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## Material for Biography: Introduction

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CLARISSA DIXON COWELL

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# Material for Biography

## *Introduction*

We live in San Francisco, 2517 Castro St. Henry remembers our country house near Stanford University where he was born . . . [in 1897] when I was 45 years of age.

. . . He was beautiful beyond the ordinary, with an indescribable, spiritual quality of loveliness impossible to convey in verse or to be caught in a photograph. When he was about 6 years of age I was told that he had been pronounced, by a member of the Sketch Club, the most beautiful child in San Francisco. He was photographed by 4 different art-photographers. One, especially, had him in many poses and fairly covered her walls with reproductions. I believe they were all lost in the great fire following the earthquake.<sup>1</sup>

From the very beginning Henry Cowell (1897–1965) was seen as someone unusual, someone special. His mother, Clarissa Dixon Cowell (who dropped the “Cowell” from her name after divorcing Henry’s father), his stepmother, Olive Thompson Cowell, and later his wife, Sidney Robertson Cowell, all felt compelled to document the life and activities of this remarkable individual and to insure that his ideas and his music attained a permanent place in music history. With her notes entitled “Material for Biography,” Clarissa began the detailed commentary and documentation of Henry’s early activities. This task was subsequently taken up by his stepmother Olive, compiling what is known as the “Grey Book” (“Henry Cowell: Activities and Achievements”) a chronology and vitae of Henry’s accomplishments until about 1935. Shortly thereafter Cowell was arrested on a morals charge and spent four years in San Quentin, where his fantastic story of resilience and accomplishment is continued by his wife Sidney Robertson. Her unfinished biography and a comprehensive oral history made by her in the 1970s completes the Cowell story from a third point of

view. All of this is preserved in the Cowell Collection in the Music Division of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

The Cowell story encompasses a diverse range of histories—psychological, social, and sexual, as well as musical. Clarissa Dixon's account sets that story in motion by giving us a glimpse of Henry's remarkable development as a child, including his work with Professor Louis Terman of Stanford University, originator of the Stanford-Binet IQ tests. Dixon spares no opportunity to support her claim on Henry's genius. And why not, since he had only a third grade education, yet by the age of ten was reading Cicero, *Demosthenes' Orations*, a variety of travel journals, as well as books on music theory, geology, zoology, and botany (in which he was highly accomplished).

"Material for Biography" is a chronological account of Henry's development until age nineteen. Written on simple 5½ by 8½-inch notepad paper, the document comprises three "books" (273 pages) compiled between 1914 and 1916. The early parts of the text are divided into categories such as "Imagination, observation" and "reason/intellect." But as the memoir progresses the entries become more expansive, often opening up to wide swaths of personal observation and opinion. These prove both valuable and vague in documenting, for instance, the turn-of-the-century trends in education and Clarissa's intense dislike for a public school education that she describes in vivid terms.

The public-school ideal of a few years ago was crushing all children into a shapeless, pulpous mass and then pouring them into moulds, like hot tallow, from which it was the delight of educators to see them issue all alike, the tallow become hard, cold, flawless candles, each with exactly the same light-producing capacity for the lighting of the world.<sup>2</sup>

More valuable but delivered with less oratory are the descriptions of farm life in the Midwest, when after the great earthquake in 1906 Henry and his mother left San Francisco and stayed for a time with her sister in Trego County, Kansas. Here Henry's awareness of the traditional folk tunes of his Scot-Irish ancestry takes root. Back in San Francisco his proximity to the nearby Asian neighborhoods paves the way for the growth and development of his unique imaginative compositions, which are nearly audible in the reaction to Cowell's first recitals in 1913 and 1914. Dixon's own review of what is considered Cowell's first formal performance before the San Francisco Musical Club in March of 1914 astutely observes, despite critics' reviews, the problem of music in relation to the sister arts in America at that time. It appears that she believed that through Henry's unique and colorful compositions, her son had begun to meet that problem head on. Did she have an intuition of the scope of Henry's rapidly expanding musical imagination, and that later he

would join with composers such as Edgar Varèse and George Antheil in the 1920s making music “modern,” just as the visual arts had done so successfully in the previous decade?

The [San Francisco] Examiner’s correspondent, Redfern Mason, gave him some commendation tempered by harpings on his need of instruction—a need which Henry never denied, but openly avowed. It seemed to me, however, not so much a matter of finding real crudeness in Henry’s work as a certain difficulty (which Mr. Mason shares with many others) in believing that such astounding performances can be really as good as they seem. Issuing from an untaught person, little beyond childhood, it is natural that critics, expecting weaknesses, are determined to find them. So, departures from ancient law are set down as breaches of musical taste instead of efforts to win for musical art a freedom already partly achieved by artists of the brush.

At this point in the text Dixon carefully chronicles the creation of a number of Henry’s earliest “masterpieces,” many of which are now lost, observing carefully the genius she sees and hears. Dixon spares nothing in her worship of Henry as if she—herself a less than modest author of children’s stories (“I worked hard on my poor little short stories that nobody would buy”) were writing the ultimate children’s story about the love, hardships, and triumph of dear Henry.<sup>3</sup> Did she know that her son would grow to be famous in his compositions, but also famous in championing and promoting the music of others? It was apparent from an early age that Henry had talent and energy that was motivated by a unique generosity of spirit.

One Christmas he received gifts from 30 persons. I supposed the house would be a store-room for toys a long time thereafter, but he had presented most of them to other children in a few days. He never gave away anything that was not his own.

One can draw any number of connections from reading Clarissa Dixon’s personal memoir of her son. It is perhaps dangerous to draw too many conclusions and parallels to Cowell’s later life, but if you are a fan of Henry it is hard not to speculate. It will be good, then, when we will be able to hold this memoir up to a complete biography of Cowell and all his accomplishments. While it was, of course, impossible for her to know in 1916 what lay ahead for her son, it seems certain that Clarissa Dixon was not far off in assessing that he would be an important force in what Henry Cowell himself referred to as “the whole world of music.”

George Boziwick  
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*The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts*

## *HENRY COWELL*

Material for Biography  
(Written by his mother, Clarissa Dixon) 1914

### *BOOK I*

If I sometimes intrude myself, my doings and thinkings; the father, his doings and thinkings upon these pages it will be because the story of a life is an account of its heredity, as far as known, plus an account of its education, as far as known, plus an unaccountable factor the existence of which is calmly taken for granted by some and hotly disputed by others.

I find much in Henry which I am unable to account for on generally-accepted scientific principles.

He seems to be part-angel and wise with inexplicable wisdom. He has taken much away from my old cock-sureness about the nature of being. He has also added material to my stock for renewal of speculations.

Born March 11, 1897, Henry Dixon Cowell is grandson of George Young Cowell, Dean of Kildare, and Samuel Albert Dixon, an uneducated wagon-maker; Jennie Blackwood-Cowell, - patrician, and Asenath Nash-Dixon, a teacher in the common schools of Illinois; son of Henry Clayton Blackwood Cowell, of Ireland, and Clarissa Dixon (Cowell by Marriage, Dixon again by divorce), of Illinois.

His father is a writer, a thinker who has chosen to be clever because cleverness is pleasing and thought is not. Perhaps it would be more just to say he was driven to be clever, Need being his driver. He is an essayist, a story-writer and a poet.

### BEGINNINGS      (Language)

Henry spoke 3 words when he was 20 months old. In 2 more months there were 180 words in his vocabulary. On his 2nd birthday I had written down 272 of his words. I am not sure that I heard them all.

At that time there were many phrases but few complete sentences, excepting scraps of song-verses, as

"I took the light away -  
Poor 'papa in bed"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Oh ride a cock horse -  
See an old lady -  
Rings fingers - bells toes -  
Music - she goes."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Bonnie Annie Laurie  
Gave me her promise true"

\* \* \* \* \*

"For thee a fond heart waits"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Luck-a-by" (meaning Rock-a-by)  
["]baby in a tee-tot" (tree-top)  
(This was at 22 months)

\* \* \* \* \*

"Baa, baa, black sheep  
Have any wool?  
- One for master - "  
Some sentences were:  
"Sing about Annie"  
"Thank the baby"  
"Lie down, light, mama, sleep."  
"Sun shines brightly."  
"Lark sings."  
"Where's Annie?" (Annie Healy, a friend very dear  
to everyone in the household).  
"Where's papa?"  
"Build a house."  
"Cut wood."  
"Here I am."  
"No hurt fly; dear fly."  
"Thank you, mama."  
"Play the ball with papa."

### (Physical Beginnings)

Before the birth of Henry I read a great many books on infancy, motherhood and kindred subjects. I read with enthusiasm and determined upon courses to be pursued for the physical welfare of my child.

Henry was born cold. Now, the books with one accord had condemned cuddling, coddling, keeping the babe in arms. He was placed alone in the middle of a big bed, like a rose in a desert. How I longed to hold him against my heart!

Hot irons were placed about him but still he was cold. (That was after I was able to get out of bed.)

One day Mrs. Harkins, an experienced woman, mother of 7, came to the rescue. "Take your baby in your arms," she advised. "Give him the warmth of your own body if you want him to live."

Gladly I took her advice. Gladly I became an old-fashioned mother, as

far as cuddling is concerned. From that day forward I warmed my baby in the best of myself, soul and body.

In a few weeks he was pronounced "physically perfect" by one physician; a few months later the opinion was corroborated by an older, more experienced doctor.

He was beautiful beyond the ordinary, with an indescribable, spiritual quality of loveliness impossible to convey in words or to be caught in a photograph. When he was about 6 years of age I was told that he had been pronounced, by a member of the Sketch Club, the most beautiful child in San Francisco. He was photographed by 4 different art-photographers. One, especially, had him in many poses and fairly covered her walls with reproductions. I believe they were all lost in the great fire following the earthquake.

There were, also, plaster figures, sketches, and at least one painting - voluntary work. We were too poor to have it in the ordinary way.

Crowds used to gather about him - on street-cars, railway trains, and in streets. He was happy in it all, but wholly unspoiled. His interpretation of such things was, as nearly as I understood him, that attentions, honors and gifts were showered upon him because he was a child; that they came to all children and would stop when he was older.

Henry was born when I was 45 years of age. My other son, C. V. Davidson, was born when I was 19, and suffered many things from my want of wisdom. During the intervening years, though I had been teacher, journalist, homekeeper, and, withal, a very busy person, there had been time to ponder on the great problems of life. I held strong convictions on many subjects bearing on child-life and the relation of the child to its parents and to society. Some such formulae as the following were held by me, and by Mr. Cowell, also, to be true:

Three great forces for human happiness are Love, Wisdom and Freedom.

Wisdom without Freedom is a god in chains.

Love without Freedom is a flame in a desert, lighting no one.

Freedom without Love or Wisdom is an unchained Devil.

I believe most children are reared in an atmosphere of unsympathetic alertness to catch them napping, and the napping is gauged by the narrow knowledge of the watcher, not by the ignorant innocence of the child.

An atmosphere surcharged with suppression on one side and fear on the other is not conducive to the growth of love or wisdom. Therefore a child ought to have as much freedom as is compatible with his own safety and the comfort of other people. Freedom does not necessarily mean absence of guidance or neglect of training; but the guidance and the training should be indirect and delightful, not obvious and irksome.

Helps, though not obtrusive, should be always accessible and, if that were possible, always wise with love's own high wisdom. Instead of pressure, external and mechanical, compelling conduct of the sort approved by parents and teachers, the motive should be the development of initiative, intelligent choice, self-government, in the child.

Though I had very definite opinions concerning the desirability of freedom, besides being an ardent lover of liberty, they were abstract and formless. My notions about methods of securing freedom for my child were exceedingly hazy.

"If you have a happy baby, don't ask for much besides," I used to say to myself. "First of all, let him be happy. Let him get happiness in his own way; and while he is learning his lessons of life, you will be learning how to help him."

I had read confident assertions that a child does not begin to reason before the age of 10. This theory was supposed to justify the autocracy of the parent and blind obedience of the child.

However, you do not learn the multiplication table by having some one say it for you. I did not (and do not) believe that children learn to reason by having all their reasoning done for them.

I began experiments in choice, with colors. As soon as he was able to look about with steady eyes, I arranged brightly colored fabrics around him.

Invariably his eyes, after some wandering from one color to another, rested on pink.

Pink was accordingly made his own - pink dresses, pink hood, pink sacque.

