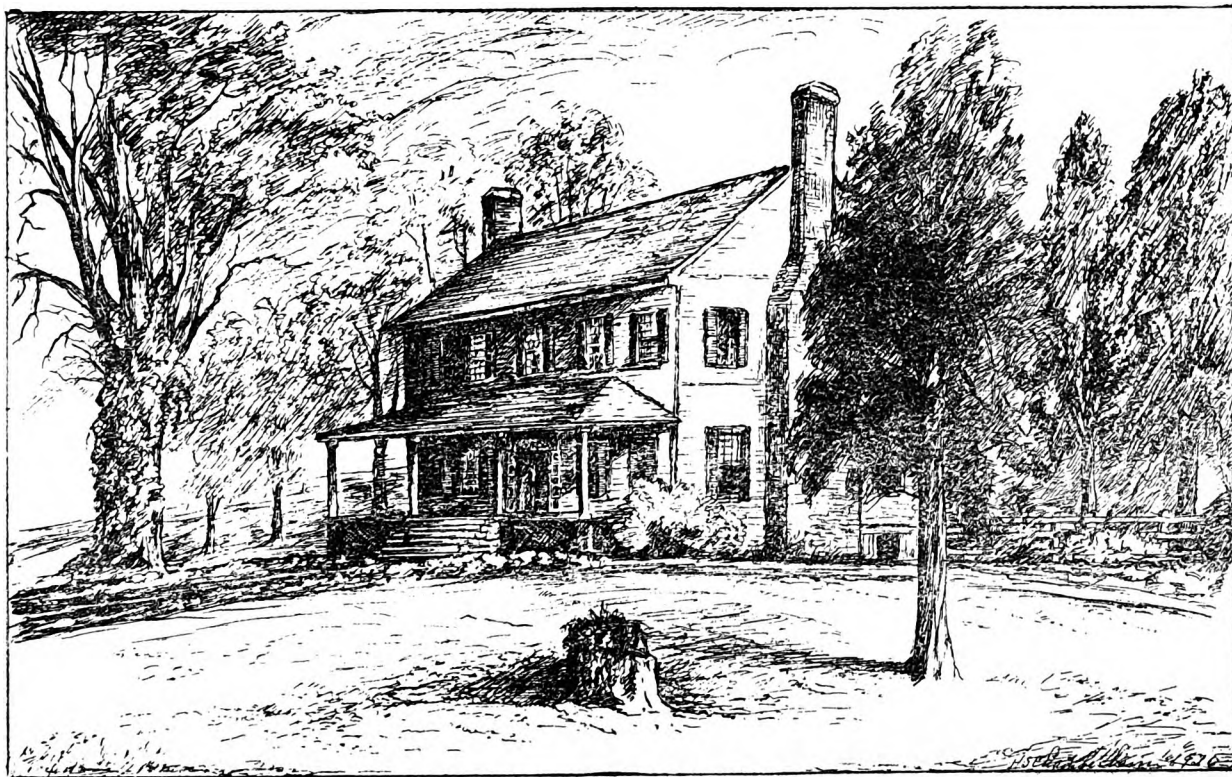
Our military captors were very civil to the townspeople. They were under strict orders and behaved well. The officers called, and chatted pleasantly, and petted the children; the privates lounged in and out of the yards, and appeared in all respects like human beings. The guard at my Father's was from Michigan. Every evening, General Atkins sent the regimental band to play in Governor Swain's front yard, (across the street) in compliment to his mistress. Our honest young private was much concerned to find that my defective hearing prevented me from enjoying these serenades on the opposite side of the street. He came up to me one evening. "Can't you hear that, Mrs. Spencer?" "No not a note." "Well I declare, I hate to think about it. I'd give *two hundred dollars* if you could have your hearing."

General Sherman's orderlies were coming and going, and one day they brought Governor Swain a gift from the General of a fine horse. General Atkins also sent his lady-love a fine riding horse. Considering the fact that these animals had been swept from southern stables, as in fact the soldiers said they had been, the accepting of these gifts was a great mistake. Three times this Sherman horse was stolen from the Governor's stables, and three times he pursued the thief and regained it.

After General Atkins left for the western part of the state, Miss Eleanor Swain handed her parents a note in which she formally told them that she had promised to marry General Atkins, that she was twenty-one years old and intended to judge for herself. Governor Swain showed this letter to Mrs. Spencer, along with several from General Atkins to Miss Ellie, expressing his feelings in lover-like way. Here is a note from Miss Ellie to Mrs. Spencer, dated May 12, 1865:

MY DEAR MRS. SPENCER:

I never was more surprised, provoked or distressed than when I found out this evening that Pa had been showing letters (to me) of all things on earth the most sacred,—letters written



THE SWAIN HOUSE

for me alone, and only trusted to my father as an act of duty, without the thought that any but himself should read them. It was enough to have him expose the *first* letter, but past comprehension the second. It takes from the letters their true value to have them reduced to matter-of-fact, as much as to expose to the world's eye the hidden treasures of the heart.

As to what people say, Pa's great failing is to care too much. As for myself, but one voice can prevent this affair, and that is higher than man. No indeed, I have all I desire—a most noble heart and mind intrusted to my keeping. I hope you did not think me so wanting in true refinement of feeling that I should have been willing to allow this exhibition?

This note was written last night under the act of provocation. I think better of it this morning, and send his photograph for your inspection—and a very poor one it is. The upper part of the face bears some resemblance. It was a gradual affair. Ellie is caught in her own net. I had nothing to hide when the Yankees came except myself. I had no fear of being stolen, but see the result!

Mrs. Spencer composed a few verses, inscribed to Eleanor Swain, "On occasion of General Atkins' Surrender," and these are written upon the outside of the foregoing note:

Let politicians henceforth cease to vex us
With questions of disunion and debate,
For the whole country now from Maine to Texas
Has learned 'tis better far to love than hate.

This boasted age of progress and invention
In this our saddest day of war's alarms,
With closest scrutiny and strict attention,
Has brought us nothing new, at least *in arms*.

The best artillery is found to be the oldest
And peace hath conquests too, by no means narrow
The wisest soldier and perchance the boldest
Yields to a pair of blue eyes and a bow-and-arrow.

Sunday, June 11, 1865—Have just seen Ellie Swain dressed and waiting for General Atkins who drove into town a few moments ago. Dressed in a lavender barege and pink ribbons, with a pink oleander blossom on her bosom. So bright—so happy! Are there any days more happy in life than such? Has life anything better? I mean as to this world's happiness. Soberly I think not. The brightest and sunniest picture is that of a young woman with love-lighted eyes and throbbing heart prettily and tastefully adorned and waiting to see her lover. I have a great deal of respect for true love and all his belongings. "*Amo amantes.*"

August 19, 1865—Ellie Swain sent me a box of her bridal gifts from his friends at the North to look at—jewelry, books, etc.

Then I went down to see Mrs. Woods sitting propped up with pillows by the side of the cradle, with a peach bough in her hand, keeping the flies off her dying baby—poor little emaciated creature—and she herself as wasted. A sad sad sight. No one need go far to find contrasts in this life. . . . Governor Swain was as little superstitious as any man could be, but he once said that the month of August was unfriendly to him, that every evil that had ever befallen him had come in August, and that he always drew a breath of relief when the month ended.

August 23, 1865—We went to Ellie Swain's wedding Wednesday night. Married in the face—in the very teeth of all this bitterness and woful humiliation, to the Yankee General who entered Chapel Hill at the head of his four thousand cavalry, April 17th. They fell in love at first sight on occasion of his first call upon the Governor, and now are married. Very few people went to the wedding, though very general invitations were issued, and a grand supper prepared.

A few faculty families, Governor and Mrs. Graham from Hillsborough, and Betty Scott. It all passed off very well, whatever we might think of it. We enjoyed the supper and spent the evening pleasantly. General Atkins is a handsome man, rather grave in expression, sedate and courteous in manners. Ellie looked well—beautifully dressed. On the 25th

Mrs. Fetter had a party for her; 28th Mrs. Hubbard had one. Same people invited to each. A good deal of bitter feeling expressed in the village about it all. Invitations were *spit upon* in one or two houses.

The only way one can find an apology for it all is in believing honestly in the love which appears to have brought it about. Let us think and speak respectfully of a genuine love affair. Since the world began this has been a wonderful agent for good—true love has done more good than harm. If this couple truly loves I have no fears for them.

August 30, 1865—Ellie came over to tell us goodbye—left for Illinois at two o'clock.

Among Mrs. Spencer's records of *Old Times in Chapel Hill* there may be found a few sentences to add to this account, written at the time in her diary:

This marriage was of ill omen to Governor Swain. The blight that immediately fell upon the University was directly attributable to the fact that he not only permitted his daughter to marry an invader, but that he gave her a fine wedding. It was told from mouth to mouth and believed all over North Carolina that Ellie Swain went to Illinois loaded with finery and jewels stolen from the women of states farther south, and given to her by her husband.

Every person who had lost so much as a teaspoon by the Yankee bummers was anxious to lay it to Atkins' Brigade, and to add to the complaint execration of Governor Swain.

The latter thought simply in his heart that the war was over. The war was far from being over. The pendulum of strife and bitterness had many more swings to make before it died down at last into peace.

The University had never been closed during the war, but now that all its endowment was lost, and every pecuniary resource wrecked, what was to be its future? In 1866 there were but three graduates, while Washing-

ton and Lee at Lexington, Virginia, counted its hundreds of students. Governor Swain's day was over, but he could not, would not, see that this was true. He labored to get assigned to his institution a proportion of the United States Land Scrip funds, and in this he was successful by his personal influence at Washington.

If he could have lived ten years longer without growing older thereby he might have weathered the storm, but the ten years were not to be his, and the rudder was not to be regained by him, now that the boat was adrift, finally and irretrievably.

IX

THE WRITING OF "THE LAST NINETY DAYS OF THE WAR"

ZEBULON B. VANCE, Governor of North Carolina at the close of the Civil War, was a man very similar in antecedents to Governor Swain, from the same part of the state; and while comparatively a young man at the time we are discussing, he was very closely joined to him in friendship. He too had been at college for only a part of the regular course. He too had been somewhat irregularly educated, but this did not prevent his becoming a popular idol, and a man especially adored by the rougher men of the mountain districts, while he was almost as highly esteemed by the "old line" Whigs. There was something intrinsically admirable about him because of his native ability, sanity, racy mother wit, and his genuine probity. His leadership during the Civil War and after it is still regarded with growing admiration, and he becomes more and more of a tradition and a memory.

From the time of his student days, Vance had been an enthusiastic friend of Mrs. Spencer's. Perhaps we have shown how rare was her faculty of making friends. She was the friend and correspondent at this time, and also later in her life, of most of the useful and prominent men of North Carolina who ever had been at the University, both those older and those younger than herself. She knew them intimately and was intensely interested in their problems. They would consult her judgment, writing to her about public matters. Her acute mind leaped with theirs to help them define their thought.

She made an appreciative and stimulating audience for them as they detailed to her their plans, policies, scruples, reflections, told her their experiences and outlined their sober aims. It was Vance who said of her on one occasion when he heard her called "the brightest woman in North Carolina," "Don't forget that she's the smartest *man* too!" It was her gift of apprehension which made Mrs. Spencer the influence she became in North Carolina history, especially in that decade immediately after the War. Not that she meddled or suggested, but that she seemed to be the anvil on which many thoughts were beaten into current shape. The many letters written to her by Vance, by Graham, by Governor Swain, by E. J. Hale, editor of the *Fayetteville Observer*, by Josiah Turner of the *Raleigh Sentinel*, which will so often be cited hereafter, by Kemp Battle, afterwards President of the University, by dozens of old students on one pretext or another, are still preserved. Less plentifully preserved are her answers to them, but some are on file. The thousands of letters she wrote regarding the University were strong arrows. She placed her shots to good advantage, as we are going to see by and by. This faculty of writing letters, which found their echo in the minds and hearts of men, was her only weapon. It was by means of this that a woman somewhat old and very deaf accomplished what not a man of them all thought possible.

Just at this time, in the early autumn of 1865, Governor Swain, writing in behalf of Governor Vance, who was in prison in Washington, as well as for himself, begged her to embody her personal knowledge of the final scenes of the Civil War in a series of articles to be published in a paper called *The Watchman* in New York

City. This was a weekly, what was called a "family" newspaper, published by Charles F. Deems, who had lately been professor of rhetoric and logic at the University of North Carolina, and who afterwards was for many years pastor of the Church of the Strangers in New York. This paper was short-lived, continuing only a year, but Mrs. Spencer's articles written for it were collected and printed in book form and called *The Last Ninety Days of the War in North Carolina*.

The idea in writing this book was to give an account to Northern readers of the real facts, to show that Sherman's campaign methods and those of others were unnecessarily severe and harsh, and to give as much well-authenticated personal experience as possible. It was hoped that some heed would be given to this message, some ground indicated for reconciliation rather than military reconstruction. Mrs. Spencer hoped to show that North Carolina especially had been sufficiently harried. After the surrender, Governor Swain and many another old Whig with him, who had remained staunch for the Union as long as there was a Union to be faithful to, wanted nothing but to rub out the score and honestly begin again. There was not the least conception in these men's minds of what was about to come to the South. Vance writes to Governor Swain at this time, "The more Miss Corny has to do with this scheme and the less anyone else, the better."

The whole idea that the South was now to be scourged with scorpions, just after she had been beaten so severely with rods, only dawned on the minds of her people slowly. This was but the year 1865.

In order then to write this book, Mrs. Spencer wrote to persons in whom she felt confidence who lived all along

the line of march of the northern armies through North Carolina. She begged them for well vouched personal knowledge of what took place when the Yankees marched in. Her questions were very specific. One of these letters, at hand, shows how very little one part of the country knew of what was passing in another part during that time of distress and confusion. We quote:

Did General Stoneman leave Salisbury after he took it? Where did he go then? I have an idea that he came crashing down from the west to join Sherman somewhere in the center of the state. Do you know what his course was? Did he come in from Knoxville? This must have been the first part of April, as Lee had surrendered. Did you know when President Davis passed along?

The many letters received she used, weaving them in her own personal knowledge to make a continuous narrative. Parts of this were submitted to Governor Vance for criticism, he now being paroled and returned to his home in Statesville, North Carolina. He writes her, November 15, 1865:

Here is a deliberate charge that I feel more consideration for Governor Swain than for yourself,—that I would hack and hew without mercy at your composition while I would be afraid to dot an i or cross a t of his. You have reversed me entirely. Your style is very readable as everything that I have seen from your pen seems, if you will pardon my saying so. I am sure it will be read greedily by North Carolina at least. For my own part I shed tears freely over some of it.

In the fall of 1864 Governor Vance, much disturbed over the signs of the times, had written very candidly to Governor Swain regarding the impending fall of the Confederacy:

September 22, 1864—By the time that the President [Davis], who has gone to Georgia, displays again his obsti-

nacy in defying public opinion and his ignorance of men, in the change to a still worse commander, the ruin will be complete.

The sign which discourages me more than all else, is the demoralization of the people. Not a bridge has been burned, not a car thrown off the track, nor a man shot by the people whose country Sherman has desolated. They seem to submit when our armies are drawn off. What does this show, Governor? It shows that the great popular heart is not now and never has been in this war. It was a revolution of the polite class, not the people—was fought at first by the natural enthusiasm of our young men and has been kept going by the casualties and the brutalities of the enemy. As you know I am of a hopeful and buoyant temperament. . . . General Lee is a *great man*. Saturday night may yet come to all our trouble. How can I help to win the victory? Secure the retreat? Duty called me to resist to the uttermost the disruption of the Union. Duty calls me to stand by the new Union [the Confederacy]. The beginning was bad, but I had no hand in it; if the end be bad I shall with God's help be equally blameless.

About November 1st Mrs. Spencer wrote and asked Vance to allow her to use this letter. He consented to a part of it being reproduced in the *Ninety Days* but not all.

E. J. Hale of Fayetteville, in several long letters to Mrs. Spencer in the spring of 1866 dissents from the opinion of Vance regarding "the great popular heart is not now, and never has been in this war," but he says further:

I feel sympathy with you in admiration of Governor Vance. I have sometimes thought that young as he was he would have carried us through if he had been at the head of either Government or Army [Confederate]. The letter you publish must have been written at a moment of depression. I did not think he would have given way so. It helps up the prominence of the croakers who ruined us. I admit that the

Governor showed sagacity and foresight in that letter, but I prefer the bliss of ignorance. I would never have uttered such opinions if I had formed them. I am glad you gave me an extract from his letter of November last. Some day I hope you will find occasion to print this extract.

In the preface to the book made by gathering these papers, *The Last Ninety Days of the War*, Mrs. Spencer declares her purpose in writing this series:

To do justice to North Carolina and to place beyond cavil or reproach the attitude of her leaders at the close of the great southern States Rights struggle. To present a faithful picture of the times and a just judgment, whether writing of friend or foe, has been my sole object.

It required an innate love of truth and justice to say, so soon after that wild orgy of a conquering march through the center of North Carolina, that Sherman was a great man at the council table, and that if he had been listened to by the Government at Washington, North Carolina would have gone peacefully back to work in a few months, to repair her shattered fortunes. This is the gist of what she does say on this subject. On February 12, 1866, she writes Governor Vance for material for the very last numbers:

Can you tell me what was doing in the City of Raleigh while Sherman's army was resting at Goldsborough preparatory to their move on Raleigh? A very comprehensive question, I know, but would it trouble you too much just now to give me a few points? For instance, about that Government property. Then about Governor Vance? What became of him, and above all tell me why he ever left Raleigh at all? Please reply at once.

It required delicacy of a generous kind to reserve the facts which were told her at this time by Governor Vance,

regarding his sudden and un contemplated journey away from Raleigh at the time of Sherman's nearing approach. She has preserved his confidence until now. Vance made to her, as we may trace from her answers to his letters, clear statements of his difficulties with the President of the Confederacy, and told her in so many words of what happened to him during the days when his commissioners, Governors Swain and Graham, had gone to ask Sherman, in view of the submission of the Governor, to spare the City of Raleigh and the Capitol. It is a tradition strongly credited that Vance was coerced away from Raleigh on this occasion by the rearguard of Johnston's retreating army, and yet in her most confidential letters to the Governor she alludes to this but does not quite say it out plain. That Vance would willingly have returned to Raleigh when summoned by Governor Swain at Sherman's request, and furnished with the requisite pass, cannot be doubted on referring to his own correspondence. Especially note the letters showing how he was deliberately left behind when he demanded railroad transportation back, and being left, was thereby excluded from the final negotiations between Sherman and Johnston, after having it represented to him that he was to be present. We will quote the letters to substantiate this:

April 25, 1866.

GOVERNOR VANCE:

I ought to have thanked you for your full and satisfactory reply to my queries, but I am so busy that mere letters of compliment may very well be postponed to the "good time coming."

I write now to take your opinion. Do you think it will be advisable to *let on* about your being hindered from returning to Raleigh?

I am (in my book) now closing up the last few desperate days of the Confederacy, when the bottom fell out so unexpectedly. What President Davis and his advisers hoped to effect by attempting to trip you up is what I cannot understand. Many of your friends, Governor Swain among them, have always regretted your leaving Raleigh, but Mr. Kemp Battle said it was very well you did. He said he knew you were prevented from remaining and by whom. Do you think it advisable that I shall state this much, that on arriving at Greensboro and finding the President gone on to Charlotte you would have returned and accepted Sherman's invitation to Raleigh, but that you were not permitted by the Confederate military authorities to pass their lines? That you then went to Charlotte and had your final interview with President Davis? Were again refused permission to set out for Raleigh? I shall say *nothing* about your not being invited to be present at the conferences with Sherman. Governor Swain demurred as to mentioning the check upon you even in this general way. He is reluctant to make any exposé of President Davis which may irritate our friends the Secessionists who now agree to idolize him you know. I had a letter from Mr. E. J. Hale, in which he says that but for the *croakers* we would have succeeded! The Governor is fearful of my saying anything which may bring you into anything like reproach with these friends.

I myself would prefer to state the whole truth.

I am so glad I know now why you did not return to Raleigh, and I know there are many more who will be glad to get a hint of the reason. I agree with you now entirely. I never knew before the principle on which you acted. As it is, I am proud of you and want everybody to understand enough to vindicate you from the charge of folly: "Refusing to give up," "Running after Davis when all was lost," etc.

Mr. Hale demurred a good deal from my view of parties in this last number, thinks I was not fair to the War Party. Governor Swain thought I said too much for 'em, so that I feel like the old woman, sometimes I think, and then again I don't know.

Another letter to Governor Vance along the same line of comment:

May 4, 1866.

GOVERNOR VANCE:

I confess to you candidly, as to your not calling the Legislature, or doing something to avert our ruin, that it made an unfavorable impression on me, coupled with the fact that you did not return to Raleigh at Sherman's invitation. It really led me to suppose that your wisdom was under a temporary eclipse at that time.

Please don't say just here that it makes very little difference whether a woman understands anything about public affairs or not. I really do believe myself that it is quite as necessary for a public man to stand well with his countrywomen as with those who can vote and fight. An intelligent woman's appreciation and good word is worth something.

Not till I received your letter of April giving me an account of your journey from Raleigh, and *why*, why also you never returned, did I understand enough to do you justice.

Governor Swain loves and admires you as if he were your own father.

I used to wonder why intelligent men who had lived and acted through important eras in history did not oftener have their experience and knowledge of facts and events on record. I see now that it is one of the hardest things to write clearly while the actor's minds are still heated and a thousand contradictory reports and views continually presented. Then Charles Phillips says I get bewildered when I try to conceive of how things would be if they were not as they are.

Poor President Davis! What horrible days those he spent in North Carolina must have been! He seems to have braced himself like a rock—against all reason.

I would like to know what effect a year of solitary confinement has had on his reason. He was an honest President, though a very mistaken one.

Governor Vance and Governor Swain were both opposed to the publication of the whole truth. Vance

said, "Perhaps I am over-sensitive on my remarks upon Mr. Davis being published," and so that letter, whatever it may have contained, was not published. Vance was well known to his fellow North Carolinians to be a person obnoxious to the Confederate government, because not pliable nor enough subservient. Writing to Mrs. Spencer about the book which was now made of the collected sketches, in answer to her final request for corrections, Vance says on August 31, 1866, defining its quality:

The real value of these sketches does not consist in stringing together the prominent events of the War, in order; but in the graphic setting forth of the feelings and sufferings of our own people. This you have performed with such peculiar and womanly happiness that wherever you have turned from it to the recital of mere historical details, I have felt like I had got off the cars at Durham and had started in a miserable hack for Chapel Hill.

Again, "It is a woman's task, and I know of but one woman who could do it." In view of the correspondence here given, the actual words published in the *Ninety Days* will be of interest:

The Governor lingered in Raleigh till midnight, then without a single member of his staff, accompanied by Captain Bryan and Captain J. J. Guthrie, he rode out to General Hoke's encampment at Page's [now Cary], eight miles from Raleigh. Hampton and Hoke and Wheeler had all passed Raleigh in the evening.

This shows that the facts were in accordance with the unpublished recollections regarding Vance's being so to speak kidnapped by the Confederate military because they did not wish him to remain in charge. Again Mrs. Spencer says:

General Sherman's letter inviting his return to Raleigh was put into his hands and he was urged to return thither but he had just received a dispatch from President Davis urging him to meet him in Greensborough by returning train.

These quotations may serve to show how difficult Mrs. Spencer found it, with the best will in the world, to get at and to state a small amount of truth. As regards the picture of the times, the book is veracious, and will surely be reprinted some day, although it is a rare book even in North Carolina at this time.

Alone among the Civil War narratives it gives the immediate feeling of things, the hysteria, the fear, the uncertainty, the indignation, the sorrow, the despair, which succeed each other in the minds of the watchers by the hearthstone when an enemy army is approaching. The conclusion shows the real sturdy veracity of Mrs. Spencer's preferences, and is no doubt in part the reason why the book has not been more esteemed in the house of its friends. We will quote:

The time has not come for the southern people to estimate President Lincoln fairly. The smoke of the battlefield would have obscured his good qualities . . . He was always presented to us in caricature . . . but a sense of remorse fills my mind now as I write of him. The day will come when we shall frankly endeavor to understand and to do justice to President Lincoln. . . .

I close these slight and inadequate sketches of a memorable time with the words of my first sentence. The history of the great Civil War is yet to be written.

The book did little of what was intended for it. That it was written when feelings and perceptions were all so fresh is its merit. That it was so written made it unwelcome at the North where people had become assured that they already knew all they wished to know about the

South and its needs, and were in no mood to revise their opinions. It was not much regarded in North Carolina because it was so vivid and so true. It could only be read with tears, for real pain, not the sentimental tears which come at the tale of "old unhappy far off things." Poignant sorrows are better forgotten for a time at least, till the soul can deal with them more calmly.

X

JOURNALS AND LETTERS OF 1865-1866

RESUMING Mrs. Spencer's journal for 1865-1866, we find entries showing the lively alternations of hope and fear, the guesses and the misgivings that were felt before anyone knew what would be done in sweeping up the débris of the War. The freeing of the negroes was taken as a matter of course and really was somewhat of a relief to those who did not know where their own bread and meat was coming from, and much less could feed a hungry horde of slaves. The removal of this responsibility for maintaining numbers of *black* children, who looked for support to those who had always hitherto furnished it, was not a misfortune.

The negroes of Chapel Hill began to stream off in numbers to other parts of the state. They had been so long subject to authority that the first evidence to them of their freedom was the power to go and come as they pleased, and this they enjoyed until lack of food made them go again to work. The entries from Mrs. Spencer's journal are given in order :

July, 1865—Governor Swain returned from the North this week, and I have had several conversations with him. He looks remarkably well and I think has returned a warmer southern man than he went. He seems to take pleasure in recalling how often he stood up for the South, and silenced her detractors. His conversation is eminently interesting. He was treated with marked courtesy and hospitality he says, and yet he is glad to get back to the South. The last four years have been years of progress, of improvement, of vast increase in power and luxury to the North. We can hardly form any idea of it, especially in our present low estate.

His judgment of President Johnson is rather favorable. A man of decided ability, of great firmness and decision of character, and little likely to be influenced by any man, especially if of a *gentle breeding*. But he will probably act as fairly to the South as can be expected. The Governor dined with Horace Greeley, with Governor Andrews of Massachusetts; saw Bancroft in New York, and Dr. Hawks.

At West Point he associated with many military notabilities on the pleasantest terms; and says of all that the antipathy, dislike, indignation, and contempt, North for South, is widespread and deep-rooted. The most atrocious tales are circulated and believed about us, while nothing that we can say of their misbehavior to us, of the ravages of their armies, etc., can get a hearing.

I was greatly rejoiced to get from him an emphatic denial of the story of President Davis' disguise in his wife's clothes. Governor Swain was with two Yankee Generals who were in Georgia at the time, and they both declared that President Davis was manly, dignified, and impressive in the highest degree. The only color for the story of his disguise was that he had thrown around him an india-rubber over-cloak, perhaps of his wife's, to shield him from the rain.

Professor Hepburn writes from Carlisle, Illinois, in the same terms of the bitterness of feeling, and adds, that as usual the women and the preachers are the bitterest, and lead in the fierceness of accusation. . . There were no demonstrations in this place to celebrate the Fourth. Vicksburg and Gettysburg were too near. Governor Swain would have made a little address concerning the state of matters, North and South, but he met no response and it was dropped.

The negroes held a grand celebration at Hillsborough, and at Raleigh—*freedmen*, as the fashion is to call them. The Yankees are willing to instigate them to any extravagance of feeling, more I imagine to spite their late masters, than out of real regard for, or interest in them. Poor things! They are between two fires. How it will go with them in the future depends much on themselves. If they behave well, and show a disposition to exert themselves honestly, all good people

at the South will aid and cheer them. Otherwise it is a dark prospect for them.

There are so many besotted, bigoted, brutish, slave-owners at the South who take this spoiling of their goods any way but cheerfully, and will need to be taught their duty in the new régime as well as the negroes theirs. At present all is in a transition state, with all the uncertainties, ignorances, errors, and discomforts attending such a state. Our Aunt Dilsey is still with us, but I do not doubt she will soon go.

August, 1865—College opened this morning with twenty-two students. Governor Swain returned this morning from Raleigh, and I had the pleasure of hearing him talk. It is one of my few pleasures. He tells me the University has lost all its endowment funds—has absolutely nothing to go upon but the tuition fees. What is to become of the faculty, no one can tell. He showed me some letters from Governor Vance which increase my opinion of his sense and ability. Vance urges me to write for him a history of the last ninety days of the War giving full material from letters, facts, and experiences. Vance has just been released on parole from Washington, as his wife's health is declining.

Governor Swain says the condition of things in Raleigh is even worse than heretofore. The despotism is harder. The losses are greater than has been imagined. People of the largest estates have been reduced to little or nothing, and their condition is most humiliating—condemned to sue for pardon, and through the hands of such a man as *Holden*. Though Governor Swain does Holden justice. Thinks he will do as well as he can, in the main points.

We hear sad accounts of the way in which confiscation is being carried out in Virginia. Many of the citizens of Richmond are stripped of everything, all that the war had spared. Many of our wealthy landed proprietors are trembling, but North Carolina, bitter as is the cup to her in many respects, is being mercifully dealt with in comparison with Virginia.

It is better in these days not to have been born rich, or provident, or influential.

Governor Swain again spent an evening here talking of the state of the country. It is evident that he hopes there is a

chance that Holden will be defeated when the state election comes on. Holden has certainly acted very injudiciously in the sweeping removal of all officers, from Justices of the Peace up. No other provisional governor has deemed such a proscription necessary. It looks as if he had spite against the state, in putting us to such unnecessary trouble and vexation. He certainly is overdoing the matter. People are not so cowed as they were a few months ago. I look forward to our Convention and election with some hope of an issue to our troubles.

We have both a civil and a military jurisdiction in the state, which is doubly mischievous and irritating. Schofield is at the head of the military jurisdiction, and Governor Swain is inclined to think well of him.

August 22, 1865—I have come to the uncomfortable conclusion that the great American people are a failure. I see in these days so much meanness, injustice, servility, malignity, narrow-minded bigotry, and selfishness, envy, hatred, and malice, *both North and South*, that I cannot help thinking that we are a radically mean people.

Does this pessimism recall to our minds the thought that was so insistent just after the World War, the feeling of all good intentions defeated, which we have been deploring ever since we lost that fine rapture of idealistic enthusiasm, somewhere between the Armistice and the end of the Peace Conference? Is this disillusion a part and sequence of all wars?

August 26, 1865—I have just read a long letter from Kemp Battle from New York, taking strong ground in favor of a hearty union with the Northern people, inviting and assisting immigration south, calling in capital, welcoming workers, opening up every source of national prosperity, and turning over a new leaf generally. It is all true, good sense all of it, but for my single self, I desire to have as little as possible to do with Northern people. My mind has not cooled down from the ire and agitation of such a war as ours. Business, however, must go on. The world is turning round, and though

my reason consents, I feel sad. I do not love my country. I feel as if I had no country to love or to venerate.

I have just read Judge Ruffin's letters to Governor Swain on the situation of the University, and his feelings expressed in them. Also his *petition for pardon!*

There has been a muss this week between the young men of the town and College and the Freedmen, who were assembled in council to elect delegates to their convention to endeavor to obtain the right of suffrage. It was a general row. Heads and arms broken. Many fear the result will be a negro guard sent up here. Governor Swain goes to Washington tomorrow.

October, 1865—Governor Swain returned from the North yesterday. He came over to see me this evening. His impressions of President Johnson are more favorable than on his first visit to Washington. He says, he looks "every inch the President." The Governor effected nothing at all for the University. There seems to be great ill-feeling towards the University in some parts of the state, on account of alleged Yankee proclivities among the faculty. Ellie Swain's wedding helped this along. From a few of our reviving southern church papers I find that the greatest bitterness still exists in the churches. While the politicians are trying to heal up matters and make friends, the *churches* are exhibiting the utmost intolerance and bitterness. How painful, and how humiliating is this fact!

October 22, 1865—Governor Swain sent me a letter to Ellie from General Wilcox in the City of Mexico, giving an account of his adventures from the dismal day of Lee's surrender, April 9th, till his arrival in Mexico.

He went to San Antonio, Texas, and was there with his sister till President Johnson's proclamation drove him and a host of Confederate generals, governors, and colonels over into Mexico. Maximilian treats them all well. No doubt glad to see such citizens in his Empire. He has lately issued a decree concerning immigration, intending to coax people to come. Lands at Government price, five year exemption from military service, etc. Wilcox says much about the soil and climate of Mexico. Thinks it a fine country for agriculturists,

but would evidently prefer this country. "It is the people make the country." Very true!

October 28, 1865—Convention adjourned, Jonathan Worth nominated for Governor against Holden. I see very little to choose between them, except that Worth is probably the honestest of the two, while Holden is the ablest. People are constantly saying, "What has the Convention done?" I'm sure I do not know. They abolished slavery, cancelled the act of secession, and repudiated the war debt, at the instance of a telegram from President Johnson. I feel ashamed of North Carolina in some respects. She is always in the rear, no matter whether the tide ebbs or flows, and always contrives to get more kicks than half-pence. No state in the Confederacy did more for the cause than she, no state acted more handsomely, no state was more abused. North Carolina was systematically insulted by the general Government of the Confederacy as unreliable, disloyal, and was suspected and accused of being secretly disposed toward reconstruction—this in the face of her efforts and her sacrifices for the Southern cause.

Lo, the tide turns, the Confederacy is nowhere, the Union triumphant. Where is North Carolina? Favored in any respect?—Not she! She has had the meanest man in the state set over her as Provisional Governor, who seized the opportunity to humiliate her still further, and she is positively behind even South Carolina in progress toward reconciliation or reunion. Her newspapers are feeble, her convention servile, her people are cowed. She lacks that something of spirit, without which a state or a man may be thoroughly respectable, good, honest, brave, but will yet lack the glance of fire, the free, bold bearing that secures deference and a place above the salt, without asking for it.

Somewhere Mrs. Spencer says that "Merry Christmas is not hard to have *anywhere*. . . It is Happy New Year that brings—nobody knows what!"

Little June has a more interesting Christmas in 1865 than ever in her short life before. There is a charming letter from Santa Claus all in rhyme, written of course

by her mother. She also had in her stocking the first "store candy" she had ever tasted, besides a real dolly, and a new dress which was not homespun. Here is the little jingle, preserved on a bit of Confederate writing paper, full of cotton fibre:

Oh! little June!
I'm just in tune
For writing you a letter.
This Christmas night
The stars are bright
Moonlight was never better.

So here I'll stop
On chimney top
While all the stars are winking,
And let you know
Before I go
Some things that I've been thinking.

I think that soon
My little June
Will be a grown up lady.
I hope that she
Will surely be
As sweet as any May-day.

But oh! my dear
It's very clear
That now's your time for learning,
For all the world
Sees no bad girl
Into a lady turning.

So mind your books
And mind your looks
And all that is befitting,
Your sewing do
And drawing too
And don't forget your knitting.

Now down I'll come
Into your room
And never think of knocking.
At you I'll peep
So fast asleep
And then I'll fill your stocking.
You may be sure
That I'm too poor
To buy this dress or make it.
"Aunt Alice" she
Did send for me
And say "Saint Nick must take it."

Now this is it,
I hope 'twill fit,
A royal dress and splendid.
And you must go
And let her know
Her kindness can't be mended.

So now dear June
Under the moon
I've written you this letter.
I must away
I cannot stay
To make it any better.

Santa Claus.

Surely the worst is over. Surely the lowest point of the fortunes of the conquered South and the impoverished University has been reached. The journal begins the new year on a more cheerful note:

January 1, 1866—The past year has been a memorable one. As Aunt Dilsey said this morning, "Thank God we are alive, and have got a little something to eat." We have a new road to travel, and a pretty hard road it will be for awhile. But the South will be infinitely better off in ten years time, richer, happier than it has ever been, I do believe. God grant it, and God take care of the widows and orphans.

January 7, 1866—Paid a visit to the Di Library. While waiting for the key I walked up and down before the building, looking at every tree and path with the same interest we look into a friend's eyes who is talking to us. The natural objects are all there. The great oaks, the steps, the turf. Things are so little changed, and yet so greatly. I never walk through those grounds without pangs of heart. There are doors and windows where I seem to see a familiar face and form. Some things are immortal, and we never feel this more keenly than in such moments, looking at the apparently long-lived objects that stand and live and flourish while the love and hope and tender memories associated with them, the voices and faces that haunt them, seem gone forever. Even when nature mocks us with her immutability and steadfastness, compared with our changing fading dying lot, even then we feel that these things that surround us are nothing, substantial as they appear. Love is immortal. The memory of it is indelible.

March, 1866—Eighteen of the Chapel Hill people have died since last March, not including negroes.

Beside this she has pencilled the entry, that she wished she had taken time to make a full list at the time when she knew them all.

Governor Swain returned yesterday from Washington City. Hopes that this time he has succeeded, but is not certain. Tells me many interesting items of Washington life. Says he owes his *entrée* to the presence of Secretary Harlan, in the Treasury Department, to a mulatto, who attended President Buchanan on his visit to Chapel Hill in 1859, and staid of course at the Governor's.

Governor Swain says he thinks President Johnson is in earnest to do the South justice, and will give her her rights if man can do anything.

This was the time when Governor Swain had made his application for North Carolina's quota of the Land Scrip.



JAMES PHILLIPS

In the month of May, Mrs. James Phillips, Mrs. Spencer's mother, left Chapel Hill to make a long visit to her relatives at the North. Her family believed her in very declining health, and were very much affected on bidding her goodbye.

I shed bitter tears when Ma left us. When she kissed me goodbye she said, "It may be the final parting, my dear, but it will not be long." I miss Ma very much, and cannot bear to look into her room.

June, 1866, Commencement Day—Only three seniors to graduate, but a large crowd here, and many young ladies. Vance delivered the address, on the "Duties of defeat." Admirable. I hope it may help to do away with the prejudice existing at present against the University, and the faculty.

The *Raleigh Standard*, Holden's paper, said about this time that the University was being reviled by some as being a "Yankee Concern," and by others as being a "hot-bed of Rebellion." Both of which statements were believed by different sections of public opinion.

July 4, 1866—The negroes of Chapel Hill had a celebration, and I made them a banner. Their choice in mottoes was, on one side, "Respect for Former Owners," and on the other, "Our Hope is in God." Colonel Guthrie made them an address. Jurdon Swain read a part of the immortal Declaration, and they all marched out to the dinner provided by themselves, and sat on the ground bought from the Craigs for their new school house. There they made speeches for themselves, showing a good disposition, poor things! I thought their procession a right affecting sight.

August, 1866—A quiet summer. How often I may look back to these days with Pa and June as Halcyon times. He and she seem to be so fond of each other. They have long talks together on the piazza of evenings, as we sit by him, and he smokes his pipe. I cannot hear a word, but now and then Pa

laughs and tells me some queer remarks of June's. The University opened with one hundred students, but at General Lee's College over seven hundred applications have been received, and five hundred at the University of Virginia.

September 4, 1866—During President Johnson's late tour to Chicago, he was received at certain places with open insult and disrespect. With a mob at Indianapolis. It will end in his being defeated in the approaching Congress. A long letter from State Treasurer Kemp Battle to Governor Swain, in which he does not seem to be sanguine that the University will get the appropriation donated by Congress for an Agricultural College. If not, the University is doomed.

October 20, 1866—Received today the first proof sheets of the *Ninety Days*. Took my first lesson on Laura's new sewing machine. Also received the price of the first copy of the book, from Judge Battle.

June's little friend Beck Kimberly came and stayed with us last night. I slept in the next room. I had a wretched night. I do not like to think about my dream. I dreamed that Pa was dead, and my distress was as great as if it had been a reality. In the middle of the dream I woke up, and could sleep no more until day began to dawn. I have tried to reason myself out of my fright and anguish, in vain. I wanted to get up and go to him. I am afraid to write it, but I do think Pa seems not well these days.

December 9, 1866—My book arrived today. I am much pleased with it, and the way it is gotten up. Very pretty and very neat. Governor Swain is unfortunately not here to receive his copy. The surprise of the dedication was what I wanted, but I had the pleasure of giving my dear old Father his copy. Now if North Carolinians will only buy it!

Great anxiety and uncertainty about the University. Governor Swain still in Raleigh. A letter from Ma gives me great uneasiness. I want her to come home, and have written her so. I think however she will prefer to stay there. She has never been happy here. I have often heard her say that when her time came to die, she wanted to be with her kindred. A

letter from Dr. Deems very gloomy. His paper is about to fail. Sales of *Ninety Days* very slow. I feel a gnawing anxiety about Ma. The year is closing, gloomily, gloomily. Governor Swain has to go to Washington with Governor Worth. Holden and his party are trying to get the state under territorial government. Had a long visit from Fred Fetter. He says the prejudice against the University is growing every day.

December 29, 1866—Governor Swain returned, and had much to tell me about the *Ninety Days*, many compliments to repeat to me. All this, however, is the merest chaff. I want to know that the book *sells*.

It has been a year of constant hope deferred to those interested in this college. A year of much pleasurable, if not profitable, employment to me, thanks to Dr. Deems. I have much to be thankful for, much to be ashamed of, much to be discouraged by, in looking back over 1866. The death of my dear little nephew [S. F. Phillips' son], and the state of Ma's health are the great troubles of the year. Our servants are a great source of worry to us. They are inclined to do as little, and to get as much as possible. Aunt Dilsey and Uncle Ben seem to sit rather loose—but we are eaten up by our negroes. The old year is passing. What will the new year bring? Who can even guess?

Several letters of interest are found in the collection. The first is to a rather prominent Presbyterian minister at Mebane, North Carolina, an intimate friend of her father, Dr. James Phillips. She afterwards wrote a memorial of him for publication in the *North Carolina Presbyterian*. The second letter, the long one, is a remarkable statement of her ideas about this time to Miss Eliza North of New London, Connecticut, a sister of Mrs. Mitchell. This lady had been a frequent visitor to Chapel Hill before the war, and was a highly intelligent,

very positive New England spinster. She had evidently been correcting the views of her relatives, who had passed the time of the war in Chapel Hill, isolated from their Northern kinsfolk, both by space and by opinion.

March 7, 1866.

MY DEAR DR. [WILSON]:

By this mail I send you the numbers of the *Watchman*, containing nos. 2 and 3 of *Last Ninety Days*, and also some poetry (so called) entitled "Sherman marching from Atlanta" which I will thank you to sing. I would be very thankful to you for a candid criticism of my work. What you say as to the passage in Governor Vance's letter referring to President Davis, is just so. Governor Vance did not wish it published, Governor Swain and Dr. Deems voted the other way, and there you have it.

Pa is and looks well. He has been doing duty for Charles, and for Professor Fetter, who has been sick also. Governor Swain has gone to Washington on business connected with the treasury department. The aid afforded by the General Assembly of the state to the University was very welcome though very small. It ought to have been ten thousand instead of seven. But Governor Swain was never liberal in his estimates, and thinks it a great wonder that he got the Legislature to do anything.

I do get horribly mired in the slough of despond sometimes. I look forward and see only a life of toil, or worse, perhaps of dependence, and poorly requited toil for one's self and one's children—Well, there's no writing about it. I am not afraid of work, no one works harder than I do these days, and how thankful I am that I have it to do.

Literary projects seem to abound among us these days. Magazines, newspapers, books—one needs a fortune to subscribe to half. I do not think very highly of American literature even at its best, but Southern literature is the feeblest attempt, the very weakest dilution and rinsings.

Has Hannis Taylor, whom I taught until he went to Bingham's, come under your observation? How is he doing?

I feel a very considerable interest in him, though latterly I never could get any study out of him. He is bright enough to do very well if he will only try.

I am writing this at twelve o'clock at night, or I could put a message in from Pa.

Dear Dr. believe me, your very much attached,

CORNELIA P. SPENCER

CHAPEL HILL, *March 10, 1866.*

MY DEAR MISS ELIZA:

Margaret gave me your letter to read containing a pleasant message to me, which somehow or other I feel as if I must answer. I have such agreeable recollections of Miss Eliza North, and so much confidence in her ultimate good sense, and love of truth and Christianity, that I cannot believe she would take amiss any letter inspired by such respectful friendship as mine.

I seem to be addressing you on the other side of a great gulf—a gulf at one time impassable, but which has been bridged over, and which I do humbly and heartily pray may be filled up some time or other. Not yet, and not now, but some day, in God's own good time. Meanwhile let us send kindly messages over our bridge, and along our telegraph line.

My dear friend I see you feel very strongly upon the subject of the "Rebellion" but I don't think you feel any more strongly than I do, and I am a moderate compared with many of my friends here. I am often at issue with your folks, Mary, and Margaret, and Eliza, but I yield to no one in love to the South, devotion to her cause, and anguish over her humiliation. I never thought the South had any pretense of right to make war. I felt she had a great provocation, but nothing that would justify an appeal to arms. I and my dear husband in Alabama were horror stricken over the attack on Fort Sumter. He was passing then through the dark valley, made darker by the clouds that hung over his country; though this increased his longing for the more settled home, the City which hath Foundations, to which he was hastened. I entered,

in those days, very little into the merits of those questions that agitated the land, and when I did rouse myself from my dust and ashes, the ruins of my earthly happiness, and came back to North Carolina at the close of 1861, I found every man, woman, and child enlisted for the War. I joined the army too, and never left my colors till Lee's flag went down on his last field.

Dear Miss Eliza, can you not see how people who resisted secession, who foresaw in it nothing but ruin, yet when it became the law of the state when our national honor was pledged to support it, sprang to arms and fought to the last gasp for the Confederacy? Yes, for North Carolinians fought for a government they did not love, and had little cause to respect, fought because their honor was involved, and because they were *Southerners*.

You seem to wonder why, if we left the Union with regret, we did not welcome its restoration. Ah, Miss Eliza, it was not the Union we had left. It is not now—and we had been learning to hate it, and those who were forcing it upon us—learning to hate, with deadly burning hatred those who wantonly despoiled us.

I do believe that the words which passed from North to South, and back again, did more to set us against each other than the bullets. I know that words are doing a great deal even now to keep our wounds open and our animosities unhealed. I believe that the lying that was done by the newspaper press on both sides was enough to sink the whole continent to perdition. I look back aghast now to think what lies we swallowed about you, and I look aghast to see what lies you swallowed about us. I should like very much to disabuse your mind of some that I see you are burdened with—to give you some idea of the laughter which Northern stories of our doings create here. For my part I have long ago disgorged what I swallowed about *you all*. I found it necessary to do so before I could accept the situation. I believed nothing, hoped nothing, cared for nothing, what time your bayonets forced the Union down my throat.

I've got it, accepted it, and think I shall digest it, and that in time it will agree with me. I have no desire now to go to Brazil or Mexico. I want to love my whole country from Maine to Texas, once more, and please God I will do it. It may take time, but I *will* forgive.

Now dear friend, cannot you get rid of some of your prejudices and try to understand that the South was sinned against, as well as sinning?

I give up as utterly baseless the stories that so fired us against you. The poisoned minie balls our papers said you shot at us—the poisoned drugs they said you smuggled into our hospitals, the starved, rat-eating prisoners they said you abused, the fires they said you kindled in our towns, the murderous emissaries they said you sent among our slaves, the fiendish temper generally they said you chose to exhibit towards us.

I do wonder that we listened to such and thousands more inventions of those whose interest it was to keep the war feeling alive, I wonder at our folly and credulity. Now dear Miss Eliza, please don't *you* believe we ever wanted to poison the Croton Reservoir, or set the St. Nicholas on fire. Such talk—such plans if they were ever broached had their origin among men of Booth's stamp, men who were quite as much of the North as the South, and who were expecting to make something out of such speculations and revelations. Don't speak to intelligent southerners of such things as if they were our southern plans. Southerners meant fair play, open fighting. How they would have carried on the war was shown plainly enough in the conduct of their army in Pennsylvania. We point proudly to that record.

Our pastime in war was not in burning houses and ravaging open country, or stripping or starving women and children. We fought honestly, we planned no assassinations, nor wholesale murders, such as the Northern press complimented us by ascribing to us. We invoked the blessing of God on every movement—that blessing He denied us, and we submit to His decree, and have not lost faith in Him. We mean to learn the lesson He has set us, and on the first page we see "Love your Enemies." Now please Miss Eliza, take hold your side

of the Book and learn your lesson with us, and see which of us can say it the best when called up. The South meant fair play, and she wants fair play now. We want to go to work quietly and build up our ruined fortunes, and set this country going again. We honestly accept the consequences of our miscalculation and delusion and we want to be believed when we say so. It is rather hard that misrepresentation must dog us even now, that people are so bent on throwing in our teeth every trumped up newspaper story, besides the new ones daily invented.

Miss Eliza, I feel that the South sinned, sinned in her pride, her prosperity, and her confidence. Sinned in the way she allowed a few fanatical demagogues to precipitate her into the war. God has humbled her. But as strongly as I feel all this, so strongly do I feel that though we have fallen we shall rise again. God chastens whom He loves. He has a great mercy in store for us, low as we lie under His hand; and I declare to you now, that I would rather be the South in her humiliation than the North in her triumph.

There is great virtue in suffering and affliction. You know the higher nobler qualities of men and nations come out of the furnace purified and intensified. We have never lost our self-respect. Humiliation is not degradation; and from this night of suffering, of confusion and blood and anguish we shall rise to the light of a better day,—God grant it!

I have not left myself any room for discussion of our affairs—freedmen or other. Without being in the least able to see any parallel between the enfranchisement of God's chosen people and that of Ham's descendants, I can heartily agree with you in being glad that they are free. They have always been an awful drag upon the prosperity and development of the South, and because I love the white man better than I do the black, I am glad they are free.

And now I wish they were all in—shall I say Massachusetts?—or Connecticut? Poor things! We are doing what we can for them.

Since I began this letter the Raleigh papers have come giving Brother Sam's speech in favor of allowing them to

testify in court. I will send it on in this to you, and I wish you would read it. It is elaborately prepared, and I understand has greatly advanced Brother Sam's reputation. You know he always was a "Reconstructionist" and mightily abused too, by some of his neighbors, though he supported the war as long as there was hope. Brother Charles has just received a supply of books from New York for his Negro Sunday School.

The Philadelphia Quakers are going ahead with their missions, large schools in Greensboro and elsewhere. Don't you believe your "eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses" of our cruelty to our poor negroes. Exceptional cases there are no doubt, as in everything, but *believe me*, nine hundred and ninety in every thousand of our people are kindly disposed to them, and if they behave themselves will befriend them.

Our slaves behaved well during the war. If they had not, it would not have lasted ten months. We feel that they are in no way to blame for the present situation.

Well, I am afraid you won't accept me after all, nor see with my lights. I would like to have a long talk with you, not at all afraid of tongue to tongue. I am glad you read my *Ninety Days* and will be more glad to have your impressions of it from time to time.

I should like to write another sheet full, and tell you about our folks, and my dear old father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and my little daughter. We are all well, thank God, and have enough to eat, and have not been reduced to fig-leaves; though when calico was \$50.00 a yard, and factory cloth \$25.00 there really was a danger of it. Dear Miss Eliza, let us shake hands across the gulf. God bless you.

A part of the ensuing letter to Mrs. J. J. Summerell has been destroyed. The date must have been about September 30, from internal evidence:

DEAR ELLEN:

. . . General and Mrs. Atkins came home this week. Most persons think it a great pity she should come home at all in

such a crisis in our affairs. . . . I went from your Mother's to call on Dr. Duncan Moore and his wife at Emery's. They were all full of the general talk and excitement against Governor Swain.

Dr. Moore says it is *very great* down in his section. General Atkins and Ellie coming here this fall has increased the bitterness. Everybody agrees that the Governor must resign, or the University is doomed, yet nobody will tell him so. I think he has no idea of resigning. He thinks he will live it down. What do you think? Sometimes he seems very despondent, but brightens up and seems to take heart. I feel very sorry for him! . . . Speaking to Brother Sam at the death of Brother Sam's little son Charlie, Mrs. Swain said, "Mr. Phillips, when you come to be as old as I am, you will not look upon this loss as being such a *great misfortune*."

As to forgiving our enemies, Ellen, I can't say that I have reasoned much with myself about it. I would like to read that book you mentioned, and see what it says on the matter. If we are to be forgiven as we forgive, I think we had better do it as quickly as we can. I am, however, sensible of a great rising in my throat when I contemplate certain parties in the Yankee Nation. I do confess I am at times in *no sort* of amity toward them. I have never been able to get up the slightest feeling of loyalty or interest in the Star Spangled Banner. On the contrary, I would like to spit on it this minute! Now of course this is not forgiveness, and yet I think myself a better Christian in this matter than a good many of my neighbors. The question you propose is whether we are required to forgive and love them before they exhibit signs of repentance. If we are to take our Master for an example, the answer seems to be this—"While we were yet sinners Christ died."—I really do believe we *ought* to choke down, trample out, scatter to the winds, all our natural, *justifiable* resentment and bitterness, and force ourselves to feel, look, and speak kindly and forgivingly of these people. It will cost a mortal pang to do it, but it ought to be done *now*. If we wait till time has dulled our memories somewhat and worn off the keenness of the edge, we may begin to say "I forgive"

when it is only that we are forgetting. I remember hearing a poor paralytic woman, struck down in the flush of her worldliness, say,—and she seemed to take such credit to herself for her renunciations—"I am done with the world now, I give it up freely" when the fact was, the world had given her up. I think we are very apt to deceive ourselves in this way. It seems to me that these hatreds, resentments, envies, whatever we call them, are not to be suffered to die out, nor are to be allowed to live till certain conditions are complied with by the offenders; they must be taken hold of, in all their vigor, and pulled up, root and branch, though it be with a long pull and a strong pull, and a pull altogether.

I say all this with the deepest shame, that having these convictions I have never as yet been able to act up to them. "The good I would, I do not." Ellen, I am a miserable Christian. I don't see that I grow in any grace whatever, or that any of my evil propensities are weakened, and the consequence is I don't enjoy my religion as I ought to. I am best in the valley, or under the rod. When I recall any special seasons of quickening and reviving, they were always in times of affliction. There is great sweetness in adversity.

Chapel Hill people are very poor. We are all so dependent on the prosperity of the University that its decline carries the whole village down. The faculty are greatly straightened. I could tell you some pitiful stories of some of them. And the future is both dark and uncertain. My little daughter is a promising child in most respects. She gives me no trouble in teaching. The main difficulty is her wilfulness. She has a great deal. I can *manage* her so as to avoid a conflict, guide her, so to speak, around the matter in question, so that she will not perceive it, but that is not controlling her, is it? I want her to get into the habit of coming over her will, into mine, and doing it prettily. "I want this, Mama wants that, and I will yield to her and do it." I want cheerful obedience.

I can compel obedience, but I do not want that.

Brother Charles' oldest girl is nearly as large as I am. An intelligent girl with a fine mind. She is well disposed, but I fear will be made unhappy by her near companionship

with Mrs. Fetter's girls. Mattie is just her age, and her class-mate and friend—a nice, amiable girl, but Mrs. Fetter restrains her girls in no way, and denies them nothing she can get for them.

Laura means Mary to lead a different life, but I fear Mary will chafe and repine.

Ellen, I do wish Presbyterians had more resources for their young folk. We deny them the ball-room and the whist table, and have nothing to offer them in place. Young people ought to have youthful enjoyments. One or two Presbyterian girls in a community where all their genteel associates are Episcopalians have a forlorn time, unless they can travel. Oh dear, how I do wish I were rich, for the sake of these nephews and nieces!

I think it is high time this letter came to an end.—Bed time. I wish you would treat me just this way. Love to all yours, and Pa sends love too—Believe me, yours very affectionately.

C. P. S.

XI

THE BREAKING UP OF THE OLD REGIME

THE JOURNAL continues with sorrowful records of death and disaster. Her friend, Mrs. Fetter, first passes away:

March 1, 1867—Mrs. Fetter is dead! I feel as if the sunshine of my life were gone. I cannot trust myself to write of this event. My Dear, dear Mrs. Fetter! It brings me a sort of deadness. June's "Ma Fetter." No more little notes, scrawled to me at night, on a scrap of paper, begged of Grandpa. "Please go over to Ma Fetter's and take me with you, and be good now, and please do it, like a pineapple,—like a yellow jasmine, and (once it was) like a rose, growing by clear water." I cannot get over this blow. The gloom and sense of loss, and sorrow of heart. How much I would write of her, but I cannot.

July, 1867—On the morning of March 11th, Thursday morning, the blow anticipated by me, fell. My father, my honored, much beloved Father, fell dead. I had been preparing myself for something of this sort for months. I cannot write of that dreadful morning. He fell dead in the college chapel, being just about to begin morning prayers at nine o'clock. He fell at his post, died in the arms of the students, without a struggle. Mrs. Martin and Ellen Summerell and Sister Laura came and staid with me.

On the 21st of March I started for New York to see Ma and bring her home with me. I was glad to be at my Uncle Sam Phillips's and talk with him of my Father. They were very unlike, but there was resemblance enough to make me cling to him. Owing to Ma's reluctance to return we did not get away till the last of June. Part of the time we spent in Plainfield, New Jersey.

New York I found immensely grown since I was familiar with its streets, fourteen years ago. It seemed twice as large,

and twice as imposing in its appearance of wealth and greatness. Such prosperity, such smiling prosperity. Such growth. I was all the time comparing it with the poor, broken down, unhappy, poverty stricken South. I feel like a dead leaf before the wind.

Here I thank God solemnly that I had such a Father as mine was. I am thankful for his example of honesty and integrity of purpose, for the simplicity of his character, for his ardent faith, and for his zealous upholding of the standards of his belief. He was a manly man.

NEW YORK, *April 23, 1867.*

DEAR LAURA:

. . . Your box goes by the steamer Albemarle, which sails for Norfolk tomorrow. Since I wrote last, I have received yours, giving the account of the shocking injury of Mrs. Lucas [Mrs. Samuel Phillips' mother], and of Charles' return. To think of Mrs. Lucas living seventy years, and then dying so at last. Poor Charlie, and so he must go thirty miles from home, and meet such a terrible fall. His letter cost me a great burst of tears.

I spent last Sabbath, Easter, with Uncle Sam at church, at Dr. Muhlenberg's. Such magnificent flowers they have on Easter Day. Aunt Annie wished me to join her at Communion, and so I went forward with the vast crowd of communicants. I hope I found good. My tears gushed as I thought of him who has drunk of the new wine, since we sat down together at our last Sacrament. Yesterday was Pa's birthday. Uncle Sam told me he was thinking of him, all day, all day!

My dear Laura, if I could only have my wish, I would go off in that boat tomorrow myself. I have nothing to do here now, and I want to get away somehow. I feel very tired of it all,

"Like a tired child at a show,
Who sees through tears the jugglers leap."

I have been thinking I would set Thursday, the second of May, for our departure, but from the various plans Mary

has for my doing and going, I doubt if I can get off then. In a few days I can see my way clear. Ma is here, seems very well. She does not appear to care about going back to Chapel Hill, nor do I wonder at her, though I certainly think she *ought*. Love to all, Yours ever,

C. P. S.

July, 1867—New York I found immensely grown since I was familiar with its streets, but its pomp, its parks, its beauty flitted before my eyes like a panorama. Useless to comfort, to distract, or to help. May 18th Ma had her fall, and I had to go to Plainfield, New Jersey, and remain with her. On June's birthday I took her to New York, where she saw so much she was only bewildered. Ma and I left New York by sea, June 29th, coming by Norfolk. We were a day in Raleigh, and reached home July 2, a sad bitter home-coming. Nothing but change and sadness. Everybody in Chapel Hill, black and white, came to see us on our return. I did not go into Pa's study for two months after my return. Everything was just as he left it. There was his dressing-gown with the handkerchief in the pocket, as he wore it to breakfast that morning.

Mrs. Spencer had missed, by her stay at the North, that Commencement at which President Johnson was present, accompanied by Mr. Seward and the Postmaster General. General Sickles, with two aides, was also present, and Jonathan Worth, the Governor of North Carolina. It was at this Commencement that President Johnson told of his early visit to Chapel Hill, when he ran away from his master, to whom his mother had apprenticed him. From this the party went to Raleigh, where the President had a monument placed in the old City Cemetery to his father buried there, and on this occasion Governor Swain made the address. By some oversight no invitation to Commencement was sent to Governor Holden, and he intensely resented this, Mrs.

Spencer tells us, and also resented the fact that he was not asked to sit on the rostrum in Raleigh with the distinguished guests. He did not come to Chapel Hill at all on this occasion. Secretary Seward made himself disliked by deriding the down-at-heel appearance of poor little Chapel Hill—no doubt a fact, but nevertheless not to be rubbed into a war-reduced company such as that.

There are but a few entries in Mrs. Spencer's diary this summer. She notices the death of Mrs. Battle, another dear friend, and says, "I cannot write of it, my soul is weary for very heaviness" and again, "The air is full of farewells."

Samuel Field Phillips, Mrs. Spencer's second brother, was a large, handsome man, dignified and urbane. He was distinguished, mentally and morally, with the intellect and acumen of his family. He had always been a man of moderation and tolerance, judicious and far-sighted. From the very first he hated secession, breathing out its threatenings, and he was able from the very first to distinguish the beginning from the end, the inevitable end of this movement. He left Chapel Hill in the fall of '67 to make his home in Raleigh, where he was Supreme Court Reporter. This was the first move away from Chapel Hill, of Mrs. Spencer's immediate family.

Samuel Phillips became identified with the Reconstruction wing of politics, although there was no real division, at that time. Everything was in solution, and the old Whigs were a good deal in the ascendancy as regards influence. Somewhere, Mrs. Spencer says that "in order to be useful in politics a man should be a little one-sided, a little fanatical, perhaps even a bit cranky."

Samuel Phillips was none of these things. He had a most kindly disposition, almost perfect as regards benevolence. He always made allowances. He did not hate people, and his turn of thought was philosophic. As a lawyer he was very able, one of the best in his generation. His detachment from the intense partisanship of the time made him dislike with his whole heart the storm and stress of the war times in which he was living. He had been a convinced member of Holden's "Peace Party" which was opposed to the Civil War's being prolonged. He was a member of that first Reconstruction Convention which did not succeed in reconstructing anything. Then he slipped naturally into the eddying whirl of that period of North Carolina politics, which is indescribable, and it carried him into the Republican party. Mr. Phillips loathed this fury and exacerbation, but he stuck to his convictions, called out his passive resistance, and ignored the slights which his diverse course brought him and his family; slights which could not help having power to wound him. But we are going ahead of the narrative, to tell what the meaning was to Mrs. Spencer of her brother's removal, although differences never made the least dissension between them. Mrs. Spencer seems to have been busy in helping her sister-in-law to settle in Raleigh. When the college opened with but fifty students, in this autumn of 1867, all the faculty resigned, and their resignations were accepted to take effect after the next Commencement.

Her journal takes up the tale again:

January 1, 1868—I came home with Brother Sam, the first time I was ever separated from June. I am to move from the old house into Brother Sam's. Mr. Anderson of Nash-

ville occupies a room upstairs. I am to have students as boarders. Ma refuses to come with us.

January 3, 1868.

DEAR FANNY [Mrs. Samuel Phillips]:

Sam will tell you the story of my journey up, a doleful New Year's day it was. June was fast asleep when we came, and as it was ten o'clock at night, and they had given us up, I did not wake her, but after we had had supper I got in bed; I put my arms around her and began to whisper to her. She turned over in a flash, and was hugging me and kissing me as if she never meant to leave off. . . .

As usual your husband is thronged with *visitors* so that no one else has had a chance to speak to him, and I dare say, all of them want money. Miss Sally Williams waylaid him at Durham, and I saw Mrs. Newton's son in chase of him this morning. *Ma Patsey* came in from her country residence. She wants him to give her ten dollars too. I divided your old crockery between her and Aunt Dilsey. I have engaged Sarah to clean up the house tomorrow. I see so much to do, and I cannot see my way clear through it. I feel dreadfully depressed.

January 13, 1868—June and I slept over here at Brother Sam's for the first time, having accomplished the moving pretty well.

January 23, 1868.

DEAR FANNY:

Here I sit in your sitting room, looking out of your windows at your prospects. To none of which I feel the least right. There is something very saddening to me in a family's moving voluntarily away from a place which we may reasonably suppose they once meant to inhabit with their children and grandchildren! For my part I feel as if I had pitched my tent here for a very brief period, having dimmed my camp-fire over there in the old house with many tears. . . .

I get up now at daylight, make my own fire, then dress, wake June, etc. At breakfast bell, 7:30, I have everything ready. Seven great young men walk down and are very polite

in their morning salutations to Mrs. Spencer, who gracefully returns them from behind the tea tray. Then I ask a blessing and the meal goes on prosperously. I come up to my room about nine, and attend to June's lessons. I can sew a little. At 12:30 I am in the dining room again till two o'clock. Arrange the table for supper, before I leave it. Now I have two hours clear, supper at five as before. The evenings are what June and I look forward to. My little stand drawn up before the fire, the hearth swept, the shades drawn.

February 22, 1868—Uncle Ben and Aunt Dilsey have left us. Dear old soul! I trust she and I will live together again. I told her I looked upon it as only temporary. Miss Sally Williams and Miss Matilda left last Saturday, in the wagon which came to take away their things.

Professor Kerr arrived on Monday night, and came here, and I was glad to see him. He staid in the "office" a few nights. The boys are delighted with his teaching.

The spring elections have resulted in the election of Holden for Governor. A terribly bitter thing for all the respectable people of this state, but it is done!

Governor Swain talks hopefully about it, but the public press augurs great and sweeping changes; among other things that the University will be seized upon by the new government. In that case the coming Commencement will be the last one of the Old Régime. Governor Swain does not like to hear such suggestions.

By June 7th, 1868, Mrs. Spencer had dismissed the young gentlemen who were her boarders for this past session. Of these young men she made warm friends in every instance. Many of them were well known and useful in after life. Two of them were of that family of cattle kings of the Southwest whose name has become an American term in the dictionary, meaning an unbranded, or wild steer: George and Will Maverick. Another was Colonel Burgwyn, well known in North Carolina for years, and all these she wrote to, at inter-

vals, and never lost sight of them. She describes the leave taking, how she and they all cried at parting, and one of them took her hand and kissed it.

Her diary does not record much but says, "Commencement of 1868 is over, the last they say." The trustees had decided to keep the institution open as long as the new government would allow it. Accordingly Governor Swain advertised the new session for the fall, and the faculty, who had resigned, were begged to wait a little before they finally arranged to leave the place. Governor Holden, who had been elected between the time of the resignations of the faculty and the meeting of the trustees at Commencement, announced that a new order of things was to begin immediately, that the new Constitution provided for a new board of trustees. The faculty had resigned, and they might stay resigned. To emphasize this announcement, he sent a guard of negro soldiers to take possession of the University campus and buildings. Poor Governor Swain, being thus ejected from his beloved work, tried to be cheerful about it, tried to talk as if he were glad to have the leisure in which to write that *History of North Carolina* which he had talked about for so many years. But he drooped during the summer, and showed his age for the first time. He was about to go to his old home in the mountains of western North Carolina, but he put this trip off from week to week.

August, 1868—On the 11th of August he had his famous Sherman horse hitched to his buggy, and rode a few miles into the country on business. Professor Fetter was with him. Within a few miles of the village, on their return, the unruly horse bolted with them, and both were thrown out. Professor

Fetter was but a little hurt, but Governor Swain was so bruised he had to be carried home upon a stretcher. But coming home he chatted with his bearers, and no one realized that this was his last appearance on the streets and walks that he loved for thirty-three years. For more than two weeks he lay quietly in his home, receiving visitors, and discussing public affairs pretty much as he had always done. He had been terribly bruised and shaken, but he was going to get over it, surely. On the morning of August 27 he sat up to have his bed made, and suddenly he fainted and could not be revived. He passed gently, without a sigh, within a very few minutes. That was a morning to be remembered in Chapel Hill. Governor Swain's death meant the disintegration of society here and the dispersion of its members with a rapidity and in a degree quite unexampled in the history of any other village in this State. Thirty families went almost immediately. California, Tennessee, Ohio, New York, Texas, and many places in North Carolina received the removing folk.

The old faculty, the few that were left, met together, and prayed solemnly in company, shook hands, and bade each other God speed.

In 1857 Dr. Mitchell had fallen over a precipice, in one of his mountain rambles, and had been drowned in a deep pool at the foot, where a little stream had poured over into a hollow with over-hanging sides. Happily he had missed all the heartbreak and loss of the Civil War. Dr. James Phillips died as we have heard, suddenly, at his post in the College Chapel. Now it was Governor Swain, the last of the three, mercifully taken away before he should see the old order change in the place where he had wrought so happily.

Mrs. Spencer herself is writing to her brother Sam in Raleigh, and talking of returning to Alabama if

she failed to get some work to do in her home state. She talks of this offer and that. It is old Mrs. Phillips, who does not wish to be removed from her old home, who delays these plans. The news is that the University is to "be allowed to remain closed for a year at least, by the powers that be." "Won't the dog-fennel take the streets in that case?" The friends who still lingered were leaving, leaving day by day.

Charles Phillips had no difficulty in finding a professorship, for he was well known and appreciated as a teacher of mathematics. Several colleges were begging for his services. He himself had always hankered after a pastoral charge, loving the pulpit more than he did the professor's chair, but at last he decided to teach at Davidson College, the Presbyterian institution of North Carolina. The defeat of the University was the opportunity of the several denominational colleges, and their endowments had not been so disastrously drained by the war.

Dr. Charles Phillips was now a man in the prime of life and vigor. He was a man of energy and eagerness. He loved work, and filled his days to overflowing. Now he also must leave the old home where they had all lived so long within a stone's throw of each other. Mrs. Spencer says:

I can hardly express to anyone the sense of loss and desolation which has seized upon me since Charles and Laura left—they were the last. Poor Charles went through all his packing and parting with apparent equanimity, but when he said farewell to us he broke completely down. He got into the hack, sobbing like a child. There was a great crowd of negroes around the gate, his Sunday-school scholars whom he had taught so long, who wept with him. Poor Ma was quite over-

come. As the hack drove off she turned to me and thanked God, crying aloud, that she had one child left.

But I am thankful that after all this waiting and uncertainty Brother Charles has so congenial and comfortable a situation.

There is an entry in her journal of 1901, which belongs to this time, as a reference to these scenes after many years:

I wish seriously to take myself to task for a certain weakness of mind that seems to overtake me. June got out of some corner the other day a brass candlestick which was once Mrs. Fetter's, one of a pair she possessed and valued. When he with his three orphan girls, alas, and alas! left Chapel Hill to go to their new home, he crossed the street from his house to mine, at midnight, January 27, 1869, bringing me the key of his house, now empty, and having this candlestick with an inch or two of the candle burning in it. He put it down on a table; "this is the last." In half an hour they all drove off to Durham. I kept the candlestick, though I have never looked at it without pain all these thirty-two years. Now June has rubbed it up, and put in a *sperm* candle, one of half a dozen which Mrs. Hubbard gave me when she had to leave Chapel Hill three years afterwards. There it sits now, the only relic I have of those old friends and neighbors, those friendly cordial people. . . .

What I arraign myself for, is that such poignant melancholy seizes me when I recall them. Why should I feel so sad? I have other dead friends whose memory is not distressing nor depressing. It troubles me that there should be such pain in my thoughts of these neighbors who were my most familiar friends for years, our friendship never once interrupted. I am simply broken-hearted when I recall these friends so linked together, "the eyes that shone, now dimmed and gone." The melancholy that comes of such consideration is largely constitutional, I imagine. It is an inheritance no doubt from my English blood.

Professor Shaler's book, last published, *The Individual*, says it is best to forget, to leave all such memories of people and things behind, "Oblivion being the inevitable lot of all human affairs, even the greatest." How true! Old people must be forgiven this weakness among others, I think. It is inherent, belongs to us all. The disposition, however, should be guarded against. The things that are behind should be *forgotten* and buried.

"O Thou first and with the last,
Annul our ruined past."

XII

AFTER THE DISPERSION

BY THE NEW State Constitution of 1868 the election of trustees of the University was given to the State Board of Education, acting as the Executive Committee of the trustees. They were to appoint one trustee from each county in the state. Of both boards, the smaller and the larger, the Governor was *ex officio* chairman, and having appointed the Board of Education, was himself the source of power in both.

William W. Holden has long been the center and focus of hatred and vituperation which grew most bitter about this time in North Carolina. He has been personally charged with every wrong which his party found means to commit, whether in any degree responsible or not.

The policy of President Andrew Johnson towards reconstruction was probably a practical one for the South, but his Congress as a body had determined to give the vote to the freed negroes. They did this over his veto, in 1867. This act became the chief reason and explanation of these stormy times, of these years of dissension,—Union League—Ku Klux—plunder of the state treasury—impeachment of Governor Holden. These unpleasantnesses form the background of this portion of our narrative.

But Holden himself is one of those strangely organized characters who could only be analyzed, were he of enough importance, by such psychologists as are today at work explaining sundry misconceived historic characters. Born a poor boy of humble family in Hillsborough, North

Carolina, he raised himself in the world wholly by his own exertions. Mentally he was well equipped, but the fierce aristocratic pride of southern society had been hard for him to surmount in his progress. He himself tells a story of his being given food from the table of one of the most prominent men of Hillsborough, and of declaring in after life that he resolved then and there to become master of those who had patronized him that day. Naturally of a literary bent, self educated, he had acquired an easy flow of language, was witty and satirical, and was for many years an able editor. Holden was not a college man. He shows his deprecation of this in once telling Governor Swain, "I am, sir, like yourself, not a *graduate* of the University." But Governor Swain had looked at college from the inside, while Holden had attended only the University of Hard Knocks.

Mrs. Spencer seems to have held a bad opinion of Holden long before he became Governor. At first he was a Whig, and Governor Swain and the Phillips family, with almost all the faculty at Chapel Hill, were Whigs. Holden edited a very influential newspaper at Raleigh, when suddenly he turned Democrat, making all Whigs his natural enemies. By his great influence he was successful in electing the first Democratic governor in 1850, and the Whigs did not again seize the reins of government. As a Democrat, Holden became a most rabid sectionalist. Vance says of him, "Holden was for ten years the great leader and teacher of secession." His editorials fairly crackle with vituperative epithets for years before the Civil War. In 1856, one of the newer professors at Chapel Hill, Benjamin S. Hedrick, was found to hold "Free Soil" opinions. Holden's paper blazed away at the University for harboring sedition,

and at the man himself, until he was provoked to reply in print. After that his students would not tolerate him, and he was forced to resign, and with him a brilliant young Frenchman who took his part.¹ These things Mrs. Spencer knew perfectly well, moreover she felt warm friendship for Professor Hedrick, and in later years never failed to visit him in Washington City. It was with sorrow and misgiving that the old Whigs found themselves outside the Union in 1861. Holden also at the same time felt misgivings as to whither he had drifted. To stop himself, he favored the nomination of Douglas for President. This should class him as a Union Democrat. In 1862 he supported Vance for governor. The next year, 1863, Holden was advocating peace. He repudiated Vance because he was for fighting the thing through, regardless. The Civil War being over, Holden used his record as an early advocate of peace, with Andrew Johnson the President, to get himself appointed Provisional Governor. When Johnson's plans for reconstruction were superseded and he was impeached, Holden used all speed to jump aboard the new bandwagon and begin to urge on the impeachment. We have already seen how he was incensed by being left off the list at the Commencement of 1867, when Andrew Johnson was present.

In difficult circumstances few men are able to wield great power for long without positively committing crime. Raised to the saddle upon his election in 1868, it would have been almost superhuman in Holden to refuse to take opportunity to get even. His election was won

¹ With Hedrick was associated M. Henri Harrisse, a most scholarly young Frenchman. He dissented from the remaining faculty regarding the acceptance of Hedrick's resignation. On this account he was insulted by his students. He therefore resigned in December, 1856. Returning to France he there became a well known historian of the great Napoleon.

by means of the recently enfranchised negroes, managed by the so-called "Carpet-baggers" and "Scalawags." White conservatives were discouraged and kept away from the polls in every practicable way. This injustice, added to the ruinous change and post-war confusion of all society, made a regular hell-broth of North Carolina politics on both sides, the poisons of which have never been entirely eliminated to this day. The politics of that time fell into sinister confusion.

Holden was a sensitive man, as such experience as his would be likely to make him; he was proud as such a man would have to be, and susceptible to flattery as almost any man is likely to be. He needed a stiffness in his convictions which he never had. His ever changing opportunism shows forth this failing. But to finish this attempted portrait, the high lights must be added. Holden was of most excellent character as a family man, as a neighbor, and as an employer. Afterwards, when misfortune came upon him, he was both dignified and patient.

It does not seem strange that Holden was willing just now to "sweep out the rickety old concern"—"to smoke out the old rookery," as he termed it; or that he should be quite indifferent to the feelings of an old University President and his remnant of faculty. He appointed his new trustees forthwith, and sent a company of negro soldiers to close the University, *sine die*. Mrs. Spencer was thinking of Holden when she wrote in her diary:

I know nothing more bitter than the pride of peasants. Burns was rude, harsh in his judgments, insufferable in his conceit and the pride of his humility. Neither he nor Carlyle ever got rid of their early belongings. Neither were ever quite at ease among their betters in these respects. Yet put a pen in the hand of either, and he rose on eagle's wing.

It is remarkable how readily the older folk would talk about the "War" and its disasters, but seldom referred to reconstruction times. The latter they wished doubtless to forget, if it were possible. Governor Swain's death was but another blow to an institution and a structure of society already tottering to their fall. Holden might be right in putting a period to a finished essay; but under the influence of one John Pool he did not stop there, as might have been justified to him. He began and encouraged an experiment which furnished his enemies with all the ammunition against him which they had lacked before, an experiment for which he was fully responsible, in whatever other matters he may be found innocent.

He decided that the University should be reopened at New Year, 1869, and the man whom the Holden government put in charge as president was the Reverend Solomon Pool. This man was a graduate of the class of 1853, and a brother of John Pool. He had been until a short time previous a tutor in mathematics at the University, and was no doubt well known to Mrs. Spencer, as having been one of her husband's classmates, and among her father's pupils, and later a tutor in his department. He had some ability, and was not without ideas. He was a Methodist preacher, although not occupying a pulpit; a smallish, curly-haired man with pompous ways. An old letter from Dr. Mitchell to his wife recounts the history of these brothers, and lays it to their peculiar upbringing, and to the fact that they had to be legitimized in late boyhood, that they showed a peculiar furtiveness of action. Of course this circumstance was their misfortune, and in no wise their fault, but it may account for some of the imperviousness to public disesteem which the

new President of the University found it possible to maintain. Mrs. Spencer says of him:

The college-mates and colleagues of Mr. Pool are not few nor unknown. We have never seen nor heard of one who says he is or ever has been fit to be president of the University of North Carolina. Dr. Phillips said of him, "Mr. Pool has not grown one inch since he graduated. He has been too lazy." Drop Mr. Pool into the boots of Dr. Caldwell, or of Governor Swain, he may peep over the tops, but he can only stumble about in them. The University is in the hands of men who will not, cannot do what they promise to do. They are disapproved by all but a very few of their own party, and can command no patronage even from their political friends.

The faculty placed in charge by Governor Holden consisted of: Reverend Solomon Pool, President, and Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy; Fisk P. Brewer, Professor of Greek; David S. Patrick, Professor of Latin; James A. Martling, Professor of English; Alexander McIver, Professor of Mathematics. Two of the new professors, Martling, and Patrick, do not seem to be indicated or distinguished in any notable fashion. Professor Brewer was a well educated man, a Greek scholar from Massachusetts, but such a vehement negrophile that he was out of place anywhere in the South. It was a sort of mania with the man. Mrs. Spencer says of him: "Professor Brewer may have been a tutor in one Northern College, or a Professor in another. I do not know anything about him save his predilection for teaching negroes."