Remembering this, I wonder he did not tire of pink. I think I overdid the lavishing of his favorite color upon him.

However, after rattle-boxes and teething-rings, his first playthings were worsted balls in 3 bright colors, and again he chose the pink one for his especial favorite.

When he was a little older, each morning after bath and nap were over and he was ready for play, many articles were placed near him. After he had selected one, the others were taken away until he had tired of the first; then he was given another opportunity to choose.

### Property Rights

When Henry was 2½ years of age he one day opened a bureau drawer and helped himself to about all the finery I possessed. He draped himself from head to foot in ribbons, velvets and laces. When I discovered him he was on top of the bureau dancing before the mirror, crying ecstatically: "Don't I look like a little fairy!"



I privately agreed with him. I had never seen a fairy but I was sure he looked like one, not because of the ribbons and laces, but because of his shining yellow curls, his happy blue eyes, the light of his countenance.

I saw my opportunity to give him a needful lesson on the subject of mine and thine; but there was no need of haste. He enjoyed the dance and the finery to the end.

He descended to the floor and began throwing off the pretty encumbrances. Then I asked:

"Shall we help each other fold them all pretty and straight and put them away? Which drawer were they in?"

He showed me.

"My drawer," I said.

Presently we were passing his own little chest of drawers.

"May I open one?" I asked - with rather exaggerated emphasis on the "may," I fear.

"Yes," he replied.

"I ask because it is your drawer," I explained. "Your pretty things are in it. I must not have your pretty things unless you give them to me."

Later we were near Mr. Cowell's desk. A pencil lay before it. "Papa's pencil," I said. "I will get my pencil and write."

Like many over-eager teachers, I wrought confusion by my too-fervent zeal. For some time thereafter Mr. Cowell and I found embarrassments in the way of using each other's pencils. Our little puritan wanted his own plate and fork and knife and spoon at table; but the strenuousness soon passed, leaving plenty of real respect for private possession of personal belongings.

Meanwhile, he felt perfectly free to give away his own possessions. No little playmate departed empty-handed if Henry could induce him to carry anything away.

One Christmas he received gifts from 30 persons. I supposed the house would be a store-room for toys a long time thereafter, but he had presented most of them to other children in a few days. He never gave away anything that was not his own.

Cleanliness may be next to godliness, as we have been taught, but it is not godliness. A smut on the face is less serious than irritation in the heart caused by constant nagging supervision. Appearance is much but character is infinitely more. It is not well to let a child's experience lead him to suppose that getting mud on his shoes is as grave a matter as striking his playmate.

In the matter of inculcating ideals of cleanliness, I, perhaps, relied too much on the power of example and his aesthetic sensibilities, which, I thought, would inevitably be offended by want of neatness. Nevertheless there were indications that something in him did give battle against too great carelessness. For example, one day when about 2½ years old

he had just been bathed and arrayed in a pretty, clean dress, when he went out to play and returned quite covered with mud.

Returning to the house, he stood in the doorway, looked down at himself, and said regretfully:

"I play in the mud. I wish I wouldn't."

Another day he entered the house in similar plight and explained: "I go in the mud. Fall down. That was a shame."

Then he stroked his dress, endeavoring to brush the mud off with his hand, and afterward added happily: "I'm all better, now."

Nov. 1900

Henry secured an old shaving brush, wet it and applied it industriously to a piece of paper he had spread upon the floor, saying, "The man must have his face washed." I saw that he was scrubbing a pictured man.

### Sympathy

(These words tell their own tales. No additions of mine are needed.)

Sept. 12, 1899

"I love the birds."

Oct. 2, 1899

"Annie's lip. It was so sore. I kissed Annie's lip. It was so sore. Cure."

Oct. 1899

"Do you see the birdies? I love the birdies. I love the birdies very much."

Dec. 1899

"Dear old Harry, I love you, (stroking his father's face.)

"I love Annie."

"You're a good mama" (patting my cheek).

December 1899 was the day I undertook to write down every word Henry said, but I was not stenographer enough to do so. However, that accounts for so many of these sayings having that date.

"I love Annie and Mary and Mrs. Galagher and Mrs. Janes."

"Annie, I love Annie, I love her very much. Cuddle, Cuddle me."

"I love mama. I love you very, very much."

Mr. Cowell was going from home that day. At parting Henry said, "Well, goodby, lovey. I hope you won't cry."

"Kiss me all round and round."

Nov. 12, 1899

I was using a knife. Fearing that I might cut Henry, I asked him to stand farther away from me, but he continued standing near me, and said:

"Darling Mama, I couldn't do without you."

Feb. 12

When Mr. Cowell started to work, at Stanford University, 1-3/4 miles distant, Henry cried and clung to him, saying,

"I want you to live with me."

May, 1900

"Be careful, little foot. Don't fall. I think you would break."

Seeing pictured people, Henry often asked of them: "Is he happy?"

"Is she very happy?"

Nov. 9, 1899

Henry had been playing with an earthworm for about half an hour, handling it with great care to avoid hurting it. He came to me afterward and said: "I won't hurt the worm. I like the little worm pretty much, indeed."

Nov. 24th, 1899

Henry brought me a can with some remnants of corn and a little liquid left in it. A fly was endeavoring to extricate itself from the liquid. He said in a sympathetic tone:

"The little fly fell in there. Can't get out, at all. I love the little fly and the birdie."

June, 1900

"The baby pigs are hunting for the mama-pig. I think they will come back. I think they will come to live in my yard and be happy. I think they'll be happy."

April, 1901

We were gathering flowers on a hillside thickly carpeted with blossoms, when Henry said to me:

"Don't get all the Escholtzias. Let's leave some for the sick lady."

### Thirst for Information

Sept. 1899

"Tell me about the yellow choo-choo."

"Is Annie a good little boy?"

"Is Mary (meaning Mrs. Ralph) a good little boy?"

"Am I a little lambkin? Are you a big lambkin."

Dec. 1899

Leaning over the chair of his father, who was reading, he kept pointing out letters, asking, "Is that a t?" and other letters.

"Is that a horse? Is he eating grass? What does the other horse eat? What does the cow eat?"

"Is the stove hot? Is it burning very hard? No, it is the fire. The fire burns."

June, 1900

(Pointing to a mirror)  
"Will we go in there?"

August 1900

"When the sun goes down, where is it? The sun rests. When the sun rests, we have to rest."

"Will you take me to the public? What is the public?"

Aug. 1900

One day when I was about to wash all Henry's every-day dresses I brought him some overalls to put on. He looked them over disapprovingly and asked: "Aren't you going to put a dress on me? Are you playing this is a dress?"

Nov. 6, 1902

Henry played in a pile of sand nearly all the afternoon. A dog belonging to a neighbor went with him, stayed with him and returned with him. The dog is very fond of him. Henry pets it and loves it and is very happy to be loved by it. The dog is an ugly-looking creature. Henry does not seem to mind that or to like him the less on account of it. There is some-thing pathetic in the way the poor creature, used to being abused, turns its eyes toward Henry, who is gentle and kind to it.

Feb. 1901

After a street-car conductor had been teasing Henry, threatening to cut off his thumb, he asked me:

"Does mans always have fun with little boys? I don't like that.["]

### A Puritan Conscience

When Henry was 6 years of age I made the following entry in my note-book:

At one time for several months Henry could not be trusted to keep a promise. Now all that is changed. He is becoming painfully conscientious. He will sob and cry pitifully in self-accusation if he thinks himself in the wrong about some trifling matter. His word is as good as possible. He will also do things to help me, even to the extent of injuring himself, if I do not take care to prevent him. He is so generous, so upright of soul in every way that in my heart I often call him an angel.

One day Henry said to me:

"I am going to get a lot of naughty boys together and persuade them to do something that they wouldn't do, themselves, so as to help them

learn to be good. When I'm a man I'm going to have a school for naughty boys, to teach them to be good. No good boys may come; just naughty boys. They needn't bring any books. I'll not teach them to read, or anything only just to be good."

Feb. 1901

"What is the sky tied to?"

"How can it stay up, if it isn't tied to anything - up on the roofs of the houses?"

Questions about the sun had brought him a little information, which caused him to inquire further:

"What makes the world keep turning over and over all the time? Why doesn't it stop sometimes?"

"Why does the little boy hurt me when I try to play with him?"

(While crossing San Francisco Bay in a ferry-boat):

"Where does all the water come from?"

March, 1901

(At Golden Gate Park, in the Children's Playground):

"Why don't the merry-go-round fall down?"

"Why doesn't the house fall down?"

"Why doesn't the ground fall down?"

Another day in March

"Why can't I see the wind?"

April 1901

"Is there any more water in the well?"

"I want a drink of water."

August 1901

"Why don't we have tails?"

"Why do we get hungry?"

"Why doesn't the sun shine?" (A cloudy day).

Oct. [1901]

"Why doesn't the stove burn up?"

Why doesn't the fire come out of those little holes?"

"Why does the draught draw it up the chimney?"

Oct. 8th, 1901

"What makes the valleys and the mountains?" (We were on the side of Fairmount, a high hill).

"What makes the rocks?"

"Where do all these little stones come from?"

"What makes the grass grow?"

"Where do cracker-seeds come from?"

Oct. 16th, 1901

"Mama, when Anglice is bad her mama hits her."

"Mama, when little childrens bes bad, why don't their mama's teach them to be good?"

Jan. 1902

In answer to a question I said that I had been kept awake by my back. Henry then asked:

"How could it keep you awake without making a noise?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Some boys say 'Just because,' and that's all; and that's no reason. What do they mean by it?"

May 1902

"Mama, what is a philosopher?"

(I replied, "A philosopher is a person who wants to know the reasons of things.")

"I am a philosopher. Tell me some reasons of things."

(I said: "A philosopher usually thinks of some one thing that he wants to know the reason of; then he tries to find out.")

"Mama, what makes the grass grow?"

(This conversation was not suggested by anything he had just heard. I had been working about the kitchen, saying nothing, and no one else was present).

April 1903

"There must have been a first baby. The first baby couldn't have had any mama. What did the 1st baby do for a mama?"

Nov. 16, 1903

"Those boys were talking to me about God. They said that God made everything. When people say there had to be a God to make the grass and the hills, I wonder who made God."

Jan. 1904

Henry asked Mrs. Lessey:

"Am I myself?"

She said, "What do you mean?"

He said: "It is very difficult to know what is myself. Is this myself?" (Pointing to his own body). "I don't know what is myself and what is not myself."

### Observation

Sept. 1899

"Do you remember Dr. Moody and Mrs. Baird? And Winnie? Winnie had a blue dress on." (He had not seen them for nearly 2 months).

Sept. 10, 1899

"Look at the clouds! Aren't they pretty! Up there where the sun is. The clouds are gray."

Sept. 11, 1899

"Baby is nice and soft." (stroking his own cheek.)

Oct. 1899

"Rainbow! Rainbow! Had a little spot. Perhaps we'll see another rainbow."

Oct. 30, 1899

Henry recognizes and names with few mistakes the following colors: Red, Blue, Green, Yellow, Pink and Gray. He is liable to mistake purple for blue, but often has it right. Orange he sometimes mistakes for Yellow or Red, but often recognizes truly. He sometimes confuses Black and Brown.

Dec. 1899

"I see the rain fall down."

"I see the ribbons. Is dose ribbons?"

"The mud is growing." (It was raining).

"Come and see the beautiful moon."

"Isn't it blowing! Isn't it nice out here?"

Jan. 17, 1900

Henry burned his finger and asked me to put soda on it, knowing that was my usual cure for a slight burn. Finding that his finger continued painful, he asked me to get a needle and take the burn out. He had had splinters and briars removed in that way and supposed that a burn might be removed like a brier. I rather think that the usual way of childhood would be to cry instead of trying to evolve a remedy.

Oct. 1900

Seeing a picture of cats standing on their hind feet (in "Three Little Kittens lost their mittens"), Henry said to me, "Do you 'member the kitty I used to play with? My kitty didn't walk on its feet like these."

Henry watches the clock and seems to suppose the time of day can be changed by changing the hands.

Feb. 1901

We live in San Francisco, 2517 Castro Street. Henry remembers our country home near Stanford University where he was born. I called him to the door today to see a rainbow. It was dim. The arch was incomplete. He looked critical rather than pleased, and exclaimed: "That's not the one that was in the country. This is not pretty enough."