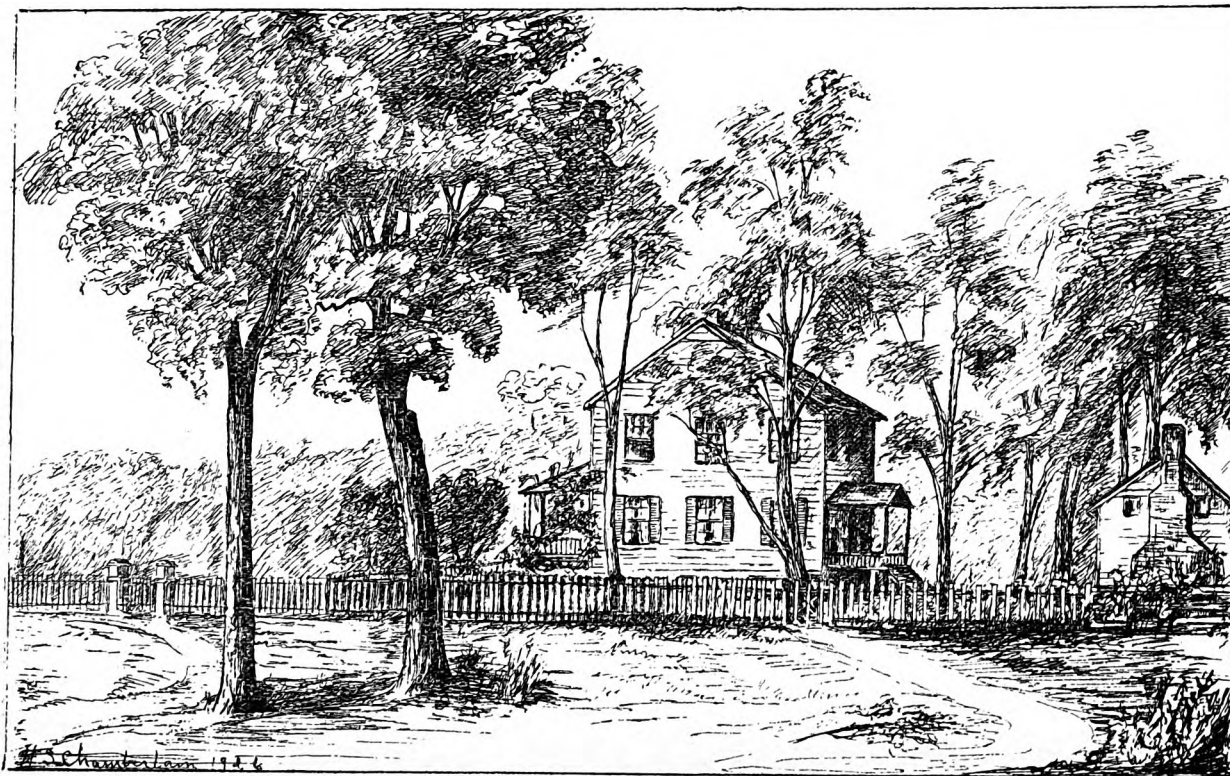
He was, however, a sort of stormy petrel, leaving North Carolina for South Carolina, where he was engaged in a similar enterprise in the reconstructed University of that state. It has been said that he was a near relative of Justice Brewer of the Supreme Court of the

United States. The fifth of these new men was Professor Alexander McIver from Davidson College, whence he had been practically driven out by ostracism, because he persisted in voting for General Grant for President of the United States when such a course meant all that was difficult, so unbelievably high did political hatred run everywhere. Professor McIver had been appointed to Chapel Hill about the same time that Mrs. Spencer's brother, Dr. Charles Phillips, was engaged to replace him at Davidson, both men teaching mathematics, and seemingly exchanging residences.

In January, 1869, Governor Vance writes Mrs. Spencer from Charlotte:

Since I have seen your pleasant and welcome handwriting, many serious events and sad gaps have occurred, and been opened in the ranks of those dear to us. Since our last communication, I have thought often of writing to you to assure you of what I suppose you have never doubted, my continued friendship and my kindest sympathy. I hear that you are to go to Alabama, and I felt that I could not let you go without expressing my regret. I am in hopes it may not be true, though there is little to detain anyone here save the associations connected with better days . . . yet somehow I want you, and all those who have labored to serve the dear old state, to feel toward North Carolina as I do—that we should not desert her in the day of her humiliation. I love her the more because of her sorrows and degradation. I should be greatly pleased to hear that the way has been opened for you to remain here and abet us in watching for the better day whose dawning we do not doubt. . . .

Oh, how I sorrow for Chapel Hill! How worse than desolate it must look under the oaks! I don't know how you can live on there, thinking always of the past. How I miss my dear friend, Governor Swain! Alas, alas, our pleasant village is broken up and destroyed indeed!



THE MITCHELL HOUSE

A few weeks later Mrs. Spencer visited Mr. Vance at Charlotte, and it was while there that she arranged to supply a column each week for the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, the paper of that denomination published there. This gave her the desired opportunity to find some employment which she could perform at Chapel Hill, and thus remain with her mother and make her own living at the same time. Four hundred dollars a year was what she was promised for this literary work. Col. W. H. S. Burgwyn is also writing about this time, to entreat her to remain in Chapel Hill:

If you will only remain in Chapel Hill it will be one more link to connect our thoughts with the past. You may see the old faculty yet come back to reoccupy their homes, and add dignity and reputation to the institution. Something may turn up, the trustees may inaugurate a better system, another legislature may appropriate the necessary funds, the loved and venerated spot may become once more a flourishing, happy, and not a deserted village.

Mrs. Swain's remark that it is an indictable offense to cut down those old trees, is not a foolish one. I wish that it was an indictable offense.

Mrs. Spencer, I do not believe I shall ever become less fond of Chapel Hill, or feel less indebted to the place and its inhabitants. I may possibly be on hand in North Carolina when the reorganization takes place.

And so Mrs. Spencer resolved to stand by, in Chapel Hill, whatever came about. Here is a letter to Mrs. Swain, then living in Raleigh:

CHAPEL HILL, March 6, 1869.

DEAR MRS. SWAIN:

I have been intending to write to you ever since I came home, but put it off until the University should reopen, and I might have something to write about; for I am sure you will

always take a deep interest in the fortunes of this place and this institution.

As for poor Chapel Hill, the University opened on the 3rd [of January]. No students have appeared or can be detected with the aid of a magnifying glass. I am divided between exultation that it is so, and sorrow for the poor village, so utterly dependent on the college for its living.

Last Monday I had a long visit from Professor McIver. You know that he and Pool were both classmates of Mr. Spencer. With every disposition in the world to snub Mr. McIver, I could not do it. He was so friendly, and appeared so well, and said so much that was gratifying to me about Mr. Spencer, about my father, and about Governor Swain and other members of the old faculty. He talked like a good man as well as a sensible one. He would have been much the best choice for president among those here. He lives in Dr. Mitchell's old home. Mrs. McIver gets up at daylight, and cooks her own breakfast. She will have no servant except a little girl.

The Patricks live in *your* house. I asked "Aunt Dicey Lane" what sort of looking people they were. She said, "As common looking white-folks as I ever saw." Mrs. P. has her bed room in the Governor's sitting-room. They have three servants, and three little children. Brewer lives in the "Retreat." His family have not arrived, nor is anything known of them as yet. Mrs. Baudry tells me that she hears that Mrs. *Pool* has laid great plans for society, and figuring therein. That Chapel Hill people always dropped her, and now she means to drop them.

I am thankful to stay at home, and not be obliged to go out at all. Miss Nancy Hilliard came to see me the other day. She says this is the most *stump-tail* faculty she ever saw. She is greatly depressed to know what to do for a living. People in town cannot even get money to pay their town taxes. The new commissioners have laid a tax of fifty cents on the hundred dollars. Ann Watson says she cannot raise the money. . . .

I was at the Governor's resting place the day before the Patricks moved in. It was covered with fresh wreaths and

bouquets of spring flowers. He is not forgotten. I hear from the Fetters regularly. Their school only numbers thirty-two. Julian Carr was here last week. He says Mr. Fetter looks lost. Margaret and Eliza write cheerfully. Their mother is contented and happy in Oxford. They hear from California where Mary and her family do all their own work, work *hard*, and are cheerful. If I can do anything here for you, my dear Mrs. Swain, it would give me great pleasure to do it.

Yours faithfully,

C. P. S.

XIII

MRS. SPENCER'S FIGHT FOR THE UNIVERSITY

IN THE SPRING, after the worst had come to the place and the people she loved, and after she had decided finally to remain in Chapel Hill, Mrs. Spencer thought of something that she might do to bring about a restoration of the old institution and its usefulness.

Vance writes her to "hold things in a sort of solution, and wait for the event. Don't hurry. They who can play the waiting game are winners in the end." But Mrs. Spencer was one who was moved by the instant need of things. She had often written articles for the state papers. She had written her little book, and she was now turning out her weekly column for the *Presbyterian*. So she offered her services to Josiah Turner, editor of the *Sentinel*, the opposition paper at Raleigh, to write a series of articles in vindication of the "Old Régime" as she called it. As early as April, 1869, he announces, "A friend has promised us, and will soon commence, a series of sketches concerning the State University. Our readers may expect something good, for the pen is competent to the task." The first of these *Pen and Ink Sketches of the University* appeared on April 26, and the last the following July 6th. With her personal, intimate knowledge of her subject and her lively way of setting it forth, this is a most interesting series today, interesting as history, unmarred by bitterness, vital and positive, without recrimination. These papers were copied by other journals all over the South,

wherever alumni of the University became interested, and they built up a body of public opinion.

Mrs. Spencer's niece tells of this spring and summer, how two little bare-foot girls, her daughter and this niece, would run out early in those dewy mornings to await the mail-wagon that went to and from Durham, as it came outside town. One would have the letter for the *Presbyterian*, while the other mailed the packet for the *Sentinel*. When the vehicle rattled in sight, the driver would take from their hands what Mrs. Spencer did not want inspected at the tiny local post-office. Turner writes Mrs. Spencer, however, that he could not preserve her secrecy. His wife had maintained from the first that Mrs. Spencer wrote the pieces, and now everyone else was saying that no one else was capable of doing it.

Writing to Mrs. Charles Phillips, at Davidson, Mrs. Spencer gives accounts of this time. She and her mother had moved back along the same village street, and were occupying the house her brother Charles had just vacated.

CHAPEL HILL, April 13, 1869.

DEAR LAURA :

Yours of last Friday to hand today. I had one of the same date from Mr. Hepburn, [a former professor] and one from Dr. Hubbard [also an exile] both saying much the same things of Chapel Hill; only Mr. Hepburn thinks the present régime cannot last, Dr. Hubbard fears it will.

I had a visit from Mr. Thomas Argo¹ [son-in-law of Dr. Hubbard] last Sunday evening. He had arrived Saturday night, and wanted me to read the manuscript of his speech delivered Friday against the \$12,000 appropriation bill for the University. He sent it to the *Sentinel* today. It is very temperate, I like it for that. The Radicals in town are furious

¹ Mr. Argo was later an attorney-at-law, of Raleigh, N. C.

about the failure of the bill. Mr. ——— says "It don't make no difference, Mr. Pool will hold on for twelve years, and he is a better qualified President than Governor Swain ever dared to be!"

Pool was in the lobby when Argo spoke. I hope he feels repaid. I took the children this afternoon and went to Purefoy's Mill. The creek was very full, no fishing done . . . Coming back we got over a break in the college wall, and walked up the grove back of the Old South. There was Will Barham,² burning leaves. He touched his hat and asked me if I could recommend him to some place where he could get work and pay. He had got little or nothing for seven months past work. . . .

Behind the Kimberly lot, (I *won't* say, *Brewer* lot) we met a whole raft of little *scalawags*, McIvers, Patricks, Brewers and Martlings. The Martling and Brewer children mince their words dreadfully. The others are plain enough. I went to call on Mrs. Patrick last week. Singular that all four of these new professors are Presbyterians, or at least count that way. . . . Oh I forgot to tell you that every effort was made last week to get that bill passed. Pool wanted \$25,000, and the offer made to support a certain number of young men here, *board, clothe, and educate*. Pool said he was resolved the college should succeed. Let the State make this noble offer, and it would be done. "Y.Y." and "H.H." [in the *Sentinel*] are very near kin. No one suspects *me*, I believe. Miss Ann Watson has been in Raleigh . . . Saw Mrs. Swain and heard her lamentations over the oaks Pool cut down. Mrs. Swain said she would not have taken \$2,000 for that large oak.

Don't you suppose your Indian Garden in the woods may be a relic of some Indian village girls who may have planted those wild flower roots? I should like to fancy it. I wonder if Indians did stop to admire a wild flower. Were there any anemones, tiarellas, iris, phlox, trilliums, yellow jasmine, laurel, in North Carolina woods four hundred and fifty years ago? These hills and woods are beginning to look very lovely now. White dogwood, and pink Judas tree, and the tender and varied

² Will Barham was a college servant, former janitor to Dr. Mitchell.

tints of green, and distant wheat fields. All is not gone from dear Chapel Hill. "The glory of the grass, and splendor of the flower"—we still have these.

I think Ma enjoys her home here. She says it is such a comfortable place, and the yard is so pretty. She is more genial than I have seen her for a long time. She much prefers this to Sam's lot. You know the purchaser filled all that yard with shrubbery, evergreens, etc., and every one has turned up the whites of the eyes, and is dead as Julius Caesar.

I hear the McIvers are depressed and low, but Pool says the College shall go on. Purefoy's son is the only one of the day scholars who will pay. . . .

I mean by the history of the University a series of short spicy numbers giving a popular account of its rise and progress, officering, managements, presidents, professors, etc., with, of course, poisoned arrows for the present incomparable incapables.

Barham, Ashe, and Wilse Swain, the College servants, say they have had "nary cent" as yet. I won't tell you what has become of all your nice barrels with wooden covers. It would vex you too much to know that the McIvers got them all, owing to a stupidity of Snipes!

Goodbye!

April 23, 1869.

DEAR MRS. SWAIN:

I have not written to you in a long time, because I have not *had the heart*. Everything is so sad around Chapel Hill, and we all are in such a state of constant exasperation and gloom, that I thought I had better not inflict any of it on you.

Miss Ann Watson told me of her visit to you, and I know she told you all of Chapel Hill gossip there was to be told.

Everything is looking very beautiful now, you know how beautiful. The oaks that remain in the old yards are putting out their leaves as if unmindful of their old friends who have been cut down. I cannot tell you, Mrs. Swain, how I felt as those great trees went crashing down, trees which had sheltered the good and the great who made Chapel Hill what it was. . . .

What astonishes me about the tree cutting is its *impudence*, as if they felt themselves owners, and seated for life. Last week Mr. John Carr had a talk with Pool, and told him he ought to resign, for the sake of the village, if for no other. Pool said he would not for \$50,000. Mr. Carr replied that he would not hold on under such circumstances for \$50,000. Pool said if students did not come in by *June* he would have the University *suspended* for four or five years. They have received money from somewhere. Mr. Argo tells me without doubt Ashley is tampering with the Common School Fund. I don't care how much money they get, so that they do not get any students. That is the main point, and must starve them out at last.

McIver, the decent one among them, tells me he is so depressed and mortified he can scarcely hold his head up—talks of leaving. Our Sunday School Superintendent has got Mrs. Brewer as one of the teachers. I did not like it, but said nothing, but when last Sunday in came Professor Brewer, affable, distributing papers, I said if he ever came there in any official capacity, I would withdraw. *I cannot help it!*

Brother Charles writes that the more he sees of other places and people, the more he thinks of Chapel Hill and its old ways. It was an unique place.

Every time anything appears in the *Sentinel* about Chapel Hill, the Radicals say, "Mrs. Spencer wrote that." I do not write everything that appears, but I confess to you, that it did me a *heap* of good to write "Hopeful" and sing King Sollie's praises.

April 26, 1869.

DEAR CHARLES [Phillips]:

There are one or two points I wish you would assist me with in writing about the University. Tell me what was the *method* of teaching in Chapel Hill? Was it in any important respect different from that of other universities in this country? Was it different under Dr. Caldwell from what it afterwards became under the Governor? Can you give me two or three well digested paragraphs on this subject? Were you an advocate for the voluntary system of the University of Vir-

ginia? I know Pa was not. What were the weaknesses of our general management?

It is six o'clock in the morning, as I write. June and Nora are sound asleep. I look *out o' winder* and see Simon come *slooming* along.

We were quite excited over a gang of robbers which have made their appearance round town these moonlight nights. Miss Nancy Hilliard and Mrs. Carr were here Saturday afternoon, full of it. I was quite relieved to have another topic than that of Pool and Co. I hear that \$8,000 has been sent up, begged, it was said, from some friend of the University. Others shake their heads, and whisper, "Common School Fund." Of this \$8,000 it is proposed to take \$500 for expenses of Commencement; ball, etc. I cannot believe they are so foolish. Pool told Carr that if no whites would come here, he would have negro students. I think Pool must say such things just to exasperate. Can you conceive of any amount of kicking too severe for such a man?

Your field I planted with corn, and Friday it was up, four inches high. Friday night, Ma's pigs broke in and ploughed the field all up again, nicely. To think of Ma's keeping those animals! She feeds them all over everywhere, over the front fence out in the street, and that makes them so turbulent. They are all the time rooting and grunting round the fences. Sam says I ought to have them removed. It is mighty provoking.

But what magnificent nights! I walk the porch alone, till late. How very beautiful the moonlight streaming through the young foliage of your elms and ash-trees. So still,—so peaceful. Everything quiet but this raging heart! Let me hear from you by return mail.

May 26, 1869.

DEAR LAURA:

They say a Commencement is to be gotten up, out of what materials does not appear. The grounds have been put in beautiful order. I never saw it look nicer. There are only three students, two Pools and a Guthrie. The rest are preps. McIver has gone to work reading law. He proposed to Mr. Argo last week they should read together. . . .

At the railroad meeting Saturday, McIver voted against Pool on every measure. . . .

In another letter to Mrs. Charles Phillips, three weeks later :

I am as sorry for Mr. McIver as I can be. He is an honest, clever, and good man, who needs to be taken hold of by the right handle. He won't bend to anybody, nor be *druv*, but he can be influenced along. I must say, I like and respect him. He has been horribly disappointed here. What did you think of my last *Pen and Ink*? Mr. McIver says, "Every word of it is good."

CHAPEL HILL, June 14, 1869.

DEAR LAURA :

It is Monday morning, the wind is blowing fair and free. I went out just now for a turn in the garden. There were light showers last night. The larkspur, white jasmine and hollyhocks were in their glory, and the cabbages on a broad grin. I am sitting at your especial window. The mimosa is in bloom. . . .

Well, we have had our Commencement, and are resting from its pleasing pains and fatigues. There never was such a grand, (and to us and our side, delightful) fizzle as Commencement has been.

For two or three weeks the faculty have talked of nothing but the *Inauguration*. Holden and Grant were both coming. They industriously circulated through the country that there would be a free supper Commencement night. Mrs. Pool said herself she would prepare supper for a hundred people. Pool ordered hacks to be in waiting at the train in Durham for forty people. *Nobody* came. Thursday ten trustees, and seven others arrived. But the *Sentinel* will tell you all that. I do not remember a word I wrote to that, I wrote in such haste, and with such vexatious interruptions. I am afraid it is spiteful. The letter to the *Wilmington Journal* is better. However, we all felt like rejoicing a little.

Rodman⁸ was very emphatic with the reminder that these men were here provisionally. Holden said in his speech that the people should be taxed to support the University even if they would not support it, and Rodman said in the afternoon that it could not be done.

McIver told me, this Saturday morning, that Pool says that Rodman did not use the word provisional, and encourages himself to hold on. McIver said he could not bear to hear them talk. He is satisfied the game is up, here. I told him if he had heard all that Professor Kerr had said, he would be even more certain. Kerr clapped his hands together and exulted when he heard of Rodman's saying "Provisional and temporary." Kerr laughed so at the idea of Installation, saying there had been no idea of such a thing except at Chapel Hill. Pool's speech, prepared for his inaugural, was all I have said of it in the papers. McIver said it was "sophomoric, hifalutin, and commonplace." Holden went up and congratulated him. Rodman said not a word.

By the way, Judge Rodman sent me a very polite message, wished to call, but had so few hours here he could not do so. He told Mr. McIver the *Sketches* were beautifully written and had more good clear sense than anything he had read in many a day. Aha! Also Professor Kerr said they had done immense good, were greatly sought after, and read, and were delightful. I have had several letters to that effect from old students. One says at the close, "Tell your brother he knows not the good he has done, by his *Sketches* of the University." I will hereby divide the credit between Charles and Sam! It was so well done of Chapel Hill people to stand aloof, and let the world see they would not sanction this crew. Rodman alluded to the absence of the townsfolk as another proof of the prostration of the University. Miss Ann Watson spent Commencement day with us, and said, "Some of 'em asked me if I would not go to the Chapel, and I said, "If I did, I'd rise right up in my place and say, this is no Commencement, and that is no Faculty."

⁸ William B. Rodman, Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina from 1868, and later.

Rev. Mr. Jenkins, who used to be Methodist minister here, is here on a visit to his old flock. He and his wife refused to go to the Chapel. He said, "Pool need not expect Methodists to support him, they were too much ashamed of such a representation." Englehardt of the *Wilmington Journal* has opened a forty-gun battery on the University. Last week it was "Infested by pismires" this week it is "presided over by nincompoops." Mrs. Carr said she met Mr. Woods [a half brother of Holden's] on the street, Commencement day, and said "Mr. Woods this looks like our Commencement, now don't it?" He said, "Oh, it's all those horrid pieces in the papers that has done it. The *Wilmington Journal* is out today with a most horrid piece, and I expect Mrs. Spencer is swallowing it down like hot cakes, this minute."

You all saw the *Appeal* in the *Sentinel*, of course. Well, it hurt them more than anything that has appeared. Touch a man's pocket and you touch a vital point. Pool and his subs were *furious*. Professor Kerr said it had a good effect abroad. McIver said it was powerful, and moreover only one person in the state could have written it, and that was Dr. Hubbard. I replied that I could swear that Dr. Hubbard never saw it until it was in print. McIver said I must be mistaken.

Pool and Mason got up a rejoinder, for the *Standard*—attacking Dr. Hubbard, and Argo, and the old faculty and the old times, and *me*. They said the old faculty plundered the college, that I and my brothers, its beneficiaries and educated at its expense, were now showing ingratitude. Dr. Mitchell chief plunderer, Dr. Hubbard waiting around in hopes of getting back, etc., etc.

Soon after Dr. Hubbard came, McIver asked his advice about resigning. The Dr. advised him to hold on for the present. Brewer is going off to Cornell and Yale and Harvard to get up "plans and ideas." I asked McIver how he was to put them in practice. Said he didn't know. I said all of them ought to go together, and I would write their travels for them when they returned, and call it, "Travels of a Faculty in search of a College." McIver laughed as loud as anybody.

Let me not forget to tell you that Mason went up on the stage at Commencement and sat down among the trustees. Town folks are so mad about it. And it is a fact that Patrick burst open the door of the Phi Society to get the velvet rugs, and a piece of carpeting. And it is a fact that furniture was taken out of the halls for the faculty parlors. They had taken the large velvet arm chairs, but on consideration sent them back Wednesday afternoon. I asked Will Barham, (who resigned Friday and can therefore speak out) if it was all true, and he said it was. It was done openly the Saturday before, the servants carrying the things about by broad daylight. Will Barham said Mrs. Patrick said in his hearing, "Wait till I get my parlour fixed, and I am as big a frog as any in the pond." You have never seen people more enraged than our villagers over the furniture raid at college. Mr. McIver declined, and is reported to have said, when it was proposed, that the trustees might sit on split bottomed chairs at his house before he would use the Society's things.

Have just read Saturday's *Sentinel*. It is not as sharp as I feared it was, perhaps all the better for that. When your Commencement at Davidson comes I hope you will give me as full an account as I have done. I wish I could stereotype this letter for all the other ex-Chapel Hillians, Mrs. Swain, Mrs. Battle, Eliza Mitchell and all.

The letters which are preserved in that famous trunk are but a very small portion of those which Mrs. Spencer was writing all along, during this part of her life. She says that letter writing was her greatest pleasure. She was a terrible person to have for an enemy, with her kindly fairness, joined with an earnest determination to leave no word unsaid that could help display the deficiencies of those pigmies, in her estimation, who were trying to fill the seats of the mighty. Somewhere she describes Chapel Hill as being now given up to pigs and pigmies.

Besides the regular *Pen and Ink Sketches of the University*, which were appearing twice a week about this time, there was a series of humorous mis-spelled letters, purporting to come from one of the students of Mr. Pool's University, whose name was "Billy Barlow." These were very comic, and were the work of the Mr. Argo she mentions as a son-in-law of Dr. Hubbard. But she wrote also many paragraphs, half columns variously signed, parodies on popular songs, and anything that would present a different point of view. Here is one:

Commencement at Chapel Hill—We allude to the Commencement of the Colored School. They had a procession, speeches and a dialogue and a fine supper, accompanied with music from the Fayetteville Brass Band, eclipsing the University not only in music, but in number of students and som'p'n to eat.

Here is a bit of "Billy Barlow," which Mrs. Spencer surely inspired:

"I hev hearn thet the Perfessers made a raid on the Fie Cersiety Hall & tuk the cheers & cyarpits. Perfesser McIver who is a Die sed he didn't care a red cent what the Trustees sot on. Split bottom cheers was good enough fer him. Ef Trustees didn't like em they might set on the floor, en so the Die hall was not bummed so bad as the Fie. One new student is come to jine the spellin' class."

Writing again to her old friend in Raleigh:

CHAPEL HILL, June 22, 1869.

DEAR MRS. SWAIN:

The mimosas are in bloom, but your mimosa is not. I never think about that tree without *rage*. I hope you enjoyed the accounts in the papers of Pool's attempt at a Commencement—a complete fizzle. Do you read "Billy Barlow?" Mr. Argo is the man.

Great efforts were made to get the country people in by starting reports that Grant was certainly coming. It is quite true that furniture was stolen from the Society Halls to furnish the faculty's parlors.

Patrick sent to Mary Barbee to demand the College melodeon, sent to her to keep. I saw the note to her, and there were two words in it mis-spelled!

Well! Can it last? That is the question. McIver tells me Pool encourages all hands with great hopes for next session. If no students come then, they will have to give up the University, but he says he *won't* do that. I am approaching the last number of the *Pen and Ink Sketches*. The next one tells of Ellie's marriage—a delicate topic when all the parties are living. But I was advised not to omit it, as the truth had never been generally known.

Professor Kerr⁴ tells me I have done great good in awakening interest in the University, and that these sketches are universally read and enjoyed.

There is a valuable book of the Governor's at Mrs. Saunders' containing history of the University collected by himself. These new comers are exceedingly anxious to get hold of all such things. If you will give me authority I will get it for you at once.

June 26, 1869.

About Ellie's wedding, dear Mrs. Swain, I always told the Governor I meant to tell all about it some day, in the papers, to which he would say, "When I am dead, you may." I think that neither you nor he ever knew how he was blamed for allowing the marriage. Professor McIver was telling me about that this spring. He said its effect, told as it was, with every variety of falsehood and exaggeration, was very great against the Governor and his college.

⁴ Professor W. C. Kerr was State Geologist, and was the only member of the faculty who was not removed by the Holden Government. His office as State Geologist was left to him, and he was a most useful and able man in this line until his death fifteen years after the War. His daughter Alice was a beloved young friend of Mrs. Spencer's, and they seem to have been among her most prized intimates.

He repeated to me as truths which he had hitherto believed some most ridiculous tales. I have been afraid of saying too much, but it is due to Governor Swain to say as much as I have.

I think the dear Governor was supremely indifferent to the gossip and scandal. I suppose you know that there are people who still believe that Ellie was married in finery that had been torn from the backs of Chapel Hill ladies. Once the Governor showed me a letter he had received to this effect. He would shake his head and say, "No need to correct such things, let them pass." But there are plenty of people who will be glad to know the truth.

I am writing for men to read, men who are at a distance, men who have never heard the truth, nor had a chance to know.

Dear and honored Governor Swain. I am glad that I knew such a man once, glad that I learned to know him so well.

A letter of family chat has in the midst of it the following, written to Mrs. Phillips:

July 14, 1869.

Professor McIver has gone to Moore County. [This is the part of North Carolina belonging to the Scotch settlers.]

You know that Pool has resigned his revenue office. McIver advised him to let go of the presidency. Pool said that all North Carolina cannot make him do that. McIver says Pool thinks North Carolina has underrated him and he means to show what he can do. They say they expect students next session, say one hundred or one hundred fifty. Well! We shall see!

Sally Caudle lives with the Brewers. Reports them as *poorfolksy*. Miss Brewer, Professor Brewer's sister, has come on to take the negro school. Patrick gave a Fourth-of-July supper out in his yard—That yard! The McIvers did not go. Chaney made all the cake. She says with indignation that they never offered her a crumb. Mr. Pool asked the blessing.

Last Sunday I dreamed that I had a visit from Napoleon Bonaparte! He was very clever and chatty, and took much notice of June. I told him that when she was an old lady, a

grandmother, she would brag of this visit, and how she had seen Napoleon when she was a little girl. The interview was so life-like, and Napoleon so like his portraits, and what we read of him at St. Helena, that I feel ready to brag that I too have seen and talked with him.

Now what could have instigated such a dream? I had neither been thinking nor reading about him. One of the curiosities of dreaming is that we are never surprised at these extraordinary happenings. I was as easy with the Emperor as if he had been an old friend.

CHAPEL HILL, *August 6, 1869.*

DEAR LAURA:

. . . Pool announces that there will be from 60 to 80 students in the next session. We shall see! Brewer has returned in time for his election on the School Committee. Lossing writes me that he has "had the pleasure of meeting one of your Professors, I forgot his name" at a grand philological convention at Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Brewer has been round to Commencements, etc., at the North trying to get up steam some way. I do *not* believe the story of Mrs. Patrick's going about bare-footed, and I told Governor Graham and Governor Morehead both so, but they *would* not believe it! But it is a *fact* that Martling goes about bare-footed. He is seen continually on his front piazza sitting bare-footed with his pants rolled up to his knees.

Mrs. Patrick is a great tobacco chewer and dipper, but she does *not* go bare-foot.

The Mr. Lossing mentioned, was Benjamin Lossing, the historian, with whom Mrs. Spencer became acquainted in connection with her *Ninety Days*. They kept up a pleasant correspondence, and it was he who afterwards offered to "let her revise his history of the Civil War, and he would subscribe to it." He did send her his school history for her corrections, when a new edition was in preparation.

August 26, 1869.

DEAR CHARLES:

I wished I could have written to you on Saturday night to give you my impression of the eclipse [of the sun]. I have seen no such spectacle in my life, and never shall again till the heavens be no more. My pervading feeling was one of intense overpowering solemnity. It was indeed *awful*; I could not read my watch during the totality. Mr. McIver says it was over two minutes. I could not remark the beauty of the scene, so much was my mind impressed with its solemnity and grandeur, and struck with the brilliance of the returning sun. It seemed to blaze out so gladly.

By the way, McIver says many of the Siamese curiosities in the University museum, given by Dr. McGilvary [missionary to Siam] have disappeared since he came. He was here yesterday, and sat a long time. He says he sees at present no hope for the University, but he thinks all sparring in the newspapers were best stopped. He says opposition keeps it alive, and nothing else. People say that the Trustees of the University will dismiss these men next November, but McIver says they cannot, although he knows the Board wants them dismissed. Holden will sustain his President. Holden, and Holden alone, put Pool where he is. McIver is ashamed of his position and has taken advice as to quitting, has been advised to hold on for awhile. McIver is an amiable man, a moderate man, and a very clear-headed man. I say again, I like him, but I do wish he were more of a gentleman in his exterior.

I have had an application from one of the expected students to give him an Algebra, as he was not able to buy himself one. They may get twenty of such a class. But no one in Chapel Hill thinks they will get twenty. Pool announces that they have over fifty applications.

I have just written to Mrs. Swain. It is the anniversary of the Governor's fall.

Writing to Mrs. Charles Phillips on August 26, after three long pages all about fruit, sugar, and methods of canning, Mrs. Spencer breaks off:

Here I was interrupted for twenty minutes by one of our poor market women from the country. She came in lugging a great basket full of beautiful soft peaches on one arm, and a large bag of snaps [string beans] on the other. Can't sell either. Went to Martling's, and was offered *five cents* for the peaches. Says she wishes "somebody would take and shoot Pool and the rest of them, a-perishing of people up as they do."

Do let me tell you a story. Martling, you must know, has a great pile of wood yet left of those dear old oaks. Negro man went to get the job of cutting it up. Martling offered ten cents a load. Twenty to twenty-five cents is the regular price. Brewer standing by offered the same price. Negro refused to do it at that price. "Well," says Martling, "I am in no hurry. There'll be plenty of students here when session opens, glad enough to do it for ten cents and pay their board."

After I had gone down with the woman to give her a mouthful of bread and to keep the dog off her as she left, I came back again. Eighteen boys at prayers yesterday, none from abroad. I asked Miss Nancy Hilliard how her boarders looked. She said, "When fodder-pulling time comes they will all go home. They call the college the School House."

She continues the letter on August 27:

DEAR LAURA:

Do you remember that this is the anniversary of our dear friend the Governor's death? Our dear Governor Swain! The more I recall him the more I am impressed with a sense of his goodness, his kindness, his amiability toward all men.

I was surprised by a visit from McIver last Saturday, bringing in tow a late Davidson graduate, a Mr. Hoffman, a warm personal friend of McIver's now in the Treasury Department at Raleigh.

There was evidently an air of concealed exultation about the Professor as he introduced his ally, as who should say, "Here's somebody from Davidson who knows a thing or two. Only see, he has come all the way from Raleigh to pay his respects to me."

However, he accounted for bringing him by saying he wished him to see a good specimen of the Old Régime and so brought him to be introduced to Mrs. Spencer. I taught McIver's Sunday School class last Sunday, his youngest child being very sick. Ma went to see the child twice, and reported it very bad off. Mrs. McIver much distressed, and the father too, but he would not have a doctor. It is getting well, but had a severe case of diphtheria. He treated it himself, with kerosene rubbed on the throat and strong salt water gargle.

What do you think of the Pool and Holden correspondence, alluded to in Wednesday's *Sentinel*? Pool has been in Raleigh all the week. He and Holden fixed it up across the table, down there.

The Ku Klux paid a visit to Chapel Hill and stoned old "Dr. November's" house by *mistake*. Chapel Hill people had nothing to do with it, in spite of that long article in the *Standard* [Holden's paper]. A few of the Chapel Hill boys went to follow the Ku Klux around and were sternly ordered off. The K. K.'s all came from Chatham County.

It was that which sent Pool to Raleigh in a vain attempt to get the *Militia*. Our magistrates would not sign a petition for it, and Holden would not send it without.

CHAPEL HILL, September 8, 1869.

DEAR LAURA:

. . . Julian Carr paid me a long visit Monday. He says the two or three boys who came here prepared for college are disgusted. Whitted from Henderson County says he has no use for the faculty because they do not teach anything. I wrote a dozen or so lines to the *Sentinel*, very quiet and statistical, giving the number of students, and nothing more. Signed them "J.W." Pool and Co. flew down to John White and Jones Watson. J. W. certainly pointed to them. So Jones and John wrote to the *Sentinel* begging him to tell the world they are innocent. J. W. is coming out again. It flows out, in a *pome* which I hope you will read. The McIver stock is going down also. A story is going the rounds about him which is every word true. They all expected fifty to one hundred students, and McIver sent to Philadelphia for certain books of

which he had some copies, but not enough for all the college. Watson gets them at Durham, C. O. D., pays freight and brings them over to McIver to be repaid. Our Scotchman, not choosing to have the loss of books for which there was no market, refused to take them. Watson had to keep the books and he put them in Mickle's hands to sell for him at one dollar, at which price he could clear himself. McIver told Mickle that the price for that book was \$1.75, and if he offered them for \$1.00 he would change the course of study so that they could not be used.

The Agricultural lectures are to begin Monday. Wonder who delivers them, nobody knows.

Brewer has bought him a fine horse, and rides about.

Pool said last week that he did not *want* more than fifty students. Dear—Dear—Dear! It is hard to live here and be a Christian isn't it? I went to the Episcopal Church last Sunday and joined them at Communion, having asked permission. I sat there in my seat, shedding many tears. I believe I was the only person there present who was there when the church was consecrated by Bishop Ives. About a dozen at Church.

The Ku Klux were after Ben Edwards who was denounced in Chatham. It proves there were no Chapel Hillians in the crowd, because they mistook November's house for Ben's.

I sent Mr. Lossing the portrait of Governor Swain, carefully enveloped in stiff newspaper, the *Nouveau Monde*. He writes that it had been opened, presumably in the Chapel Hill post office, and the portrait badly torn.

What is to become of our poor people. They are already beginning their piteous stories. Julian Carr says he never felt so gloomy as he does now. . . .

October 4, 1869.

DEAR MRS. SWAIN:

After Brother Charles went back to Davidson, in August, I felt as if I did not care to write to anybody. I had fallen into a sort of lethargy, and could not rouse myself. . . .

Mr. Pool was very much mortified by the adverse resolutions of our town meeting! It was a burst out of all the pent

up indignation of the past year—but I doubt if it does any good. Mr. Pool went to Mr. Mickle last week, saying he had come to have a *Christian talk* with him. Mr. Mickle said he gave him a very *plain talk*!

Mr. Pool was staggered by that meeting, and has descended from his high horse perceptibly. He says he has bought property, and settled here, and wished to educate his children here—It would be hard on him to have to move.

He was asked how it would be any harder on him than on Professor Fetter or Professor Phillips or any of the others who were turned out of their own owned homes here.

October 19, 1869.

DEAR LAURA:

I received the other day a great gratification, and a great surprise. A small box by express, containing a letter from a stranger,¹ an old North Carolinian in Alabama, who left this state thirty-six years ago, being now seventy-seven years old.

He has been reading the *Pen and Ink Sketches* republished in the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, all summer, with "inexpressible delight." "Having known and loved all the great and good men mentioned, especially my Father" and to express to me his "admiration and regard for me as well as to signify his sympathy in the degradation of the college, and his veneration for the men who made the University what it was" he inclosed a very massive plain gold ring, having engraved on the inside, "In memory of the University of N. C. as it was. Caldwell, Phillips, Mitchell, Hooper, Swain. A tribute to Mrs. C. P. Spencer." 113 letters are engraved on the inside, and very beautifully done. I do not think I ever had anything to please me more. You know how it touches me.

The ring, taken from Mrs. Spencer's hand, is still in existence. In December, 1869, Mrs. Swain, who had moved away finally from Chapel Hill, had her husband's and daughter Annie's remains exhumed, and removed to the Old Cemetery at Raleigh, where they now lie. To this, the following letter alludes:

¹ The name of this man was William Huntington.

December 20, 1869.

DEAR MRS. SWAIN :

I feel as if I must congratulate you on having your *dead* together, and near you. I did hope, though against hope, that the time might come within a year or two that you would feel willing to let the remains of your beloved and honored husband remain here where his life work was done.

But of late the signs are too evident of no sense of gratitude, or even of decent remembrance and respect. Last Wednesday night I sat by the fire thinking of Governor Swain, and what he was, and what he had done here. My thoughts were very bitter, but I believe that after the gloom and foul weather, so surely as the sun will shine, shall the day come when he shall be rewarded with outspoken love and gratitude of the whole State. I only hope to live to see that day.

In a letter received from Charles yesterday he said, "Governor Swain had more constructive ability and efficiency in his little finger than all these men put together who govern Davidson."

XIV

CONTINUED HOSTILITIES

THE LIFE of one who is poised ready to pounce on some word or deed of an enemy is not a happy nor an easy one. Mrs. Spencer, although she felt that this was her mission, does not enjoy it and would have been a happy woman in some serener, more congenial atmosphere. She does, however, make all that she can of the infinitesimal happenings day by day in poor little Chapel Hill. Only one of her letters has so far been given at full length, namely the one to Miss North, in 1866. Here is another, whole and unabridged, showing her interest in her fellow villagers:

CHAPEL HILL, *Friday, December 18, 1869.*

DEAR LAURA:

This is Friday night, and no letter to you can get off before next Monday, yet I begin one, hesitating as I begin whether to say, Dear Laura or Dear Charles.

This afternoon, I took June and we went to Miss Annie Craig's to give the old lady a nice dotted muslin cap, with lace border, I had made for her—a Christmas present. When I went over to see her after old Mrs. Watson's death, and told her about her being buried in the cap you had given her, Miss Annie got up and brought out that cap of your mother's you had sent *her*. She said it had been so much worn since you gave it to her, she was afraid it would not serve her to be buried in, but she had no other nice cap. Then and there I resolved to make her one, and if all Christmas presents made in New York next week give each party as much pleasure as the cap I carried Miss Annie this evening, there will be a large sum total.

Then we walked along the lane, past William Hutchings, and down Uncle November's street on our way to Mrs. Hub-

bard's; when, at Dr. November's, we were arrested by Miss Belle Hutchings standing gossiping with Aunt Chaney, over her fence. I stopped at once, of course, to hear the chat, and found Aunt Chaney was giving an account of Captain Freeland's wedding last night, she having been chief cook, and *knowing to everything*. Belle and I picked her quite clean of news. Bride dressed in stone-colored merino, trimmed in green, white wreath on hair being the only *bridal* adornment. Captain Freeland much agitated—his little girl cried manfully. Mrs. Marcom, late *Yancey*, present in high feather. Quite a little crowd of friends, Carrs, etc., etc. Mr. Stone, father of the bride, was married in Martin County a few weeks ago. He was there but did not bring his bride. No waiters, unless Mr. Norwood was one. A very suitable match everybody says.