He builds imitations of the houses he knows when playing with his blocks - not often, but sometimes. He has built the house we now live in,

our house in the country, the City Hall, and the home of Mr. Strunsky, all with a good deal of accuracy.

July 1901

On the evening of July 4th we were at our window watching a display of fireworks in another part of San Francisco, when Henry exclaimed:

"Oh, look there on 29th St! There's one trying to look pretty and it can't hatch out!"

Another, better, explosion called forth the exclamation:

"The fireworks were excited!"

Aug. 30, 1901

Henry asked me which waist was prettier, his or mine. I said both of them were ugly but I knew something that was not ugly. "What is it?" he asked. I said, "A little boy with blue eyes." Then he closed his eyes and asked:

"How do I look now?"

Jan. 1902

"Some cats, when they are afraid, get high all over, tails high and hair high, and then they scatter toward where they live."

\* \* \* \* \*

### Reason - Intellect

Oct. 1899

Henry, having begun relating the story of Little Bo-peep who "lost her sheep and couldn't tell where to find 'em," suddenly broke off and inquired:

"Where were her glasses?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"The dog is barking. The dog is a naughty boy, I think."

Dec. 1899

Mr. Cowell was getting milk for Henry. Meantime he was repeating, for baby's delectation, a rhyme about Little Johnny:

"What does he want?

A kiss, I am thinking," - but when he came to the last line Henry substituted:

"Some milk, I am thinking."

Henry called me in an excited tone, crying; "I made E! I made E!" It was built of blocks - huge letter, quite accurately made.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Please give me a spool. I want 12 spools."

I doubted whether Henry knew enough of numbers to know when he had 12, or that 11 plus 1 made 12, but, on counting his stock I found that he already had 11, and the one more he asked for made 12.



Henry calls being held in arms and rocked, being "cuddled." A shawl is often spread over him when he is being cuddled.

Dec. 1899

He was playing with pencil and paper, when he cried out delightedly:

"Oh, I did make a cuddler." The "cuddler" proved to be a shawl.

He also drew several capital letters - C, G, O, I, A, P, Z.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is that the bicycle-bell? Is papa coming?"

Feb. 1900

"Papa, don't look at the book. Look at me. I love you. The book doesn't love you."

Henry was trying to stand between Mr. Cowell's knees, but found that his legs were crossed, when Henry said, after several unsuccessful attempts:

"I don't want to get in when your feet are shut."

\* \* \* \* \*

Feb. 1900

"I want to hurt your poor little nose, then kiss it. I want to bite it first, then kiss it."

March 11, 1900

Henry knows the capital letters and recognizes at sight about 25 words. This has been picked up gradually, never as "lessons," only by way of play. Both his father and I disapprove beginning formal education when a child is very young; but when a baby points to a letter or a word and fairly demands to be told the name of it, what's to be done? There is probably no more wear and tear of brain-substance in learning the name of a letter than in learning that the dog's name is Puck and the cat is called Olivia Twist. He likes to have the names of persons he loves written (or printed), when he learns to read and spell them as a sort of game. He likes to print little letters to persons he loves, having some one at hand to tell him which letter comes next. In books, his curiosity has usually been excited by large type or by pictures.

Some one playfully called Henry a little rascal, when he said:

"I don't like little rascals. I'm a rascal, myself, but I don't like others."

Another time, he said:

"I'm a little mischief." I asked: "What is a little mischief?" He replied:

"A mischief gets the thread off the spool. I won't take it all off! Oh no! Dear me! I'm not a rascal, now." (The last was added as he began winding the thread back on the spool).

March 19, 1900

Henry was having what he calls "A frolic," running from a certain corner to my chair, to be caught and kissed by me, and from there back to the corner. He was quite breathless with excitement and laughter, so I said to him, that I thought after 5 more runs to me he had better go to bed. Then, instead of coming to me directly from his corner, as he had been doing, he kept running part way and back again - evidently to make the five runs last as long as possible.

June 20, 1900

Henry sucked his thumb. I tried to persuade him to break himself of the habit by wearing a cot on his thumb. He asked me to do a little service for him. While doing it, I remarked that I liked to do things for him (in reply to his thanks, I believe). Then he held me in a reproachful gaze and asked:

"Do you like to put a cot on my thumb?"

June 23d, 1900

"Henry often builds very pretty and original designs with blocks - for me, he says, but he does not like me to see his buildings while they are in course of construction. As soon as he has one finished, he calls me to look at it. Today (quoted from my notebook, entry June 23d, 1900) while he was building I chanced to glance toward his work, when he cried out: 'Don't look at it: Look out there' - pointing through the open door. I looked where he suggested, when he remarked, as if to console me, 'Isn't it beautiful?'"

"His little buildings are remarkable for a certain geometrical symmetry, architectural balance and completeness. He has no pictures of block structures. He invents the forms himself."

\* \* \* \* \*

Henry wanted me to talk with him instead of sewing, and this was the form of his persuasion:

"Don't sew. You'll make a muss on the floor, and then you'll have to sweep it up."

Oct. 1900

Henry, pretending to read: "The fireworks went up in the air so fast that they ran around the rain."

Henry, at his play, took an object in his hand and, turning it over, said: "I'm the sun. Now you can see me." Then, turning it the other way, "Now you can't see me."

March 17, 1901

Henry was asking his father questions about a watch. In a short time he learned to count correctly the Roman numerals on the face of the watch and to tell several of the hours by the hour-hand.

At 10 minutes past 6, Mr. Cowell said: "It is now 10 minutes past 6." Henry said:

"But that is 2," pointing to the minute hand, about which he had not been instructed.

March, 1901

Henry made quite an argument about the story of "The Rat, the Cat and the Little Red Hen". In the story the hen eats all the cake because the rat and the cat will not help her to make and to bake it. Henry held that she ought to have given them part, anyway - "Because," he said, "they have to eat."

July 1st

In the story above-mentioned, the Rat and the Cat were lazy but the Little Red Hen was very industrious.

The kitchen floor was strewn with Henry's playthings. I asked him if he would be the Little Red Hen and pick them all up and put them away.

He asked: "Are you The Little Red Hen?"

I replied, "Yes, I am working."

He said: "There was only one Little Red Hen in that house. I'll be the Rat and the Cat."

Same day

At breakfast Henry said:

"I want to eat mama." Then he laughed, and repeated, but with the appropriate accent, "I want to eat, Mama."

Henry uses a number of long words - long for a child of 4 years. For example: "I think probably Uncle Patrick is not at home." "When Harry comes I'll be delighted."

"I made a definite change."

"Is my hair thoroughly dry?["]

March 1901

The words, "finally," "difficult," "difference," "circumstance," "mistaken," "suggested" were used properly, about March 24, 1901.

"Mama, you almost promised to swing me." (The latter was said after I had taken his hand and started toward the swing, saying nothing; but had been interrupted in my intention by a task in the kitchen that could not be deferred). He often used the word "surprise" in its proper meaning, but I think he must have meant "surprised" when, one day, he said, after something he had done,

"Mama, weren't you civilized when I did that?"

July 1901

"Fred is a teacher. He teach Annie how to wash." (This seemed to be

satirical, Fred being a boy, unused to work, and Annie an experienced woman.)

July 26, 1901

Henry put his thumbs and index fingers together and said, "What's that?"

I answered, "It looks like a B."

He said, "Not a honey-bee; a letter B."

Aug. 16, 1901

Henry — Whose picture is this?

Answer — She is my niece and your cousin.

Henry — But she can't be both at once.

\* \* \* \* \*

We were riding in a streetcar. Henry looked out a window and remarked:

"There must be a school near here, I see so many children."

Oct. 10th

Renewal of interest in books.

December, 1901

Henry jumped on my bed. I asked him not to. He replied:

"Oh yes, I will. I'll do it, and then I'll say 'Forgive me.'"

Soon after, sure enough, he did jump on my bed again, and just afterward looked at me with innocent amiability and said, "Forgive me."

Could Christianity find anything to criticize in his conduct?

\* \* \* \* \*

Jan. 3d, 1902

Henry told me he had the ear-ache. I exclaimed with thoughtless unreason;

"Heaven help you if you've got the ear-ache!" when the little philosopher looked at me calmly and replied:

"Why don't you put cotton in it? I think that would help it more than heaven."

Jan. 23, 1902

Henry said to his father: "My ear hurts."

Mr. Cowell answered lightly: "Shall I tell it to stop?"

Henry answered, "NO."

Mr. Cowell: "Couldn't it hear me?"

Henry: "No. My ear has no ear. It is for me to hear with."

July, 1902

We had a neighbor who one day began talking to Henry about God. He asked, "What is God?", or some such question. She was horrified to find a child 4 years of age who had never heard of God, and thereafter

talked so much to him on that subject that, speaking to me of her, his name for her was "The God-Lady". For some months after that he felt a good deal of interest in the talk of religious people.

July 5, 1902

"I talk about God to make people think I know about Him."

I asked, "Why do you want people to think you know about God?" He replied:

"Because, other people know about God and they'll think I'm naughty if they think I don't know about Him."

\*\*\*\*\*

"I don't think there is any God. People say God makes things nice, and I don't like my nuts with soft shells."

Sept. 1902

"I know there's a God. I've been to heaven and seen Him,"

"When you get to heaven, you'll find out there's a God."

"I am no longer an infant, as you say. I am a child."

Oct. 1902

Mr. Cowell and I were talking about soliloquies (in stories).

Henry listened attentively awhile, then he said: "I don't talk to myself. What would be the use? Myself knows everything that I know."

Nov. 1902

"How do you spell would?"

I said: "W-o-o-d."

Henry: "No, not that would. Would you like to" -

Nov. 11

"I'm glad I wasn't born a bad boy. I don't want to go to jail."

Nov.

A neighbor related this story of Henry.

She was jestingly arguing with him to prove that she was right in disliking a certain dog that carried off her daily papers and destroyed them before she had read them.

He persisted that she ought not to dislike the dog.

"But wouldn't you dislike him if he carried off your papers?"

"No."

"If he carried off the papers you hadn't read?"

"No."

"But why?"

"Because, I don't read the papers."

Nov. 1902

I asked Henry to refrain from something he very much wished to do. I was surprised to hear him answer, as he had never done before:

"You keep still."

I said it was not nice to speak that way to anyone. He considered awhile, then, as if to amend the matter, added, "like a good girl."

Henry asked me how much 9 plus 9 make. When he had heard the answer he exclaimed "I know that 9 and 9 make 18 and 12 and 12 make 24. It is very strange. 9 and 12 come so close together and 18 and 24 are so far apart."

Jan. 1903

"Mike says God is the papa of the angels; but I don't think Mike knows, for he's only a little boy, and even big folks don't know much about it."

March 16, 1903

Henry asked if one could count a thousand. (He had just counted a hundred.) I said if he counted 100 ten times, that would be counting a thousand. He instantly replied:

"Then if I count 100 twenty times, that will be 2000."

\* \* \* \* \*

Until Henry was past 4 years of age, he knew nothing of the uses of money. I had been rather anxious to keep him from knowledge of sordid and hideous facts. His own coins were used for playthings.

One day he said, "Isn't the grocer kind to bring us so many nice things to eat!"

It seemed necessary to enlighten him upon methods of exchange 'in this our world'. He was taken along on shopping and marketing expeditions, and, before long, sent to the baker on errands; but his new knowledge had an unpleasant feature in it, to his mind. He disapproved 'things as they are,' and often said that there is no need of money. "When people want something we have, why don't we give it to them? When we want something that other people have, why don't they give it to us? It is foolish to have money."

When Henry was about 5 years of age he once asked his father to carry him up a steep hill. Mr. Cowell replied:

"You are too heavy."

"How much do I weigh?" Henry asked.

"About 40 pounds," Mr. C. replied.

"How much do you weigh?" Henry asked.

"About 140 pounds," Mr. C. answered.

"If you weighed 180 pounds couldn't you walk up the hill?" Henry asked.

"Yes," his father answered.

"Then," Henry asked, "what difference would it make to carry me, or to carry yourself if you weighed 180 pounds?"

This, written down, sounds cold-blooded, but, when it happened it

seemed more like the attempt of a logician to solve a problem than of a selfish child contending for his own way.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Imagination

Sept. 6, 1899

(Age of Henry, 2½ years)

Henry ran away, down the road toward the nearest R.R. station, in Menlo Park, 2 miles from home.

I saw him going but found difficulty about overtaking him. He ran incredibly fast, for a baby. (As a boy, Mr. Cowell, Henry's father, won 6 prizes in 8 athletic events at Port Arlington, Ireland, School for Boys. At least one was in running.)

After I had come up with him he laughed gleefully, as if the race had been great sport.

I asked:

"What made you think of going away?"

He replied:

"Choo-choo say, 'Run away, run away, run away'" - imitating with his voice the monotone of carwheels running over rail-endings.

Sept. 12, 1899

Henry had a little low table of his own in the dining-room. He had been building cars on it with blocks, when he brought his boy-doll, Jack, and held it up before the table, saying:

"See, Jack, the car and blocks?"

Sept. 14, 1899

"Be a good little boy, block, (in a tone of gentle admonition, while overcoming the total depravity that sometimes appears to dwell in inanimate things). "Aunty Lou will see you. Be good, darling."

Sept. 15, 1899

I was leaning back in my chair, thinking. My eyes were closed. Henry exclaimed:

"No, no, don't put your eyes away."

Oct. 7th, 1899

"I told the engine eat honey. Him eat grass." (He was in the dooryard, playing with a toy engine.)

Nov. 6th, 1899

Henry saw a burr lying on the floor, and said it might 'step on' him. He was afraid of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dec. 8, 1899

While I was washing dishes, Henry stood at the kitchen window, dipping his hand in water and rubbing it on the glass. "I am washing the window," he said.

Then he played that our neighbor, Mrs. Fuller, came. He said, "How do you do, Mrs. Fuller? Are you pretty" - (he probably meant to add 'well'.

Then he got a water-pail and said he was going after the milk.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I'm a little girl."

\* \* \* \* \*

Henry went out-of-doors and ran up and down the walks. Afterward he said: "I did go to Annie. I did go upon the roof, mama's roof, where the rain falls.["] (This was all play. He had not seen Annie and he had no means of getting to the roof.)

Henry brought me a dead leaf and said:

"This is a potato. I didn't hunt for another, at all. I hunt for mushrooms." (He had been playing in our own yard, where there were no mushrooms).

Feb. 12, 1899

Henry tried to motion his shadow away, saying:

"I don't want he to come with me."

June, 1900

Henry played that a photograph of little Shelley Pierce was the child, himself, and talked to it: "Be a good boy, Shelley, and I won't go away. I'm sorry you were a naughty boy and cried."

July 12, 1900

Henry heard someone singing "Comin' Thro' the Rye" and took a great fancy to it, wanting to hear me sing it at home again and again. His interest in the words was so great that I undertook to explain to him - that the Rye is a river; that a girl wading across holds up her skirts to prevent them from getting wet.

He asked me to make The Rye with blocks. I laid a crooked line with wide mouth and narrow source - a shortened caricature of a river.

He built a house near the bank and represented 2 trees growing beside it, a walnut and an eucalyptus, he said.

Next, a boat was set sailing on the water. Then Henry went wading in the river, pulling up his dress to keep it out of the water. He waded across to the walnut tree and brought me a walnut.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of his favorite games was going to Menlo Park to buy me a bag of candy, which he presented to me in mimicry and expected me to receive with great show of gratitude, and to eat and enjoy very much.



Another game is going to San Francisco to see the Ocean.

He often said he wanted to "go up to the clouds." One day he said: "I want to go up to the clouds and live all the time."

Feb. 1901

Almost continually Henry, when at play, represents himself as some character in a story he has heard. Often he asks me to 'be' another character, for the better carrying out of the idea. "I'm the Fairy and you are Cinderella," he will say. When we have reached the point in the play where the clock must strike 12, he will say: "Now I'm the clock," and count impressively up to 12, on which he makes a long, die-away sound.

Or, he will say: "Are you Little Silverlocks? I'm the Big Bear. I'm making the porridge. I'm a good bear. I won't hurt you."

Sometimes he is Hans, of "Hans in Luck," and wants to exchange a lump of gold for a horse, the horse for a cow, and so on to the end of the story.

Or, he is Jack of the Beanstalk and goes through Pantomime climbing. I must be Jack's mother and help him put on his red jacket and afterward I must welcome his return from the perilous journey.

(In S.F.) Feb. 4, 1901

Today it is raining. I had to go a half-block away after the milk. I stationed Henry in a window, where he could see me during part of my walk. When I came back he said:

"When I saw you outside the gate it made my heart ache. I heard a noise in the kitchen-room while you were gone.

"The little mice did this way," (making a halting jump with his feet). "They wanted very much to have dinner."

That was probably his first experience of being alone in the house. I fear he thought the "little mice" wanted to dine on him.

Feb. 27, 1901

"My head is tied on with a little red string inside so it won't fall off."

March 2nd, 1901

Henry placed his hands together, palms facing, and said, "Now it is 12 o'clock." It was 12 by the clock. He had seen the hands of the clock together.

July 26, 1901

"Once when I was a little girl, a little boy put his finger-nails into me. I'll go to heaven if he does that again."

April 4, 1901

"I don't like Myself. Myself goes wherever I go. I can't get rid of Myself. I don't like Myself."

Jan. 27, 1904

Henry said:

"I believe there are a great many heavens and people die from one heaven and go to another. People always think, whichever place they live, the next one will be heaven but they are always happier every time they go to a new heaven."

\* \* \* \* \*

### Stories, Imaginative, and True

About July 1899 I left Henry in charge of Mrs. Dora Pierce several hours. Here is the way he related the story, nearly two months later:

"I was in Dora's bed. Baby can't find his mama. She was gone. Mama was gone, She was out-doors, you know. Baby cried for his mama. Couldn't find his mama: but Baby went to sleep."

Oct. 6

Henry: "Shall I tell you another story?"

I said, "Yes."

Henry: "And after awhile Mary came to see the baby. Mary say: 'Come in.' Mary say" - (something indistinct about a window).

Oct. 19, 1899

Henry: "One time there was a little robin, and it had a song, and it had some rice and some more rice, and flew away in a tree over to Harkins'. Wasn't that too bad? You sorry?" (Sorry it flew away, I supposed.)

Dec. 8, 1899

Henry: "One time there was a little boy and it was a little robin. There was a little boy and he had a little rattle and she had a little basket, too."

March 1901

Henry told an original story in which a pine tree bore little boys' trousers and jackets, and a man came with a very large basket and picked off the fruit of the tree and carried his basketful to the old-clothes man.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Imitation

Oct. 1899

Before Henry could talk he frequently pushed a hassock into a corner, stood upon it and chattered in imitation of a preacher or public speaker, gesticulating with hands and arms and making his voice a marvelous and laughable caricature of an impassioned orator.

Henry was in the dining-room at his low table. He poured some milk

into a bottle-lid similar to an old one from which he had seen a cat drinking. Then he called: "Kitty, Kitty, Kitty!" Then put his face down and lapped the milk with his tongue, like a cat.

\* \* \* \* \*

Henry went out with a formal goodby and closed the door after him. Presently he returned and, looking sweetly in my face, inquired:

"Did you 'member I was coming back again?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Henry waked and called for me, after a day-time nap. I took him from the bed and held him in my arms awhile, when he looked up at me and said:

"Baby wake up. Baby say, 'Mama! Mama!'"

The words repeated were in imitation of the sound of his own voice when calling me.

This seems a meager section on imitation. That is partly because he was always more an inventor than an imitator; partly because his little histrionic efforts have been mentioned in the paragraphs on "Imagination", and partly because everything pertaining to his musical tastes and aptitudes is reserved for separate mention.

### Love of Beauty

Sept. 7th, 1899

Henry: "I love the flower very much. I smell it all the time. I love the bright air, too."

Sept. 12th, 1899

Henry: "That's very lovely. See! See!" (Showing me something he had built of blocks.)

Dec. 8th, 1899

(At breakfast) Henry: "I like that, and that." (Pointing to pictures on a sauce-dish.)

Dec. 8th, 1899

"I want to see the beautiful sky - Oh, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!"

Nov. 9, 1899

Henry wanted paper to cut. He rejected some that was a little soiled, saying:

"I can't cut dirty paper."

\* \* \* \* \*

When Henry reached the trousers-age he objected to the new kind of garments. He said they were ugly. He said he wished to be a girl and wear dresses because they were prettier than boys' clothes.

Up to the age of about 8 Henry frequently dressed himself in gay attire, cast-off finery of ladies, the most beautifully colored silks and finest fabrics he could command. Then he went calling on our neighbors, under the pseudonym "Mrs. Jones." His love of these pretty things was so well known among our friends that women contributed silk dresses, opera cloaks, rib[b]ons, laces and so forth, to his supply until he had a large trunkful to draw upon for his full-dress parades. Sometimes children of the neighbors joined him in this game. The result was analogous [*sic*] to a fancy dress ball. On these occasions Henry usually wore a large sofa-cushion on his head in lieu of a hat. No real hat was enormous enough in size. Otherwise his costumes usually displayed great taste in outlines and selection of colors.

Henry always loved flowers. At the age of 9 years, his little flower-garden in Des Moines won a gold medal as the best grown by a child of his age. (I do not know whether it was the best in the city, or only the best made by anyone in the school he attended. There were, in the latter case, about 200 or 300 competitors. In the other, thousands. A great enthusiasm for gardening prevailed among the children of Des Moines that year.)

### Cheerfulness

From infancy up, Henry was a very sunbeam of joyousness. Small ills he overlooked, usually, and greater ones he bore with wonderful courage and cheerfulness.

One day, when it had been cloudy a long time, I spoke (fretfully, I fear), of the cloudy weather. Instantly he looked at me with his bright, ever-ready smile, and said: "I think the sun will shine tomorrow."

That was representative of his usual attitude toward life. His uncle, Richard Cowell, had a pin made with a tiny miniature of Henry's happy baby-face on it - to keep him cheerful, he said, as if it could have a sort of talismanic power.

It is usual for people to multiply their delights by 3; to enjoy them in anticipation, realization and retrospect; but I think he differed from the average person in the degree of his enjoyment and in the cheerful persistency with which his memory set aside unpleasant facts and held fast to pleasant ones. For example:

June 5, 1900

A child (Louise Clarke) near his own age came to visit him. As she was going out riding with her mother, she could not stay long. He was very fond of her and wished her to stay longer; however, after she had gone, he repeatedly said to himself in a joyous tone, "The little girl did come!" "The little girl did come," and did not fret at all because she went away.

June 20th, 1900

Henry: "I was so happy when I go to ride on the choo-choo."

### Groping Among Educational Methods

(I do the groping. The child leads.)

Henry loved successively, ardently, one subject at a time. While the love lasted he mastered difficulties with readiness and insight that seemed little short of magical. While he loved the alphabet he learned it in a few days. While he loved the violin he learned in less than 4 months, beginning when he was 5½ years of age, to read simple music at sight, play it with seldom a false note, excepting that the time was often imperfect; he learned to count money and make change in a short time, while eagerly doing little errands at the baker.

In 3 weeks, working 1 hour each day, 21 hours altogether, he "went through" a "Language Lessons" textbook which, in most school curriculums is given a year's work of not less than 152 hours, and, in some schools, 252 hours.

He was then 8 years old. Of course, in this case, the drill did not last long enough to establish his mind in working automatically. Many years later he continued careless habits in capitalization, when writing, which he, himself, corrected without the aid of a teacher if he re-wrote his letter or manuscript; but his conversational use of English has always been exceptionally good.

A light broke upon me. It was not a new light. No doubt it shone on Socrates when he walked the ways of Athens with his disciples about him; but it was new to me in that I then first felt the truth which, previously, I had merely known.

The child must be delighted with his work. He must be eager for it, devoured with love of it. Then it ceases to be difficult, and the path to knowledge becomes a royal road. He must study the thing he wants to know while he wants to know it, and he must not have his attention distracted from this main interest by having other, lesser interests thrust into view.

Why should a child be compelled to study sand-burrs on a day when he hears the wind in the pines? Will not another day do for learning about things that lie near the ground? It is not the way of wisdom [*sic*] to hold Geometry before the face of a dreamer while he is at his dreams. First let him wake to the presence, if not the beauty, of angles in the world.

One study at a time, and that the one utterly beloved - for the time. That became my cult.