I hear Lucy Bullock is to be married in a few days to young Riggsby, and it is confidently asserted that Caroline Mallett is preparing her wedding clothes. Dowd was here again last week. I suppose it is true. Well!—Then June and I came on past the President's. All very fine, painted and fenced in marvellous style. June squeezed my hand and pointed over at it derisively, and then, to my surprise and indignation, she *spit* towards the mansion, and said "Yonder's the dog kennel." I was dumbfounded, I assure you. She doesn't get such as that from me. Does she?

We found Mrs. Hubbard alone waiting for Mattie's return from Macauley's mill. Presently she came in, and then they made us have supper with them. The nicest light biscuits, bread, *souse* with mustard dressing, raspberry jam and cream. 'Twas so nice you know!

Then I heard Dr. Hubbard's last two or three letters. He has been to a Ministerial Convention at Oswego, New York. Host's dining room windows looked out on Lake Ontario, everything beautiful, delightful. Dr. Hubbard said, "I had a glorious time, was cordially received by my brother clergy, some of whom I found to be clever fellows." He seemed to be comfortably situated at Manlius . . . finds the people grow upon him—is in first rate health and good spirits, etc.

These letters, and my last news from you and the Fetters being discussed over and over, we fell upon home talk. Mattie told me that she had been stopped in the street by John Watson today to tell her *the news*—that a new professor had been elected to the Agricultural College, and a *negro* at that. However it was but next door to a negro. I had had a visit from Mrs. McIver before I went out this afternoon and she had given me the facts.

Who do you and Charles think the new professor is? How amused you will be! No less than your friend, *Friend Dickson*, the English Quaker, negro school teacher, and agent. I hope you have not heard it before so I may enjoy seeing your amaze. You must make your own comments. I have nothing to add!

Margaret Lewis came up from Henderson today. You know she has been cook at the Fetter's. She brought her sister Rhina tea, coffee, sugar, flour; bedclothes too from the girls. I am so glad—also a kind note to her from Sue. Kate wrote me, and sent June scraps of all their new dresses which are handsome. I shall lay out your fifty cents in whiskey for Rhina, if I can get any, for it is the hardest thing to get these days. She needs a stimulant now and then so much. She is better this week, will be very grateful to you I know.

Mrs. Adams came into my room today and sat down and began to cry. She told me, "Poor Charley is gone"—was released Saturday night from his long and piteous sufferings. "Yes" she sobbed, "He is gone at last, his life is done, and *he never see'd no pleasure in it.*"

Doesn't that strike you as very pitiful? I remember our dear Mrs. Hall saying once that our grief was deeper and more poignant on losing one who left no pleasant joyful memories behind, than when the departed had been a great blessing, had enjoyed much. For there was nothing pleasant to look back upon, nothing softening or comforting in the anguish. Mrs. Adams made that remark about her poor boy, and dwelt with such anguish on the long struggle his life had been, with disease and poverty. He died very serenely and happily, thanking them for all their kindness and expressing a good hope. He suffered much for stimulants. No whiskey could be got for

love or money. The people are all struck with the swift stern course of the United States law. There will be few egg-nogs made this Christmas I guess.

The crippled soldier, Sykes, is near his end. His wife came here last week. He made a profession of religion she says.

The Methodists are going to have a Christmas tree and supper next week, to fix up their church. Everybody has been importuned to help. I got a letter from James [Phillips] today. He says he is coming down next Friday to spend Christmas with us. We will be glad to see him. June is mightily excited.

I did not remember your wedding day. My mind and heart have been so torn up by the roots I seem to take less and less note of days, times, and seasons. But as I read your letter and Charles's recalling the anniversary, I walked over to Judge Battle's [Mrs. Charles Phillips' brother's house] and went into the house, and stood in the echoing empty parlor, and conjured up the wedding party, and the faces. "All, all, are gone, the old familiar faces."

I went up into Sue's old room, and stood looking vacantly 'round it. On the floor lay a note. I picked it up, addressed to Miss C. A. Phillips, and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mallett; would be pleased to see me at their house, 1851! Where did this little reminder of the past come from? How came it there? Poor dear Sue! If those four walls could speak! I believe I am more overcome with sadness when I go down there, and over that house, than anywhere else in Chapel Hill.

Mrs. McIver has told me that a neat marble monument has been put this past week over those of the Mitchell family, buried in her garden. She and I agreed it was a pity they were there, and not in the graveyard.

Our Governor Swain and his daughter Annie's bodies were removed to Raleigh this week. It rained hard all day Wednesday, and strange to say that was the day appointed to exhume them. And when done, towards night, after it was finished, where do you suppose the bodies were placed for the night? *In the barn!* By Patrick's order I hear, although both the

offices were vacant. Fred Lane attended to it. Very few people in town knew it was being done, or know it now, I believe. Dear Governor Swain! I should like to stop, now, and have a good fit of crying, as I think of many things.

Poor Edward Martin I have not seen this week. He certainly looks much better than last summer. But he has no voice, no strength, no digestion. Mrs. Thompson thinks him in the last stages of his disease. I cannot judge, knowing less of his weak condition—but it looks as if she were right.

My cough is better. I should give Susie something for her's. Mrs. Argo says, dip the tip of your finger in spirits of turpentine and touch as low down on her tongue as you can reach with it. It is certain cure of that tickling sensation which causes the hard, explosive, dry cough. I give you that in return for your "two eggs."

Charles asks for news of "Judge" Owen. He has been teaching a country school for a year past at Major William Patterson's. He sent to me for a French grammar, and I sent him—*Bolmar!* I thought that would be about the date of his French! If by any chance he had been elected one of the professors here, there would have been some show of sense in it. Mrs. McIver told me they had washed their hands of the University, and were *down on it*.

Sunday night—June and I have just returned from sitting with Ed Martin. He was coughing incessantly. Mrs. Thompson says she is put to it to get something for him to eat that he can eat, and she has very little money.

Does Charles know the whereabouts of J—A— and of B— T—s son McKay? They both owe her a good round sum for board—years ago.

Mrs. Thompson has all the substantials, but you need money to buy delicacies. . . .

Love to the children. I trust that they at least will have a merry Christmas. June is anticipating Christmas quite rapturously but I have provided nothing, not a single thing for her stocking except a little book I purchased from a colporteur from the Tract Society. I have made a nice large pincushion

for Aunt Dilsey, a hood for Mrs. Adams out of one of my old black frocks, and that is the extent of my Christmas preparations.

I am yours affectionately,

C. P. S.

Apologizing for a letter filled with small matters, Mrs. Spencer wrote on another occasion, "All this seems very trivial, but what would you have? One cannot always be talking about the Solar System."

One explanation is due of the "offices" mentioned in the foregoing letter. These were the customary bachelor quarters of southern mansions, and were placed at the sides, or corners of the front yards, for the convenience of the young men visitors, or the youths of the family. They were usually one-roomed houses with fireplaces, matching the construction of the Great House.

The fulfilment of the command of Christ to "forgive your enemies," was a living obligation to many southern women at least. We have heard it discussed before. Here is another reaction to the problem in a letter of about this time to Mrs. C. A. Phillips:

Mrs. Newton had a sister to die this winter, who had taken her name off the church book soon after the Surrender, and who never had it put back; because she never had been able to say her prayers again, or forgive the enemy. And she died suddenly, without a word of reconciliation.

I think there could be few afflictions greater than such a thing as this. Mrs. Newton says her old mother is in despair about it.

The disintegration of the old institution, under its management of the time, continued and went on apace. Mrs. Spencer watched it relentlessly. Her writings so far had not seemed to make much of a ripple on the downward flow, although they were so much read and

praised. But she does not give up for a moment. Whenever there occurs anything which is of a nature to shock the alumni into action, or make more apparent the growing discredit into which the experiment was falling, she would write it to the *Sentinel* in her incisive manner. To her brother and his wife and to Mrs. Swain she was in the habit of writing the news of each passing moment.

The year 1870 was notable, for it saw the reaction against the radical policies of Holden and his friends, and change was in the air from the beginning of its calendar.

In the very last days of 1869, Mrs. Spencer records:

Pool has purchased Miss Nancy Hilliard's house for one hundred and fifty dollars at public auction. Mr. Norwood was to blame for letting it go, and not bidding it in. I cannot understand how such a sale can be legal—No honest man would keep it. Poor Miss Nancy! I do not know what she means to do.

Later, in March, 1870, she says:

Miss Nancy is in despair these days. She has no resources. In fact Chapel Hill was never quite so low. You may walk from end to end at eleven o'clock in the day, and not see six people. I am writing letters. It is the only thing I can do.

These letters are to all those men whom she trusted, asking for ideas and plans of procedure for restoring the University, after it should be vacated by the rump faculty which was holding it. Vance writes to her:

CHARLOTTE, *February 19, 1870.*

MY DEAR MRS. SPENCER:

. . . I will proceed to answer your question. "How can Chapel Hill be redeemed?" I believe the next legislature will represent the true people of North Carolina, and that *concern* you have with you will feel the first and fiercest of public indignation. I am more in heart about public matters now than

I have been for years. I knew from the first that people would see some day that ignorance could not control. I can see the streaks of purple and gold in the east, thank God.

But this was not what Mrs. Spencer was after. She herself could see the purple and gold full as well as Governor Vance. She wanted a distinct plan, and so she told him. In answer to this second letter Vance says:

I hardly know whether to laugh or to cry over your slightly acidulated letter; if I thought you were really hurt or mortified I would cry! Pray don't "wash your hands of me," I beg. When the University will be revived is one of the things now inscrutable. I think with something of malicious satisfaction of the failure of Pool and Holden, but contempt is too costly a thing to be wasted on such as they. I am glad you have resolved to stand fast. I hope you will abide there till the wheel has entirely turned. Surely that consummation is not far away.

By this one can see that Vance is not theorizing about any such undertaking as Mrs. Spencer has at heart. She derives much more sustenance from Governor Graham of Hillsborough. He here outlines precisely the plan which was eventually followed:

September 29, 1870.

MY DEAR MADAM :

In regard to the University, in which I am pleased to find your interest suffering no abatement: I have thought, considering the experience of the last two years, there is no hope of the revival of the University under the management of the present board of trustees, and that a convention to change the constitution would be necessary to effect this. I conceive, with you the necessity of re-establishing the institution as soon as practicable.

I think I see already the want of the annual crop of impartially educated young men we sent forth from our Commencements.

What will be the most effective means to this end when authority shall permit action, will require more information

than I can command at present. I much incline to the system of educating downwards—and that more good may be accomplished with limited means by endowing the University and sustaining it, than by expending the like amount in common schools, if both are not possible.

Whether or not this be so, I am clearly of opinion that the grounds, groves, buildings, libraries, etc., of our University should not be allowed to lie in disuse any longer than want of power for restoration shall paralyse our energies.

WILLIAM A. GRAHAM.

Returning to the earlier months of 1870, we transcribe one of the chronicles written to her brother and sister:

February 29, 1870.

. . . Mr. Argo says the days of this faculty are numbered. I told him I hoped it might be before they got all the trees cut down back of college. He said it was not known that they intended it, for he had not heard of the timber cutting till he came here. He does not think the trustees would permit it if they knew. Dickson's appointment has never been ratified, or even brought before the Board. I certainly do meditate another article before long, and Argo says it will have a good effect just now, and help to kill off their old endowment bill of \$400,000.

If Charles has any assistance for me, let him send it on and keep dark. I have a great outrage to tell him of. Dorland, aided and abetted by two other students, at the close of last session broke open the doors of the Phi and Di Society archive rooms and searched and scattered and otherwise abused and destroyed their papers!

In vacation I went to the Di Hall with Mr. McIver and he called my attention to the kicked-in panels, etc., of the door, and characterized it as infamous, and appeared to suspect it had been done at the instance of some of the old Di's to get hold of their private papers. I thought it likely enough myself that was the case, but have since been told that it was certainly done by Dorland for spite! I met McIver again the other day, I wish you could have seen him as I met him;

unshorn, unwashed, with a farm shirt on, unbuttoned at the neck, and his old hairy chest, white hairs at that, all open. Dirty brogans on his feet. You never saw quite such a professor. I stopped and spoke of going to the Di Library next week, and asked him if he had ever found out the author of the outrage on the two societies. He looked very much embarrassed, but said that they had had reason to suspect Dorland of it, but that in consequence of strict investigations had exonerated him. Did I know? I said yes, I did know, but declined to tell what I knew. He said twice, emphatically, that Dorland should not have been allowed to stay this session but for his clearing himself of this suspicion. How would the old Phi's and Di's like that news?

To Mrs. Swain, she says:

March 27, 1870.

The stores all refuse the faculty any further credit, and Professor Patrick has declared openly that he expects the old concern will burst up in June—that he wishes it was now—for, “He ain’t getting anything.” Two or three of the students, such as they are, have left already. I saw the “President” in church this morning, looking more sleepy and solemn than usual.

June 13, 1870.

DEAR CHARLES:

. . . I suppose the *Sentinel* will give you an idea of Pool's second Commencement, which was a greater failure than the first, except that they had a band, which attracted negroes and children. Only fourteen strangers, children and all, came. Mr. Merritt, passing Thursday, went up to hear Abbott speak, and said he counted 103—little negroes and big, whites and mulattoes all included. Thursday evening, D.D. was given to Mr. Purefoy,¹ degrees to Dr. Closs and Mr. Merritt which the two latter refused to accept. The *Standard* will no doubt flourish it all.

¹ Mr. Purefoy was a Baptist preacher of Orange County; Dr. Closs was a Methodist preacher of Durham; Mr. Merritt was a trustee from Chatham County. He writes to Mrs. Spencer at Cambridge, in her old age, a letter of reminiscence.

James Taylor [one of the trustees] came to see me. I gave him a piece of my mind, so did the Misses Cole, so did Mrs. Barbee. He said he never was in so much hot water. He told me he found things better in some respects than he expected, worse in others. He said the faculty was incompetent, the college a disgrace, and declared that Holden was the head and front of it all. The trustees had nothing to do with it, had not been allowed to do anything. But there should be a change, and that soon. He had a copy of Pool's catalogue, with his addenda and corrections and commentaries.

He said he did not ask for any statements—he knew what Pool claimed and did not believe him.

I am told the marching 'round Dr. Caldwell's monument, the procession altogether was utterly and painfully ludicrous. . . . But they seem determined to go on. It was announced that \$20 in gold would be given to the best scholar of next session. Everybody thinks this will be the end, but I think Pool will hang on. Taylor told me that Pool claimed that he and his faculty had been doing an immense amount of teaching, for thoroughness and painstaking devotion—nothing here had ever equalled it.

O Charles, it is a most exasperating business to live here these days! I feel boiling at times with spite, rage and scorn. If I did not feel that anything so rotten *must* come to an end before long, I *could not* stay here.

I wrote an editorial for the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, looking toward reunion [of the southern and northern branches of the church], as likely some of these days, and I have a letter from the editor by which I judge my remarks will not appear, unless purged.

June 20, 1870.

MY DEAR LAURA:

We have just seen Mrs. Hubbard and Mattie drive off this morning! "*I feel like one who treads alone.*" It is the end of an auld sang. I never realized until last Friday that Dr. Hubbard was indeed moved, and gone, and finally uprooted from his old home. I went into his study, and saw his books taken down from their accustomed shelves, and boxed up for

transportation. Mrs. Hubbard threw up both her hands as we stood looking, and said: "It is all over, It is like death!" She and Mattie both wept as we stood by the hack a minute or two. Happy as are their prospects at present, and as much pleasure as they are anticipating this summer, still the thought underlying, of removal, and of loss of their home, made their departure bitter and painful.

Mr. Argo showed us a long letter from poor Howell, damning the men who had driven him from his poor little home here. In fact he rained so much retributive fire and brimstone on them all, from Pool down, that I was not so sorry for him as I would have been. . . . It is very dreary in Chapel Hill now, I can tell you; I should feel it too acutely to remain here, if I did not have work to do. I shall be very busy, and hope to forget much that worries and depresses.

August 21, 1870, she mentions that, "College has begun with fifteen students. I believe no day scholars. The common school being in operation takes care of them." Sometimes Mrs. Spencer's silences are strange. It was at this time that the Ku Klux were rampant in Orange and neighboring counties. It was now that Governor Holden, rendered desperate by his lack of control of the situation, had recruited troops from Tennessee, and had a young war on his hands, trying to subdue the insurgents.

She alludes without comment, on Saturday, August 3rd, thus:

On last Saturday, a squad of militia marched in under Dr. Emery. I don't know what his rank in the army is,—Adjutant, I think. They are camped back of college. A number of county citizens have taken to the woods. Kirk [Holden's Commander] is in Hillsboro', F. Strudwick has *bushed up* for fear of arrest, Colonel William Saunders ditto. Our people are very mad.

In after years, these few sentences were written by her in her diary:

I have just read Tourgée's *Fool's Errand*. It is very smart, and the only book on this phase of the South and North that presents a true picture. He has done it very well. Tells the truth as nearly as a Carpetbagger and a Tourgée could be expected to do. I think he tried to be fair.

And again she records:

Logic hasn't anything to say to the events of Reconstruction. Prejudice, enmity, indignation, selfishness, dogmatism, all these came in, and with them much plain human nature.

But it does not excuse a matter, when you merely give a good reason or two for it. These times sound very over-stressed, to read the plain facts. But many of the ingredients are not resolvable. "What a mistake it was, dear Sam's joining the Republican Party," says Mrs. Spencer, thirty years after this time. "When I recall those days of humiliation, exasperation, and despair it does not seem so very long ago. How great was the revolution, that came suddenly!"

The election of the summer of 1870 brought in a majority for the Conservatives. Samuel Phillips, who ran for Attorney General, was beaten. He was, however, a member of the House, in 1871. Kemp Battle of Raleigh, writing to Mrs. Spencer that same autumn, says:

Mr. Sam was nominated by the honest element of the Republican Party, led by Tod Caldwell [afterwards Governor of North Carolina]. It was a bitter pill for Holden. I regret as much as you do Mr. Sam's false position before the country. I have not had such pain in years; but he is so truthful, honorable, and noble he will outlive the false impression of the present day.

Just now, however, the public visits on him all Holden's and the Carpetbagger's sins. His motives were pure, but he could not realize the corruption of the party in power. He did not realize that he could not join the party without shouldering the imputations of their doings, with the hot-headed and unthinking.

Offences which Governor Holden was impeached for were political in their essence, however stated, and no more forbearance was shown him than in any other instance when party adversaries have so strongly the upper hand of a scapegoat, as they now had. Holden was convicted, deposed, and disfranchised. The strain that his rulings had placed upon society in North Carolina was no longer to be borne. It was put an end to, speedily, as was needful. To quote G. B. Shaw, "The degree of tolerance obtainable at any moment depends on the strain under which society is maintaining its cohesion." With him went out—evaporated—the poor simulacrum of a University which he had fostered. Mrs. Spencer is telling of these events from her own watch-tower:

August 26, 1870.

DEAR MRS. SWAIN:

Always as the fatal 27th of August approaches, my mind turns towards you. Every day, at this season of the year, renews your desolation, recalling the last hours of a life so precious to you. Do you not often feel as if—if you could only have one interview with him allowed you, one more opportunity to pour out your heart to him, and hear his voice only once, you would give him up more cheerfully, and resign yourself to your widowhood without a murmur? I do not wonder that there is so much said in the Bible about widows and their claims upon God's protection. He who made the human heart knows that a widow has endured the deepest sorrow His hand can inflict. I think of you sometimes Mrs. Swain, and of

what your married life was, and wonder how you have lived the past two years. God alone knows. I was glad to hear Mrs. Deems say you were cheerful. I am sure you must have enjoyed her visit there, though she said it was all the time saddening.

I suppose you have felt, as we all have, a great pleasure over the result of the election. It was indeed delightful to me to feel that the days of that party were numbered. Chapel Hillians especially were bound to rejoice, you may be sure. Poor Miss Nancy Hilliard talks as if she already saw all the old faculty reinstated, and three hundred students coming in. I doubt if any of the old faculty ever come back, and it will be long before prosperity is restored to an institution so degraded. I want the first step toward reform taken by the new Legislature, by the reorganization of the University. I want this crew turned out.

Some of the men down the street sent old Wiley Henderson to Martling a few days after the election returns had come in, offering to move him and his things, very cheap, to Durham.

Wiley was in earnest to get the job. Martling was furious, said he meant to stay a while longer to spite the people of the place. They have fifteen students from abroad, and as many day scholars. The students board with negroes chiefly. Wilse Caldwell has several boarders. John Ashe several, and Sam Mahew a few. They say all the boys are quite poor, all being free scholars. The common school is set going at last in the village.

I sit sometimes and think of how all this would appear to Governor Swain, could he revisit these familiar scenes. I fancy him walking these streets. What sighs he would heave, from the bottom of his heart, over a place and people so long the objects of his care and anxiety. With what charity would he speak, with what wisdom and forbearance. I try to imagine what he would say, and comfort my mind by it. It seems to me as if the chief object and wish of my life were now to live to see this place restored in triumph; to see a set of men worthy successors to those who are gone, sitting in the old

seats—to hear due honor paid to Governor Swain's memory, and justice done to his lifelong services and those of his colleagues; and to be assured that time will never dim nor tarnish his reputation, but will only add to the grateful affection with which his native state remembers him.

This I hope to see. And when the time is come, and with tears of joy the people come up to renew and restore these beloved seats, then I want you to come up and mingle your tears and smiles with ours. I look forward to that joy!

I am dear Mrs. Swain, with a thousand tender grateful remembrances of the past, associated forever with your dear and honored husband,

Yours affectionately with true sympathy,

C. P. S.

December 31, 1870.

DEAR MRS. SWAIN:

Since the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches are quite played out in Chapel Hill, I have turned in to help the Methodists. I am teaching in their Sunday School. I cannot bear to be cut off from all associations with my kind, and I like the Methodists.

We are still waiting for something to turn up,—while Mr. Pool says the University shall go on, and no power can oust him and his faculty. If we get a convention it will be tried. Did you see the notice of Brewer's book in the *Sentinel*?

I hear the Martlings are soon to leave for Raleigh, but he does not resign, he is still Professor of English, think of that!

CHAPEL HILL, *December 28, 1870.*

MR. ABRAM VENABLE,
GRANVILLE COUNTY.

MY DEAR SIR:

The Angel that prompts us to do purely benevolent actions must surely have been at your side when you penned your letter to me. Nothing could have gratified me more, or done me more real service; for though in general a merely "complimen-

tary" does not mean much, yet I feel that a letter from *Abram Venable* assuring me of his approbation and friendship is worth a good deal, and will stimulate and cheer me as very few letters can.

I write for money to be sure, but no money payment is half so dear to me as such a token from one of the *old régime*. Praise from such a quarter is praise indeed.

I had in this week another such pleasure in a letter from Mr. E. J. Hale, now in New York. Your name, my dear sir, and his, recall the old days of Whig and Democrat, when you were a wheel horse on one side, and he on the other. Utterly opposed and unreconcilable in political principles, and now you both write very much alike, and say much the same things.

Your letter, dear Mr. Venable, flushed the tears into my eyes, recalling as it did the good days and the good men now passed away. Was it not well for my Father and Dr. Mitchell and Governor Swain that they fell on sleep in good time, and saw none of the melancholy changes of these later years. And since you wrote, Bedford Brown has joined them. Your friends are indeed getting to be a majority on the other side, but while you are waiting to join them it is pleasant to see that you do not lose your friendly interest in your surroundings here, especially in the rising generation.

In no way can you so successfully continue the good influence you have exerted all your long and honored life as by giving your last counsels and the fruit of your ripe experience to the young. Your hint of giving me your views on free schools I hope you will not fail to carry out. It is a matter on which I require a great deal more light, though as you have seen I have been audacious enough to express myself. In the course of publication of those articles, *Free Schools and Colleges*, etc., Governor Graham wrote me that his preference was for educating downwards, i.e., build up the University first, and the schools afterwards. And Dr. McGuffey says the same, and my Brother Charles the same, so that I am possibly in a grievous minority. However the veteran Calvin H. Wiley is of my persuasion.

Chapel Hill is still trodden down of the Gentiles. That miserable farce called the University goes on still. I and my mother, now 75 years old, and my little daughter, 11 years, are the last of our tribe, the sole remaining members of a once pleasant society. In the past two or three years, twenty-one of the best families in Chapel Hill have removed from it. I hold on, believing we will see better days, and the restoration of the University to the affection and confidence of our people. The use of the Libraries, which was refused me at first when these new-comers took possession, is a great attraction to me. Of late there has come a great subsidence on the part of those in power, and I am allowed to go up to the University Library when I please.

Books take the place of society. The Society Libraries have been sadly pillaged since Holden's negro troops first arrived and took charge; while the Militia last summer broke in the Phi and Di Libraries and helped themselves.

I wish to remain here till I can see all this changed, renovated, reconstructed. I want to have that triumph, and see Carpet-Bagger and Scalawag return to their own place.

My mother joins me in cordial salutations for you, and best wishes for your health and happiness in the new Year.

I am Sir, with highest respect and regard,

Yours affectionately,

C. P. S.

After the end of the year 1870, the Board of Trustees, despairing of making any progress with the reconstructed University, and having moreover no money for farther experiment, closed the doors of the institution a second time.

The faculty were left high and dry, chained to the village by poverty. Martling was given a hundred dollars to enable him to leave the state. Patrick did not get away from Chapel Hill till the next summer. Brewer remained awhile before he left for the University of South Carolina, saying that he meant to be on the ground

when the institution should be opened for negroes. McIver was appointed State Superintendent of Public Instruction sometime in the fall of 1871. Mr. Pool, however, managed to hold on, to wait, later to claim and finally to obtain his full salary for all this time. In the interval he held some offices which brought him in enough money for his needs of the day.

XV

THE LEAN YEARS, 1871 TO 1875

MR. SPENCER'S letters of this year and the two following are not preserved in such numbers as are the earlier ones. But there is evidence to prove that while they are not in the collection, they were sown widely all about where they would bring forth fruit for the reorganization of the University. Credit is given to men who came later in time, but Mrs. Spencer sowed the seed of interest in education beside all waters, for years and years, before North Carolina awoke to her obligations toward her young folk. Aycock and Charles D. McIver, graduated in early classes after the reopening, when students were few, were constantly invited to Mrs. Spencer's home, when her influence was still most potent in indirect counsel with the faculty. Probably not a boy was disciplined, or a small change initiated in policy, in President Kemp Battle's time, unless Mrs. Spencer knew about the very inception of it.

The sower and the reaper shall rejoice together, and no one is filching praise away from Governor Aycock and Charles B. McIver to say that what they advocated seems to have been formed in their minds by Mrs. Spencer, and shows the mark of its origin. Indeed McIver recognized this, when he named one of the buildings at the North Carolina College for Women after the woman who had upheld the necessity of women's higher education. Resuming the correspondence:

CHAPEL HILL, *March 5, 1871.*

DEAR CHARLES:

I have finished reading aloud to June, and will conclude the evening by beginning a letter to you.



MRS. JAMES PHILLIPS

Ma has your long letter, and is much gratified and interested. It seems that our Southern church is in a dead and lukewarm state. Ma says it is judgment, or the reaction of the sin of our General Assembly in rejecting the offered hand of the Northern Church. It grieves me to see the constant appeals for help from all our Church organizations. McIver says the Southern Church has undertaken more than it is able to accomplish.

I have a letter from Mr. Jones, and the report [of the trustees] has been delayed greatly by Lassiter's [the Secretary's] absence in Washington City. I should pain you greatly if I were to tell you how things are going on here. The college property is being depredated to a scandalous extent. Wood is being taken off the land by everybody. Patrick is selling it to get money to live upon. Negroes are cutting it down. Rails for fencing are being made and sold. Wash Davis and sons have just fenced in the whole west side of Smith's lot with rails made in the woods behind them.

McIver says, if they were to blow off the top of the South Building, Pool would not say a word. His Administration's cornerstone was flattery of the boys to their parents, and complaisance to all concerned. He did not grow one inch after he graduated. You know he never could control his classes when Tutor.

Dr. Spencer [her husband's brother] died without a will, I fear, from what his brother writes, with affairs tangled, his health having been declining for a year or two—everything at loose ends.

We endeavor still to hope for a Constitutional Convention. It seems to be the last chance for Chapel Hill. Brother Sam seems to be the bulwark in the Legislature against one.

CHAPEL HILL, *September 30, 1871.*

TO GOVERNOR VANCE,

MY DEAR GOVERNOR:

Last Monday I was favored with a call from Mr. Lassiter, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the defunct University, introduced by Professor McIver. His object, he stated, was

to request me to suggest some plan for the restoration of the University, and to prepare a manuscript for him to submit to the Board at their next meeting. I think I may be excused for smiling at this turn of affairs.

I endeavored to feel not unduly elated by the honor thus thrust upon me. "A Plan."

I told Mr. Lassiter that the only plan occurring to my mind was that the present Administration resign unconditionally, and call on the Alumni to take charge of the Institution.¹

Mr. Lassiter has few ideas, and a limited horizon bounded chiefly by "Our Party." It was, to say the least, nauseating to hear him talk about "party" in connection with this matter.

He objected to my plan on the ground that the Alumni were "all Conservatives" and it would be giving the University over into the hands of this "Party." I suppose he is an honest man, and means well according to his lights, which lights are few.

His favorite word next to "*party*" was "*co-operation*." He wants everybody to co-operate with the present board in a generous effort to re-animate and restore the University. I said I did not think that would be done. They must abandon the whole concern, before anyone else would move. And Mr. McIver rather surprised me by seconding this declaration very vehemently and declaring, if he had a million dollars, he would not give one, while the present trustees held on, or the present administration was retained.

Professor Patrick is gone, *abijt, evasit, erumpit* between two days, his creditors being numerous and desperate. Chapel Hill people have had to come to the rescue and send in food to the family.²

An entire breakdown. Mr. Brewer remains. Says he means to be on the ground when reorganization takes place. He has openly expressed his hope of being able to secure this

¹ This plan was followed early in 1872 by Alexander McIver when he became State Superintendent of Public Instruction. See later.

² Mrs. Spencer herself is said by her niece, Mrs. Lucy Phillips Russell of Rockingham, North Carolina, to have been the main person of Chapel Hill who fed and helped these people at this time.

for a negro college. Says the money for this would be forthcoming from the North at once.

He is one of the hottest negro philanthropists! Mr. Pool is as usual impenetrable, but busy underground. His latest move is to stir up *sectarian* animosity against the University, so that since he failed, no one else shall be allowed to restore it.

Mr. McIver is fighting him. I do not know what Mr. McIver will do. He is thoroughly sick of Mr. Pool and the rest. I think he is honestly anxious to undo any mischief he may have done in coming here. Some think he is playing a game to secure himself with the Alumni in case they come into power.

Some time when you have a spare half-hour—and Mrs. Vance does not need you; for I do not believe she cooks “all by herself” as the children say, though of course she is willing to take the credit—some spare half-hour then, between setting the table and bringing in the dinner, you would do me a great favor if you would say what you do think about the chances for the reorganization of the University. . . .

I am Dear Governor with much regard,

C. P. S.

A letter to Mrs. Swain, belongs to about this season:

August 23, 1871.

MY DEAR MRS. SWAIN:

The time of the year is full of recollections for me, of the Governor and of you, but I must needs dream of you last night. I dreamed of you both, all night, and the conclusion of my dream was, that your old home was full of servants, cleaning and repairing and bringing in furniture; for you and *he* were coming to take possession again, and so when I woke my first thought was of writing to Mrs. Swain. This very day I must write.

The failure to get a Constitutional Convention has seemed to set all hopes for Chapel Hill further off than ever.

Dr. Burke Haywood of Raleigh, while here, went early one morning to the Campus, and went all over the buildings.

He told me a more melancholy walk he never took. Then he went into the Chapel and "thinking it a fit place and opportunity" kneeled down and thanked God for twenty-four years of reasonable prosperity since his graduation. Thanked Him for his education here, and his intercourse here with great and good men now gone, and prayed for the restoration of his dear old college.

I thought it an affecting picture—the old student kneeling alone in that chapel with such feelings and such expression of them.

He was confident of its reorganization, but like all the rest, did not say *how!* An attempt will be made this fall to get it turned over to the Alumni. Pool has been writing a series of articles in the Methodist and Baptist Church papers, exceedingly bitter and odious. His remarks upon Governor Swain and the old Faculty are full of malignity and untruth. His aim and desire is to stir up sectarian feelings against the University, and prevent its revival under any hands. I think I never knew such a case as Pool's.

I suppose you know that Miss Nancy Hilliard and Mrs. Utley have the "Exchange" Hotel in Raleigh. Their place here is shut up, and looks forlorn enough. I fear they are too old, too infirm, to keep a city hotel. The depletion goes on here. The Emerys, Carrs and Barbees are pretty much all that are left. Mr. Argo I seldom see.

The Faculty are still holding on here. The Patricks have been about to starve this spring, having literally nothing to eat. The Chapel Hill people rushed gallantly to the rescue, and sent them meat, flour, sugar, and coffee. Mr. McIver tells me they are destitute now again. Pool has got a snug place in the southern claims office. He and Jones Watson are getting up the claims.

Fifty thousand dollars are claimed as damages from the Federal Army while hereabouts.

Governor Swain was under the impression that his exertions saved the village, and General Atkins knows better, and could tell a different story about it. Mr. Pool is to get half of what he has allowed.

In January, 1872, McIver, then appointed to office as above, fulfilled his promise to Mrs. Spencer by summoning a meeting of the alumni to consult over the procedure necessary to restore the University. This meeting Mrs. Spencer prepared for, by her full and earnest letters, and helped to gather together. She found it disappointing enough, however. Somewhere she says that all women are born anarchists, and law breakers; and by this seems to mean that she marvelled, as so many women do, at the intricate rules of the legal game men like to play, when women would consider it simpler to go straight to the necessary conclusion of the affair.

In 1871, after the University was closed the second time, the wheels began turning, very slowly, but surely, in the direction of the restoration. At the time of this first meeting of the alumni Mrs. Spencer was staying in Raleigh. She was making for her great friend, the State Geologist, W. C. Kerr, a large map of North Carolina for him to use in his lectures on the geology of the state, at the various colleges:

RALEIGH, *January 30, 1872.*

MY DEAR CHARLES:

I am trying to get the map *done* all I can, but it is hard work. I received the *Alumni Association Record* with your letter this morning. I cannot tell you the eagerness with which we read your letter. McIver came to arrange with Kerr as to the Alumni meeting. I wrote letters to twelve more old students begging them to be here, at Mr. Kerr's insistence. I was also requested by some of the Alumni to write editorials for the city papers. Mr. Turner has not published what I sent him. The others did. I inclose them. "They say" the *Carolinian's* is the best one. Mr. Battle says there are hopeful indications for a full meeting. The programme is, to meet on Thursday morning, have Mr. Bart Moore appointed Presi-

dent, appoint a committee to confer with the Trustee's Committee; these are to be empowered to treat upon the conditions of an entire reorganization at Chapel Hill. Neither political nor sectarian influences are to be allowed.

If the Trustees will accede to this, then the committee of Alumni will receive further instructions. . . . It is said that Pool is busy writing letters to this man and that, to come to his help.

I am writing this with eight or nine gentlemen present, over at the State Museum. The map proves attractive. I do not think I will get off this week. Ransom sent me his compliments, and is coming to see me. I have not seen him since 1847.

To the same:

RALEIGH, *February 2, 1872.*

I went to the Senate Chamber at three o'clock today. Mrs. Kerr and Miss Lizzie Kerr, her sister-in-law, and Mrs. Scott and I were the only ladies. I was resolved to come myself, ladies or no ladies.

Mr. Bartholomew F. Moore, with the *Alumnus* book before him, and about fifty old students were present. Mr. David Carter was secretary. The Alumni were called, year by year. It was a sight that made the tears come very near the surface. There were Governor Graham and his boys, Mr. Barringer, and Judge Battle and his sons, and the Haywoods, and many another familiar face. I am such a goose, that I could not feel happy or comfortable at the meeting till I saw Brother Sam come in and take his place. He did not come early. I fidgetted until he did. Mr. Kerr told me there was fifty thousand dollars ready to be pledged to the University, to begin with.

Mr. Barringer rose, and called for the *present condition* of the University. Mr. McIver got up and answered that there was nothing to report, no college but the buildings, no faculty, no students, nothing but Mr. Pool. By the way, I was sure that worthy would be on hand, with his imperturbable solemnity. Then Governor Tod Caldwell rose and stated the debt.

Then all the lawyers had something to say about that. Finally Judge Pearson brought it to a point with a few well chosen words. He said it was premature to discuss these topics till they knew what jurisdiction would be allowed to them. A committee was appointed to confer, and report next day, at three o'clock.

RALEIGH, *February 3, 1872.*

DEAR CHARLES:

I came to the Museum today, and found a number of the Alumni had called to see Mrs. Spencer. They all told me I must be made an honorary member. I told them, that if being mad for three years together entitled me to it, I have a right. They say many pretty things about my pen and pencil.

Mr. Barringer was most clever, and went over all the University matters with me. Mr. Carter came too. His staying over to the meeting was the result of my meddling. I begged him to do it.

Mr. McIver has immortalized himself by his course. Everyone praises him. This afternoon will show what can be done. It is snowing all the morning, but I will go if Mrs. Kerr will. I feel as if I could not stay away.

They wasted yesterday afternoon discussing the affairs of the University when they had no right to do so. They ought to have sent out their committee at once. Brother Sam had nothing to say. One fact was elicited which I did not know. That twelve thousand of the Scrip money was used by the old Board to pay the salaries of the faculty in requital of giving the Agricultural College the use of the University buildings. Now the express condition of the act of Congress was that no part of that gift should be used for buildings, and yet Governor Swain did so use twelve thousand, and the new Board followed suit and used ten thousand for their faculty's salaries.

Both acts were clearly illegal. Taylor moved to memorialize the Legislature to pay back that money, or as he had the misfortune to say, (Mrs. Kerr said), "Have it repaid back," and this after he had performed prodigies of pronunciation,

Alumnee instead of Alumni, and "Ag-ree-cul-tu-rah!" several times. . . .

Miss Nancy Hilliard will have to break up here in Raleigh. Her house is going down every way. Mr. Utley gets drunk, and the boarders had no fires all day last Sunday, no wood. The few she has would leave, but Mr. Utley has borrowed money of them, and they stay to eat it out. The table is still good. Miss Nancy says herself she must go back at once to Chapel Hill. I feel so sorry for the old lady.

It was in this year of 1872 that Samuel Phillips received an appointment from President Grant as Solicitor General of the United States. His removal, at the first of the next year, made another great vacancy in Mrs. Spencer's life. Mrs. Phillips found it necessary to take a preliminary journey to make house arrangements for her large family, before moving to Washington. Mrs. Spencer went to Raleigh for several weeks, in February, to stay with the children and keep house until the move was definitely planned. The account of this visit is unrolled in one of those enormous letters of hers, which in this instance gives a cross-section of a family, and of a whole past society:

To June Spencer:

RALEIGH, *February 28, 1872.*

. . . And what is my precious daughter doing right now, when her Mama is sitting before Aunt Fanny's fire with Cornie on one side and John on the other, trying hard to work out a sum which their father has sent them to do. My thoughts are busy with my dear lonely little girl, who was so sweet and good as to accept her lot and not say a word so as to add to her mother's trouble at leaving her behind.

I know dearest child that you like regular beginnings, so I will begin where my note from Durham, yesterday, left me.

Just as I was writing my last line Mrs. Watson told me the train was coming, so I put my note in her hand, and

Mr. Watson got my ticket and put me on board. I had a dull ride to Raleigh. I felt very sleepy and hungry. *Mem*—Always bring something to eat along, in future. Arrived at one o'clock. Found a carriage waiting. Conductor was polite, this time. Away I went. I did wish you had been along to enjoy the pleasant ride in an open carriage through the city. Everything looked so bright and cheerful.

When I got to Uncle Sam's gate, there was John; he jumped up in the carriage to ride to the door, and his first word was "Why where is June?" Before we stopped, here came Aunt Fanny, running out.