I do not know how it would work out with children in general. It may be that there are children who feel no special voluntary interest in anything, and need to be prodded and pricked and roused to look about them and see what sort of world they live in; but in the case of Henry, freedom of choice meant the quick mastery of any subject attacked by him. Whirlwind progress through geography incidental upon a thrice-interrupted journey from California to N.Y. City; (Afterward this knowledge was supplemented by the incidental geography learned in collecting stamps - a delightful occupation - while it lasted. Through it he learned without effort which countries were ruling nations, which subject, and to whom; where islands and colonies, however obscure, were situated; often a good deal of the political history of a nation and sketches of its rulers; what language was spoken, and so forth.) - geology in an impassioned six weeks, outgrowth of curiosity excited by the great earthquake of 1906. Mastery in a few days of the stories of 20 or more operas, with names of authors of music and of librettos, suggested by hearing one night's performance of Il Travatore in Des Moines by The Italian Opera Company. Later he became interested in floriculture. With Santa Clara Valley and the San Moreno Mountains for his laboratory, a plot of ground some 50 feet square for experimentation, some reference-books, a few conversations with two of Stanford University's botanical staff, but without a teacher, he gained in 1½ years a remarkable knowledge of botany, won a flower-show prize and won a reputation in at least 2 counties, so that people began jestingly to call him "The Boy-Burbank," and like names. He was then 14 years of age.

The public-school ideal of a few years ago was crushing all children into a shapeless, pulpous mass and then pouring them into moulds, like hot tallow, from which it was the delight of educators to see them issue all alike, the tallow become hard, cold, flawless candles, each with exactly the same light-producing capacity for the lighting of the world.

I was a fervent believer in the encouragement of individual initiative, yet, inconsistent though it may appear, I fully intended to send Henry to a public school. He had never been much with other children. I wanted him to know life - at least enough of it so that he could bear understandingly such parts of it as he could not love but could not evade. He had a very clear and special personality, a strong, bright spirit. I did not think the process of reduction to pulp would prove efficacious in his case. I expected him to survive with little or no intellectual or spiritual hurt. I reckoned without proper recognition of possible physical hurt. I supposed modern education had at least solved problems of preservation from assault.

When he was 8 years old we lived in our cabin in Santa Clara Valley, 2 miles from Menlo Park, 1-3/4 miles from Stanford University. It is, and was, a delightful neighborhood thickly settled with kind and in every way desirable neighbors; but the country schoolhouse, a half-mile away,

in our district, was also in the district of a number of very rough children. There were some boys 14 to 17 years old who were worse than rough; they were ruffians, as I afterward learned to my horror.

It was to this district school that Henry went to learn what kind of a world he lived in.

He instantly liked his teacher and the boys and girls of his own age. The ruffians he would have avoided if it had been possible; but 2 boys, 15 and 16 years old, spied him at the front of the school-house at a time when the teacher was indoors and the other little children were in a side-yard. This was their moment. Henry was lassoed around the neck and his head thrown violently against the steps leading to the door. He reached home without help, but the mark of the rope was deep on his neck. He had gone to school in the morning in perfect health. He returned seeing double, his face flaming with fever. An attack of brain fever resulted.

Henry was plucky. As soon as he was able to go about he became very anxious to go back to school. He said he liked the children of his own age, and the teacher, too, though she was afraid of the big boys. He would try to stay away from the bad boys, and go and come with other children.

He went. I was doubtful of my wisdom in sending him, but he must go there or give up public school - and some of the children were very desirable playmates.

A ring of the big boys gathered around him and took turns striking his face with their fists. He came home again bleeding and disabled.

It was difficult to understand why Henry was worse-treated than other boys of his age. I supposed, however, that several factors entered into it. He was practically a stranger in the district, as we had lived in San Francisco 4½ years previous to this return to our home when he was 8 years old. Strangers in a school are often maltreated as a sort of initiatory hazing. Other children had older brothers in school, or, at least, fathers at home, to protect them, Henry's father lived in San Francisco; his half-brother was married and lived in Des Moines, Iowa; and his mother had never been seen in war-paint. Race-feeling may have entered into it - the "big boys" were mostly Portuguese or Spanish-Mexican-Indian in blood. They were broad-shouldered, sturdily built. In the world of work they have since found appropriate places, but, as boys, they, perhaps, felt envy of the young god so manifestly different from them by something in the nature of his being which they, perhaps, unthinkingly attributed to race-characteristics.

We gave up the public school, for the time. I taught Henry at home a short time every day. As I did the work of the home besides earning whatever we had over \$10 a month, I could not devote much time to his studies but he read a great many books during the 11 months we lived in our home. I remember that he was a subscriber for *St. Nicholas*, which he read faithfully, besides joining some kind of a "League," represented

in the back pages. Mary Mapes Dodge was then living. Henry was very pleased to have her signature on his membership scroll. A little letter he wrote received "honorary mention" in this department of St. Nicholas. He usually borrowed *The Youth's Companion* from Louise Clarke and read it. I do not remember all the books he read that year, but the following were among them:

Alice in Wonderland (read 7 times)  
 Grimm's Fairy Tales (re-read many times)  
 Hans Anderson's Fairy Tales  
 Black Beauty  
 The Wizard of Oz (read twice)  
 Queen Zixi of Ix  
 A book of verse  
 Arabian Nights Tales  
 Gulliver's Travels  
 Language Lessons

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A few weeks after the great earthquake Henry and I left our Santa Clara Valley home. First we spent 2 months with my sister and her family in Trego County, Kansas. Next we went to Oklahoma for a month with my father, my youngest brother and his family; from there we went to Des Moines, Iowa, where my oldest son lives. After a 2-months visit in his home, I began magazine work again. Henry and I rented a little house, set up home-keeping together, and he entered school in Des Moines.

Passing into the school-building, holding an older child by the hand, Henry was asked by the Principal:

"Did you ever go to school before?"

The Older Child replied for him: "No, ma'am, he never did."

Now, the Principal of a city school is The Great Law-giver before whose face all mere child-persons walk softly. Even a Primary Teacher is a Personage, not to be addressed without sufficient reason. The Principal, naturally enough, on this information, assigned Henry to the first primary department. Henry did not lift his voice in self-defence, even when he had spent the larger part of a half-day studying that absorbingly interesting sentence: "I can fly"; though he had every reason to wish it were true, so that he might spread his wings and fly from the schoolroom.

I learned the next day that some heroism was required, even on the part of a mother, to get a real hearing from the Personage and The Great Law-Giver. An interrupted hearing, broken into bits by the hurrying tide of other duties, was easily obtained. No proper explanation of the real situation was possible. Both women were overworked, and harassed by a mixture of the duties of a nurse and a police force with those of



an instructor. Henry was advanced to the 2nd primary department. In the course of a few days he made his way to the 3d grade, where, being among children of his own age, he was given no further opportunity to prove his fitness for a higher. In fact, he was not fit in penmanship nor in drawing. Afterward, his 3d grade teacher said that it would be impossible to classify him properly; that he belonged in the 6th grade in geography; any grade in reading because he could read as well as an adult, the 5th grade in numbers; but he must be held back until his writing looked better. Alas! at 17 he still writes badlooking pages; but his writing is far more legible than that of most pretty penmen, and that comforts him. In the drawing he soon made up for former want of instruction, and had his little works often pinned above the blackboard as examples to his less gifted classmates.

Henry attended school regularly about 4 months. Then there was a long siege of illness - grippe winding up with an operation for removal of adenoids and tonsils; measles; scarlet fever. This did not affect his standing in school, since scarcely anything in the whole year's course was new to him, excepting drawing. He was promoted with his class to the 4th grade, in which, the following September, he began work with another teacher.

After about 3 weeks, Henry made his way home from school one day in such plight that - Oh, I can scarcely write about it, after all these years! He was in St. Vitus Dance convulsions. I supposed it to be an incurable disease which would make the rest of his life a nightmare of suffering. I was dumb with anguish and terror though I soon control[l]ed myself and tried to encourage him with cheerful words. I knew it was not epilepsy because he was fully conscious, although unable to speak for some time after reaching home; and immediately I knew the truth about him, though I carefully avoided letting him hear a name for this trouble. I said it was nervousness, and he would soon be better. I feared I was lying, but he must be comforted at all hazards. It takes a skilled nurse and a simple-minded patient to make lying effective. Before many hours, I saw him open a medical work we had in the house. I looked over his shoulder. It was open at the chapter on St. Vitus Dance! He turned to me, grave, pale, tearless, and told me that he knew.

I learned afterward that the convulsion began in school after his new teacher had compelled him to "study" a half-page of 4th Reader lesson during the regulation time allot[t]ed to his class. It was extremely simple. He knew it by heart in a few minutes, but if he looked up the teacher ordered him to keep his eyes on his book. Even after the jerking began, she evidently did not understand the gravity of it. She asked him what was the matter. As he could not speak, he did not reply. He supposes she thought he was crying.

She did nothing for him. We lived a mile from the school-house. He

started home on his feet but fell after a while and crawled home. It was a street not frequented by traffic wagons. Perhaps no one happened to see him. At any rate, whatever was the reason of his receiving no help, he came crawling to the door at home.

Fortunately a very skilled physician lived in Des Moines at that time. Under his wise treatment the convulsions entirely disappeared in a week, though some traces of the affection remained a long time.

The doctor shook his head over the idea of Henry's returning to school. There was no need that he should shake it. I had already determined upon my course, though I was glad to have my decision approved by him.

No more school for Henry! No primary school. No grammar school. University work for the man, if he so elected; High school, perhaps, if the youth chose to attend it; but private teachers, always, if he preferred them and they were accessible.

Almost everything Henry knew, excepting his knowledge of pain, had been learned outside of school. School was responsible for brain fever, measles, a mangled nose, (scarlet fever?), St. Vitus Dance. The progress in drawing could have been made at home in a few days any time his attention fastened upon it. His penmanship was nearly as bad as before; and at what awful cost he had learned a bit of drawing and a slight improvement in penmanship!

I undertook to teach him at home. He was unable to keep regular hours or do hard work. The thing that interested him most was, of course, always easiest. His study-periods ran from 10 minutes a day to an hour a day. Whenever he wished to stop he was free. All was free, beginning and stopping. He was out-of-doors much of the time, but every day was a study-day if he felt the mood. There were neither formal vacations, set study-hours, nor conventional holidays to be observed.

I found it impossible, however, to give as much thought and attention to his education as he should have received. The income of \$10 per month I have mentioned had come from Mr. Cowell after he had separated from me and assumed new responsibilities. It was intended as partial support for Henry, and was all Mr. Cowell could afford to give him, as he, also, was poor. After the earthquake this little contribution to our income ceased altogether for a long time, and when resumed was irregular and infrequent. I was not a very successful writer. Consequently I spent much time earning little money. Consequently, also, I had our own housework to do; and Henry had only odds and ends of my time given him directly, though, indirectly he had it all.

This explanation is necessary. It will render clearer the fact that, so far as Henry has any education, he has been almost self-educated.

Henry soon exhausted the possibilities of the juvenile department in the Des Moines Public Library. It is good and well-stored, but he had

outgrown it at the age of 10½ years. The Librarian was a broad-minded woman. She permitted him to browse around among books intended for adults only.

He devoured books with such rapidity that I feared he was merely skimming, so I asked him to give me outlines of the books he read. He began doing so, not only cheerfully, but with evident pleasure. His expositions were very full, very accurate and often critical - and the devouring went on as voraciously as before. He spent much time out-of-doors, yet his book had to be unusually large if he did not finish it in a day; and he did not usually read out-of-doors. He ran about or played very active games, in cold weather, and in warm weather worked in his garden.

Shortly after Henry's 11th birthday we moved to New York City, There my struggle for a livelihood, instead of being less strenuous, became more so. In the year and 5 months of our stay I received less than \$200 for my work. "Janet and her Dear Phebe" was published (Frederick A. Stokes Company). It was favorably received by critics but never became popular. I worked hard on my poor little short stories that nobody would buy - and Henry was more than ever dependent on Public Libraries - and Life, itself, for his education. As to Life - one day when we had less than enough to eat, Henry detected me in the act of giving him more food than I took for myself. "Mama," he cried, "If you don't take as much as you give me, I shall not eat anything."

Oh but he was a splendid comrade! More like a man than a child, he was my friend and close, sympathetic companion through dark days or bright. Never a word of complaint passed his lips. He was cheerful through almost everything (once he wept; I will relate the story of that when I come to his musical career). I did not know what the great city had done to him until we were leaving it for the West. As we crossed Hudson River, I saw a new light break over his face, which had become almost grave, before. Leaving Jersey City behind, steaming farther and farther from the great roar of the metropolis into country quiet, from hot red walls and glaring pavements to country green, the light grew and grew and grew, and at last he burst forth with: "I hate cities! I shall never live in one again!"