Not gone yet you see—not meaning to go until today; "Oh you haven't come without June!" and even the baby said, over and over, "I want to see June." So as I told you it would be, I began to feel as if I had committed a crime, before I got into the house. And when I was fairly inside, they began at me again about you. Aunt Fanny said it was the greatest shame she ever heard of, and she wouldn't stir a step to Washington City, and thereupon she began to cry. Cried big tears, and took out her handkerchief, and I had half a mind to cry too. And it was all to go over, when the rest of them came home from school. I told them I believed they did not want me at all, without you.

When I went into Aunt Fanny's room, and saw how much there was to get ready, I began to think she would not get off in a week.

There was a woman sewing for dear life on a beautiful apron for the baby, whose travelling dress was not even done. None of Fanny's or of her dresses home from the dress-makers, none of their clothes home from the wash, Aunt Fanny's new black silk not come home from Mrs. Scarlett's, and to crown all, a box from New York with three dresses made there and a new cloak not yet arrived by express, and by the way, has not come yet.

As soon as I had had a glass of ale and some ham and biscuit, I looked for my thimble, and went to work with a will as you may guess.

The first thing I did was to pleat a flannel skirt and sew it on the body, and finish it. Then next to make twelve fine button-holes. Next to finish the baby's travelling dress. Near dark, two dresses came in from Mrs. Scarlett's, a cuivre colored silk dress with a magnificent train—I inclose you a scrap—and a splendid corded black silk with train, and she had also a pearl-colored velours trimmed with black Cluny lace. I thought it one of the most perfectly handsome dresses I ever saw in my life. The cuivre colored one, which was trimmed with Spanish lace the same color, fit exquisitely, but the black was not perfect; so Aunt Fanny and John went right off to Mrs. Scarlett's and fortunately caught her, just as she was going out for the evening. Aunt Fanny did not get back till nearly nine. Three lovely dresses came home for the baby. I send you scraps. The blue one trimmed with blue silk, the white alpaca trimmed with cherry velvet, the crimson satin trimmed with black velvet. White velours and merino cloak, and the loveliest little white merino hood from Stewart's. Baby's travelling dress was scarlet merino waterproof cloak, the 'cutest little turn-out you ever saw, and a white hood Miss Sally Williams has crocheted for her. She did look darling! And such quantities of exquisite fine drawers and petticoats and tiny boots! After supper Aunt Fanny showed me some things she had bought from Stewart's. The boxes the things were in were all so beautiful. One box, filled with embroidered and lace handkerchiefs, all different. There were a dozen, besides any number of plain hemstitched borders. I can't imagine what they cost. One box filled with collars and sleeves, in sets, point lace, and embroidery. Another full of gloves. Then all her chemises and petticoats and gowns, all embroidered, and tucked and flounced, I was going to say like a bride's trousseau, but I never saw a bride with such clothes. The cloak she expected from New York was to be embroidered cashmere, and then three dresses which Cousin M— has had made there for her. She has never seen these of course, but one was to be a morning dress. Altogether, I am sure your Aunt Fanny's outfit cannot come far short of a thousand dollars.

When I came into her room this morning it was after eight o'clock. Train left at ten. The black silk had not come home. The clothes from the laundress had not come. The woman was still sewing for dear life on the Baby's white velours cloak, and not one thing had been put into the trunk. I did not begin to think that she could get off. Uncle Sam telegraphed at nine last night to know if she was to start today, as he wished to meet her in Richmond.

Aunt Fanny had a great mind to say she would not come because her box from New York had not come; she said she would not go without that. I advised her to go, and said we would send the box straight on to her in Washington, and that it would be wrong to disappoint Uncle Sam. So she sent him word she would leave today, and I felt pretty badly this morning, thinking she could never get off, and there Sam would be in Richmond. Wonderful to relate, *She Got Off*. At nine o'clock the things began to come in. Margaret Walker and I filled up the trunk in a very few minutes. After the baggage wagon had come Aunt Fanny was still in her old wrapper, while her new boots, which had the tops cut down to fit her ankles, had not been bound. But she was dressed in time, nevertheless, in a black silk skirt, trimmed with velvet, olive green polonaise, very handsome cloth cloak, and high black straw hat trimmed with black. She looked very handsome, and dear little Baby looked like a pink.

After the omnibus was at the door I had to fix the lunch basket. In the midst of all this hurry-skurry, everybody on the lot and about twenty people off it busy doing something for her, Aunt Fanny was so quiet, and as serene and deliberate as if she did not have to leave in a month. Her brother came to take her to the train, and ate breakfast with us. John went too of course, and said they got there in good time.

After Aunt Fanny got off, M— cried heartily, she was the only one. The others wanted their mama to go. Not to get rid of her, you know, but because they thought it would be so nice for her. I told her to dismiss all care from her mind, and think she was on her bridal trip.

When she said last night that she would not go without her box from New York, John was outdone. He got red in the face, and he said she must go. "Mama 'th got frockth enough," he said.

Uncle Sam has written Cornie such a birthday letter. O so good, so tender, so full of sweetest counsel! But I am sure she thinks a great deal more of one just received from her cousin. She sits and kisses her Cousin's. I have half a mind to get up and slap her, what do you think? Last night, Aunt F. produced a bundle which she said Cornie had brought me from Davidson.

And Cornie never said a word to me about it. I did not know what Aunt Laura meant by "the brown dress" she had sent you. Here it is. Cornie had it in her trunk all the time I was here, after she got home, and said not a word about it. I could have made it up for you, and it would have been so useful to you this winter! . . .

Well! Uncle Sam sent the children each one, a dollar, and besides he sent three dollars which was to be divided among them, according to their ages. They were to do the sum, and say how much each is to get. And the one who does the sum first is to have fifty cents more, over and above all the rest. Cornie nor E— can no more do the sum, or even guess what proportion of the three dollars each is to have, than the baby can. I thought Cornie at least could, but she will not even try. John is trying hard. They are not to be assisted, but I have given John a hint to start him, because he is so honestly and seriously trying.

Can you tell what each will get? I think John will do it. Uncle Sam wrote that he knew June could do it. He thinks you are here with me. He said he was sure you would be sweet and good while Aunt Fanny was away, and hoped all the rest would be.

E— took her dollar this morning and went off and spent it *all* directly, of course. She bought two very pretty hair-ribbons and some candy, and has given all the candy away, by this time. M— spent ten cents in candy, and so did her younger sister. Little James bought him a tin horn. Cornie invested

in ground-peas, and has been eating them all day. She gave John *four*, gave me *six*, and gave E— *one*. You ought to hear them all laugh about that. John has not yet decided what he will do with his money. He comes up, and says, "All that letter to June?" I say, "Yes, I am giving her an account of my travels." My dear good and sensible little girl! I shall never forget how good she was the last night that I was at home, nor how she comforted her mother's heart.

P.S.—John has got the sum. His share of the three dollars is sixty-five and five-eighths cents.

Although Mrs. Spencer did not agree with Sam in his political principles, she loved him devotedly, and with admiration. She acknowledges in the midst of her regret:

Brother Sam lived a much larger life in Washington City than he ever could have done in North Carolina. He saw more, learned more, enjoyed more, and had an infinitely greater opportunity for doing good, helping other people and enlarging his own heart, than North Carolina could ever have given him. That he could help others was always his keenest enjoyment.

Just before her death she inscribed the following in her journal:

July 30, 1907—Whenever my mind receives fresh impulse from some written word of the masters, or a fresh view of faith or love, it turns to my Brother Sam, as having been my friend and guide in all good thoughts and aspirations. He never spoke at length. His words were few and well chosen, and his manner was impressive and weighty.

The subject of the reopening of the University suffers an eclipse after this for a little while. In 1873 the machinery was perfected which was going to permit it to open in 1875. But the waiting must have been the sickening suspense of hope deferred. However, there were still those who needed Mrs. Spencer in Chapel Hill.

In November of 1872 she writes Laura about many things:

DEAR LAURA :

Mrs. Thompson asked me last night if I did not think poor Ed Martin had joined our departed friends in Heaven? And if he had, would they know each other? And if they recognized him would they not ask him of us? and if they did ask him, could I not imagine him saying to Pa, "Mrs. Spencer's face was one of the last I looked upon. She was standing before me at the foot of my bed, when I died." And would not Mr. Spencer ask him about June? And would he not rejoice to tell him how often June came to see him, carrying things to him? She said, do you think such things inconsistent with Heaven? I cannot say what I think. How near is the next world to us! . . .

Mrs. Carr came a-calling just now. She has a new black silk, and her son Julian has sent her a good sum of money to buy her a velvet cloak. . . .

Miss Nancy Hilliard is even worse off, in more melancholy circumstances than ever. I do not suppose she has ten dollars in the whole world. I intend to ask Brother Sam if he thinks an appeal to some of Miss Nancy's old boarders would result in their making up a fund for her. I wish something could be suggested and done. Thanksgiving Day I shared my provisions with seven persons outside our family. I see no prospect before some of our poor neighbors here but to go to the poor house. There are too few left to help them. What is to become of them? . . .

Mrs. Loader came to take a farewell tea with me, before leaving next week. Sitting knitting very cosily, she leaned too far back and suddenly turned the neatest summersault you ever saw. I helped her up very demurely, and then I went out into the passage and laughed almost hysterically, till I was right weak! With which sprightly anecdote of high life, I will now conclude my letter. . . .

She found out what to do for the needy neighbors, for she wrote to many who had lived in Chapel Hill, and

especially those who had been treated generously in the past by Miss Nancy Hilliard, who had fed more boys, given more poor boys credit, done more work and earned more money than any woman in North Carolina.

Among Mrs. Spencer's papers there is a neat account book in which she has accounted to herself for the disposal of funds, running into hundreds of dollars, which she gathered and expended for the needs of her poor neighbors. It is all set down, receipts and disbursements. A load of wood to this one, money to that one, food to another. As her mother wrote of her, "There would not be a want, or a misery in the whole world, if my dear Cornelia could only help everybody."

December 31, 1872.

DEAR MRS. SWAIN :

People in Chapel Hill are poorer all the time. Mrs. Mickle was just saying that she saw no prospect before some of her poor neighbors but the poor house. There are very few families left to assist the poor, as formerly; and some who in old times did not think of asking help, are fast sinking into the condition of paupers. Would you ever have thought of Miss Nancy Hilliard as an object of charity, and yet I fear she is. They returned from Raleigh, much poorer than they left here, for they once had a good houseful of nice furniture, and they left all that behind them. Their experiment ended in disastrous failure. Dr. Burke Haywood gave Miss Nancy twenty-five dollars, and told her to come back here while she could—so they came, and Mr. Pool refused to let her go into her old house. They were without shelter, till Long & McCauley, who own the old Hotel, told them to go there and stay as long as they chose. So they are living there, in one room. They have two beds, and some china, and a table and a chair or two. Nothing else in the world! Mrs. Utley is grown imbecile, and is quite helpless, and Miss Nancy has hardly a trace of her old witty vivacity. The Carrs and the Barbees are very kind to them.



OLD SOUTH BUILDING AND THE WELL

I think I do Mr. Pool no injustice in saying that he would much prefer to see every building belonging to the University burned down, to having his place taken from him. He and Mason are superintendents of the University property. They will not do anything toward protecting the buildings. I think they invite their destruction. Gangs of negroes spend the nights in the Old South Building, rioting, shouting, drinking. You have no idea of the degradation. The Halls and Libraries are broken into at all times, and I am told that the Phi Library, which is especially in Mr. Pool's hands, has its books scattered all over the building. It makes me heartsick to write about it.

I stand at my window late in the night sometimes looking that way, expecting to see it all on fire.

The Brewers and the McIvers still live in their respective houses. Colonel Guthrie and his wife live in Miss Nancy's house, put there by Pool to keep Miss Nancy out. Neither the Episcopal nor the Presbyterian Churches have been opened in a year.

Lizzie Mickle still lives, a great sufferer. She cannot walk, cannot lie, sits in her chair all day, and all night. Mr. Mickle is a clerk in Raleigh. They are always cheerful—about my only resource for company now. I take it for granted this is all as interesting to you as it is to me.

Old Dr. November lies on his death bed. He has made a profession of religion. He told me all about it. He said, "Miss Cornelia, I liked to have been too late!" His principal pleasure is having some old friend sit and talk about old times. He says he knows he will see all the old faculty sitting up there in Heaven. He means to look for 'em!

Mr. Hogan died last week. His wife and six children in the depths of poverty, and the old father refuses to help them. He refused to go to his son's funeral. Oh do let me stop this chronicle of sorrow and suffering! You will feel as if you had been reading the book of *Lamentations*. My household is in good health. Ma is quite cheerful. June grows up apace, but is still fond of dolls and cats.

Yours most affectionately,

C. P. S.

XVI

THE UNIVERSITY BELL RINGS AGAIN

TO SEE a humanly-contrived establishment that you love, die before your eyes, whether it be a palace or simply a farm-home that sheltered your family, is surely a pitiful experience. Indeed, much of the subject matter of these papers is more than pathetic. Mrs. Spencer had assisted at the long-drawn out obsequies of this thing that she loved best, and she remained face to face with its corpse, still unburied. A college left deserted, as was this one, is the most disheartening of all such sights, because of the association it has with eager vivid youth, crowding generations of students, which it should be suggesting, when it is void and solitary.

The letters of 1873 and 1874 hold merely chronicles of small happenings. There occur some graceful verses, some rhymed epistles, written to please June, as from her favorite pussies, a riddle or two in rhyme,—such things as would while away one of those winter evenings which must have been long and heavy-going to a person like Mrs. Spencer, who loved to give portions to many when friendship was being shared. Resolutely cheerful, she could not help feeling the loneliness creep cold into her heart, as time passed and her hopes were delayed. By September, 1873, she writes that “Miss Nancy is failing. She begins to fear that she will never get well again. ‘Do you think I will?’ she says, looking at you so piteously.”

CHAPEL HILL, *November 12, 1873.*

DEAR CHARLES:

As you probably have learned by this time, our old friend and neighbor Miss Nancy Hilliard was released from her long

sufferings last Saturday morning at daylight. She had been entirely unconscious for thirty-six hours and died quite easily.

Her sufferings have been very great, let us hope she has entered upon rest. She was laid out in what she used to call the *dark room* of the old Hotel, next to what was for many years her bed-room. Her face assumed a very sweet peaceful expression. The funeral was held that afternoon, the condition of the poor body forbidding further delay. No minister in town, and no religious service or observances unless you call such the tolling of our church bell. Just as this began, and the little procession moved from the door, the University bell joined in. It was very affecting, and brought tears to my eyes. No one knew who was paying the tribute, but we heard afterwards it was John Mallett.¹ He said he thought it ought to be done, and indeed it did seem very suitable and right.

Very few persons were out, about twenty-five. She was buried beside her mother, who died in 1823, near the Phi enclosure, on the east side.

The small sum subscribed for her by Miss Nancy's old boarders is nearly gone. What is to become of old Mr. and Mrs. Utley? It was pitiful to see poor old deaf-mute Lem Yancey following Miss Nancy to her grave with his head bent down. Worthless as he was, as long as she had a biscuit she divided it with him.

Sam has written twice this week; he inclosed ten dollars in his last letter "for Miss Nancy's use." I longed to give it to Mrs. Utley but must write him for further instructions, Miss Nancy being dead.

January 9, 1874.

MY DEAR JUNE:

At Sunday School, I heard that poor Sally Hearne was dying. I resolved to go tomorrow, and take her something. When I got home, here was a good fire, and a hot cup of tea for me waiting on the hearth, and after I had drunk the tea, I began to think of that poor pretty girl, and what if it had been *my girl*, instead.

¹ Son of a physician who had lived in Chapel Hill and still retained property there. He probably happened to be in the village.

I felt that I must do something right away. So I put on my things and gathered up something to take and set off. It was bitter cold. Mrs. McIver joined me at her gate, and I told her of the poor child. It is typhoid pneumonia, insufficient clothing and insufficient food. They live in the upstairs of the house, another family in the downstairs part. We went up, and the girl is very low, her recovery doubtful. Poor child, they say she calls her father all the while. So young, so pretty.

January 10—Poor Sally Hearne is no better. I went up and saw her. The room was so close it made me sick. I told Mrs. Hearne they would all have typhoid if she did not let fresh air in. I opened one of the windows. Poor Sally lay insensible with her pretty brown eyes closed. I grieve for her, and yet it may be a great mercy, that God is taking her out of this troublesome world where her prospects for comfort or happiness are so slender.

Uncle Charles sent me ten dollars for old Couch, and when he came to get his money he was the most wretched looking object you ever saw. I told him to wash his face and make himself look like a white man, that no woman in the country would marry him if he went about like that. You ought to have seen the smile in his old bleared eyes.

January 14—This is the thirtieth letter I have written this year. I have four more that ought to be written. Uncle Charles writes me that there is good hope that the University may soon be reorganized. I felt so happy and lifted up, after reading that, for two days, that I did not notice the weather. The sleet seemed all sunshine.

The following letter is to Judge W. H. Battle:

January 24, 1874.

JUDGE BATTLE, RALEIGH, N. C.

DEAR SIR:

I am in some respects like the importunate widow in scripture. I keep coming to the *Judge*. However there the parallel ends. My judge is in no respect like hers.

About Uncle Ben and Aunt Dilsey, (I am all the time being employed for other folks, it seems to me), Brother Charles writes that if tenants who will pay rent want the Fetter place, they must be allowed to take it in preference to any other. But that Uncle Ben and Dilsey may be still permitted to live in one of the kitchens.

This plan is not a brilliant one for several reasons. First, no white tenant would want an independent colored family on the lot. Second, Ben would not live on such terms with any family. Third, there is but one kitchen which is habitable.

Nat King tells me he wants to rent the land, and can make it pay a rent of \$35.00 a year. He is a hard working man and has two stout sons, and will make the land pay better than anyone else.

Jim Watson wants the house, and part of the garden. I doubt if he can pay any rent at all. His habits are not good. The worst of letting such houses to such white tenants is that they do all their work in there, besides all the tobacco chewing and spitting.

Cooking in a dining room is no advantage to the flooring, nor is the practise of spitting against walls and chair boards good for the appearance of things. My proposal would be, let King have the land and let Uncle Ben have the kitchen, and part of the garden, rent free on condition of keeping things up. You might say at one dollar a month. There is some fruit on the place. He could pay one dollar a month for his share of garden and fruit.

April 24, 1874.

MY DEAR MRS. LACY:²

I hope the lectures on gossip in the *Presbyterian* helped the cause at Peace Institute a little. The young ladies up here professed to be delighted, but one had the *sass* to send me word she had a heap of nice little bits of neighborhood news she had been saving up to tell me, but now I should not hear a bit!

We still have a tiny *white* Sunday School here, and a good large *colored* one, and a sewing circle of little girls

² Mrs. Drury Lacy, wife of a well known Presbyterian minister of Raleigh.

who are trying to make something for Foreign Missions, in time for the May Collection. My June is the oldest girl in the Society. The youngest one is six, and she can thread needles for the President whose eyes are not so good as they have been. I want to send a small box of our little works to you to Peace Institute, in hopes that the girls, understanding where they come from, may buy 'em.

There are pretty little pin-cushions, emeries, ruffs, cushions, etc., such as school girls would be likely to fancy. . . . There will not be more than five or ten dollars worth, and the little girls have worked so lovingly for the church which most of them know by name only, for we have not had a service since last September, and only two services in two year's time. . . . With love for all Peaceful people, Yours affectionately,

C. P. S.

At the risk of reiterating too often the saying that it was an almost extinct society that lingered in the fast crumbling habitations of Chapel Hill, there might be quoted, from her niece's telling, the story of the death of "Old Couch," the town drunkard:

He had fallen, through drink, to a condition lower than the brutes. At last, a negro, passing his little house by the roadside, a miserable hovel, brought Mrs. Spencer word that, "Old Couch was a-dyin'."

Laying aside her work, she armed herself with food and clothing, called me, and together we entered his hut. There on a pile of leaves and rags lay what was once a man, burning with fever.

Sending to a near-by cabin for a basin of warm water, and kneeling on the broken floor, Mrs. Spencer with her own hands began to bathe his face and throat. Looking up at me after a few minutes of hard work, she exclaimed, "Why Lucy, he's got blue eyes!"

She cut away his filthy rags, clothed him decently, fed him with broth, had a bed brought in with clean coverings, and when the poor outcast breathed his last it was in the guise of a man, and not like a beast.

January, 1875, finds June Spencer at school in Raleigh, at Peace Institute. Letters begin to come thick, written to her like any mother's to any daughter, about clothes, and studies, and girlish doings and needs. Mrs. Spencer's increasing deafness reconciled her to solitude. She became accustomed to her still grey life, she sat alone, or with only a very old lady and a cat for companions, and outside the house always the moribund village to look at. But the long lane is about to turn.

On March 10, 1875, Mrs. Spencer writes to June in Raleigh: "The trustees of the University are having their meeting in Raleigh today. What they will do, can do, no one knows." But this time they got hold of the right end of their money tangle. The judge, before whom the litigation came, instructed the lawyer to construe the decree about the University liberally;³ and so

* The bill for reopening the University of North Carolina pledged the state to pay toward the maintainance of the University legal interest upon \$125,000, this sum remaining of the Land Scrip money which had been obtained by Governor Swain under the Morrill Act as North Carolina's allotment. This sum, \$125,000, had been turned over to the treasurer of Governor Holden's Board of Trustees, and had been invested by him in "Special Tax" railroad bonds which were now repudiated by a conservative General Assembly. The state, however, was still responsible to the United States Government for the principal; and by the majority of only *one* they voted to pay interest on this debt to be given to the University, thus making re-opening possible. The Supreme Court of the United States, opinion by Chief Justice Waite, decided that no part of the equipment of a state educational institution could be sold for debt,—thus preserving the plant, the buildings, campus, libraries, furniture, and faculty houses from being sold. A debt owed by the University to the defunct State Bank was at this time declared valid, but was afterwards reduced to 25 cents on the dollar. Twenty thousand dollars had now been pledged by the alumni towards repair and re-opening. Very little else, besides possible future tuition fees, was in sight. The State Bank pressed for the debt owing to it, and Mr. William B. Snow, an attorney of Raleigh, was appointed Commissioner to report as to what property should be exempt. Mr. Snow consulted Judge Bond, of the United States Court, in regard to his report. Judge Bond said, "Be liberal. It is the University, for the education of the young," so six hundred acres beside, of adjoining land, was set aside as added to the exempt property. The

the decision of this whole question was to come finally from the General Assembly. The last of the old *Pen and Ink Sketches of the University* had closed with the words:

To the Alumni must the University look for her restoration. To the Alumni have I addressed these desultory papers, in the hope of kindling their attachment, and awakening their interest.

To the alumni and their influence, constantly rallied as it had been by Mrs. Spencer, and no other, to the support of the old Institution, was due the long fight, and final passage of the bill for the financial reorganization and support of the University, a bill which passed its first reading by only one vote, but which was adopted unanimously on its second and third readings. March 20, 1875, was Mrs. Spencer's fiftieth birthday. It was on that day that the news was telegraphed to her, a few minutes after the bill was safe. She called her few young girls, her scholars, her neighbors' children, and with them mounted the stairs to the belfry. It was no funeral peal which waked the echoes when for half an hour she told the hills and trees, and the few living souls left within the joyful sound, that the days of silence and defeat were over.

Grandmother Phillips is writing a little later to June. She tells her of all the news that is budding with the spring:

The faculty houses are to be put in complete order as soon as possible, a herculean task, when outbuildings and fences have mostly been destroyed, and floors and partitions ripped remaining University land, when offered for sale to pay the debt to the bank, was bought in by Mr. Paul Cameron of Hillsborough, North Carolina, one of the new Board of Trustees, and a life-long friend and benefactor of the University.

out for fire-wood. You must come home to take care of your dear generous mother, for she is pressed into service by public as well as private imposition. Last week we had five gentlemen here, some of them for all night. Many strangers are coming to Chapel Hill.

Our quiet times will all be changed. Dear old Chapel Hill has suffered enough to appreciate prosperity. Everyone is repairing their front fences.

As Mrs. Spencer expressed it in one of her sketches:

I have given the entire first act of the drama, that there should be a farce interlude seems consistent, but the curtain will rise again, on fairer scenes, new actors, and a prouder story for Chapel Hill, as no one who loves North Carolina is willing to doubt.

Writing in the year 1900, she says:

How all that storm and stress has passed—passed away as a cloud passes after a thunder storm, leaving the sky clear and the birds singing again. I have survived nearly all the actors and sufferers of that day. Looking back, coolly and dispassionately, at those men and their measures, there seems ground for disapproval still, and for *contempt*! Thanksgiving that they were so triumphantly defeated. Rev. Sol Pool, so often mentioned in my letters to his disadvantage, died in Greensboro', North Carolina, this past April—an invalid for several years—from a paralytic stroke. What a miserable story his so called Presidency of the University of North Carolina.

In June, 1875, Mrs. Spencer is writing to urge her brother Charles, who has been "recalled to the University from Davidson College, to resume the Chair of Mathematics," to accept the call:

It is time for you to be making up your mind about returning to Chapel Hill. It is a sort of duty. You ought to return. But when I sit down and think about it all, I feel down in the mouth. I want to feel all glorious, and I cannot!

Mr. Pool offers his house for sale and wishes to move away—is going to deliver lectures, on what subject I do not know. Has invented a calculating machine and got a patent for it. Has just returned from a trip North, to Boston, etc. Has seven sons, and I should think would want to get out of Chapel Hill with 'em.

It is clear that Mrs. Spencer never could live in love and charity with Mr. Pool. A little further along in this letter, she calls him an "Edomite" and he is thus dismissed from her mind and her writings.

CHAPEL HILL, May 26, 1875.

DEAR JUNE:

Kemp Battle and John Manning and Mr. Cameron were all here last week when the trustees met. Kemp stayed with me. Mr. Manning and his boy came after tea, and he and Kemp and Mr. Dalton, and Mr. McIver, who stuck to the trustees like a tick, sat on the piazza and agreed there were nowhere such trees, such moonlight, such air as here in Chapel Hill.

It was delightful to hear those old students talk. There seemed to be a constant disposition among them to be shaking hands, all the time. I hear there is to be some racing as to whose boy will be first on the ground. Since Governor Graham cannot take the Presidency, has Kemp Battle the least notion of that place?

I should think not. I am astonished that anyone should think he would want to come here. It would be like the olive, leaving its fatness to become king.

All that summer the carpenters, under the surveillance of Mr. Paul Cameron, of Hillsborough, a most devoted trustee, were repairing roofs and making the place habitable after the years of disuse. In September the opening took place. Mrs. Spencer decorated the Chapel for this occasion, using wreaths of evergreen, the portraits of the old worthies, and a great motto in evergreen letters, her own motto, *Laus Deo*. The students were

fifty-nine in number, who gathered in to the reopened institution.

While the world outside had been forging ahead for the last decade, North Carolina had retrograded in every way. Money was scarce, and enthusiasm dead. It was a small beginning-again, and not a restoration that was taking place. There must be years of work, before the level was reached of the days just before the Civil War. The endowment was gone, and the legislature was in a most penurious mood regarding the new expense needful. The denominational colleges were not pleased to have an old superior come back as a competitor. They knew how to make this react on the appropriations for a good many years to come. The old men would feel more like weeping than joy, like the older priests in Ezra's time who had seen the first temple; there was not much to bring elation in the reopening, hopeful as it was. Sons of many men of distinction were among that first band of students. Among them was one of Governor Vance's sons. No President was elected this first tentative year. Mr. W. J. Peele, one of that first class, describes the look of things as he first saw them:

On my arrival at Chapel Hill I noticed that there was a subdued silence throughout the grounds. A few lonely looking students could be seen going in and out of the old buildings, selecting their rooms, which were now musty from disuse. Occasionally might be seen relics and reminders of old student life.

I saw, written in chalk in one of the old recitation rooms, a memorandum of the brief and disastrous attempt to continue the University after the death of Governor Swain, by those unfamiliar with its traditions. It read, "This old University has busted and gone to hell today," and then the writer fixed the day and date of the catastrophe.

A new start always brings a number of those who need, as the boys put it, to "back up a length and start again." And this first class had some unruly members, who lost no time in getting insubordinate. One of these was Governor Vance's own son. Mrs. Spencer plead for him but she could not help the course of justice. Following this in a day or two, Mrs. Spencer received a long letter from Kemp Battle, then Secretary of the Trustees, on the subject of clemency to these boys. He was like Governor Swain in working through honor and trust to control the students by means of their self control. When this same year he was chosen President he knew how to steer the craft without touching any one's prejudices, or self will, and was a conciliator. He had a great mission, and fulfilled it by reason of his nature and training. All through this political turmoil he is said to have been a man whom all parties trusted as being honest and fair. After he came to the University, he continued his course of disarming and conciliating, and he was needed for that very quality. A fighter would have embroiled the feeble institution with interests at enmity with it, and would have very likely wrecked it in the very inception.

Charles Phillips came back to his old home, and so did two more of the old faculty, Professors Hooper and Kimberly, and so there were some familiar faces in Chapel Hill. Mrs. Spencer is writing all about it to Mrs. Swain, who is in Illinois with her daughter Ellie. This is in the summer of 1876:

. . . Brother Charles does not like living in the Swain home, he says his memories oppress him dreadfully. . . .

But I have lived to see another Commencement—have lived to see the Chapel crowded once more, and seven hundred and fifty *fans* in motion at once—have seen the Campus

thronged, and the procession marching, "what time the sound of all kinds of music."

But we were disappointed in two of our speakers. Professor Kerr, who was to speak about Scientific Agriculture, was appointed one of the Centennial judges. He had to go to Philadelphia last week, and throw us over. Governor Vance, who was to have delivered an eulogy on Governor Swain, threw it up, because his son David was dismissed from the University this spring in company with four other boys, for insubordination. Vance could not get over it. I was disappointed in him that he showed so little self-control. Of course it was mortifying, but he ought to be used by now to having David dismissed from school. It was the fourth time he has been sent home in disgrace, and to throw up such an engagement and disappoint everybody who was hoping to hear justice done to Governor Swain by one who knew him well, and owed so much to him! Well! I wouldn't have thought it of Vance! The worst of it was, that he never sent any word to the trustees till just a week before Commencement. He wrote me as soon as David got home, but as he sent no formal notification to the authorities, I supposed he had got over his pet. If he had let them know about it at once, they would have invited Brother Sam, who was the man who should have done it any way, in the first place.

The company did not begin to come in great numbers till Tuesday, when Nellie Battle led the train driving into town in an open carriage with Mr. Duncan Cameron. Next came another carriage with Judge Battle, and several young ladies. Next came Watson's hack with June, and Alice Kerr, and her brother, Will. This was the happiest group of all, for me.

Then a long line of carriages and vehicles of every sort, and then the Salisbury band, resplendent, with six horses, came in, just a-playing! Did I not wish I was a little darkey just then, so that I could run along the side-walk and screech!

Commencement is Commencement. No time is like it. I will send you a newspaper about it as soon as I can get hold of one, and proceed to tell you such items as do not get into the papers.

Nellie Battle was the belle of course, but Mary Loder came from Raleigh too. Danced at the ball till morning. *Mary Loder!* I wonder what modern Methodism is coming to! When I was young, Methodists could not even wear artificial flowers!

Brother Charles was not well enough to be out. He has been in a very bad condition for several months past, and has not been able to do anything in college for six weeks. He has improved so far as to be sitting about the house a little, and can enjoy seeing his friends.

A little later, Kemp Battle writes at length to Mrs. Spencer, to ask her opinion of his being President of the University. Then after he is chosen, he writes:

I have long been trying to engineer Dr. Charles Phillips into the Presidency, but his illness has thwarted me. When the trustees decided that I was the "best man under the circumstances" I did not refuse. I have had opportunities.

I have been student, tutor, trustee, before and after, Secretary of the Board, lawyer, politician, member of the Constitutional Convention, president of a railroad, banker, lobbyist, planter. These have trained me for the grandest of all trades perhaps. Time only will show. If I succeed it will be a crown of honor.

You will help me I know, you will always talk to me candidly and fully. Dr. Phillips will work with me as cordially as any one could.

I do not feel so burdened with *you* to help me, as I otherwise would, but my thoughts of the future are very solemn.

For this first Commencement Mrs. Spencer wrote a hymn, which follows:

CLOSING HYMN, FOR UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT
OF 1876

Eternal source of light and truth
To Thee again, our hearts we raise.
Except Thou build and keep the house,
In vain the laborer spends his days.

Without Thine aid in vain our zeal
Strives to rebuild these broken walls,
Vainly our sons invoke the Muse
Among these sacred groves and halls.

From off Thine altar send a coal
As burning seraphs erst have brought,
Relight the flame that once inspired
The faithful teachers and the taught.

Pour on our path, th' unclouded light
That from Thy constant favor springs;
Let heart and hand be strong beneath
The shadow of Thy mighty wings.

Recall O God the golden days,
May rude unfruitful discord cease,
Our sons in crowds impatient throng
These ancient haunts of white-robed peace.

So shall our upward way be fair,
As that our sainted fathers trod,
Again the Priest and Muse declare
The holy oracles of God.

XVII

PLEASANT PLACES

WHATEVER Mrs. Spencer's faults were, she was not a maddeningly perfect person. She was often pleasantly wrong-headed, interestingly opinionated; was liable in her deafness to get hold of a false impression and ride it far and hard; was sometimes ultra-conservative, and often fiercely partisan, and yet with all this, she was a loyal friend and loving, as much as anyone who has lived. Everybody who has ever known her well tells the same tale. It is not mere politeness. All sorts and conditions of people came to her for sympathy, trusted her, and expressed to her their inmost thoughts. She loved folks, and she loved every little trait which made them genuine and individual. After a long strain of expectancy, such as has been shown in former chapters, anything else which can happen to such a woman is in the nature of an anticlimax. And yet there is a good deal more that should be interesting. There are a great many more letters and some writings, which ought to appeal to a reader who has come thus far, and been interested. It is this mass of material, greater and more minute than what has gone before, that is to be sifted for the remainder of this book. And if it does not help the story, which has been told already perhaps, it will at least round out a character which is worth revealing for its own sake.

To Mrs. Ellen Mitchell Summerell she writes a long full letter:

CHAPEL HILL, *December 8, 1876.*

MY DEAR ELLEN:

I have been in bed all day, trying to beat off an incipient cold. I straggled out of bed a little before dark and got into

my wrapper and drank my tea which June brought me, read a little in a new book Kemp Battle brought me (*English Radical Leaders*), and getting tired of it, and finding June deep in a new *History of Rome*, and disinclined to talk, I have reached over the table for my portfolio, and resolved to have a little conversation with you before I go to bed again.

The only paper I find is this foolscap, which I hope you will excuse. Ma had a very good letter from your sister Margaret last night. It was so satisfying, and so *natural*—seeming to write her thoughts as they arose. She wants Ma to tell her something of your Mother's young days, and how she appeared before Eliza's birth.

I have your letter received this week to thank you for also. It is a pleasure that you write us as if you felt sure of our sympathy. I think as we advance in life the ties that were formed in childhood and early youth are the strongest of all. The scenes and associations of middle and busy life wear out and fade from the mind, and these earlier ones start out afresh. All that you say of your mother and your daughter and their deaths, is deeply, sorrowfully interesting to me. I know what a gap is left in your life by the death of your child. The loss of a grown son or daughter has always seemed to combine all the elements of calamity. At every turn you are reminded of them in one or another capacity. Child, friend, companion, assistant, comfort, while round one who had been so much of an invalid as Phena had gathered a double amount of tender oversight and indulgence. It will be long 'ere your heart ceases to bleed. Yet time will do much for you, and God's grace will do more. There is so much to be thankful for, chief and foremost that she *went safe*. That she had so evidently been making ready for her departure, so that when the messenger came, she was not frightened or unwilling. You will find comfort insensibly, in dwelling on the tokens of God's love to you and to her, all along the way He led you.

Mary Phillips¹ came over yesterday, and we talked a long time of you all. Phena is the fourth one of Mary's school-mates who has died within a few months. Mary is a pleasant

¹ Mrs. Mary Phillips Verner, Charles Phillips' oldest daughter.

conversable, sympathetic companion. She has two children, has married I judge a man of sense, industry and energy. The second son, Will, is doing well in college in the Department of Natural Science. They say he will make a fine chemist. The third son, Alex, is studying well, but I do not think him especially talented. They are all good boys in the main, without bad habits or principles. Brother Charles is still in Washington City, recuperating. Writes cheerfully, but longs for home. They live, as you know, in Governor Swain's house. It was Mr. Green's in your day. "A great castle" Laura says, "without any room in it." The Hoopers² have moved again, this time from the Hubbard house to the *Wheat* house. Helen Hooper is a fine woman. I like her very much. She is now absorbed in attendance on her invalid husband.

Mrs. Mary Hooper is as we knew her years ago, very kind and sweet, very agreeable in her manners; a woman of great natural sensibility and refinement of mind, and with unusual culture. But she has some marked peculiarities. A disposition to say sharp or biting things strikes me most, I suppose, because she so often turns this arrow on me. When I was a little girl, and afterwards a young woman, Mrs. Hooper's amusement was to tease me about my *nose*. Now she is perpetually alluding to my deafness. In some way or other, more or less offensive, she makes me remember how deeply my deprivation impresses her, sometimes lamentably, sometimes *ridiculously*. And she is quite hard of hearing herself, which makes her remarks upon me the more singular. However she is truly good, and kind and charitable and sincere, a woman to have a conservative influence, which I think in these days is of immense value. Professor Hooper is even more of a Bourbon (as it is the fashion to call those who cling to the past) than his wife. They studiously shrink from the "progress of the age" and think the times are "awful."

Old Dr. Hooper was far ahead of them both. What a lovely old man he was! I envied you the having had him at your house for a few days to entertain and make much of—

²This Professor Hooper was the son of the one who resigned long ago when Governor Swain became President, and who had just died at this late day.

and now he and your dear mother have both gone over to the great majority and are numbered with the saints in glory everlasting. I love to think of these old friends, to talk of them, and to recall the days when they were young and we were children. Brother Sam on his late visit to North Carolina told me he had enjoyed nothing more than to come upon anecdotes of Dr. Mitchell among the people in the mountains, and over on the borders of Alamance and Chatham counties where he is well remembered and talked of.

Chapel Hill still retains many external features of its old forms, and looks quite familiar, but its society has not yet recovered from the exodus that followed the break-up of the University. The families who have come in of late do not amalgamate, and there is less of sociability, less of neighborliness than I ever knew. A disposition to adhere to church lines in association is something I can never bear. When Kemp Battle and his lovely and gracious wife come here to live, I think they will fuse these elements, and make these new-comers understand what the conditions of a state institution really are. Kemp is surely the right man for his place. He brings an enthusiasm and a love for the University that no money could buy, and which is indispensable and inestimable. They are about to pull down and rebuild the Judge's old house. It looks forlorn enough now, but Mr. and Mrs. K. P. Battle are young enough yet to look forward, and enjoy planning. After fifty one ceases to do much of that. At least it does not come natural.

We have very agreeable letters from Charles while in Washington, supplemented by Sam's comments. Charles was deputed to escort Sister Fanny and Cornelia to one of Mrs. Fish's receptions. Charles went, in his simplicity, and knew nothing about it, and when he arrived, he found himself at a grand ball,—ladies *décolletées* in all the full splendor of evening dress. Sam says poor Charles looked through his spectacles, and over them, and under them, at old necks and shoulders which Clay and Webster had often seen displayed. Mrs. Fish, herself, dressed in a tarlatan, is considerably over fifty.

June stopped at Brother Sam's returning from New York and the Centennial. She was very much delighted with what she saw, but chiefly I think with Mount Vernon, it being a place to stir deeper feelings than those aroused by ordinary sight-seeing. . . .

Wednesday, December 13—I have written this at intervals, having been in bed mostly since I began it. Have had a very heavy cold, not yet worn off yet by any means, but I am dressed and feel more civilized. Ma has just such another, but she will not *give up* and go to bed, and have her tea brought to her, and her feet bathed and her head comforted. She will stay up, and she likes to make her tea herself. Your mother was so different in many ways from mine. Ma still reads much of her time—enjoys the *New York Post*, and the *Nation*, and the *New York Observer*. But I see her Bible more frequently on her lap than any other book. She thinks much of her approaching change. I think she is afraid of the prolonged struggle at the last. What a mercy is an unconscious and gradual withdrawal without pain or observation.

June sits near me, reading her German. She is very steady and painstaking in all her occupations. Still very young and childlike. When I look at her, and think what you have lately lost, I wonder, if, should God's judgment take my child away, would God's grace be given me to bear my trouble as you have done.