I feared it was not so much the city as my poverty that caused the feeling; for it had obscured the beauty and emphasized the ugliness of dwelling in crowds.

While Henry was in touch with great libraries he read the following books, and many more which I have forgotten:

#### History

Greece - 10 books

Egypt - 2 or more

Rome

Persia - 2 or more  
 China  
 Japan  
 France  
 Ireland  
 England - 2 books  
 Assyria  
 United States  
 Holland  
 Germany  
 Austria  
 Hungary  
 Babylonia  
 Chaldea  
 Parthia  
 Phoenicia - 2 histories  
 East India  
 Troy  
 Crete  
 The Balkans  
 Peru  
 Mexico  
 The French Revolution  
 The Boer War

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Travels      Travels in

Iceland  
 India  
 Japan  
 China  
 Korea  
 Holland  
 Norway  
 Australia  
 Chili [*sic*]  
 Panama  
 Alaska  
 Labrador

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Scientific Works

Astronomy - 2 general astronomies and one on the sun, one on the  
                   solar system, one on The Earth  
 Geology - Lyle's  
 Mineralogy - 3 books

# Natural History of Animals

(Others read between ages of 13 and 16):

Botany - Coulter's, Gray (2), two others, Mrs. Parson's - 6 read.

Reference-book, much-studied Jepson's. Darwin's Cross-Fertilization of Orchids Burbank

Zoology

Physiology

Lyndall on Sound

Stainers Harmony

Foote and Spaulding's Harmony

Mason's Orchestration

Musical Form - by Prout

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## Biography

Beethoven

William Mason

Franz Liszt

Charles Anchester (Mendelssohn)

2 volumes of short biographies

Benj. Franklin

Henry Clay

Abraham Lincoln

Thomas Jefferson

J. Quincey [*sic*] Adams

Autobiography of Jacob Riis

Autobiography of Booker Washington

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## Literature

The World's Great Literature, a cyclopediac work in 7 volumes

The Iliad )

) At least 2 translations of each

The Odyssey )

A volume of extracts from the Greek poets

Aeschylus - 1 Volume

Sophocles - 1 "

Euripides - 2 Volumes

Aristophanes 2 "

Demosthenes' Orations

Cicero's "

Aeneid - Virgil's translation

Some Horace poems

The House of Orchids

King Henry VIII (Shakespe[a]re)

Perseus "

The Tempest " "  
 Taming of the Shrew " "  
 Julius Caesar " "  
 Merchant of Venice " "  
 Romeo and Juliet " "  
 Songs " "  
 Tennyson  
 Evangeline (Longfellow)  
 Poems - "  
 Poems - (Keats)  
 Poems - (Yeats)  
 Lamb's Essays  
 Poems - Robt. L. Stevenson  
 Greek Art - Walter Pater  
 Walks in Hellas  
 Volume of Addison (Not greatly enjoyed)

\* \* \* \* \*

### Humor

Mark Twain's writings, all he could get.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am leaving out fiction, of which he read a great deal.

It seems to me that a boy who had read these books could scarcely be called uneducated, especially as he had chosen most of them himself and read with enjoyment and understanding; yet I have often been reproached with "Bringing Henry up in ignorance," because he has been to school only a few months. I regret that he lacks some of the knowledge that might have been supplied by formal education, but, under the circumstances, I am glad I did not send him to school. I should have been glad to have given him more of my time or to have hired a tutor for him, but neither way was open to me.

We lived in Trego County, Kansas, a year after leaving New York City. Then we returned to our cabin-home in Santa Clara Valley, Henry 13 years of age.

When he was 14 years of age Professor Terman of the Educational Department, Stanford University, gave him a number of Binet intelligence-tests, besides many others of Dr. Terman's devising. I wish it was in my power to give an accurate statement, in detail, of the result, but I have not Dr. Terman's summaries. I can give only the vocabulary result and the general result of the test.

It should be stated that the Dr. is a well-known examiner; that his work is not confined to the University locality. His services are in demand. He travels, and tests children by the hundred; therefore, when his statement as to general result was that Henry was 'the brightest child

to whom he had ever given the tests,' it meant a wide comparison with other children of his age, and was the more remarkable because Henry had missed formal education.

The English vocabulary test began with that usually given to boys of 15, Henry being 14. He stood so nearly 100 in that test that Dr. Terman decided to try another, that usually reserved for University students, whose average vocabulary is about 20,000 words, the Dr.'s own vocabulary being 22,000.

According to this test, Henry's English vocabulary was then 19,700 words - 31 words for every 17 days of his life since the age of 2 years. This, of course, did not include words from his botanical or other scientific studies. Beyond these, however, he knew no language but English. He now (17 years of age) is gaining knowledge of French and German.

In these tests he stood especially high in problems requiring original thought, invention, logical and rational intellectuation.

\* \* \* \* \*

### The Seers

Do all children stir men and women to prophetic vision?

Henry's horoscope was cast a few days after his birth by an old man who had been our neighbor. We then lived some distance away from him. He sent the horoscope in a letter of congratulations.

Great intellectual and artistic power was predicted, with want of practical wisdom of the world, its ways and requirements.

Another neighbor looked upon him and proclaimed: "He will be a Bishop." She was a Roman Catholic and saw Catholic visions. I hoped that if her words held any meaning the word "Bishop" was of broad and metaphorical application.

When Henry was 3½ years of age a man who had recently become acquainted with the family and had never heard Henry sing looked him over one day and confidently announced:

"He will be a great musician."

"What makes you think so?" I asked.

He smiled mysteriously and made no answer.

One day I went in search of a Socialist meeting. I took Henry along. Perhaps that was cruel, for he was then a very little boy, and little boys do not like to sit still and hear long lectures which they do not understand. But, that day, I hoped it was, at least, less cruel than staying at home. We were both tired, for the time, of being alone at home. We wanted to "go somewhere".

We turned in at the wrong door and found a small gathering in charge of two very remarkable-looking persons. Both were of extraordinary height and dignified bearing. They were clothed much alike, in long

Oriental-looking robes. I supposed them to be Hindoo occultists - adepts, perhaps, from some things that were said by the one who was speaking from the platform.

Soon after our entrance the other came down the aisle, paused before Henry, looked at him a moment in silence, then turned to me, and, waving a hand toward him, said in a deep, sweet, impressive voice:

"This little boy will be one of the world's great musicians. Not only will he compose the music of grand operas; he will also write his own librettos."

### A Baby Songster

When Henry was an infant I sang baby-songs to him, as old-fashioned mothers do. As soon as he was able to show a preference, I was doomed to sing "Little Redbird in the Tree" for him many times a day.

Daily he saw meadow-larks, linnets and bluebirds with sky and flame in the colors of their decorations. No wonder he liked to hear about birds.

One day when he was not yet able to sit alone I found it necessary to leave him several hours with a friend.

"What shall I do if he cries?" she asked.

"Sing 'Little Redbird in the Tree,'" I advised.

"Don't tell me a baby of that age would stop crying for a song about birds in a tree or anywhere else," she retorted incredulously. "And if he would, it's because he likes music. One song will do as well as another. I shall practice 'Thou Brilliant Bird.'"

"Better learn 'Little Redbird' before I go," I persuaded.

Accordingly she learned a part of it, though her want of faith in my remedy made her pause between lines to laugh.

On my return she greeted me with mysterious looks, like a woman with a secret. Then she burst forth with it:

"Well, I never saw such a baby! He's asleep, now, but do you think he would shut an eye or even stop crying for anything but that little black-bird - what color was it?"

"Why, I sang the loveliest things I know and he just screeched in my face until I gave in and let him have his foolish little bluebird. Then he put his little thumb right into his mouth and cuddled down as sweet as an angel. I guess your baby knows what he wants. Well, I never! He's a funny one."

Between the ages of 2 and 3 years Henry sang little songs well enough to bring admiring friends to our house in the hope of hearing him. In his repertoire were:

"Oh, rockaby baby in the treetop,"

"Annie Laurie,"

"Last night when I was snug in bed,"



"Oh sing, sing on, sweetly to cheer me,"  
 "Peek-a-boo,"  
 "Little Redbird in the Tree,"  
 "Oh, ride a cock-horse,"  
 "Baa, baa, black sheep,"  
 "For thee a fond heart waits"  
 "Sweetest lullaby"

There were many from Mother Goose and many more little school-songs, but I cannot state positively what they were. These are all I have written in my record.

While learning the songs he also learned many bits of verse. No one tried to teach them to him. Among his gifts there had been an illustrated Mother Goose and a collection of less easy verse. He insisted upon having these rhymes read to him - over and over and over again. They were his delight. In a short time he repeated couplets from most of them and the whole of an occasional one.

Sometimes I improvised a little melody to a verse. In that case he soon learned both verse and melody.

One piece of verse that he learned from beginning to end, without accompanying aria, was "Dear little feet - how you wander and wander."

It is not especially easy, and there are 4 stanzas. I never understood why he liked it so well. It was part of the little collection which he called his "Dilly-Dally Book" because it contained the tragic history of that unrighteous child Miss Dilly Dally, who never reformed, as far as I know.

A few months after Henry began learning verses and singing little ditties, he suddenly ceased to sing at all, excepting an occasional outburst of improvisation. If asked to sing he protested that he couldn't; that he didn't know anything to sing. At the same time he ceased repeating verses, excepting "Three Little Kittens," which he knew from beginning to end of the whole book, and liked very much. He did not tire of it for a long time.

The words of the improvisations were exceedingly simple, to adult ears; but it is not common, I believe, for babies to improvise verses of any sort, ready-set to music. The music was never as crude as the verses. Unfortunately I did not save any of it. I found difficulty in writing down the words which I never heard but once; and the music I could not reduce to notes before it passed from my memory. I do not believe I could have written it, if I had remembered better; for I am not a musician, and, even in infancy, his improvisations were not wholly easy to set down.

Some of the words (when he was 2½ years old:

"I never knew  
 That this is true.  
 And that is so  
 For Mary said she didn't know."

\* \* \* \* \*

A little older (about 5, I think):  
 "You'll follow up the she-bear  
 And make the gods willing  
 to have you there"

\* \* \* \* \*

These are all I can find. I seem to have lost most of his baby-verses.

The Christmas following Henry's 4th birthday a friend, Mrs. Mary Ralph, presented him with a zither-like musical instrument called a "Mandolin-Harp". In a few days he could play simple airs upon it. Some of his improvised variations of "Home, Sweet Home" attracted the attention of a young musician, Miss Crow, who gave him a child's violin.

It must have been about that time, or perhaps during the preceding year, that Henry was one day deeply stirred by hearing the old negro melody "Nelly Gray." He was very curious about the story, very sympathetic with the man who had lost his Nelly Gray. He talked and talked of it:

"Why couldn't he see his darling any more?"

"What does it mean by 'toiling'?"

"What is cotton?"

He asked the questions with a quiver in his voice, in excitement that brought him to the edge of tears.

Miss Sylvia Holmes, daughter of the great violinist, Henry Holmes, became interested in Henry's musical gift and offered to teach him the violin. His first lesson was taken November 16th, 1902, Henry being 5 years and 8 months old. Mr. Holmes entered the room where Miss Holmes and Henry were working and gave him valuable instructions about position of instrument, arms and bow.

I rather dreaded the initiatory practicing. I supposed it would screech and shriek like that of some country violinists, self-taught, whom I had heard making their awful way through beginnings that seemed hopeless - leading nowhere; but Mr. Holmes said that came of not knowing how - beginning wrong; and he taught Henry so well that not a single unpleasant sound ever issued from his tiny instrument.

The violin which Miss Crow had given Henry, though 4th size, very small, was too long for his baby-arms. We bought an 8th size, the very smallest to be found, excepting a toy-violin.

I went with Henry to his lessons at the home of Mr. Holmes, his talented wife and gentle daughter, usually: Mr. Cowell went occasionally.

After a time (2 or 3 weeks, I think) Miss Holmes suffered an injury to one of her fingers so serious that she was disabled as far as violin-practice was concerned. The lessons were discontinued until Jan. 15th, when Mr. Henry Holmes gave him a lesson.