I have written this unconscionably long letter partly to please myself, and partly in the hope of withdrawing your mind for a short time from sad thoughts. Whether I in any degree succeed or not, dear Ellen, you may take it as an expression of friendship and sympathy. May God bless you and yours. You will not have a Merry Christmas, nor a Happy New Year, but you will by degrees take comfort, and be able again to enjoy life, and the blessings that remain to you. You always have "Hope" you know!

Very affectionately, and truly,

C. P. SPENCER

Mrs. Spencer, having seen her first object restored to life again, seems to have felt the need of a cause. The

one she chose was that of woman's, or as they called it then, "Female" education. She wrote at this time a letter to Major Bingham, a veteran educator of boys, keeper of a famous classical and military school, which his father had kept before him. This letter is not preserved, or at least not at hand, but the reply tells a good deal :

January 22, 1876.

DEAR MADAM :

In answering your letter, . . . there is in this state a great apathy on the subject of male education. There are twenty-five or more female schoolbuildings in North Carolina, costing from twenty to fifty thousand dollars. There are twenty-five hundred *girls* going to boarding schools, paying a hundred dollars a year for instruction. I am touching on the difference in male and female education in this state. First the cost. The cost of female education and its value are, I consider, like the legs of a lame man that are not equal; value a pitiful stump, value I mean as affecting a woman's life work. The girls can get a good solid education, the boys are put behind the plough handles.

I have heard of Mary Lyon. I wish she would come down here before my girls come to the front.

The male and female intellect is an old and vexed question; too old and vexed to discuss here. Dr. Johnson's idea about a woman who speaks in public, etc., being like a dog that walks on his hind-legs, is about right. But Bishop Pearce of the M. E. Church said that the records of Methodist Education showed little if any difference, in simple power of acquisition in girls and boys, young men or young women. But that one thing indicated overwhelmingly inherent weakness in the sex, to wit their style of dress.

Men's fashions change, but never hamper the person, or prevent locomotion. Women's fashions change and go to extremes, hamper the person, expose to cold, prevent locomotion, and destroy comfort. Men dress to please themselves. Women dress, not to please men, nor themselves, but to excite envy in each other. This is all Bishop Pearce, not me.

I am glad that ugly woman got the Greek prize, but her Greek and the culture superinduced by it will hardly add to her capacity of performing her duties as wife and mother. Common law is common sense. A woman ceases to exist if she marries.

This absorption by and in her new condition is overlooked by female education, it seems to me. More money is spent in North Carolina, teaching girls to *sing*, to yell like hyenas and tear the piano to pieces, than would sustain ten first class male schools of 75 to a hundred boys each—And what a difference would there be in results!

I hope the University is doing well. It is the hope of the State.

Is not this a strange letter to be writing to Mrs. Spencer? She was not dampened by it as regards her zeal for education. There are many little traces, such as the one in the next letter, showing that she was now speaking a word for the girls whom Major Bingham thinks are so negligible. To Mrs. Ellen Mitchell Summerell:

April 5, 1877.

MY DEAR ELLEN:

The same mail brought me yours of the third, and one from your sister Margaret, written as becomes such a High Church woman as she is, on Easter Monday. I will not say to you that I enjoyed them both. You know me and my tastes well enough to be sure that I prize one word from old friends far more than many words from new ones. And especially of late years, as I begin to go down the slope, I turn more to the past and feel drawn to revive old friendships with greater warmth. I am very glad that you write to me, my replying to you at once you must take as the proof of it.

Margaret told me Eliza had gone to pay you a visit. I enjoy the thought of the comfort it must be to you to have your sisters so near you. There are compensations amid all our troubles. Their removal to Statesville has helped you all through the sorrows of last November, and reunited you just when reunion is most needed and most beneficial.

Poor Mary,¹ I often think of her, and her lot in life, with wonder. Perhaps, when we all meet in the next life we shall talk it over, being then able to see how each of us was led by our Father's hand into the very trials that were needed to root out the evil, and develop the virtue, to try the faith, and enrich the experience. If Mary had married a man more suited to her, she might have been the foremost woman in all North Carolina today, as widely known and loved and respected as her Father was in his day. Instead of that her astonishing energy of mind and body, her wonderful executive ability, her courage and hopefulness, her education and talents, have been made to find their field in repairing the breaches caused by the errors and follies of her husband—in trying to keep up and sustain him and his family—to raise her children under more untoward surroundings than you or I can ever imagine—happy if she can feel their daily bread secured by hardest labor.

Was this the discipline needed for her high spirit? Or is it because the Master takes only His choicest tools for His hardest jobs, and she will be seen some day with a far brighter crown than some of us who have spent our lives in comparative ease and sloth. I used to admire Mary in our youth, more than I liked her. I like her now as much as I admire, and trust that at evening time she will find light and peace in seeing her children successfully established in that strange land.

Her piety towards those two old ladies, her husband's mother and aunt, more than repaid by her own children and grandchildren, and her husband able to thank her for deserved discipline. . . .

I do agree with you in the feeling that more calamity, more trouble and disaster is abroad than in my young days. People of fifty years old and more are able to look back for more than a generation, and may see that this is but the harvest time of seed sown many years ago. I feel certain that I have seen the measures meted by mothers, measured back to their daughters more than thirty years afterwards, and the wrongs done by fathers bearing bitter fruit to be plucked by their sons.

¹ Mrs. Richard Ashe, nee Mary Mitchell of Chapel Hill, moved out to California after the Civil War, where she suffered the many hardships common to pioneers.

There are such seasons recurring at intervals all along the course of time. I feel more and more what a priceless inheritance that of a godly ancestry may be.

My Mother had an aunt who lived in what Ma calls the "Lake Country" of New York State. She was perhaps ninety when she died, and judging from her letters written at long intervals to Ma, continued till near her death, she was a woman of deep piety, with some tinge of mysticism, great familiarity with the Scripture, and a turn for philosophical speculation. Her letters were quite remarkable, for she must have been self taught in her youth; but she kept close to the word of God. In her extreme old age her mind seemed clearer than ever, and some of her expressions about the "signs of the times" as she loved to say, were almost prophetic. She wrote her last letter before the War broke out, but she firmly believed there was a great trouble preparing for the land, and afflictions such as had never been seen, to be followed by a great awakening of the Church. I recall many of her expressions now with wonder. Ma talks often of "Aunt Angeline" with great respect. Old people of naturally strong understanding who read their Bibles as children do, with implicit belief and confidence, do attain in age to an extraordinary insight into the tendency of public events. Such and such things have been, and therefore they are not afraid to declare that such and such will follow.

Yes, the dear old University seems to be setting its feet down firmly once more. Kemp Battle is, I feel certain, the right man for the place. His courage and cheerful energy in the face of difficulty, his promptness, firmness, and unselfish devotion to the cause, give him a more heroic attitude in my eyes than I had hitherto supposed him capable of.

The old chapel will be ready for re-occupation before Commencement. The new chemical laboratory (under the University Library) is now lit with gas, and the boys are at work in their long aprons down there, distilling, combining, resolving, experimenting, in a way that leaves the old ways far behind. The new idea is to make the students do all laboratory work for themselves.

I went up to see the North Carolina Centennial banner the other day, with some ladies. (This banner you know, the ladies of North Carolina have presented to the Historical Society for safe keeping.) It is now in the Library, and then we went down to the Lab. and watched the young chemists there. I said, O that Dr. Mitchell could see them! You will be glad to know that Brother Charles's son Will seems likely to distinguish himself in this Department of Chemistry. The professors give him high praise. Strange that not one of my Father's grandsons has any liking for, or proficiency in mathematical studies, and the only one of them so far evincing any mental energy is a chemist! The Centennial banner is neat, modest, tasteful—I like it, though Brother Sam says it made but a poor show among the heraldic splendors of the Northern States. I am glad we have got it back home. It suits us, *me judice*.

Poor Charles is tied hand and foot these seven weeks with rheumatism, unable today to lift himself in bed—he finds himself broken winged just when he would like to be making superhuman efforts and doing the work of three men—Was this the discipline he also needed for his strong will, and somewhat overbearing temper? It is severe indeed to him, but no impatient or fretful or peevish expression ever escaped him. I wish sometimes he was cross, rather than so silent, so depressed, so low. He had a very painful attack this time, is for a day or two somewhat better.

We are hoping to see Brother Sam, who would have come ten days ago, if he could have been spared from his post in Washington.

Ma has been very poorly, as I have been, with a terrible cold. We are both over it, but look both of us the worse. June too has not been well. She and I are both undergoing a course of iron and quinine. I hope this will fit me at least for sundry tramps this spring, to Otey's Retreat, Cave's Mill, and the like. Margaret announces that she is getting "too old" for such delights. It is only because she has left off the habit so long. With a bunch of laurel, or a tress of jessamine in

view, I could tramp it as gaily now as thirty years ago. It is one of my pleasures that June has grown up here and loves these localities as warmly as any of us. It makes her more a part of myself, and when I see her walking off with the sons of old college beaux of mine, to the "Roaring Fountain" or "Otey's Retreat" I felt right dizzy with the feeling that it is me—myself, with my youth restored. There are half a dozen young men in college whose fathers were friends of mine. I love to have them come to see us—I was going to say "to see me" when happily I remembered that perhaps I was not the principal attraction! June is still much of a child, but being sprightly and intelligent, has made friends and is popular. I don't let her call herself a full blown young lady yet, but you know that in a college society it is nearly impossible to prevent early gallantry. Fortunately the boys have a certain awe of Mrs. Spencer which makes it easier to control their assiduities.

Mrs. Shober has written to me of her intentions and I warn President Battle that he will have to take part in a tableau on Commencement Day. I declare I think it would be a pretty sight. A group of pretty girls offering gracefully their tribute to the University equipment.

Only I think North Carolina ought to give the girls of the state some attention as well as the boys. Co-education will never do in these latitudes, but don't you think the State ought to make some provision for teaching its girls? When I think of the poor crumbs they have to pick up, I get angry.

Mr. Battle encourages June and Lucy in their attendance at the College Lecture museum this winter, but there are too few girls here to carry on such attendance. And yet I do want June to have some instruction in physics.

The Davie Poplar is leafing out wonderfully—more an emblem of the University than ever. The lightning struck, but did not kill it. I see old Lem Yancey walking by. Very poor, but always lighting up with a smile. Benton Utley creeps about the streets, ragged and shabby. *Quantum mutatus!* There are not many in Chapel Hill whom you knew, but the

rocks and woods and hills are here yet, and I want you to come this summer and pay me a visit, and walk all round everywhere. Can you not? June says she means to go to the mountains with Mrs. Grant, and I want you to come and see me. So come on, and bring Hope with you. Ma sends her love. She heard lately of the death of her only remaining brother. She remains alone of a family of seven. She is getting as deaf as I am, but does not like to be reminded of it. Have you seen Dr. Deems' new *Sunday Magazine*? He wants me to write for it, and maybe I will. Meanwhile I am not doing anything in particular. I teach Lucy Phillips and June, Racine, and Horace. June teaches her five little girls. I read aloud to her at night, Shakespeare, Hugh Miller, Macaulay, and now and then a good novel. The Dr. did not send me his love, but I will send him mine. Sister Laura sends you her love. She is a wonderful example of endurance and patience. How many long illnesses has she nursed Brother Charles through, and yet is steadfast, cheerful, and all efficient. I love her more and more as we both grow older.

Now I must close and go to society meeting. We have a tiny sewing society and a tiny Sunday School. With a kiss to your little Hope, whom I wish to see very much, I am

Your very affectionate old friend,

CORNELIA

It was at the Commencement of 1877 that Governor Vance, now a second time Governor, made a fine and eloquent address, a memorial eulogy of Governor Swain. Mrs. Spencer says in a letter to Mrs. Swain:

It was nobly done. He allowed me to read the manuscript, and although I could not hear one word, yet I could enjoy the occasion. I saw so many of Governor Swain's old friends and neighbors hanging on Vance's words. Many a handkerchief was pressed to eyes at his close, and I just leaned back in my place, and cried heartily, the sweetest tears of mingled joy and pain of my whole life.

It was in 1877 that the first Summer School of which we have record was initiated at Chapel Hill. It was a new educational idea, and was of great benefit to education in North Carolina, for men and women both were admitted. To these successive Summer Schools came many excellent lecturers. Walter Page was one of the teachers there for the summer of 1878, and it was here that Mrs. Spencer first came to know and so highly to appreciate him.

It was in 1877 that the Board of Trustees tendered formal thanks to Mrs. Spencer in recognition of what she had done so nobly for the institution. "To Mrs. Cornelia Phillips Spencer for her unflagging interest in this institution, her able efforts on its behalf, and for her clear and intelligent reports of its transactions." To her came the duty of reporting the daily Summer School events and advantages to the papers of the state. These were by way both of news and advertisement. This North Carolina Summer School was a very early one, however usual they have become since. Also, as women were admitted, it gave the first state aid to women's education.

In September, 1877, Mrs. Spencer's aged mother fell upon the floor in her house in such a way as to break her hip. She is said to have suffered horribly at first, and at her age she could never recover her power of walking. Her daughter says she leaned over the bed, and said to her, on her eighty-second birthday: "Dear Ma, you have been spending your birthday as never before." "Never before have I suffered such pain in my whole long life," was her reply.

Letters of the next two years are very scarce. The care of her crippled mother, the interests of the restored institution, the new friendships and interests of the re-

juvenated village, must have taken her whole time. There are three long letters from Governor Vance, dated respectively: October 21; December 1, 1878; and January 25, 1879. These are outpourings to a sympathetic friend, at the time of the deaths of his mother and his wife. They are most emotional and full of sorrow. Then when he is finally sent to the United States Senate, where he remained till his death, he writes her:

In the joys that have come to me, and in the sorrows, for the last quarter of a century, my friends in Chapel Hill, yourself chief among the number, have never failed to rejoice with me when I rejoiced and mourn with me when I mourned. I have often thanked God for leading my steps to Chapel Hill. I wish I could say more, but with kindest love to you, and all that are dear to you, I am

Your faithful friend,

Z. B. VANCE

In the early fall of 1880, June Spencer went to New York to attend the Cooper Union art school. She was there without coming home the entire winter, a very eventful one for her mother, as it turned out to be. The letters written to her by Mrs. Spencer have been preserved, every one. They give the fullest reports of each and every day as it passed. Very much of this is too intimate and minute for quotation. It is only natural that a person as deaf as Mrs. Spencer, a mother as devoted as she, and one who had been having all her connections with the outside maintained and carried on through the speech and the dutiful affection of this only daughter should write to her daughter fully and in great detail. She talked to her on paper just as she would have done face to face. The letters are beautiful, but so detailed and so manifestly written for each passing

moment, and for the one person to whom they were sent, that they cannot be quoted very copiously. They show a relation very true, and very wonderful, but too sacred for public exhibition. There is, and we should be glad there may be, emotion far too strong and personal for current circulation. But one or two letters of this winter will be quoted to show the character of the writer.

XVIII

WRITING ABOUT CHANGES

CHAPEL HILL, *Saturday, September 4, 1880.*

MY DEAREST:

I have been all the morning all through the usual Saturday work, trying to think how people feel when their children *die*. How has Mrs. Kerr lived all this year since Alice died? I feel as if nothing were of any more account, nothing worth doing. In fact I have the *horrors* and look forward to an even worse spell tomorrow. Sunday is always a day of gloom to me—and now—Well, one lives along somehow.—I lived through your Father's death somehow, and I suppose I shall get through this winter. But yesterday and today have been dreadful!

I stood at the gate a long time after you drove off, not thinking of anything, just standing and keeping myself from breaking down.—When I came in I stood talking to Grandma for some time. Then I went upstairs. Everything of yours that hung there was a fresh dagger. I took everything and folded them up and put them away. Then I went to the bureau and opened every drawer—took up your little ribbon trunk. I sat down on the side of the bed with it—took up the bits and bows of ribbon and kissed them, and smoothed them out. That little trunk! How it made me think of you and Alice Kerr, and your childhood, and all the years that you have had it—Everything came to mind. Then I locked that, and took down your little writing box, and cleaned all the little odds and ends out of it, and dusted it. Then I looked through the things in the table drawer. How everything stabbed me! I put away everything of yours worth putting away. The whole afternoon I absorbed myself in such work.—After I had got through my solitary work, I had my supper. Bettie is to stay in the house, and sleep here, at least for the present. Then I talked to Grandma a little while, and when my mail came, I looked it over. I went upstairs while Bettie went to sleep near Grandma, in my summer room.

My Child, my Child, how my heart cried out for you! That deserted room! That lonely bed! Everything is full of you, eloquent of happy days forever gone, of a sweet childhood, and a pure, modest, well spent young womanhood—a happy time that will return no more. The page is full, the leaf is turned, the chapter is ended. God only knows what the future will bring. The past has been happy. That at least is secure. Now let us trust Him still.

This morning I went out and made my Sunday loaf of bread. Then Bob [the cat] and I sat down to breakfast—then I took the broom and dust-cloth and put the whole house to rights, finishing with a splendid bouquet of zinnias and grasses.

I do not know how and why I can do it, for all the time I feel as if my heart were broken—O my darling girl, every sharp word I ever said to you comes up and stabs me now, over and over.

I have always expected or rather wanted too much from you. I wanted you to be this and that, and show such and such traits, forgetting that you could not be other than nature and my bringing up had made you. I put so much stress on the things I missed in you, and did not let you know how entirely I was satisfied in the main developments of your character. Your modesty, humility, truthfulness, purity, steadfastness, and general reliability of character have been beyond all praise. And how often I thank God for you, and count it the great blessing of my life that you are what you are.

One of the reasons why I have wanted you to go away from home for awhile has been that some sides of your character may have more time to develop and more opportunity to grow than they have here. It is time that they should. You must learn to act, to think and plan for yourself. It has always been so very precious to me that you came to me, and depended on me just as if you were my little child still . . . so sweet to do things for you, that in my selfishness I have kept you too long dependent, and wanted you to do as I liked without being satisfied to let you follow your own tastes about little things. In all matters of consequence, I believe

and feel that we think alike. In all questions of right and wrong, I feel sure of your judgment. In small affairs it is time you should do as you think best, and learn to act for yourself in the affairs of life, as you will have to learn at some time or other. I hope this winter will set you far on your way towards gaining ability to sustain yourself, in a better higher sphere of work than Chapel Hill can give you; will help to sweeten and ripen your character, and disposition for perfect womanliness. . . .

It is now after dinner, and Bob has come in and jumped upon the window sill and gone to sleep, close by me. Everything is clean, and silent, and awfully lonely. I don't want you to be back here this minute, any more than if I thought you were in Heaven, but the sense of loss is the same—I must live more now for Grandma's comfort than has been possible of late. She will be better now the house is so quiet and there is nothing to excite or worry her.

I can make her far more reasonable, talk to her more, amuse her, make things smooth for her, and see that she is comfortable as far as she will let herself be made comfortable.

Seeing people passing to and fro, and not being able to hear what they are saying, makes her so fractious!

Sunday evening [afternoon]—What a long lonely day! No one coming or going. No voice to break the silence. No interest in anything left. Both the cats have walked around after me the whole day. It is extremely curious. I think it must be because I have spoken to them and noticed them more than usual.

The silence of the house also affects them. Cats have a good deal more intelligence than they are given credit for. They have not much power of expression, but if given time, they put two and two together. These two miss you, and miss the life of the house, as much as an intelligent dog could. They know something is wrong, and that I am troubled. I wander round and round, and walk to and from the house. Still it is, and quiet, and very hot.

Just here I lifted up my eyes, and beheld all Mr. Newton's hogs and pigs, great and small, in my front yard. I arose and

donned my sun-bonnet, and rushed down. Away went the hogs, and I followed down to the barn. There was the gate open, and one of the pickets torn off the fence. Negroes, no doubt after the figs in the garden, have done this. I closed the gate, took off both my garters and tied the picket in position—went through the garden, not one ripe fig left.

Such are the small blisters of life. And so I will close my long letter. Besides I must now go down to see what the cow is about. I do not mean to spend all my Sundays wrestling with cows and pigs. I am half ashamed to send you this letter my darling, and half a mind to destroy it today. Good-bye,—your Mother.

CHAPEL HILL, *October 7, 1880.*

MY DEAREST ONE:

I have been out all the afternoon with Mrs.— in the phaeton, making visits, and seeing what people will give toward the convicts' dinner, which will be tomorrow. [This was a dinner gotten up by Mrs. Spencer for the hundred convicts who had been working on the railroad, now about finished, which was to connect Chapel Hill with the main line.] One lady took very high ground. "Principled against anything of the sort"—"Wondered I could think we owed anything to those wicked criminals who had only got their just deserts," etc., etc. When she had finished I had my say, and gave her a good "setting down." Idiots will always be in the land.

I did not get home till dark. I felt discouraged and uneasy, for there was an evil spirit abroad in the community which, however one may despise it, has power to poison one's comfort. Most of those in our neighborhood gave liberally except——, who said I should not have gotten it up, and that they would not give those wretches a mouthful. Contemptible of them!

However, when I got up next morning, and had a cup of coffee, I felt better. Mrs. Guthrie came to talk over things, then we went to Mrs. Carr's and she was very clever! When I came home I weighed out a big cake, and found that Bettie had cooked the big piece of beef, and made fifty apple turnovers.

Sunday, October 10—Friday was a cloudy day with a little wind. Everything down this way was ready on time. Mr. Cheshire¹ is to be Chaplain at the dinner. The spring wagon was filled to overflowing. Then I gave Bettie last charges about Ma, then I kissed her goodbye, and took my grey shawl, and a lovely bunch of flowers Mrs. Hooper had sent to put in the middle of Colonel Holt's big cake, and set out on my long walk. I am dressed in my best, and as I walk along up the street everybody looks pleasantly at me. Mr. Patterson has his horse and wagon running about town, picking up things also. My spring wagon stops at the Post Office, and Mr. Mickle, who has all along been one of the doubting Thomases, and said I could not do it, comes beaming out, and pours two bushels of fine red apples in on everything.

Mrs. Taylor joins me, and we walk on merrily. The convicts have not yet finished making the long plank table.

There were Mrs. Carr, and the others, unpacking the baskets, while two or three of the "trustys" helped. Mrs. Taylor and I took off our gloves and went to work. The long table for ninety-six convicts had tin plates and cups and spoons arranged on it.

Beef and ham and chicken were piled on each plate, apple pie, potato custard, apple turn-overs, ginger cakes, light bread biscuit, apples, potatoes, till you couldn't see the planks. I never saw a greater profusion of good substantial victuals in my life.

Jim Taylor said there was more food on each plate prepared for a convict, than he could eat in a week. At some distance off a long table was set with knives, forks, plates, and tumblers, for Colonel Holt, and the guard, who were to eat afterwards. On that we placed a fine ham, turkey, chicken, slaw, tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage, pickle, cake, custard pies, and my big cake with the bouquet in the center.

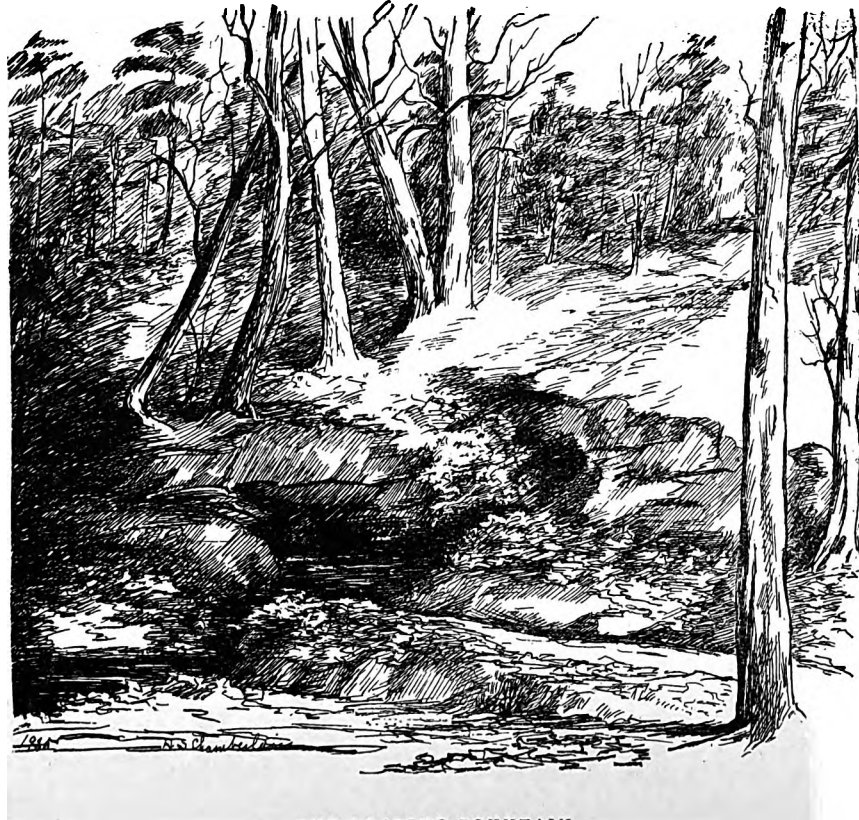
When all was ready, the convicts were marched up, and ranged at the table. Mr. Cheshire said grace, and the poor things fell to. We all stood and watched them. The convicts

¹ Mr. Cheshire mentioned here is now one of the Episcopal Bishops of North Carolina, residing in Raleigh.

ate and ate, and laughed, and joked and ate some more, and drank their coffee (made in an immense iron pot, over the fire by the roadside) and ate again.

I never saw people eat so. When they were fairly full, Colonel Holt told them to fill their jacket pockets if they chose, and in a moment the board was cleared. Then they were told to sit down, and were guarded by a few rifles, while Colonel Holt and the rest of the guard sat down. We ladies waited on them. After everybody was through they made the convicts rise, pull off their hats and cheer us, which they did with a will. I had a towel in my hand and I waved it. Then we drank some coffee and sat about. Colonel Holt said that the convicts had worked so well and with such cheerfulness since they had got wind of the dinner, that he thought they could have finished the railroad clear to town, without a guard. At parting he made me a formal speech, for do what I will people come and stick me forward. He invited all the ladies of Chapel Hill to meet him in six or seven weeks, when the first train of cars would be ready for them, and he would take them *wherever they wanted to go*. (I believe I will please to go to New York City to see you.) I replied that "We ladies felt ourselves the obliged parties in being able to do this kindness. That we had enjoyed the occasion more than any," etc. Then we gave the convict women and various hangers on and waiters their dinner. There was a quantity left, which Mrs. Carr took in charge to distribute to the poor. I sent home every utensil I had borrowed, and everybody who had no other way to ride, and while waiting for the wagon to come back the last time for me, walked a few hundred yards to where the hands were at work levelling a section. They were jumping about like boys, all evidently in high spirits. Wasn't it a pleasant thing? At four o'clock the spring wagon came for me, we rattled home merrily. I sat down by Grandmother and told her everything, and then went over to Mrs. Battle's and told her and Mr. Battle everything. As Bettie said, it was "right plumb-dark" when I came home.

Saturday morning I felt tired, very, but in the afternoon I took a nap and felt better. I cannot tell you how lovely the



THE ROARING FOUNTAIN

woods are now. No frost in town, but just enough in the country to tip the trees in a charming way. Autumn, here and there, laying "a fiery finger on the leaves. . . ."

November 11, 1880.

DEAREST :

I do not know when I have been so angry, so thoroughly and contemptuously angry as for some little time past, culminating today; feeling this evening as if I must whip somebody or something. Tomorrow the University lands are to be sold, a portion of them. North Carolina sits there and allows this to be done, land donated to the University by Revolutionary patriots for a sacred purpose, every square foot of which should be precious. To think of these hills and woods and rocks and springs passing into the hands of *anybody* to be turned into cottonfields! Think of them possessing Newton's Grove, Piney Prospect, Roaring Fountain! The census returns say that North Carolina spent for liquor last year eight million dollars, and yet she is too poor to save the University from spoilation.

Last night I came home late from Mr. Battle's and wrote to *Mr. Paul Cameron* and begged him to come forward and save the land. Buy it in and hold on to it. The University may be able to buy it back from him some day, and meanwhile if it is his it will not seem so far gone.

Sunday, November 14—I got a letter from Mr. Cameron, which I inclose for you to read. The dear, kindly, courtly old gentleman! It did me good, I can tell you. Next day came down Mr. Benahan Cameron and Mr. John Graham to buy the land for Mr. Cameron.

I felt like screaming with joy, when I heard it!

A few acres of this land were left to Mrs. Spencer by Mr. Paul Cameron's will, in order that she should own some of the actual soil of her beloved village. It was sold by her daughter after the mother's death, the proceeds being used to erect gravestones over the Phillipses in the Chapel Hill cemetery.

December 1, 1880.

We have had two lovely rainy days, words would fail to tell how I have enjoyed them. I sat last night all alone, the rain pouring all the evening. I wrote and wrote, and then I sewed a little on flannels for Grandma, and then I wrote some more. The night was black, blacker, blackest. You don't know anything about black nights in a great city. At half-past eight, how good to see Ben come in dripping with his lantern and the mail—and your letter!

You take things too much to heart June! I “never say anything about your coming back here to Chapel Hill.” Why should I? Life is too uncertain to be calculating a year ahead, and if you once fix your mind on doing thus and so, at such a time, and then have to give it up, you have been only hugging a day dream, preparing disappointment for yourself.

People say, “Oh, but I enjoy the anticipation!” I had far rather go on quietly calm and cool, ready for anything, without any anticipations. I suppose that is instinctive with me. A sort of fending off of trouble and disappointment. I hate disappointments so much. When I was young I used to feel them so keenly. Little things had power to poison my happiness. I shrink from such things now. I try never to fix my hopes on anything. I think it may add a keener pang to Hell, if one should remember that one once thought he would be sure of Heaven. . . .

December 4, 1880.

MY DEAR AND LOVELY DAUGHTER:

You will please to note what I wrote you of the futility of making plans for our future when life is so full of short and unexpected turns even to people who may reasonably claim to be settled.

A very sharp turn has just occurred next door to us, utterly unlooked for and accompanied with cruel pangs of disappointment and mortification. Our friend Dr. Simonds has felt himself compelled to resign and leave. He has become involved in trouble with the students.

On Thursday last the Senior class went into his recitation room turbulently and noisily. He remarked to them that he

December 1, 1880.

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had hitherto supposed he was instructing gentlemen, but their behavior made it problematical whether they were not perhaps little boys. (You see how he used the word gentlemen as being *men* as opposed to little boys.)

Certain of the Southern bloods fired up at this remark as supposing he had said they were not gentlemen (that word so dear to Southern hearts and so little understood in truth by many who claim it), and when the lecture was over . . . [three students] went up to him and one assailed him with most insulting profanity and giving him three minutes to take back his words, frantic and furious with rage. This one called him a "G— d— scoundrel, a d— infernal hound of a Yankee who only knew the insides of a grasshopper," etc. (And this by way of asserting their claim to be considered gentlemen.)

Our friend the Professor interrupted the torrent of abuse and blasphemy by saying that he had insulted no one. Had no such thought or intention, but the spokesman would not listen. He foamed with anger and rage, he demanded a watch, he held it up. "Three minutes, you damned hound to retract your words!" The Professor unhappily, *faltered*. He was so astounded, so confused. He stood alone. He remembered all he had heard of Southern violence and murders. He thought that if he had a personal scuffle three to one he was ruined. He said, "three minutes is too short a time." The spokesman redoubled his abuse, held out his watch and said, "Three minutes, that's all the time you shall have," and the Professor—gave up, retracted his words, and well knowing what he had done, went home and wrote out his resignation!

You know just how the students are in such a thing. None of them have the sense or manliness or moral courage to pursue the proper course. They side with insurgents of course, with the one, there was but one, who *spoke*. The class stood looking on, and not one stood by the Professor. Poor fellow, he knows he has shown the white feather, and that is the sharpest pang of all to him too!

If he had but spoken with dignity, had said he would defend himself if they touched him, it might have brought the better sense of the class to his side. O it is all so miserable!

And some have seemed to think it all a good joke, spirited, a display of boyish high spirit! And O for the evil result to the University!

I went over to see my neighbor afterwards. He came in and began to talk about it at once. He said very firmly, "I cannot stay because I could not control my classes. I shall be better away. I don't understand your Southern ways, nor your Southern use of words. I am not like you, and never shall be. I have failed and had better go away." What a sudden turn is this!

The winter of 1881 was the snowiest, bitterest winter ever known in North Carolina in the memory of those then alive. Snow, sleet, thaw, rain, freeze, and *da capo* for two months. Not being prepared for such cold weather or such prolonged cold, the thin-walled houses, heated with the open fireplaces hitherto deemed sufficient, were never really warm from day's end to day's end. Especially the poor negroes, an improvident race, suffered terribly. On New Year's day, 1881, Mrs. Spencer is writing to her daughter in New York City:

. . . Bettie went off today for her holiday, and Sarah will come in each day to see what we need. Grandma and I are living in as small a compass as possible, on account of the cold. I have had but one New Year visitor, and I hailed him and made him come in. It was Mr. Charles W. Johnston, and I gave him cake, fruit, jelly, figs, and lemonade, all ready in case some one should come. But it is very cold and very dreary. I have to attend to Grandma who in such weather requires constant attention to keep her warm. I get up at two o'clock in the night to heat bricks, to warm her bed again. Then I get up at daylight and go through the same process, and make her a cup of tea in addition. At eighty-five years the flame of vitality burns low; but she drinks her tea, and goes back to sleep, and I cook my own breakfast at the hearth, two eggs and toast, and a cup of tea. I simply cannot go out in the cold to grind coffee.

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January 2—Sarah and her boy came in this morning; it has snowed all night and filled up all the paths. I gave her and her son breakfast and a lot of bread, molasses and potatoes to carry away. I cannot tell what she and others like her are to do while this weather lasts.

Everyone in the village is short of wood, and what do poor negroes like Sarah do for wood?

January 7, 1881—Our Bettie is sick. I had a note from her. She broke out with measles or chicken-pox as soon as she got to the country, and was, she says, sicker than she ever was in all her life. Grandma is quite well. We have plenty of light-bread, sausage, and a piece of beef.

I make the tea and coffee by the dining room fire. Bob sits by and watches me with gravity of demeanor. Since the thaw began the roads are terrible. The point is to be cheerful and good humored under these circumstances of discomfort.

We have had two weeks of skating. . . .

January 9—Today everything is again thickly covered with snow.

January 16—Sleet all over everything. I have for two days been busy making a warm double wrapper for Grandma, out of that French calico of yours lined with grey flannel. It was a job, a work of art. Yesterday at three o'clock I finished the last button, and Grandma put it on.

On New Year's day, Uncle Sam writes from Washington, he went to call on Governor Vance, and the Governor said one *Vancey* thing. Talking to Uncle Sam about Christmas Day, and the other Church festivals, Vance said, "We don't care much for set days, to observe them." A Roman Catholic lady, a friend of the second Mrs. Vance, looked at Governor Vance and asked him to repeat what he had said. The Governor repeated it. "Now who do you mean by *we*," she asked. Vance answered, "*God*—and the Presbyterians." The lady did not smile, but looked at Vance sadly and solemnly as one might regard a profane sinner. Uncle Sam says he watched the expression of the lady's face with much interest. He considers that there is an attempt being made to convert Vance. Mrs. Vance did not hear this.

Senator Vance had married a second time, after he went to Washington as Senator from North Carolina. Writing Mrs. Spencer an excuse for not coming to the Commencement of 1880, he said that he was going to be married, and so had a scriptural excuse, adding, "Man proposes, and woman—*accepts*."

January 20, 1881—Tonight I took Bettie and went to the Post-Office. It was not yet open, but there were fifty students before the door, watching one of them disport himself on what they call a *bicycle*. I never saw one before. The fellow flew up and down the sidewalk perched upon it, at a great rate.

Yes, 1880 has been a kind year to us both! Miss Mary Smith wants me to write Miss Maria Spear's obituary. I do not want to do it, but of course I have got it to do! When you come to Heaven my dear, after long years I hope that I have lived there, it will be one of the first questions I shall ask you—And who did write *my* obituary?

January 29—I received a photograph of Mr. Cameron, the best likeness, taken by *Sarony*. Mr. Cameron sent with it a little note, begging to have me include him among my household friends. I shall want a frame for this picture. I wanted to kiss it, it was so perfect.

February 20—Your Grandma is quite sick. A bad cold, she has, and just now she is going into one of those sleeping spells of hers. You know she has had one of them every spring since 1877. This time she has been asleep forty-eight hours, hardly waking to drink a little tea now and then. Of course I sent for the doctor. He gives her a little medicine for her throat. Thinks her sleeping a constitutional affair. Nothing to do but watch her, keep her warm, and let her sleep. I have been up and down continually all of two nights, seeing that she was warm.

On February 22 old Mrs. Phillips died, quietly sleeping her life away. And so Mrs. Spencer is writing June all about it:

Grandma is gone, does it not seem strange? although it was in truth to be looked for, day by day. It seemed incredible to me that I should have no mother. I go in where she lies, and I talk to her. Oh Ma! Oh my dear old Mother, why did you go so suddenly, without any parting words? No apprehensions, she was not thinking of it herself. When Brother Sam came, we went in and stood together by our mother. She lies peacefully on the lounge in the middle of the parlour. I wish my dearest could see her. The sweetest picture of an old lady asleep with no trace of care, or pain, tranquil and lovely. I sent to have a cap made for her, and it is of sheer muslin with wide pleated border and wide strings. She has a shawl round her, a white lace handkerchief, and wide lace ruffles over her hands. After we had dressed her and laid her out, I sat down, as I have said, and talked to her. She looked so radiantly serene. I told her I had dressed her as nicely as I could, that I had done my best for her, and that she looked now as I had wanted her to look every day, but I said, "That was your little mistake dear Ma, you never would dress up nice, and I used to scold you, for I did desire you always to appear well. You never did think enough of your own personal wants. . . ."

Everybody has been here today, literally everybody. Even poor old Lem Yancey. All the respectable people of the village, many students, many negroes. For the funeral we did not send any paper or funeral notice round. When I got home from the church, walking with Uncle Sam, there was dear old Aunt Dilsey sitting by the fire. Uncle Sam said to her that he thought so much of her, for coming and staying with us! . . .

I was always good to Mother. I have never begrudged her anything. I have never felt it a hardship to wait upon her, and alas, I shall never feel impatient with her again. We have been very happy together this winter, and when I would put her to bed she would often thank me, and bless me. Dilsey is here staying all the time, such a comfort. . . .

All day I have been going over Mother's trunks and boxes—I am so glad you are spared all this—and have laid out

things to be given away, and things to be divided. Pa's old books are to go to the University. What a sudden and short turn in life is this, yet Sam says he has long looked forward to it. There was much to be proud of about Ma, much that you may well remember. . . .

February 25, 1881—After dinner yesterday I had a little talk with your Uncle Sam. He said that Grandma had left four thousand dollars in money, that neither he nor Charles would touch a cent of it, that it was very scanty pay for what I had done all these year for her. And then he said he wanted me to get up and go home with him, at once. I said I could not do that, and I cannot. What is to be done with the property in this house? He said, "Sell nearly all of it, and save only the few pieces especially endeared to us". . . . I do not know how to face all these changes. We did not decide on anything.

This house you know belongs to Charles and Laura, was left to them, and Ma has paid them rent for it each year. I feel in a dream—dazed!

I think my dear June must know what pain all this gives me. I cannot stay on here alone. If I were rich enough, I should keep this house, and shut it up, and go away next week. Uncle Sam says, "Give away a great deal of the old furniture, not of any value." Of course to a man living as he does our old chairs and bedsteads look both shabby and poor, but I cling to them. I feel lost and shipwrecked when men talk business to me. I cannot reply. The reasons I have to oppose them are, or seem to be, sheer childishness. I cannot live alone, I do not wish to try. I cannot go and live permanently in Washington, I *will* not.

After consideration, and much heart-rending hesitation, she did decide to leave Chapel Hill. She was ready, and left Chapel Hill for her brother's home in Washington, on March 24, 1881.

The break up of Mrs. Spencer's home after the death of her mother marks the epoch of her life when the downward slope becomes perceptible. Almost total deafness and the lowered rhythm of her vitality become apparent.

Her days are less active. From this time she grows more self inclosed, more contemplative. She mellows, and yet she becomes more remote from daily currents and events. Like Miss Martineau, she "shifts her trumpet and takes up her knitting" when the talk does not run in any of her channels. From this time forward we witness no stirring scenes. It is with her but a drama of the heart and mind. Her interest in ideas is not dimmed. She reads more widely than ever, and her mental force is not abated, but she shows herself more reminiscent, more tolerant, more reflective. From this time forth she was separated from her daughter a good deal, until she finally went to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to live with her, in 1894. June is teaching at first, then is gone to Europe, and finally is married in 1885. These separations from her daughter make her confide in her diary more and more. Until this year of 1881, Mrs. Spencer had passed the much greater portion of her life in North Carolina. Besides two short visits to New York City, and her sojourn in Alabama, she had travelled very little. She had never even glimpsed the North Carolina mountains, which she would have so enjoyed seeing. She who loved nature with such passion, speaks often of her longing for travel:

I don't know anything I would rather do, than travel with my Dearest. Go where we could see rivers and mountains together. What a sensation I had to see the Potomac! No one who has never seen a great river can form any idea of what it is, and you lose the idea after living a few years away from one.

To see that magnificent stream, magnificently gliding on, is an ever fresh delight. It looks fit to bear the navies of the world—and to see Washington City lit up at night!

I am in the sitting room, near the sloping banks of books. Oh the books, the books in this house of Brother Sam's. I want to be at 'em all the time, read, read—it is a refreshment even to stand before 'em and look.

Mrs. Spencer made her home in Washington with her brother for the greater part of two years. She spent the summer of 1881 in Plainfield and New Brunswick, New Jersey, with her mother's people, and on one of these summer trips she went to Boston, as well as New York. As she was in company with her chief correspondent she writes but little about these summers. Her daughter was teaching at Peace Institute in Raleigh, and after these two winters in Washington we find Mrs. Spencer back in Chapel Hill boarding with her old friend Mrs. Henry Thompson.

Her Washington letters show enlargement of vision, for she had the pleasure of seeing pictures, parks, and fine buildings. But she had read so widely, and had such profit from it, that what she saw was merely the verifying of things already well conceived, and it would have been the same thing to her if she had been in Europe. She pined for Chapel Hill. While her nieces loved her dearly, and while she was cherished and appreciated by them all in her brother's home, yet she was but a visitor, but a relative, very deaf, and quite elderly. She was unfitted to enlarge her acquaintance. In Chapel Hill she was still the hub of the community.

XIX

MRS. SPENCER'S LITERARY TASTES AND LATER WRITINGS

MANY and many are the books which record the literary tastes of folk considered worthy of note, or possessing some sort of super-personality. Poor North Carolina has never had much opportunity to celebrate her notables in this way, for most of her people have escaped formal culture, or the attribution of it. In Mrs. Spencer, however, and in her circle of friends there existed a keen appreciation of good literature. Until the coming on of the Civil War gave these people much more to think about than mere literature, their interests were wide and up-to-date. After that time there came an intellectual settling on the lees. Besides, in the South after the Civil War modern literature was not obtainable except by purchase; and any broad reading of it was impossible to a people so impoverished as the North Carolinians of that time were.

It was far better, they thought, to read over the old books which had nourished their taste in the fifties; and this may have satisfied the older folk, but the young crave new thought and modern authors. Those young folk of just after the war had no time at all for the leisurely culture of ante bellum days. They had pioneering to do, in all sorts of industrial and practical ways, and pioneering disdains literature; so that this whole condition has resulted in North Carolina's being dropped back a good deal behind the current thought of the world outside, a condition which is but slowly being overcome.

Mrs. Spencer could see all this plainly. She saw that education alone, and that administered with a lavish hand, could restore the lost prestige. She herself however, like those around her, re-read the old rather than adventuring into anything new, and her old books were not to be despised. She was a thorough Latinist, a lover of the classics which have nourished all minds, and an especial devotee of Horace. She also read and re-read all the poetry that came her way. In her journals she quotes perhaps a hundred poets old and new, so that one can more easily enumerate the few whom she does not quote. When Dickens and Thackeray and George Eliot ceased writing she seems impatient of the less masterly fiction, and this is perhaps natural. One wishes, even if in the wishing one is unreasonable, because nobody belongs to another generation than his own, that she might have realized the great mind-currents which began to wash over the world just then, changing all landmarks.

Reconstructing the mental condition of the seventies is difficult. It may best be done by such letters as Mrs. Spencer's, dealing as they do with all the detail of life. It was the idea of everyone then that somehow the old should be restored, brighter, better, changed in some ways, but essentially the same. They did not grasp the fact that the old is never restored. It is this backward looking attitude of Mrs. Spencer's which must be indicated, even if it is made equally clear that it was the better part of the old which she favored.

Continually she reads over her favorite annals of English notables of the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, beginning with Boswell's *Johnson*. She was a person of a practical turn who loved true stories and

real people. She lived, she herself says, in the society of these governing Englishmen and Englishwomen, knowing all their kinships and family connections. Of French memoirs she does not seem to have taken much notice. Next to North Carolina she seems to have loved England. This great United States seems rather to have irritated her by its multiplicity.

Here is her definition of culture:

What do we mean by Culture?—not study—not learning. Culture is self-discipline. Culture should elevate the whole man. Culture should raise our thought to the higher levels. Culture is appreciation.

Of the greater portion of the stuff of which life is composed, Culture can make nothing. It says nothing to poverty, destitution, oppression, pain, disease, to the heart desponding, to failure.

The only published books of Mrs. Spencer's composition are two slender volumes. *The Last Ninety Days of the War*, already fully discussed in its place, and a *School History of North Carolina*, begun in the year 1887. Besides these her published work is found in many a forgotten newspaper article, some of which have been quoted. Her sketches of the old University of North Carolina are very fine, both as accurate history and as literature. Why they lie buried in the sepulchre of old dusty newspaper files while so many jejune old chronicles have found resurrection and republication is a question worth the asking. It is not generally known that she wrote two full series of these historical reminiscences, one for the *Sentinel* published in 1869, the other published irregularly in the *University Magazine* of 1880 and later. These series are handled in entirely different ways, although they tell the same story. The later

series is more discursive. They seem to have been produced whenever asked for by the students and naturally they would be asked for when material for the college monthly was needed to pad out an issue, although today the padding is all that remains valuable in the files.

Her message in both these series was most pertinent after the Civil War, and it is none the less true today after the World War. She wished to show how any institution worth the praising is the product of time, and the results of slow development, and how nothing, as she somewhere phrases it, can "erupt into usefulness." She wished to preserve a tradition and an ideal from which to develop. She knew the grace and the pleasantness of those old times, and she wished to keep the best of them alive.

Her little *School History of North Carolina* was a failure, and it is interesting to trace why. The reasons have been gathered from the book itself, and from a pretty exhaustive series of questions and answers—and silences. The only rival it had at the time when it was written was a most distinguished book—distinguished by its utter nullity, but it was in possession of the field. Mrs. Spencer wished to supersede this book, but she was writing just before the expansion of our historical knowledge, just before the printing of the long line of volumes of Colonial and State Records. She had to use the same sources as her predecessor.

The very early history of North Carolina has little unity of subject. It is at best a troubled confused record of many dissensions which are hard to render interesting to children. Later come in political changes and recombinations, so many and so hard to state rationally that the difficulty becomes even greater. Mrs. Spencer seems

herself to have felt the great difficulty of her task, for she mentions in her journal of this time the continual "writing and tearing up" which she was practicing. Even though there are picturesque incidents and interesting narratives to be recounted, a good school history of North Carolina is a task at which a good many hands have taken their turn. But in telling all this, we must not forget to emphasize one fact. This book of hers was not published as she wrote it. It was critically edited, by whom does not now appear, but that was not all that damned it; the reasons come to light by glimpses.

In that period, thirty-five years ago, conservative sentiment at the South was especially interested that many by-gones should not be forgotten; or rather in their being remembered in a properly composed sort of *creed*. This creed Mrs. Spencer did not respect. She revived the ideas of Thomas Jefferson and of Judge William Gaston on slavery. She taught that the South in the Civil War was not only fighting for their own interpretation of the Constitution, but also fighting to perpetuate slavery, as an institution, and that slavery was *wrong*. She also reiterated what she had fully proved in her *Ninety Days*, that North Carolina was not so heartily urgent in the prosecution of the Civil War as some of her neighboring states, and that she was suspected for this at Richmond. She also indicated that a good Republican might possess something corresponding to a conscience, might really believe in himself. She herself was a most ardent Democrat, but she saw instances of what she was supposing in her brother, Solicitor Phillips, and in other friends.

Such things as these simply were not to be said in the North Carolina of that epoch; and so this little his-

tory, although infinitely better than the other one, was denatured and levelled to please public opinion. It pleased nobody, and was superseded. And yet it has often been said that men have learned all they could afterwards recall of the early history of North Carolina from it. And in it she had placed, appropriately, all the poems then extant in North Carolina which were of any patriotic value.

Mrs. Spencer was for a good many years an associate editor of the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, and her weekly *Young Lady's Column* is worth looking over for her religious opinions. The church paper, with its moral and religious essays, was a much more essential part of life in the seventies than it is now, not because we are less ethical, but because more such subjects are treated in our magazines and reviews. No one who did not live through the experience can know how little there was to read in North Carolina then, or how little money there was to buy anything new. It is as hard to imagine as is a word lighted at night only by candle flame. Into this hungry atmosphere Mrs. Spencer's little essays came with great influence and acceptability.

While rummaging to recover some of this material, an elderly elder of her denomination was consulted. He said, "Put an advertisement in the *Presbyterian Standard* and you will be likely to recover these articles. Most of them are doubtless still in existence, pasted in many an old scrap-book, and probably still re-read." The locating of a file of the paper in question made this plan unnecessary.

It is pleasant to note how modern this supposedly prim and antiquated *Young Lady's Column* of the seventies shows itself. Not pietistic, not namby-pamby, no

overstrained feeling expressed; the author sees life whole, and sees God in every part of it. Very many of these writings touch subjects that many religionists consider merely secular. She takes up those old themes, of youth, and effort, and duty, and self-sacrifice, which are ever new themes, always to be re-discussed and re-urged; and she founds upon these and on many other often treated subjects her less original papers, but she never becomes trite.

In her journal somewhere she says that she exceedingly covets the gift of making an old subject fresh and attractive. She does possess this gift. She can make social obligations seem sincerely and fundamentally religious, when love for humanity is their reason and love for God is their impulse.

Very varied are her subjects. Early occurs, "How to treat the Negroes"—this just after everybody's servants had become *preferred* voters. She says:

I think the very first and prime requisite in dealing with the emancipated negro is kindness. I neither mean high authoritative kindness nor sloppy good-nature, but pains-taking, founded on good feeling towards them. Look at them! Humble, simple-hearted and civil. Let us enter into their feelings, and try to sympathize with their desire to elevate themselves in the scale of humanity. Let us keep the race among us. Our negroes are beginning to take a pride in showing the white folks that they can support themselves. When we think how the negro has been lifted into regions for which he was totally unprepared, when we think of him, one day a slave, the next day a legislator, urged against his former owner; we cannot but wonder that he has done so well as he has. The question of Social Equality never troubles my mind. People surely find their level.

"Laughter, Kind and Unkind," is another sermonette. She advocates marriage as good for both men and

women, "The best children are found in families where the union was equal and suitable." "How few of our marriages do we make ourselves. What sudden turns and unexpected incidents change the currents of our lives." "Selfishness is the greatest sin of married life, as well as it is of all life. Determine that you will not live wholly for yourselves, wholly for a good time."

Two succeeding weeks after this she tells in the *Column* two true stories of two different marriages which have come into her knowledge, one a romantic account of an old-time wooing, where a fine wholesome girl from a country home was brought into a too proud family, and altered entirely its barren quality—story enough for a whole novel. The next week she tells of an ill-advised match where sickness and debauchery made it end in despair.

Recommending "employment for the girl who is through school" she wishes first for good libraries, at that time a far-off dream. She says that "Novel-reading is not bad in itself, but spoils the taste for better things." Then realizing, as she must have done, that there was literally nothing to be had to read in the Southern homes of that day, except cheap novels and religious books, she pays her respects to the Sunday School library of second or third rate pious fiction, common at that epoch, and adds:

You can splash about, if you prefer it, in shallow water, and take comfort by seeing how many companions you have. It is the age of cheap writing. We are not a reading people, and that I know well; for rather than be at the trouble or expense of providing a plump juicy beefsteak of solid reading, parents these days will say, in effect, "Here is some nice slop all ready fixed up for you. Take it away and drink it, and don't bother me!"

Her voice is the only cry in that wilderness of intellectual starvation and barrenness which grew round us at that time. How much better if a few had hearkened to her recommendations! She begs girls to read and commit to memory good English poetry, as a means of profitably whiling away the interminable long hot summer days of the lonesome South of that time. She advocates intelligent "nursing the sick." This before the days of trained nurses. "Gardening for flowers, for food, and for health" is gone into very fully. Again, "Ignorance is the Unpardonable Sin. People do not know because they do not want to take the trouble to find out." She advocates a nonsectarian "Home for Destitute Gentlewomen," more in demand just then than now, but always necessary.

She writes very fully concerning the need for the reunion of the Protestant denominations, split on the issues of the Civil War. This was in the early seventies, and there they are today, with breaches still unhealed. It is mentioned in one of her letters that this article was edited and modified by her chief. Her ideas are all democratic. She writes a fine delineation of the narrowing influence of "social sets," saying that:

Selection, not exclusion, is the rule of friendship. I do not believe that a soul narrowed down into sole sympathy with its own *set*, its little exclusive *ring*, can be capable of true friendship. I do not believe it is ever worthy of a true friend.

This is all moralizing, of course, but interspersed with it some religious meditations. One of these, almost a random choice, will be given at full length.

ITS OWN BITTERNESS

. . . We live alone. Even when most surrounded by those we love, and in the freest intercourse of social and domestic life, we are still alone. A thousand thoughts, emotions, associations, imaginations, continually spring up and pass away, which we tell to none.

A thousand resolves, speculations, doubts, hopes, fears, annoyances, pleasures—we would not impart one tenth of them if we could, life is too short—we could not if we would.

You walk out with your best friend, both freely conversing with scarcely a moment's pause—but as you pass along fifty different objects may suggest as many different reflections of which he knows nothing; and earnestly as you may be pursuing the subject of your conversation, quite a different set of thoughts is busy within you. It is for the time a double existence; the one represented by the visible person, and the other, with its secret pangs and struggles, known only to God.

This inner self is *the* self, and whether good or bad makes the character, is the man. It is this which must be guarded from bitterness, falsehood, jealousy, or despondency, if we want to be happy, or useful, or good.

The heart knoweth its own bitterness. While we sit smiling with our friends it may be filled with scorpions. The keenest vexations and the meanest sins are those we tell to no one.

Without entering upon what a lively writer calls "too close an inspection of our moral secretions" which must inevitably lead to despondency and despair of one's self, and which perhaps more than anything else has led to what is called religious melancholy, and which has often thrown deeply conscientious people into the arms of the Romish Church for anodyne, striving to find it in their doctrines of confession and absolution, it will be well to take some note at intervals of the habitual current of our thoughts when alone.

From the force and direction we may judge of our whereabouts. "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" was King David's prayer, when his heart must have known the full bitterness of keenest remorse for outbreking sin.

Unsuspected, the worst passions may long lie hidden growing and strengthening, and in a sudden moment of temptation may spring up like a strong man and take possession of us. Bitter thought against God may ripen into rank infidelity. Bitter judgment of a neighbor may breed gross injustice. Long brooding over petty anxieties and selfish vain desires have become insanity. "When the mind loses its elastic power of changing the current of its thoughts at will, there is insanity."

No man can watch his own heart long without a sense of amazement and even of terror at the spectacle of its utter hopeless weakness, to say nothing of its wickedness. Ever busy, now with the past, now with the future, pondering, planning; and even when the soul has been given to God the heart is too wandering in its affections, earthly in its aims, conscious of its own failures, tasting continually its own bitterness. What can be more helpless, or more affecting! . . .

In these modern introspective days, do not some of the inner landscapes described at length in literature reveal something quite comparable to this description of the secrets of the heart?

Woman's Suffrage was then a matter being agitated, before it was laid asleep to be awakened and carried to a successful enactment in our day. Of course Mrs. Spencer would have been a sort of monstrosity, would have lost what influence she possessed, if in her newspaper column she had treated the idea of woman's political or other equality with man with any hospitality whatever. This was the conservative South, in the seventies. She herself, who was speaking to a greater and a worthier audience than perhaps any other person of her time in North Carolina, would have felt herself sincerely horrified at the idea of any woman's speaking in public.

In her articles on this subject she proffers all the familiar arguments against Suffrage. Then she speaks

of education for women, as discussed at that time, and often declared to be too much of a strain on their weaker powers, both of body and mind. Just as this point she switches suddenly from the opinion then being commonly expressed, and declares, "I have never known any young woman to be injured by a good thorough education, nor broken down by any well-chosen course of study."

Then noting how the refusal of men to allow participation of women in common school affairs and educational policies generally is driving on the cause of Woman Suffrage, she adds, "They will have to take more than they need in order to obtain what should be freely given to them."

In her next week's issue her sober thought is expressed:

I believe I felt very cross, I was pulled two ways. I must confess to being so blind and bigoted that only lately has it occurred to me that there might be some good on the other side of Woman's Rights. Only lately have I looked at it dispassionately, and I find that to my disgust the female reformers out yonder in Wyoming, or in Chicago, or New York—where not, save and except down South—have really an argument or two on their side. No use shutting our eyes or closing our ears till the flood is upon us, or I am afraid we shall be all swept away. Violent denunciation and contempt are no answer to argument. There are surely two sides to this great question. Yes I feel cross! And yet, a house mother—one of those quiet women who keep society from going to pieces—Is she not as valuable to the world as a Mme. de Staël?—Or more so?—Still, I feel *cross*.

A series of historical columns gives, week by week, a good deal of the early history of North Carolina. There

is a full account of the Regulators, and she says, "I am proud that such principles pervaded the humble and the illiterate. Their courage was the courage of martyrs. I glory that they were poor men." She asks why there is no more interest in research into local historical matters:

Can anyone in Randolph County point out the farm of Herman Husbands, or show the situation of his famous clover patch?

What ever became of Esther Wake or her descendants? Write to England, and perhaps you could elicit the name of her great-grandfather's first wife, with all collaterals, up to the present. That is the accuracy which characterizes their records.

Every now and then the question came up about the true date of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. "Why cannot something definite and conclusive be ascertained and settled about that? Whether it was the twentieth day of May or some other day of May?"

Then she extracts with a running commentary an old book written by an English traveller through the Carolinas just before the American Revolution; an unfamiliar book which she has discovered in the University Library.¹

"From Hillsborough," he went on through the "Hawfields" to "Salisbury," "Charlottesburgh" and the "Chawraws." Everywhere pouncing upon the familiar names in odd spelling, noticing the man's account of the deep red soil about Hillsborough, and his experience of a green persimmon, "austere, rough and astringent to a greater degree than any other vegetable substance whatever."

¹ This book is *A Tour in the United States of America*, by J. F. D. Smyth. Published in Dublin in 1784.

“Charlottesburgh,” says her traveller, “is an inconsiderable place, and in England would be thought not deserving of even the name of a village,” then stops to describe the costume of the Charlotte bucks and dandies. “All the male inhabitants habituate themselves constantly to carry along with them everywhere the rifle-barreled firelock, and the tomahawk. . . . Their dress is a hunting shirt, somewhat like a wagoner’s frock,—ornamented with a great many fringes, tied around the middle with a great belt. . . . They wear leather breeches of deer-skin dressed. . . . Their feet are covered with Indian moccasins made of buck’s skin dressed soft, lacing round the feet without a seam. Thus habited and accoutered he is equipped for visiting, courtship, travel, hunting, or war.”

Whatever this old book might be, it was worth quoting, to vivify the historical imagination, and must have made the *Young Lady’s Column* of the *North Carolina Presbyterian* a pleasant tilt-yard of local controversy, for Charlotte was for her own side, before the Revolution and after it. Here is the True story of the Real Lady:

When I was young I lived in a village where it was the custom of the country people to take their produce from house to house, wearily walking with baskets of eggs, or fruit, or strings of chickens, or buckets of butter, till they could find a purchaser.

One hot summer day, it happened that many such callers had been at my door. It is a vexation to get up from drawing, or sewing, or writing, and descend into the lower regions, literally and figuratively! I have settled it in my own mind long ago, that I am not a lady; I do not mind confessing it here. And not being a lady of course I acted as such, thus:

The dozenth caller with eggs and chickens that morning, walking in upon me, was a comely, kind-faced woman of about

thirty, dressed in the conventional North Carolina country-woman's calico sunbonnet, and white woolen mittens. She looked weary and flushed, with a basket on either arm.

Did I ask her to sit down, or offer her a drink, or a fan, or even speak gently when I refused to buy? I did none of these things. I had been civil to eleven. To the twelfth I was uncivil. I remember to this day the tired patient glance she gave me as she left the room, silently.

Two months after that, I was one of a crowd of young folks, going to a camp-meeting six miles in the country. Between services we strolled about among the tents, as town folk will do. Presently we found ourselves at the door of a neat and comfortable tent.

The mistress came smiling out. I recognized her and her calico dress at once, and longed to slink out of sight. She recognized me too, and coming up she addressed me by name, with courtesy and cordiality. There was no mistaking. She thus marked me out for especial notice and kindness. That July morning two months previous was in both our minds. Its effect on her was to make her redouble her simple attentions. Nothing was too good for the sinner.

I endured it all, revolving many things in my mind. When we parted, I took her hand, and said, "Come and see me." "I will," she answered with a hearty grip, and a pleasant smile, but I have never seen her since.

Finally, she never gives up writing of her constantly advocated plans for more education for both sexes to be more generously provided by North Carolina. She rings the changes on this:

"Large heart," says O. W. Holmes, "never loved little cream-pot." Many good women appear to think it is a sinful waste to use cream for any purpose whatsoever, save to make butter. One must not break the cream on a pan of milk. There is not much cream going, in North Carolina.

Here we live, with all our good climate, and soil. No reason why we should not fare as well as any people on the face of the globe. We might *live* on cream if we chose!

Now I believe in cream. I believe in having the best when Providence has put it within our reach. I believe in enjoying it after we get it. I call it skin-flint economy that keeps a poor scrawny breed of cattle when a little pains and enterprise would enrich the country with improved stock.

A three gallon cow will not eat any more than a three pint cow, which is dry half the time. I call it poor economy which refuses to grow clover, but turns the poor cows into the wood-lands.

North Carolina has used skim-milk too long. There is no cream in our public expenditures. We spend seventy-five thousand dollars on building a penitentiary, while we let our orphans cry from door to door. This is skim-milk doings.

We have a State University to be proud of, and we think if we give it ten thousand dollars we shall be bankrupt. We refuse to endow it.

Skim-milk again. We don't know the taste of cream. We think skim-milk is just as good. Let us have more cream. Let us hand it round liberally.

Large heart never loved little cream-pot.

There was no incentive to a woman to write, in the North Carolina of those days. That Mrs. Spencer did write so much, and that she kept up her studies as well as her writings, shows a great strength of purpose. Her modest acquiescence in the lack of comprehension she met, her certain knowledge of what she would have been capable of, under better conditions, were hard to reconcile, but she went on, stirring when and how she could, trying to move her readers and hearers in the direction she knew to be desirable.

Last of this little anthology of forgotten writings, we will place a sample of her serious attempts at versification, a part of one of those songs she wrote for college occasions, and samples of her translation of her favorite Latin, Horace:

NORTH CAROLINA

Sung to the tune of the *Watch on the Rhine*

O Carolina, well we love,
The murmur of thy dark pine grove,
Thy yellow sands beside the sea,
Thy lake beneath the cypress tree.

Chorus:

Dear land thy sons salute thee here,
Their watch for thee shall know no fear,
On thousand hills our guard shall firmly stand,
And keep their watch, their watch for thee dear land.

We love thy stately groves of oak,
Thy vines, that hang o'er broad Roanoke,
Thy mountains, from whose rugged steep
Catawba's rushing fountains leap.

Where on the hill the wild bird sings,
Or jasmine's golden censer swings,
Where maidens loitering through the glen
Hear love's sweet story told again.

Where Freedom, Truth, and Peace abound,
Such men may well call hallowed ground.
No dearer boon from heaven we crave,
Than here our home, and here our grave.

Chorus:

'Tis our own land, we greet thee here
From wild Watauga to Cape Fear,
On thousand hills our guard shall firmly stand
And keep their watch, their watch for thee dear land.

MANY MEN, MANY MINDS

Horace, Book 1, Ode 1

Maecenas, born of royal line,
Yet guardian dear, and friend of mine,
Some men prefer th' arena's strife
To every other charm in life;

The very dust from off the wheel,
That, glowing hot, just clears the goal
In race Olympic gives them joy;
The victor's palm exalts them high
With gods who rule o'er earth and sky.

This man, of civic honor proud,
Delights to hear the fickle crowd
Thrice raise his name with clamor loud.

That man with greed surveys his stores
Just swept from Lybian threshing floors.

Another loves the joys of home,
No wealth could tempt his love to roam,
Content to plough his native plot,
He shudders at a sailor's lot.

The merchant fears the south-west storm,
Lauds rural life as safe from harm,
But soon, unwilling to be poor,
Refits his ships for foreign shore.

But some there are whom generous wine
Befools to waste their day's decline,
Stretched in the shade where fountains shine.

Camps delight many, and the note
Poured from the trumpet's brazen throat,
War's stern array. The clarion clear,
Hateful to many a mother's ear.

The hunter braves the winter rude,
Deserts his wife and tender brood,
While on the deer his hounds he sets
Or marks the wild boar rend his nets.

But I—if once with ivy crowned,
Meed of the learned, with gods am found.
Light-footed nymphs and satyrs rove
With me apart in solemn grove.
The muses there will oft retire

To trill their pipe, and tune their lyre.
Grant me ye powers such lyric praise,
And 'mong the stars my head I'll raise.

TO HIS CUP-BEARER

Book 1—Ode 38

I hate your Persian pomp and luxuries rare,
Weave not for me with nimble fingers
Linden-bound wreaths; nor search the gardens where
 The late rose lingers.
The myrtle for my banquet I design,
Simplicity befits us both I'm thinking,
And graced with myrtle you shall serve the wine,
 While I am drinking.

INDIAN SUMMER

MRS. SPENCER was in Chapel Hill the greater portion of her time, after the summer of 1882, until she went to live in Cambridge permanently in 1894, but she also went to Washington City frequently on long visits. She had no driving necessity for occupation, living as she did, a boarder in the house of her old friend. She seems to have taken great interest in the growth of the University, to have made friends with all newcomers, to have read, walked, sewed, received many visits, and lived a life of the most comfortable serenity. She always enjoyed sewing for herself and her daughter, and to the very last of her life she both sewed and embroidered. At this period of her life she revived her taste for painting and decorated china, and painted her well-loved wild-flowers with truth and exactness. After June Spencer had returned from Europe, she was married at the very end of 1885 to James Lee Love of Gastonia, North Carolina, who was at that time Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematics at the University. He was to Mrs. Spencer as kind and considerate a son-in-law as may be described. There is no one in all her circle of relatives and connections of whom she so invariably speaks with affection, gratitude and approval, as of her son-in-law, in whose home she was to spend the last fourteen years of her long life. The letter below takes up the series where it was left in the last chapter. She is writing a letter which recalls vividly a celebrated criminal trial, that of President Garfield's murderer, Guiteau:

October, 1881.

I wrote you a postal Dearest, while in the court, yesterday, sitting and looking on at a great criminal trial. Some of the papers are abusing the women for going, but the men are quite helpless to resist, and prevent them from getting the best seats. We went per favor of the Solicitor General, and had every attention. Arriving, we found all doors guarded by policemen, and hundreds of men and women besieging in vain for admittance. We elbowed our way through the crowd. At the doors everything gave way to us, and we were let in at once. Those left outside quarrelled with the policemen, for letting *those people in*. To which was the reply, those people are official people and we are obliged to let them in.

So we went on triumphantly, being official, from one room to another, handed along by obsequious gentlemen. At ten o'clock we were taken into the court room and given good seats; the marshall giving me, on account of my poor hearing, a good place to see everything among the medical experts who have been summoned to watch Guiteau, and judge of his insanity. We staid till the recess at noon, and then elbowed our way out, having seen and heard all that we wanted to. The whole scene impressed my imagination as the last act of a remarkable tragedy. Guiteau is not interesting apart from his crime. He has some smartness. Good address. Good easy manners. Loses his temper and gets furious however, and seems to care for nothing then,—but Oh, what a wild, wasted, friendless-looking creature—not a voice or a hand will be raised to save him from the gallows. And does he not deserve it?

Cornie, Nora and I went to the Opera at seven-thirty that same night. It was *Gerster* singing, whom you have heard, so I will not tell you anything about *La Traviata*, in which she appeared.

I was much amused with all I saw. (I could not hear anything.) I laughed and laughed. The crowd of painted and powdered *rips*, both men and women, the painted passion and sentiment.

In 1883, in Chapel Hill, she and her niece, "Cornie," Samuel Phillips' oldest daughter, go to look up an old

nurse, Miss Sally Williams, who has been living away from Chapel Hill ever since those evil days after the war.

November 1, 1883.

MY DEAREST:

Cornie and I went and returned from our journey yesterday. The storm of Monday had cleared up everything. The sky was blue as in June, the sunshine golden, the air delicious.

We had a nice little one-horse phaeton, and a one-eyed old negro for driver. We carried a large basket full of things to give Miss Sally Williams, besides a good lunch for ourselves. We started at seven o'clock, drove to Aunt Dilsey's, who had a couple of broiled chickens and biscuit for us, and away we went, quite happy, not knowing at all whither, though our old driver seemed confident of finding the way.

Up hill, down hill, trot—trot—trot! I thought of the little story I used to tell you when you were little, of travelling away somewhere and stopping along the road as we pleased, only this time I did not have my baby along with me.

We went past Robert Patterson's, by Mt. Moriah Church. The trees were beyond description gorgeous, gums, maples, hickories, the road was good, that is, good for Orange County, the horse was lively, and we were in tune to enjoy everything. We stopped to get "locusses" [honey locusts] to get haws, to pick grapes. As to persimmons, they were too plentiful, we disdained 'em!

We had been advised not to go to Durham, but to go straight to Guess's Mills on the Eno River, between Durham and Hillsboro. A mile from the river we met two women walking. Asking them if they knew Miss Sally Williams, living in that neighborhood, "O yes," they "knowed her mighty well, her and Miss Matilda—they both of 'em was dead, died last July."

After this neither I nor Cornie felt that the sunshine was as bright as before. We went on, crossed the Eno at the mills, beautiful place, large dam, noble rocks, and hills all glowing with color. A mile beyond we found the house, as described.

An old woman, some dogs, and some children came out. We went in and announced ourselves, and our purpose.

The old woman was Miss Sally's sister Annis, living now with her daughter who married twelve years ago. Annis used to come to Chapel Hill in the old days, knew us all, and loved us. Cornie remembered her, and she Cornie.

So we sat down among the dogs and children and heard the short and simple annals of Miss Sallie and Miss Matilda, and their last days. Miss Matilda fell dead, with no warning, from her chair, July 19, and Miss Sally who had been poorly, though with no especial disease that Miss Annis knew of, "just wilted right off," and died ten days later. And when they went to dress her for the grave, they found what no human being of them had even suspected, so well had she kept the dismal secret, Miss Sally had a dreadful "eating cancer" in her breast, said Annis, "as black as your dress, Mrs. Spencer. The doctor said, from the looks of it, it must have been three or four years old, and she had hid it, and dressed it herself alone."

She had gone on uncomplaining all those years, nursing the sick, doing just what she had always done. No hint of the fire that was burning into herself. We knew Miss Sally was a woman of great resolution, but would hardly have thought her capable of this.

Her sister, who talked very well, said it would have prevented her from being employed as a nurse if people had known. She dressed herself to within three days of her death, and when the fever came on and she was delirious she kept reason enough to charge her sister "not to unpin my underbody whatever you do." So they let her alone. After her death of course they went to put clean clothes on her, and found this awful thing, all primed up with plaster. In her trunk they found the old linen, and the medicines and ointments that she had used. Poor Miss Sally! What a story.

We sat about an hour and a half, and heard all they could tell us, and told them all about the Chapel Hill people. It was all abundantly affecting to Cornie and me, as you must admit would be natural. We gave Annis the coffee and sugar, tea and

flannel, and a nice tea pot I was carrying to Miss Sally; and after kind parting words came away.

Miss Sally and her sisters had lived in a large house across the road, but it was shut up. Miss Annis said she could not bear to go into it after those two deaths. They appeared to be comfortably well off. Have good mules, a good barn, a colored woman living with them. Comfortable but sluttish, North Carolina like. So we came home. We ate our lunch after we started. It was about sixteen miles distant, we took four hours to go, and four to return. What strikes me is that at such a trifling distance there should be so little intercommunication. They had heard nothing about Chapel Hill, and we had heard nothing of them.

In 1884 we find a letter to her daughter, who has just announced to her mother her decision in favor of the man she eventually married:

CHAPEL HILL, *January 22, 1884.*

DEAREST :

Sitting alone and thinking, thinking, turning everything over in my mind connected with you, and having no one with whom to share my thoughts, it is no wonder I want to write to you, and so begin this letter.

I am thinking this morning that it is a pity that girls are not perfect. Their lovers think they are, of course, but we know they are not. When one sees a strong man on his knees so to speak before a tender unformed girl, placing all his hopes for life's good upon her love and truth, idealizing and idolizing, I say it is a pity she is not all he thinks she is. There is a great deal of unconscious deception in the first flood tide of a newly awakened love. Both parties really do appear exalted, bettered, transformed, as if in a new state of existence.

Of course this cannot last. The illumination ceases, and people appear once more as they really are. Then if a woman is not really truthful, sincere, modest, good-tempered, unselfish, industrious, sensible, it will all come out. Sometimes when I think of all that has been staked upon you I am frightened, when I think of what you are staking on him it appals me.

Sometimes I want to advise you, and then I say, if in all these years she has not become so, and so, she cannot now. It would be only a putting on, an affectation. I believe she will show the same prudence, self-control, delicacy and generosity I have noticed in her all her life. It is a good thing to have the first, and undivided love of a good man. How do women dare to trifle with such a thing as they do very often! You see how very thoughtful the letter you wrote me last night has made me. Are you not glad that none of your old lovers can call up a blush to your cheek? You have nothing to wish unsaid or undone with regard to any of them. . . .

I have always imagined a marriage for you with a man already settled and a house ready, and instead you have gone and done the very thing I did not want you to do—engaged yourself to a college man with nothing particular in view. But why should I regret that your entrance on the serious duties of life is delayed for several years. You will be at work, you will not sit idle. I have just received your letter with all your impatiences, your hopes and fears.

If you decide to go to London when Professor Winston goes I shall go to New York and see you off, and then spend your absence in Washington, with the kin.

The journey to Europe was over, and in December of 1885 Miss June's wedding cake was made at Aunt Dilsey's cabin, according to old agreement, and all went "merry as a marriage bell." There are full accounts of the wedding and all about it. In March, 1886, a few months after, we find a page of the journal devoted to a description, item by item, of that quiet but pleasant life she led for a few years while her daughter and son-in-law were both with her, before they removed thence to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

I think it is a duty to put on record this halcyon calm, my daughter happily married, and living in the same house with me, under circumstances of comfort. Our situation here with my amiable Mrs. Thompson is certainly the best that Chapel

Hill affords. Yesterday, March 6, 1886, was just like every other day, and I spent it thus. Up at seven, dress leisurely, open the door for my cat Bob to come in. Breakfast at seven-thirty. Mr. Love hurrying to be in time for college. June going to the door to see him off. Both so happy. All so amiable and cheerful. I sit down to my sewing, thinking of poor dear sister Fanny, gone now three years. Dinner and afterwards June comes in with her work, to sit with me. Different friends call. . . . June and her husband go to walk.

After supper I read *David Copperfield* aloud to them for an hour, June with her work, and then I go downstairs to my room, as I do when no company or engagement is expected. Often I sit by my fire, reading till late, wake next morning in perfect peace, to another quiet day of employment and comfort, a life of uneventful ease and peace.

And this peace continues for several years longer in the home built by the daughter and her husband. A tiny slip drops out of some old pocket record, saying, "Wednesday, February 29, 1888. June, Lee and I went to the Mineral Spring this afternoon. Picked some dog-tooth violets on the hill beyond the long bridge. A happy day." But there are letters of this particular period which are worth reading.

CHAPEL HILL, *September 15, 1884.*

DEAR BROTHER SAM :

This is a fine bright cool fall morning. A fire would be comfortable, but failing the fire I have a shawl round me, waiting for breakfast. We have had a cool summer, hardly a case of illness and not one death, though I recall very few deaths in our circle of friends and neighbors for ten years past. The population of this place is changing however, and has changed wonderfully. A visit to one of the churches of a Sunday morning will show this. In the Methodist Church not long ago I could see but four or five faces that were familiar. Poor old Jones Watson looking up at the preacher with dim bleared eyes. He is completely severed from this new day. He and John

and the Carrs, Mrs. Barbee, and F. Utley, Mrs. Jennings, theirs are all the ante bellum faces.

At the Baptist church it is still more strange, at the Episcopal, the Malletts and Miss Mary Smith are all.

We had a political meeting, a speaking here on Saturday. Cox, Ransom, Graham, Bunn, etc. Ransom called to see me, and said there were not six people on the ground whom he knew when in college. I was one of the few. I took Cornie and Fan and Minnie and went and sat under Mr. Hargrave's largest oak tree, and was much amused surveying the crowd. Esquire Johnston was out in a new suit, playing the candidate. Senator Ransom dealt out chunks of taffy all round during his stay. I absorbed and assimilated my share without any difficulty. He paid you a very handsome tribute of respect and liking during his speech, as the "North Carolinian best known and most respected in Washington, standing higher professionally than any other ever sent there," etc. He told me that night that he "loved Sam Phillips." He spoke of John Pool with forbearance and pity. All this is pleasant, even though we may be certified that it is only Ransom's way. . . .

The crowd was but small, even with the students to swell it. I asked why so few ever came to a Chapel Hill political meeting. Mr. Hoot Patterson said it was because no liquor could be had here. "They will go by hundreds to Hillsboro' or Durham,—Chapel Hill is too dry."

I went driving with Charles and Cornie the other day. I saw the "Old Mrs. Strain Place" on the old Hillsboro' Road for the first time in thirty-three or four years. I have not seen the "Huccabee Place" since the winter of fifty-one-fifty-two. You perceive by this that I am not locomotive. It is a sort of inertness that possesses me.

I had a visit from Bettie Williams the other day. She married this summer a nephew of our friends Henry and Marmaduke Williams, a respectable man who owns a well stocked two-horse farm. She told me his name was "Levi" and added, "but people don't call him that. He's got another name. They call him *Woodbury* which a'nt any name at all to my mind."

The man is forty years old at least, and his name is a hint of old political times—Levi Woodbury and his associations and enterprises are gone as completely as those of “Tidal King of Nations.” Who thinks of them, except in this way, as one recalls extinct animals—say the Dodo!

And O, the next world to which we are all hurrying—Where is it? and what shall we do there? Anything of more permanence than here? And what shall we know and remember? Such queries are often in my mind these days, and there are times when I would like to go and begin that new life, and, it may be, join the members of our life’s party who have preceded us thither. . . .

Cornie is the only one of your children who is really smit with the secret charm of woods and fields. She is constant, and always ready to go. To have on always a good loose and easy shoe, and never to be too much laced up, are great assistants to this sort of constancy. I have been there myself. The old “White Place,” Mrs. Swain’s old home in Raleigh, is advertised for sale. “None abiding!”

Very affectionately, your Sister,

C. P. S.

The next letter is written to Mrs. Charles W. Johnston, whose husband is the Esquire Johnston mentioned in the foregoing. She was a friend of whom Mrs. Spencer said, on one occasion, “As long as she is in Orange County, there is something there to tie to; she rests my soul.” Mrs. Johnston still lives some miles from Chapel Hill, and in the country, then as now.

WASHINGTON CITY, *January, 1885.*

MY DEAR AGNES:

I did not know whether to laugh or cry and be vexed when Susie Thompson wrote that a letter having arrived at their house for me from you, together with some fine apples, they had kept the apples to eat, and returned the letter to you. I did not begrudge the apples to them, but I was vexed at the

sending your letter back. I would have been so glad of it. It would have been like a farewell from you.

I was very glad to receive your wedding-day letter . . . glad to think you associated me with the day. In your calendar it comes as a day to be thankful on, thankful for a kind and loving husband, promising children, and a comfortable peaceful, plentiful home. I had not thought of its being so long since that mild grey January day, when for the first time since old Esquire Johnston's own marriage, sixty years before, a bride was brought to the old Johnston Homestead. . . .