In two months, (at 6 years of age) Henry stood about like this in his musical work:

He played the first 12 or 13 lessons in "Spohr's Violin School" (Edited by Mr. Henry Holmes), 2 short compositions written especially for him by Mr. Holmes, ("Suck-Thumb" and "The Spring-Song"), also "Home, Sweet Home" and a Minuet from Mozart's Figaro. He read at sight simple music written in natural C. He had the gift of absolute pitch. He could call the name of any note sounded on piano or violin without a moment's hesitation. One day we were at a dinner-party where there were several musicians, 2 of whom were well-known. The matter of absolute pitch was mentioned at the dinner-table. Some one struck a silver fork on the top of a goblet and asked what note sounded. Each musician guessed. Henry said "C". We ran into an adjoining room where there was a piano and sounded C before the memory of the fork-and-goblet sound had faded from memory. Henry was right. Every one else was mistaken, though one was within a half-tone of the truth. The piano was tuned at International Pitch, the same used by Mr. Holmes in violin-work.

At this time Henry almost daily - even hourly - improvised little melodies. He tried to write some of them down. I am very sorry, now, that none of them were saved.

I was ill a long time the following summer and Henry's lessons, and also his violin-practice, suffered long interruptions. Also, about that time, I began to observe a curious twitching of one of his shoulders after even a few minutes work with his music, and he was extremely nervous. I became anxious about his health and purposely neglected to remind him of his lesson if he, himself, forgot it. Altogether, I think he had lessons with Mr. Holmes about 8 or nine months.

He was about 7 years of age when they came to an end that was embarrassing, very sad, and also disastrous unless it was best for his health to relinquish the hope of becoming a violinist.

Meantime the separation between Mr. Cowell and myself had passed from tacit understanding to accomplished fact.

We were divorced. I had resumed my father's name, made legal by court proceedings, and had been given the guardianship of Henry. Thus I, alone, was held responsible if anything amiss was supposed to be found in his conduct.

The relation between Henry and me, or, for that matter, between him and his father, had always been that of comradeship. No arbitrary power and authority had ever been felt by him. He stood on an equal footing, pleasing us if he was pleasing, offending if he was really offensive, never discouraged from the attitude of a friendly talking-over of matters misunderstood or not agreed upon. Frankness was not crushed, nor frowned upon. He had not been taught to say "Sir" or "Ma'am," or to do obeisance to anyone. That does not mean that he was "disrespectful." A man does not lie in the dust of artificial humilities in order to escape the

imputation of disrespect to his fellow-man. He pays reverence where reverence is due, but not obsequiously.

Should a child be squelched if he stand in the presence of a person older than himself? I do not think so. It is becoming for Ignorance to be still in the presence of Wisdom, but not so still that it dare not ask a question nor make an explanation when Wisdom is, for once, making a mistake and attributing to it a kind of ignorance it is not guilty [*sic*] of.

Mr. Holmes was a man of dignified presence, noble character, great attainments, eminent ability; a fine, serene old man, to whom the world of music justly did reverence.

He was accustomed to be revered. He deserved even more reverence than was accorded him, yet one would not expect of such a man that he would demand reverence - unless one remembers that he was English and old. He had the understanding of a child's position among elders that was commonly held in England 60 years ago.

One day he talked while Henry was playing. He had never done so before. Perhaps he was not conscious that he did it then. Henry bungled a phrase. Mr. Holmes asked him to repeat it. He tried to do so, his teacher explaining all the time. Of course he repeated his mistake, not only a second but a third time. He could not play and listen to his teacher's instructions at the same moment.

"I cannot understand why you do not get it right," Mr. Holmes exclaimed.

"I cannot play because you put me out," Henry explained. His tone was not disrespectful nor complaining. It merely conveyed an explanation, which, under the circumstances, he was perfectly justified in making. He had spoken the simple truth, and not in an offensive manner, unless the truth, itself, is offensive when a child speaks it. A child is, even yet, by some people thought presuming if he speaks the truth in the presence of his elders. He is expected to believe that "The King can do no wrong" and every adult is a king.

What followed would have been comedy had it not been, as comedy often is, well-nigh tragical.

Mr. Holmes told Henry to put away his violin and never come for another lesson. He treated what Henry had said, Henry, about 7 years of age, as a grave and unpardonable offence of an older person might be treated if committed with forethought and malicious intention; and he never relented. Henry was never invited to his house again.

Henry was utterly bewildered. We made all possible haste to get out of Mr. Holmes' house. When we were settled in a street-car on our way home, Henry looked sorrowfully up into my face and asked:

"Mama, what was it about? I don't understand. What did I do that displeased Mr. Holmes?"

Henry had no strong impulse toward working without a teacher. I made no step to get another, first because I feared that his nerves would be shattered if he continued work. I felt doubtful, uncertain what to do. The jerking in his shoulder, together with a sort of irritability of temper quite foreign to his nature, in fact never displayed by him before the violin episode nor after it, warned me that something was wrong. Once, for 2 or 3 weeks, Mr. Carl Becker taught him, but he soon moved away from the vicinity; and that was the last of violin-lessons. Occasionally the little instrument was brought out, but less and less often. By the time he was 9 years old he had altogether forgotten how to play; the violin was dusty and his love of it was over, for the time. Now he has no memory of ever having played on a violin - only a sort of memory of a memory, kept dimly alive by stray questions and remarks of people who heard him play when he was a little child.

During the violin period Henry played in drawing-rooms occasionally. Two different managers of Vaudeville houses sent for him to play for them, with possible engagements in view, but I did not take him to either of them. My Baby! What should he know of stages and audiences and managers? He was given a toy wagon and encouraged to play in the sunshine in the yard.

He began singing again - fitfully - rarely. He seldom learned the words of a song. The quality of his voice was exquisite, - fine, clear, so beautiful and unusual that I was frequently asked why I did not have him trained for church-choir singing.

One day, while we lived in New York, he was in the little box of a place called by courtesy a back yard, playing with our landlady's children, when he sang "Annie Laurie" for his playmates.

Immediately windows flew open. Silver was thrown down to him and voices pleaded for another song.

In vain!

Henry ran into the house and up the 2 flights of stairs to me as if some great danger threatened. He threw himself into my arms, shaking with sobs. "Mama, people think I am a street musician! They want to pay me money for singing."

That was a dying remnant of the drop of royal blood in his veins, I suppose. He felt it as a cruel wound to his dignity.

Even while learning to draw a good bow, Henry sometimes said to me that he preferred a piano to a violin.

While we were in Des Moines my son Clarence's wife, having two pianos, gave one of them to us. It was very old, but well made, and usable through the middle range of the keyboard.

I engaged a young teacher for Henry. After 2 or 3 lessons he began instructing a playmate who had been studying under the same teacher several months.

We went to hear Il Travatore by the Italian Opera Company while we were in Des Moines. I think it was that inspired Henry with the notion of writing an opera. He chose the words of Longfellow's "Golden Legend" for his libretto and began work on the old piano, but his composition is now lost and, I fear, forgotten.

He had had only 5 lessons when we moved to New York City, leaving the old piano behind. It was not worth moving, even could we have made a place for it in our one little room. We remained in the city a year and 4 months. During that time I do not remember that Henry ever touched a piano excepting once for a few minutes when we were visitors where he was left to his own devices in the parlor.

I read somewhere a sorry sarcasm like this: "Let women in free anywhere and they go in shoals."

That was written many years ago when most women were dependent upon husbands, or fathers for the nickels they spent, - and were expected to give an accurate account of what became of each nickel. Times have changed since then. Many of us earn our own nickels; but, as for mine, they were so few that I was not thus rescued from the "shoals."

Henry and I seldom went anywhere unless we could "get in free." We went once a week to the Wannamaker concerts. (I wonder if the person who planned that benefit to the forlorn and nickel-less knows how grateful we are). In Central Park we sometimes heard great music. Our only extravagances were car-fares that enabled us to visit the Metropolitan Museum on free days, Central Park, Riverside Drive, Morningside Park. We were on 12th Street part of the time and part of the time in Waverly Place - within walking distance of Cooper's, The Astor Library, Hearn's (where there was a fine collection of carved ivory and some good paintings), and Wannamaker's. If we were invited to an artist's exhibition, we went. We used to walk lingeringly past great opera-houses when world-famous singers might be heard within by those who could pay for seats; but Henry never asked me to buy tickets. Young as he was, he understood our necessities.

After New York City we spent a year with my sister, widowed since we had parted 3 years before. Her home is in Trego County, Kansas - the most wonderful, most interesting of desolate places I had ever known. My sister's farm is 21 miles from Wakeeney, the nearest town, 14 from Colyer, the nearest village, and 7 from Banner, the postoffice where she gets her mail and where there is a little country store, convenient if she is out of sugar or salt.

Jennie, my sister, plays the little reed-organ in a country church, teaches piano and organ to the neighbor's children, sings in the choir, when she happens to be where there is a choir - and has two sons and a daughter, every one with some degree of musical gift, all uncultivated. One of her sons plays on a guitar and a mandolin, or sings in a deep, strangely

sweet-toned voice. I think he would go out of his way to avoid hearing a Beethoven symphony or a grand opera. The simple music we all love on rare occasions he loves on all occasions.

Her other son plays a violin for country dances, nodding his head and beating his toes on the floor in time with the measure. He is Jennie's really gifted one, though nobody seems to know it. He works in his fields from six till 6, cares for horses, cattle, pigs; milks two cows, drives 14 miles after his mail once a week (he lives 7 miles from his old home. He is married.) and does not forget how to play "The Arkansaw Traveler" nor how to train a little band of country musicians, though untrained, himself.

Jennie's daughter sings in church choirs in the village where she lives with her husband. She has no especial talent - a modest little voice, a true ear, a commonplace touch on the piano; but she has better taste than her brothers and cares for music of a finer type.

In my sister's home there was then no piano. There was an old parlor organ but Henry did not often touch it. He was out-of-doors most of the time. He learned to ride on horseback, to harness a horse, to help a bit with the harvesting of Kaffir-corn and alfalfa, to make and tend a vegetable garden. His flower garden gave great pleasure to his aunt and myself, also to him.

He explored the wild, strange country for many miles about. He gathered specimens of silver ore from my sister's land and of strange prehistoric remains from Castle Rock, Wildcat Bluff and other places.

Many beautiful flowers grow in Kansas. These, of course, interested Henry, but we both began to long for our old home in Santa Clara Valley.

We came home in September, 1910, when Henry was 13 years of age.

I was ill several weeks after our arrival. My dear, long-time friend, Mrs. Etta Clarke, took care of me until I was strong enough to take up life in our own dear little home.

One of the momentous accidents of life was our first meeting with gifted, charming, wonderful Mrs. Veblen, which happened in the home of Mrs. Clarke.

As soon as Mrs. Veblen had opened her mouth and spoken a few words I knew that I was not too old for another love, but I could not have known at that time how closely knitted together her life and mine and Henry's would become.

She told me since what a strange experience her first meeting Henry was. She saw a small, anaemic-looking boy swallowed up in a big chair. She was introduced to him; he asked some question, not usual to hear from the lips of a child; and in a few minutes she forgot that she was listening to a little boy, because he talked like a philosopher.

Our little cottage had been vacant a long time. The window-lights



were broken, the front door was covered with a tangled, briery mass of rosevines, the yard was given over to mustard - with stems so large that we used them for fire-building. Mrs. Clarke's daughters hosed the inside walls of the house until the spider-webs and wasp-nests disappeared. With Henry's help they scrubbed the floors. "Uncle" Daniel Dunn, Mrs. Clarke's brother, cut a way for us through the great rosebush. Mr. Clarke mended the windows. If there is another family anywhere like the "Royal House of Clarke," as we call them, they must be relatives of the "Mother Carey" made famous by Kate Douglas Wiggin.

We bought a cooking-stove, a heating-stove, a table, 2 chairs, a bed-lounge, some cooking utensils and groceries. Henry's father sent him a bedstead. While it was on the way he slept on a door laid across the table. We had made a big muslin bag and stuffed it with wild-oats straw for his mattress. I slept on the lounge.

After these necessary expenditures we had a hundred dollars left in bank.

I wrote but two short stories in 5 months. One of them was poor work. After it had been rejected once I burned it. The other and one old one were all I disposed of that winter.

In February we had lived since Sept. 2nd on our hundred dollars. Little was left. Henry knew I was anxious. Weak in health though I was, I pondered, in desperation, opening a roadside tea-room, hoping for patronage from the Stanford University students, who passed in great numbers on holidays and week-ends, going to King's Mountain. Henry said little of his intentions. During the week before Christmas he had earned 40 cents gathering fern leaves and moss for a florist. In February, however, one day he took a gunny-sack and a trowel and said he was going to the mountains for ferns.