Are you using your new dining room this winter? I hope it is to add greatly to your comfort. . . . Here we are well enough, but like you complaining of the weather. I have kept myself tolerably close and try to busy myself first with sewing, next with reading, and finally with letter-writing. I have overhauled all June's things. You know I have never relinquished the pleasure of making her underclothes for her.

We all spent the morning at the windows of Brother Sam's office on Pennsylvania Avenue last Saturday, looking at the long procession, the Monument dedication. Lots and lots of soldiers, sailors, tinkers, tailors, Free Masons, Cadets, orders, brass bands, flags and banners; finishing up with President Arthur, Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Bancroft, and other Washington City grandees and notabilities. And at night we had a fine view of the fireworks round the Monument, from my bedroom windows which overlook the city and the Potomac River with the Virginia shores in the distance.

The girls had a dinner-party that evening. Would you like to know what they call a good dinner? They had soup, oysters, roast turkey, steak, asparagus, green peas, macaroni, potatoes, celery, cranberries, pickles, and relishes. For dessert rainbow ice-cream, lemon ice, chocolate cream, mince pie, macaroons, French bon-bons, oranges, grapes, winding up with splendid coffee, black as ink.

Brother Sam still occupies his wife's room, where all things remain just as she left them. But I notice that the girls never go into it, yet they all talk of her freely, and keep alive the idea of her among them.

But what human sentiment survives in any force after two years of death? It is no doubt the mercy of God that time should invariably steal away the sharpness of all bereavement. My poor Mr. and Mrs. Mason are an instance of how the broken heart can live on, and find something to live for.

I had a good letter from them, not long ago. They write of their two dead girls, but are submissive, even cheerful. I had a letter since I came to Washington from——. I was surprised and much pleased. Her letters do her credit, supposing her to be quite sincere. She is, is she not? Without that element, sincerity, I cannot take any stock in a person.

Give that element of truth a foremost place, dear Agnes, in the forming your children's character. As they grow older, you will find there is no comfort like that!

Mrs. Charles Phillips keeps writing to me, "When are you coming home?" I am not able to say, I suppose I shall see the Democratic President inaugurated. Wonderful is it not? Dear Agnes, write to me again. Give my love to Mr. Johnston and the children.

Next is a letter to her brother, describing the inauguration of President Cleveland.

SOLICITOR GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON CITY, *March 4, 1885.*

DEAR CHARLES:

A wonderful day! wonderful spectacle,—yet I enjoy it only by half. I long for you and Laura to be here. They say Washington City never saw anything like the crowd, the display, the excitement. Brother Sam keeps saying to me, "Magnificent, isn't it?" and I nod assent.

We all came down here directly after breakfast—fine place to see everything, but I cannot describe the show. The multitudes oppress me. The day is perfect, 'Twould be too warm if the sun shone very bright, but the slight misty veil over everything makes it perfect.

I am always glad for the people when the weather is good. The show, the troops, the marching, the music, the fine horses and equipages! Cleveland, Arthur, Ransom and Sherman in

such a gorgeous vehicle! Such cheering and waving of handkerchiefs, such glory. The public buildings are a mass of flags; the streets, stands, balconies, windows, roofs, every possible spot to hold on by, or where a seat could be constructed, is black with crowds. And everybody is in good humor, everybody is well dressed and orderly. The civil display is as impressive as the military. It befits a great nation of freemen. It fills one's imagination completely.

The one drawback is that to our good brother all this means defeat, dispossession. This handsome apartment will know him no more as proprietor. His future is all uncertain, yet as Mrs. M—— says, "Doesn't he take it beautifully?" Yes he certainly does. Doing the honors as gaily and cheerfully this minute—dear old fellow. He has provided an elegant lunch here for the party.

I wish I had a small kingdom to bestow upon him this afternoon! Yesterday, June, Cornie and I walked to the Capitol. The Avenue was a jam—slowly we moved along. The elements of the throng were evidently of great respectability. At the Capitol every hall, passage, staircase, presented a moving mass of humanity. We made our way into the President's room, where Arthur sits all night the last night or two, signing bills. As we rested on the red morocco sofa, in came Senator Ransom. He came over and sat down by us. I introduced my daughter, with great pride, and Ransom immediately gave her piles of taffy about her mother.

The views from the balconies and windows of the Capitol are just glorious, the air slightly smoky, as today. The winds were west for once in Washington City.

We sat in the Senate Gallery, and then in the House for a while, and then went slowly home. I had seen so much I did not want to come out today, but I was overruled, and here I am scribbling to you, with the room filled with ladies and gentlemen going and coming.

Last night a gentleman called on Mrs. Spencer and declined to send up his name, saying he wanted to see if I would know him. I went down, and luckily guessed *Hannis Taylor*. It was he. I had had a letter from him in the winter, saying he

wanted to be here on March fourth. We had a very pleasant talk, and then I went up and sent Brother Sam down, and he invited Taylor to dinner on Friday, so I shall see him again. He appears very well.

Sam got a letter from you which we two enjoyed as we read it, in the middle of the hurly burly. Yes it is something to be thankful for, that when so many reputations have made shipwreck, our dear good brother lays his office down with only increased honor and reputation.

Senator Ransom told us yesterday that there were a great many North Carolinians in the City. I have not seen one. The faces, O the faces!

It is like walking in a dream! Presently the grand procession which is to form at the Capitol will come this way. Cleveland is to review the troops from a grand stand erected in front of the White House. . . .

Four o'clock.—Have been staring steadily for more than three hours at the procession—and still they come, never ending, troops upon troops, file after file. . . . It has been the grandest show I ever beheld. The soldiers made a splendid display, and when Fitzhugh Lee rode along at the head of the Virginia boys—such cheering! It was the only general popular outbreak. Lee brought several colored regiments with him from Virginia. He said nothing would tranquillize the negroes more successfully.

I must stop. Have written this in such intervals as could be snatched.

Affectionately Your Sister,

C. P. S.

Perhaps the most celebrated of all Mrs. Spencer's friends from a purely literary standpoint was Hannis Taylor, whom she had taught during the Civil War at Chapel Hill, where his family were refugees. He was Judge Taylor of Savannah when he called upon her in Washington. Letters from him are among her papers. He sends her later a full account of his forth-coming book which bears the same relation to the English Con-

stitution as Lord Bryce's does to that of the United States. He says:

If my book succeeds I shall expect *you* most of all to be proud of it. Take a leisure hour and tell me all about your dear self, all about Chapel Hill. If I bear fruit, and I may, I shall give you credit. After an absence of more than twenty years, I cling to the associations of my youth with a tenacity and affection which surprises me. With your dear daughter married and within a stone's throw of you, and with your older love, the University, entering upon a second youth under your eyes, you should be very happy, and you deserve to be. Why don't I come to see you? I have resolved never to go back, unless I go as a man of high distinction. Do you live in the old home? Is the old bench still there, upon which "Pa" and yourself and Governor Swain used to sit together?

In a later letter, Hannis Taylor says to Mrs. Spencer that if anything in his book is the least bit unclear to her mind, that passage is defective, and must be revised. When the Normal School for girls was established in Greensboro the credit of sowing the seed which had thus flowered was duly given to her name, and in 1910 it was her old pupil Hannis Taylor who made the eulogy when her portrait was presented to the school, to be placed in the building named for her. He called her the "Typical American Woman" in this address.

On the first of January, 1886, the old Swain-Caldwell mansion in Chapel Hill was totally destroyed by fire, thus changing the whole outlook on Mrs. Spencer's familiar street.

In January, 1887, Mrs. Spencer began a school history of North Carolina, which she brought to an end the following year. It was duly published, and there are letters to her about it, preserved, but it was not as vital

a matter to her as the beginning of changes in her peaceful life of the decade just past.

January 1, 1888, she records the death of her old friend, Mrs. Ellen Mitchell Summerell, to whom several of these letters were written. "I look out this night, and think how the moonlight lies also on her grave."

In July of the same year died "Cornie," daughter of her Brother Sam, and her namesake and prime favorite. A little later she writes "The University is not prospering, and that weighs on my heart."

April 17, 1889.

Brother Charles and Sister Laura have come to the decision to do as their children wish, and break up their home here, give up all semblance of independence and go to live with their sons at Birmingham, Alabama. I have fought against the idea in vain. I think it a most injudicious thing for two persons at their time of life, but all their children advise it, urge it.

I shall never see Charles again, I feel sure. Laura may return, but Charles, *never*. My good kind generous hearted brother Charles, I shall see him no more on earth, after this farewell!

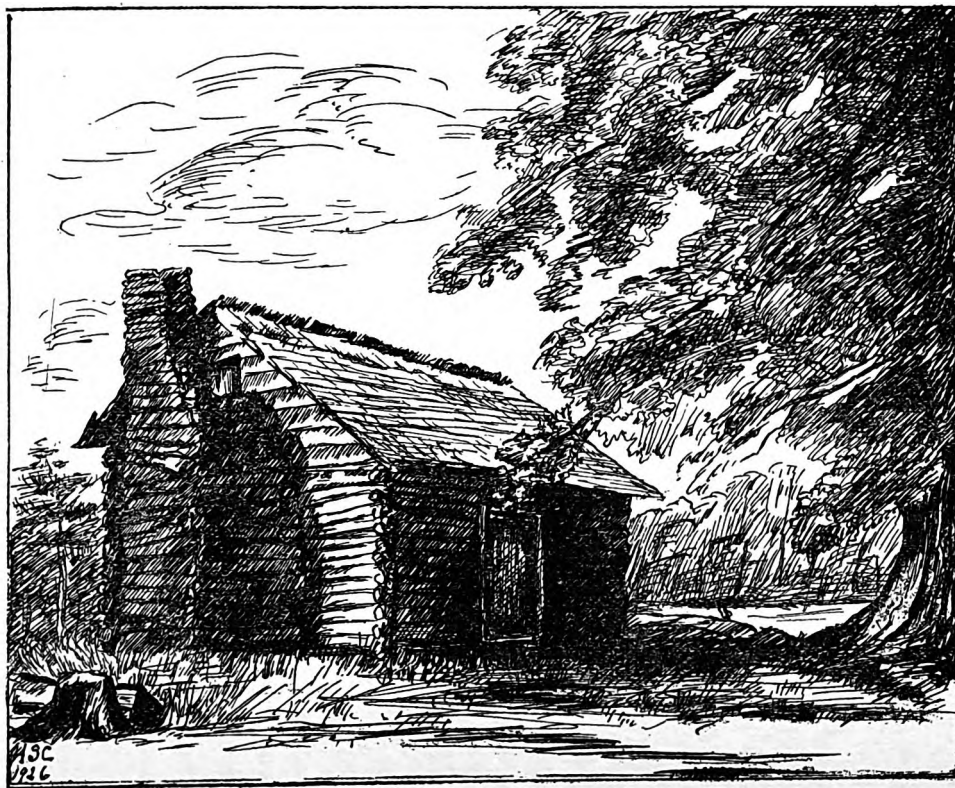
Charles Phillips, Mrs. Spencer's eldest brother, was a man of parts, well known and appreciated, but the last half of his life had been ground up under the disintegration of his often recurring illnesses, so that he never accomplished the half of what he was clearly capable of doing. His disorder was rheumatic gout. He was a preacher, powerful and practical. He and his wife, in his Chapel Hill days of the first period, undertook some of the most neglected religious work. They conducted a Sunday School for the negroes. After the break-up of 1868 he was seized upon eagerly by Davidson, where he remained till the University was reopened. The call of Chapel Hill was the stronger, and he came home again,

where he worked for awhile between the attacks persistently recurring until his health gave way completely. He was an invalid confined to a rolling chair for eleven years before his death, in 1889. Frustration of a life is one of those tragic developments which make us pause and revise our current values in achievement. Dr. Charles Phillips was thus taken from his activities, teaching and preaching, and limited to one subject, and one text: patience.

Mrs. Spencer says of him that he was so utterly patient that it broke her heart, so resolutely patient that he could never have been in his heart resigned. But he was cheerful. Everyone visited him as he sat helpless. He grew broadly tolerant and mellow as he grew older. He taught a student Bible class. He assisted in the compiling of the Alumni Catalogue, he kept up his friendships. The visitor to Chapel Hill, especially if an old student, called on Dr. Phillips who always had time to talk over all the old stories, and who would be sure to recall them. The negroes whom he had always befriended and understood would often come to him with their long histories. The sorrowing came to the side of his chair for comfort. His children grew up worthy about him, but he must often have said to his own heart, that the race was not to the swift. He and his wife left Chapel Hill on April 29, 1889, and seemed to reach Columbia, South Carolina, in fairly good trim, but he never rose from his bed after he lay down upon it. He died after ten days of excruciating agony.

From a letter to Miss Margaret Mitchell:

Chapel Hill opened her bosom to receive him back once more. He was the most living one of us three, the brightest,



AN ORANGE COUNTY LOG CABIN

the strongest, the most vivid, most interested, most sympathetic. It is wonderful to think of the position he held in spite of his infirmities. To the last he was the center of us. . . . He said in his last postal to me, written on his last journey, "I did not sleep. I lay awake and watched the stars. I have not seen them in a long time."

The year before her own death she records:

I always loved that bit of horizon on which Brother Charles' eyes rested, summer evenings on his piazza, for so many years. I thank God every day when I can see a pine tree against the sky. I seem to see that one lifting its head, on Battle's Brook, across the valley, eastward.

November 6, 1889—Brother Sam married his second wife today. I believe this second marriage will secure his happiness and comfort in his latest years.

Christmas, 1889—Lee is gone to Cambridge, Massachusetts. June and I are alone in the house, comfortable, not unhappy.

June, 1890—Lee has returned after an absence of nine months precisely. Now I must get myself ready for the inevitable, June's departure in September.

January, 1891—Christmas and New Year I spent alone. June and Lee are comfortably and happily situated in Cambridge. My winter is passing in great peace. My health is perfect.

January 8, 1891—My dear friend Mr. Paul Cameron was buried today.

Hereabout there begin to come notices about the failing of Aunt Dilsey, who was as valued a friend as any.

Dilsey sent for me last Saturday. Said she was "mighty poorly." I think she was as usual, but was tired of corn bread and buttermilk as a diet. I sent her a new calico dress, some flour and other things. She is better. Whenever she gets "outdone" with everything she sends for me.

A few days later :

Aunt Dilsey was better today, very cheerful and uppish. She says she "studies on you children all the time."

No more entries till 1894, when, on May 25, occurred Aunt Dilsey's death.

Our dear old Aunt Dilsey, faithful servant in our family for about sixty years. I suppose her to have been about 92 or 93 years old. In face and person she bore the appearance of extreme old age. She died after a tedious illness, in full possession of her senses, her characteristic good nature, good sense, dignity, loyalty, and unshaken faith in her Redeemer. She was Chapel Hill's oldest inhabitant at the time of her death.

At the surrender Aunt Dilsey refused to use her liberty, but remained with her "Old Master" till his death. She said, she went "straight on 'tending to her business."

She was twelve years old when the Old South Building was being erected, and liked to tell that she had turned the grindstone on which the workmen sharpened their tools.

Like others of her race, she dwelt fondly on old times. The rising generation will never know the sweetness of the attachment that exists between an old servant and the family to whom the loyal service was given, an attachment lasting to the third and fourth generation.

The death of this old servant was the loosening of the last tie that held Mrs. Spencer away from the abode of her daughter, where a little grand-daughter was awaiting her. It was the natural place for her to go, at her age; nothing was left which needed her in Chapel Hill.

GOING DOWN THE VALLEY, ONE BY ONE

IN THE faithfully told story of any significant and long continued lifetime, there comes in toward the last a deep undercurrent of tragic feeling. Very few who read sympathetically the account of a memorable life of this kind are insensible to the temptation of turning back to the opening pages to escape the downward drift of the closing ones. They compare the toils of the seed-time with the hurried joys of harvest. They must read of later days when there is no pleasure left in them, and ask themselves, "Is this really the end?"

Mrs. Spencer was in her seventieth year when she finally left Chapel Hill. The suddenness of her departure came as a shock to her whole state, for while, as she said, she had been for some time "drifting out of sight of the students gradually," yet she was to the young a tradition and a figure surviving from the old days of the giants, and no older person could bear to think of Chapel Hill without its patron saint. It was, however, a very simple matter. She knew she was growing old. She had already planned to move away in the autumn and join her daughter in Cambridge. She now found that she needed surgery for a dangerous growth in her breast. Of this she told not one soul in North Carolina, but hastened away in late June, 1894. Her cure was complete and permanent, but she never went back to Chapel Hill.

The University which she had revived from its deadly swoon so far relaxed its disapproval of too great forwardness in woman as to bestow upon her at the

next Commencement the honorary degree of LL.D. *in absentia*.

The summer of 1895 found her with her relatives in New Jersey, and joining her beloved "Sister Laura" at her brother's in Washington, but she was now three score and ten, and stone deaf. She could no longer go about city streets alone. Her mind took a late growth for these years. Her diaries became more full and detailed after she went to Cambridge, for they were her confidante. These are full of interest and comment upon the thought of that vivid center in which she now found herself, although she felt a keen distrust of the naturalistic trend of some of it. She read eagerly after the writings of those men who were at that time making Harvard famous. She must have seen them at times, a few she knew, but age and deafness, and her own desire to be unnoticed and not too much waited upon, kept her from being actively a part of the Cambridge society of the day.

The Harvard Library held infinitely more sustaining abundance than the little collections down in North Carolina. Always a great reader, she could obtain anything she now desired, and her diaries record how many and varied were her interests. She could also pursue her love of English biography, and appraise her favorite Englishmen of the governing class by the words of all their contemporaries. She manifests a suspicion of her own rational departures from the beliefs of her youth, and feels each new decision of her own strong mind as almost a treachery to her old self, and yet she cannot help broadening her views very materially so late in her life.

And she was appreciated outside her home. How often these latest letters refer to the many flowers and books "June's indefatigable friends" lavish upon her at every anniversary. She probably might easily have been esteemed at her true worth, and as it is there was an instinctive recognition of her as a remarkable personage, as was shown in the fifty or more letters written to her daughter by New England friends after her death.

Like an uprooted tree as she was, she had not lost her intimate interest in the things of her old home. If any people from North Carolina chanced to come to Boston, a pilgrimage to Cambridge to see Mrs. Spencer came to them as naturally as homing bees. Hundreds of old friends must have done this. And she had one old friend living in Boston a part of this time. This was Walter H. Page, at that time editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. He was to her one of her own folks, and she saw him and his family from time to time, rejoiced in his successes, and interpreted him aright. Once she records that he made her a visit on his birthday, and "I kissed him for his Mother."

All these years she writes letters, letters, to all the throng she loved. These are tintured with some sadness of exile, and a sense of finality, but are patient withal, and show no waning of love or of keen interest. Mrs. Spencer had a certain broad human sense of humor. She loved simple people and somewhat elemental jokes. This quality of hers was quite apparent personally in her, although it is not so apparent in her writings. It was a part of her broad sympathy with life and her keen interest in all that composes it. This was probably what gave her such great appreciation from those who were

by no means her equals, for everybody claimed an interest in Mrs. Spencer, claimed it and received it.

This trait belonged to all her family also. It made for kindly judgment and charity. The atmosphere of New England was just a little rarified and over-strained for her conceptions. She continually harks back to odd warped characters known long ago, events trivial by all counts, but perennially interesting to her because a part of the panorama of her early life. Anybody who could claim a connection or a relationship to any of this storied past of hers was by that fact become of the deepest interest to her, and as these contacts died out, one by one, a part of her own soul seemed to flicker out with them. There was no indifference, no manifestation of the stupid acceptance of the inevitable that besets some old folk like a paralysis. Mrs. Spencer was definite, and gamely determined to express herself to the very last. Her comments never lack that energy or that salty wit that made her little sayings memorable. A few of her last letters show all these things, although as she herself said, "Getting old, in this day and time, is but a silly business!"

The next letter is to Charles Phillips' second daughter, Mrs. Lucy P. Russell, of Rockingham, North Carolina:

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., *April 14, 1902.*

DEAR LUCY:

Thanks for the unlooked-for letter, for I was in your debt. I too had been planning to write, and I too had been delaying with some faint hope of a more cheerful state of mind.

I enjoyed your letter. You have the same turn of mind that your Auntie is gifted with. I too am in the spirit when spring returns; always have been. Perhaps the month of March has something to do with the annual introspection, the living again of life's farewells, musing, brooding over days,

scenes, woods, faces long long ago passed. Why should one scene more than another, one word more than another, spoken, brand itself upon one's memory when many others more worthy of remembrance are faded and forgotten. I recall with springing tears that brief interview with Mr. and Mrs. Mason as we walked out of that rude old graveyard (after the burial of Brother Charles), and I also recall a word or two from him, as I recall Susie's cry of anguish the day he was finally driven away from his old home. Oh Lucy, what pain his last look recalls to me!

Perhaps it is wrong, foolish, certainly it is unavailing to indulge such memories. It is like pressing a dead rose's stalk to one's breast till you can feel the thorn pierce again. Still, I would not be *I* if I lost the habit.

Over my mantel hang the photos of my father and my two brothers. I often put down my book or work and accost them. "Yes, Charles, you were right. Sins are forgiven, but not folly." Or I appeal to my dear old Father.

"And if thou wilt, remember, and if thou wilt, forget." I choose to remember, sad though it be. I am glad your boy is at Chapel Hill. I hope, I do hope he will retain through a long honorable and successful life a love for the hills and groves and sweet recollections of his college days. Tell him this, to keep himself clean and pure if he wants to recall this time with pleasure. Keep out of scrapes, out of bad company, away from haunts of evil. Urge this upon your boy!

Can you realize that your Aunt Fanny has been dead nineteen years next Monday? And in those nineteen years, how much has happened to us all. I suppose myself to be the same person I was then, but I do not feel to be.

I think the close of your Uncle Sam's active life, his retirement, is peculiarly melancholy. His crippled condition, and the death of his good wife. I do not speculate upon his future. Most of what his second wife had must return at her death to her first husband's family. When she was here five years ago she told me laughingly that she had been angry with Sam for taking a five-year lease of their house. "It looks like assuming that we shall live five years." The lease is just out now. It

lasted her term of life. She was good, sensible, prudent, and pious. Brother Sam writes beautifully of her. Nothing could have prolonged her life, as her family physician told Brother Sam after her death. Sam had not seen her in a fortnight till he was carried into her room to see her die. Miss Mollie writes me that he held her hand, and spoke to her repeatedly, but if she made any sign in response it was very faint. When the last breath ended he placed his trembling hand on her forehead, and with tender solemnity commended the departing spirit to the mercy of God, in Christ. Such a pathetic scene!

I shall always think of the second Mrs. S. F. Phillips with respect and affection.

Dear child, I understand the longing of your soul for rest and peace and congenial companionship. "Turn thou away from earth, there's rest for thee in Heaven." I believe that in what seems to outsiders the best and happiest life such feelings occur as often as to others less favored. *Just as often.* It belongs to humanity. The universal groan that rises day and night from a planet that has suffered shipwreck. I wish I could do something for you, something that would help you bear it, help you look up and look forward.

I can only sympathize at eight hundred miles distant. Sympathy is not much. Don't let anything shake your trust in God. Hold on. At evening time, it shall be light!

I missed the twelve o'clock postman by just ten minutes. I will improve my outrageously long letter by an extract from a diary which I was reading today—Lady Granville's *Letters*.

She gives her impression of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and her daughters on their famous visit to England about 1856, and I am spiteful enough to enjoy Lady Granville's description.

"Mrs. B. Stowe and daughters have arrived. We are very much amused with the young ladies, so extremely different from anything we ever saw before; talking so much, giving their opinions most decidedly, never saying 'Goodmorning,' or 'Goodnight,' or 'If you please,' or 'Thank you,' to anyone. Leaning their elbows on the table at dinner. Saying 'Ma' at

every word, knives in their mouths,—this strikes one, though I have discovered some good points.

"Mrs. B. Stowe is very pleasant to listen to. She is quiet in manner and talk, wears the oddest little wreaths in the evening. Touch freedom, says nothing at all. Touch slavery, she bursts forth."

Mrs. Stowe as appears in these memoirs made personally no impression in English society while there. She infuriated the whole country on her return by retailing the vile obscene scandal against Lord Byron told her by his crazy widow.

All this was repaid to the Beecher family in the trial of Henry Ward a few years afterwards for adultery. He was the idol of them all, and whether guilty or not, he went to his grave besmirched.

When I read the letters and memoirs of these great English ladies, note their conservatism, their devout adherence to the Church, its prayer book, collects, Holy-days, poems, works for sweet charity, all so saintly, so encased in prejudice and ecclesiasticism, such fervid love for Church services and priests, such passionate admiration for their own children, grand-children, nephews, nieces, and kinsfolk generally, so much reading of religious books, such love for people of the right Church, I am reminded of Mrs. Battle [Mrs. Kemp P. Battle]. As they advance toward the end of their lives, such a loosening of their loyalty to their own forms, such a change in their attitude to all who love Christ. I am deeply interested in all such displays of grace, and true Christian spirit unfolding as the soul ripens. Mrs. Battle has softened and sweetened too, most amazingly. I have learned to love and to admire her. There are not many such sterling characters, *me judice*.

Dear Lucy I have not time to *write less*.

Yours with love.

C. P. S.

Two small quotations from letters to Mrs. Laura Phillips are both dated in October, 1902.

Will Phillips writes that Southern professors, scholars and the like, are simply not in it in such a crowd as was recently

at Princeton; are not known, not recognized, not invited, not handed round.

On the contrary the beloved Booker, Apostle of his race, in full academic regalia was seated on high. Will says more-over that President Venable, of the University of North Carolina, had the same experience, same impressions, talked it over, and came to the same conclusions.

The South must stand together in its educational work and do its full duty with no reference to the great universities of the North and North West. They have no use for the South, no sympathy for it, and the South must just accept the situation, at any rate for this time being. . . .

I brought from the Library a life of Sir James Paget; one of England's greatest surgeons, one of Queen Victoria's family physicians. He died in 1899 at 85 years old, closing a noble life gently and calmly. He watched himself growing old, and remarks upon the symptoms. Makes the best of it. Enjoys all he can, to the last. "The degeneration of the body is such a natural process." He observed it all with the trained keen eye of the scientist, repining at nothing, thankful for everything.

Such a book is a great pleasure and solace to me in my old age.

1903.

I spent the morning going over several trunks full of *things*. Nothing makes my heart sick like coming upon relics of my old life in Chapel Hill. Something that recalls Mrs. Fetter, an apron of your Grandmother's, some reminder of dear Sue Battle, or of Annie Swain. I feel sorry for my old books. Nobody would take them as a gift—my old friends, most of them disintegrating, like myself.

Lucy, the end of life presses rather heavily upon me at times. It is near, for I feel many things slipping away which once I clung to. The poets and the philosophers. How do we know about them? but the saints, we are sure of them. I can imagine your Grandfather in converse with Saint Paul very well, but not with any man or woman whose religious belief is nil, or hazily uncertain.

You are to think of this old woman sheltered under the wing of her good daughter, and thanking Heaven with great seriousness when she lies down at night for all Heaven's mercies.

October, 1903.

DEAR LAURA:

Brother Sam writes me of the death of one of his classmates, in 1841, Atlas Harrison, of Raleigh, who had been inmate of insane asylums North and South since a year after their graduation. Think of it! Sixty years. What a doom!

A letter a month ago inclosed one from our old friend Professor McIver. I have written my last letter to him, without doubt. My dear husband's last classmate!

Sam's letters of late have plainly shown that life for him was over. He is indifferent to passing events, men and books. His longest letters contain no allusion to any living man or woman, in his family or out of it.

He writes of the old old days when we were children, and of the old old friends. "Dr. and Mrs. Mitchell, now of Paradise." "Governor Swain, on whom lies God's peace."

November, 1903.

Now dear Sam has gone to join all these old friends of his. In some things Sam's character was ideal. In his strength, benevolence, uprightness. I thank God I have had two such brothers as now sleep side by side in Chapel Hill. His faith was of the old fashion, firm.

At the last they heard him repeating the Lord's Prayer. Then turning to his daughter, he said, "Your Grandfather will be waiting in the path for me!"

Has anyone ever known a finer character?

Samuel Phillips died on November 18, 1903. Here is a bit from that same last letter to his sister, in which he writes his own epitaph:

I hope the latest memory of me may be by some fire-light in the cabin of some humble old acquaintance, white or black, who shall have outlived all his generation, and every now

and then will recall some incident of his early days, distorted, and unreal, which at the end will result in an attempt to identify the spectre as "one of them Chapel Hill folks." Then, "I mostly forget the name, It was Phillips, maybe Sam!" Then some morning this old relic will be gone to join his past, and my name will go with him into final oblivion.

But through all this reminiscence, Mrs. Spencer keeps a hold on the younger generation. Here is a bit of letter, written this same year to the daughter of an old friend who had never seen, but who knew well by tradition, her mother's old friend, and who impulsively wrote her a Christmas letter :

December 29, 1903.

DEAR :

I am much pleased that you took it into your head to write me a long and pleasant letter for Christmas. I do thank you for writing just as you did, in the confidence that your mother's old friend would be glad to hear from you, that she would feel *complimented!*

I sat some time with your letter in my hand, summoning up the past, figures, scenes, incidents—fifty-sixty years ago.

If ever I meet your mother's spirit in that other life, I shall, if I am myself, as here, tell her about your writing to me.

How I have regretted that I allowed our correspondence to drop. She would have kept it up, for she was more persistent and efficient about everything than I was.

To Miss Margaret Mitchell:

October, 1903.

DEAR MARGARET :

I like to think of you, walking among your flowers, stooping to attack your weeds. Here I am, looking over old letters papers, etc. I find such an accumulation of memoranda as distresses me. I hate to burn them. I equally hate to leave them for other people to toss around and finally set fire to, as old rubbish.



CORNELIA PHILLIPS SPENCER AT SEVENTY-FIVE

What a comfort if one had a great old Norman Castle, with uninhabitable rooms, holes, corners, chests, hiding-places where this correspondence could lie quiet two or three centuries, and then be discovered and brought out and viewed with reverence; used by historical antiquarians with delight and wonder!

Did you ever look over the *Paston Letters*, written during the York and Lancaster civil wars by a country gentleman's wife to her husband in Parliament? There is really mighty little in 'em,—and so I feel some accomplished scholar might say of my letters—"rubbish."

On the whole Margaret, it is far from exhilarating work to look over old letters. You and Sam and Sister Laura are the only friends I have who would understand or be interested.

In the year 2003 they might be invaluable, but I cannot wait to see them appraised.

I have bundles of letters from gentlemen which would be eagerly scanned—from the men of the Battle family, from Vance, from the Bingham, from Mr. Paul Cameron, Governor Graham, Governor Swain, from Brother Sam—Yes these would all be read in 2000, but I cannot wait.

Brother Sam destroyed all his correspondence several years ago. So did Brother Charles before his death. My Father had few correspondents, Presbyterian ministers, mostly. No one would want to read their closely written lucubrations. I have burned cart-loads of letters since I came here.

What I now value chiefly are bits out of the lives of my old Chapel Hill neighbors. . . . What you wrote me about Vanderford, the blacksmith, for instance, and how he jilted Betsy Dyer, your housekeeper. Mary Shaw was the person who told me about that affair long ago. Where did Betsy Dyer come from?

There were so many of those forlorn single women, perched here and there in old Chapel Hill.

I want to talk to Brother Sam about them. June does not care but he would. You are now the only persons I resort to in such gossip. Laura is a new comer compared to you and me. She cannot be appealed to. What does she know about Vanderford, or John Winfree, or Polly Roach? Or Dr. Yancey,

or tailor McGee? Her mind on such topics is a blank. Poor Laura!

Shall you and I go to visit Mrs. Vanderford, aged ninety-four? You would not go. You do not love old women!

Another letter to Miss Margaret Mitchell may be quoted. The first is just before, this one some time after her brother Sam's death.

DEAR MARGARET:

I am thinking today that old folks, men and women, are a good deal in the way. So many of our friends here are hampered by the care due to old aunties and grandmamas and they *do* live to be *very* old hereabouts.

Old Mrs. Woods in Chapel Hill writes me she is helpless as to moving, but can read her Bible without glasses, while Mrs. John Carr has them write me that she can go as she pleases, but cannot see to do anything.

June is busy picking up the loose ends of her social life, calling on friends returned from mountains, sea-side, or foreign lands. I call it melancholy however, when a woman comes home from a tour in England, or Italy, and can talk of nothing but servants and their vile ways, about the impossibility of getting a decent one, and the dreadful necessity of doing your own work. What will these ladies talk about in the next world?

Americans do not seem willing to deny themselves anything that shall lessen labor, or exertion of any sort. Here in the new house are buttons, knobs, rods all about. I am afraid to touch 'em. I creep upstairs and downstairs and hold tight to the banisters, and step as if on eggs over the rugs which lie on these slippery floors to trip me up.

When you get old you find yourself doing many queer things. I do get so hungry at times for some word of affection from some of my kin North or South, that I am ready to sit down and cry. These New England people, with all their many excellencies, are not warm-hearted. Unless there is confidence, friendship dies out.

Now dear old friend I will release you. I read the letters you sent of dear Brother Charles to you, with a swelling heart. He wrote too long letters. Too many words in them, but how kind. . . .

Let me stop right now! . . .

Writing a few months later to Mrs. Johnston, in 1904, Mrs. Spencer anticipates the death of this old friend, Miss Mitchell, also:

. . . It has been a long winter, and a sad one to me, and the spring is not likely to lessen the sadness, for I am in daily expectation of hearing of the death of the only remaining companion of my childhood and youth, my own and my brother's lifelong friend, Miss Margaret Mitchell, now sole survivor of Dr. Mitchell's family, as I am of my father's;—a woman of highest character, and one of the excellent ones; my old friend, my good comrade, what shall I do without her warm sympathy, her clear good sense, her uncompromising faith in the unseen. Your husband Esquire Johnston must remember something of her, though it has been thirty years since she and her sister, Mrs. Grant, left Chapel Hill. She is supposed to be in her last illness. Since Mrs. Grant's death she has lived in her own house in Statesville, North Carolina, a useful, secluded life, hampered of late years by cataract in both eyes.

Her oldest sister, Mrs. Richard Ashe, died in California within a week or two of my Brother Sam. She has had little to live for since. When she wrote to me of my brother's death, what she said was, "And Sam departed in peace. I knew it would be so."

How many things death takes away from us!

I have just finished reading Morley's life of Gladstone. He quotes some lines written by a Greek poet 540 years before Christ, on the death of an old friend, which are as fresh and sweet in his translation as they were 2500 years ago:

"They told me Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear, and bitter tears to shed.
I wept when I remembered how often you and I

Have tired the sun with talking, and sent him down the sky,
But still your pleasant words, your thrilling tones awake,
For Death he taketh all away, but these he cannot take."

The last year of her life—she died on March 11, 1908—Mrs. Spencer's thoughts were quietly fixed on the change she was expecting, even with eagerness, as she grew weaker and weaker. Her mind remained perfectly clear until the last dying stupor, and her diary receives its daily record far into the February preceding, but she complains of excessive weakness. Never any pain. A few entries from her journal copied here may show how busy her thoughts were with the subject, how she marched breast forward to meet her end. It is the privilege of age to feast on memory, but she, while remembering, was also adventuring into the unknown.

These paragraphs are taken from the journals of the last two years of her life:

I seem to live in my memories, and resort to them when I feel stagnant instead of taking any lively interest in the ocean of life that is surging around me.

Some persons in Chapel Hill have sent me copies of the last *University Record*. It hurts my feelings dreadfully to see June and Lee take no notice of them. They are entirely weaned from Chapel Hill. I am not.

I suppose the process of change is really going on always, only we do not notice it till years after, like the gradual changes of the forest.

I have been troubled lately with wakefulness at night, and have comforted the night watches by repeating to myself in whispers many of the familiar old hymns. I often hum them over at my sewing. I love that old tune of *Silver Street*.

Coleridge said, just ten days before his death, that scenes of his childhood and youth, long forgotten, came floating 'round his mind and memory like fragrant airs from the spice islands. Perhaps it is so with all old people towards the end.

They say the appearance of his room grows strange to a dying man, when he looks upon it on his last morning, and knows it will confront him no more. He sees effects, things that never struck him before. I think this is true.

Chapel Hill is always an unique place. Its great trees have stood for a hundred and fifty years. It had in consequence of its many undisturbed years of sun and shadow many characteristics not often seen.

Just one more letter, a very late one, written to Mrs. Charles Phillips about Commencement Day, 1907, will give an old woman's farewell to life in her very own words:

June, 1907.

MY DEAR OLD BRIDESMAID:

Thank you for your remembrance of me as a bride 52 years ago. You and I are all now. Margaret is gone. June brought me a lovely Cape Jessamine for remembrance, which has perfumed my room for two days, and this morning brought me a box full of the same from South Carolina.

Fifty-two years ago. I can still see some of the faces at the wedding. I do not recall any incidents of importance, but I can summon up the faces of fifty-sixty years ago. Cannot you?

Nobody need to think I want to return to my old home and see the changes. No no! "It is not now as it hath been of yore!"

Dear Old Bridesmaid, friend and sister, the best a woman ever had—may our friendship continue on, through this *next* life!

This month was Commencement day at the University of North Carolina. My heart warmed so as it turned to the memory of it. Faces long since hidden rise up to me from under the grass, rise into view once more. And I always end with a prayer for the University. Do not you?

I long so at times for a chat with some old-timer and sympathizer, some one to help me arrange my ideas, trim up my

prejudices, and dust my mind generally. I miss Charles and Sam and Margaret, and I shrink into my forlorn lonely old self once more.

I have such tenderness of feeling towards old Chapel Hill, and the old folks now disappeared. They did what they could in their day. Do you ever meditate on the thought of how entirely the men and women of the preceding generation have gone? Nothing left but a house or two, but the wild flowers still survive. The liverworts, the houstonias, yellow jasmine, and white fringe tree, the rhododendron and the kalmia flourish in their old haunts just the same. They were there before Columbus came, they are there now.

A soft autumn day brings many memories of woods, fields, chinquapins, nuts, and wild-grapes, and the companions of childhood, and even of later age; for many a long tramp did I take all through my sixth decade. I think of the old North Carolina woods, fields, and highways. How silent, how solitary and how restful. Blessed is the heart that can be satisfied with the life they offer, and be willing to end life there.

I have no plans whatever, and only one desire for this life, to be let alone, to be allowed to meditate. I am withering, wrinkling, shrinking out of life. Sometimes I find a relic of Margaret. I stop to think of her, and envy her her transit. So quickly, so safely!

Where is she? What is she, and what is she doing? Vain questions which you will one day be asking about me, and get no reply.

Where are my dear brothers? My father and my husband, four good men and true who have blessed my life?

Perhaps it is but the old cry of humanity for rest and peace and permanency that seizes us, a hunger of the heart. I faint with it often.

I will say right here, that it is a great help in weaning one from life that you have lived to be pretty much alone in it.

After the seventy-fifth milestone, it is like walking in a battlefield. Where are they all?

I always recall my ever dear husband, still fondly remembered, as a young man. I wonder if he would know this wrinkled old woman?

Two old United States Senators from Alabama, who died lately, were contemporaries of my husband. If he had lived. . . . But why think of it?

Because I never can forget.

Dear Laura, I think it very much to be expected that you and your Great-grandsons should not have many common topics for conversation.

You will be satisfied with looking at them, seeing how well they appear, and feeling thankful that they promise so well, while they will retain an affectionate remembrance of their Great-grandmother, whom they knew so little.

As to their being *so serious*. . . .

How could they laugh and be jolly among such elderly folk? We must let neither our children nor our grand-children make our last years unhappy.

Dear Laura, it is a resource to my mind to have you to say things to. If you were not so severely good and virtuous I would say a good many more things than I do, but I am afraid of your casting me forth.

“Ah no, the visions of the past,
Sustain the heart in feeling,
Life as it is—our changeful life,
With friends and kindred dealing.”
Your old Sister,

C. P. S.

Mrs. Spencer's remains were brought South. Her funeral was held from the little Presbyterian Church her father had built, which is now superseded by a fine new one. She lies buried in the Chapel Hill cemetery with her kindred.

Much was written and said about memorials to her, immediately after her death, and there was a memorial tablet erected to her in the Memorial Hall at Chapel Hill.

The great World War and its tremendous changes and interests intervened, and so the trunk full of papers remained unexplored for longer than it otherwise would have done. But hers is a character which can never be repeated, and a service which must not be forgotten. The village of Chapel Hill, with its institution, is her monument and her epitaph. And so let it be.

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