It was a long road. He was not used to walking; yet he brought back a weight that he ought not to have carried 300 feet.

It was a magnificent sack-full, though; rare ferns, with fronds 5 to 8 feet long and great, strong roots - Woodwardias, for which many hunt in vain.

"How did you know where to look for them?" I cried.

"They grow in damp, shady places," he said. "I looked in deep gulches, along the banks of little streams."

"And how did you know - " but I stopped asking questions. One almost felt that he was "led." How should he know what kind of places Woodwardia ferns choose for their nesting-place? He had seen little of the mountains.

I made him as comfortable as I could. The next day he sold his fern-roots.

For several months he went to the mountains at least once a week, sometimes oftener, and never came back empty-handed. He found cof-



fee-ferns and 5-fingered ferns, both rare. He found orchids and many other wonderful things. One week he earned \$12. He often earned 7 or 8 dollars in a week but his doing it made me wretched. The work was too hard for him.

He walked too far, carried burdens too heavy for him, was often caught in rain, drenched to the skin and had to struggle home with his load over adobe roads, his tired feet laden with heavy black mud.

Often instead of receiving money for his plants and roots, he exchanged them for bulbs. In a few months he had nearly a bushel of Chinese lily bulbs, besides amaryllis, narcissus, jonquils, tulips, iris, and many wild ones he had gathered, himself - harebells, fritillaria (mission bells), Mariposa lilies, leopard lilies and many others.

These were set in our yard to grow and multiply. In their season he sold blossoms; later he sold bulbs. As the bulb business increased, his trips to the mountains were less frequent.

One day he told me that while down in a gulch a wild outcry had been made at the top of the gulch on one side and answered from the top at the other side. At first he thought it was boys, it sounded so like human voices, only, he had wondered how any boy ever could command so much lung-power: but the cries continued a long time, and finally he knew they were not made by human beings. He remained where he was until they ceased, then made his way out and home.

Mountaineers, when the cries were described to them, said they were made by mountain lions (cougars).

Before that time I had supposed that coyotes and rabbits were the only large animals on this side of the mountains, and coyotes, I had often been told, never attack anyone. Now, investigating the matter, I learned that wildcats were often seen and that a woman on horseback, on a mountain road, or path, had been attacked by a mountain lion. She had thrust her hat-pin into its eye and thus frightened it away, but had been made insane by the horror of the situation and had died soon after.

And my Henry, a child, alone and utterly weaponless and defenceless had been wandering about the mountains for months. If my hair had not been gray already I think it would have turned gray then, with terror of what might have happened.

Henry continued as fearless as before but I persuaded him not to go alone any more. The animals would not be likely to attack a party. (Since then a man has been attacked by one of the cougars. He was not a hunter and had done nothing to enrage the animal. It must have meant him for food).

Henry's father had given him a bicycle. On his later mountain trips he rode to Woodside, or a little past, until the grade became steep, when he left the wheel in the bushes and walked. There were 4 boys, one or more of whom accompanied him occasionally. With one of them he formed a

partnership. He was about 18 years of age, a strong, good-natured fellow. They took a vehicle but results were not satisfactory. Their earnings did not fulfill the ambitions of a boy who was almost a man and expected to earn \$75 a month.

Henry became janitor of the schoolhouse, receiving \$12 per month, and continued floriculture. He made occasional business trips to the mountains until he was about 16 years of age. I earned a little and we lived comfortably, though of course it was the simple life with a big S. Henry read books in the school library. We also had reading matter from the Palo Alto Public Library. Our reading matter was mostly books. We seldom saw a newspaper (excepting "Current Events," a condensed account of the world's doings that was on the school list), but occasionally we read magazines.

Early in 1912 Henry came into the house one day and said to me with rather a desperate air:

"I can't do without a piano any longer!"

I had not suspected that he wanted one. I said:



Figure 1. Henry Cowell, ca. 1914. Courtesy of New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the David and Sylvia Teitelbaum Fund, Inc.

"We have only \$60 in the bank. If you can get one with that" -

It seemed hopeless; but he went forth bravely to try. He found an old one in a furniture store in Palo Alto. Strangely enough, the price was \$60 - exactly all we had. Henry did not like our being left without any reserve fund; so he paid \$20 down and arranged to meet the remainder by \$5 a month installments.

The piano had been used in a boys' school. It was so badly worn that it could not be kept in tune without paying sums to a tuner almost equal to the rent of an instrument.

Henry bought the piano February 17th, 1912. In March he made arrangements with Mrs. Boylan to exchange gardening for musical instruction, hour for hour - though her time was worth \$1 an hour and she could have hired a gardener at 25c an hour. She is a kind woman; besides, I think she felt interested in Henry's undertaking. He bought a First Grade instruction-book and began with the first lesson a few days before his 15th birthday.

In 5 weeks Mrs. Boylan went away for her health and he had no more help from her. In the meantime, however, although Mrs. Boylan was advancing Henry through the instruction-book as fast as she thought any mortal boy could possibly go, doing good work, he was surreptitiously playing his way through the book alone. Before the end of the 5 weeks he sat down one day and played nearly everything in the book, at sight. Also, he played Rubenstein's "Melody in F" and an easy version of "Léonora."

He kept on alone a short time after Mrs. Boylan went away. The piano then went out of tune so badly that it was quite useless. After about 6 weeks without it he paid \$10 for repairs.

Afterward he began taking lessons of Miss Partridge, a young girl who was making a brilliant record in the musical department of an academy in Santa Clara.

He asked her, after a few lessons, to give him Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." She said she would if he 'wouldn't tell anybody,' for people would think it strange of her to give such difficult work to a beginner. (I trust she will now pardon me for 'telling.' That was 2 years ago and she is now more interested in something else than in her reputation as a teacher of piano). However, with or without her approval, he was already playing the 1st movement of the sonata at home before he asked for her help. She gave him the rest of it.

After about 9 weeks Miss Partridge decided that it was best for her school-work that she remain in Santa Clara most of the time. She gave up taking pupils - and Henry was again without a teacher, having had the 5 long-forgotten lessons in Des Moines, 3 lessons with Mrs. Boyland [*sic*] and, I think, 6 lessons with Miss Partridge, (the piano always being out of tune part of the time and preventing regular work). As he always

studied far ahead of the formal lessons assigned by his teachers, he had practically learned without help.

He had borrowed a beginner's work on Harmony from Mrs. Boylan. It was returned after he had read a few pages.

Mrs. Robinson of Palo Alto sent for Henry to visit her. She had heard something of him that interested her, probably from Mrs. Veblen.

He made the acquaintance of Mrs. Robinson, a brilliant, cultivated mind, with musical tastes and much knowledge of a certain system of piano-work, which she was kind enough to impart to Henry freely. He had 3 of her lessons; and that was the last of formal instruction for a long time.

Henry bought music occasionally. I remember we felt very glad when he could play Heller's "Tarantelle" creditably. By that time he had learned several Nocturnes and the Military Polonaise, having found a Schirmer "Chopin Album" among some things that had been sent to him by his father when we lived in Des Moines. Miss Brown, Mrs. Boylan's sister, gave him a volume of Beethoven's Sonatinas.

Before the departure of Mrs. Boylan, 5 weeks after the beginning of Henry's work on the piano, he had written some compositions and taken them to her for criticism.

The last of May a young Stanford graduate who was about to leave for the east gave Henry the evening before he went. He was a musician, a composer, (Mr. Otis), and we felt very sorry they had not met sooner. Yet that one evening worked a revolution in Henry's method of writing down his compositions. He had not known how to do it. It seems incredible that he learned in one evening, but he asked information on points that had puzzled him. He remembered every answer he received.

I have said that we bought the old piano in February 1912. The following October we bought a better piano, at \$235. The old one had been paid for. We turned it in for \$50 and promised, with some misgivings, to pay installments of \$6 per month. When we had reduced our indebtedness to \$143, Mrs. Veblen paid the remainder. We still owe her \$104.

In fact, if we undertook to keep track of all we owe Mrs. Veblen and to pay her - it would be like paying one's mother for the care she gave us in infancy. At every step of Henry's struggle for musical education Mrs. Veblen has forwarded his cause, whether by influence, or gifts, or loans, or, most generous of all, by giving herself.

After that memorable lesson in composition Henry worked without a teacher for many months. In fact, he has had, since then, 2 lessons from Mrs. Carrington, 2 or 3 from Mr. Arthur Lewis (Composition and Harmony) and 2 from Mr. Lippitt (piano-forte). Always he has worked mostly alone, browsing for information, when he felt need of it, wherever a door opened.

In the winter of 1912 Dr. de Angulo and Mrs. de Angulo, also a doctor,

moved into our neighborhood. Both were taking post-graduate work in Stanford University.

We became acquainted with them through Mrs. Terman, and a warm friendship sprang up at sight between them and Henry. Mrs. de Angulo is a woman of remarkable intellectual power, critical ability, generous spirit, sanity and rational poise. A woman who seldom makes mistakes. Dr. de Angulo is a man of temperament, insight, mental quickness, searching intellect driven by whirlwinds of glorious excitements over the beautiful in art or nature. He and Henry love each other ardently.

These and other friends became greatly interested in Henry's musical compositions. Dr. de Angulo was not afraid to declare his opinion that the boy would one day stand beside Richard Wagner. He talked critically, advised changes of title, recommended modifications in phrasing. Always his highest praise went to the boldest, most original work. He was an inspiration.

But his inspiration was occasional. That of Mrs. Veblen was constant. Hour by hour she listened carefully, patiently, to new compositions, pointing out weakness and strength with rare taste and fine appreciation. It has always been good to watch her gladdening face when he has produced something more than usually remarkable.

"Adventures in Harmony" was written the June after Henry's 16th birthday, after about a year plus 3 months' possession of a piano.

The following July Mrs. Veblen, then in Carmel-by-the Sea, sent for Henry to go down and witness two productions in Forest Theater - one for adults and one juvenile play. There was to be original music. She hoped Henry would be benefited by hearing it.

During his stay in Carmel Mr. Takeshi Kanno, the Japanese poet, chanced to hear Henry play some original compositions. He was greatly impressed. His poetic drama, "Creation-Dawn," was to be presented in Forest Theater August 16th. He asked Henry to write music to accompany its production.

Henry came home about the end of the 1st week in July. In a week the music was written, besides "Eagle Dance" for Mary Austin's "Fire." (This was not used by Mrs. Austin). ("Creation-Dawn"'s music could scarcely have been all written in a week, had not some parts of compositions already written been used in it.)

Henry returned to Carmel Aug. 2nd, his music written, his nervous fingers ready to do their part. He was to play it himself, a little back and removed from sight of the audience.

The drama was beautifully presented, Mrs. Kanno (Gertrude Boyle Kanno, sculptor) taking the part of Saarashi, Mr. Kanno that of Sagano, a Japanese flutist and several dancers taking other parts.

It is a mystical drama. The scene was mystically beautiful, in soft light, entrancing colors, solemnity of tonal effect.

Henry's overture poured forth from a screen of green leaves like a Pan renewing possession of the forest. A score of fairy-like little dancers flitted tantalizingly into view and out again to his dainty "Fairies' Dance" and "Windsprites' Dance." (The little dancers, whose dances were not formal but somewhat of inspirational order, were trained by Henry.)

"Sea-Music" broke over the hill in stately measure - more impressive than anything else during the evening.

After it was all over the woods rang with Henry's name. "Henry Cowell! Henry Cowell!" was shouted over and over and over. Henry was surrounded by boys offering candy, and by men and women offering congratulations.

We remained in Carmel until March. Henry gave a recital in Arts and Crafts Hall, played a number of times in Pine Inn, (then under the management of Mrs. [blank space]) and gave a few parlor concerts. In April he gave two concerts in Pacific Grove. One included a concerto of his own composition. He led the orchestra, which numbered only 4 or 5 pieces, but the most important event during that time was his playing original music before the San Francisco Musical Club in St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, March 5th, 1914. He had but 20 minutes on a long programme representing at least one musician of note, yet most of the newspaper comment next morning was given to Henry. Unstinted praise came from The Chronicle. The Examiner's correspondent, Redfern Mason, gave him some commendation tempered by harpings on his need of instruction - a need which Henry never denied, but openly avowed. It seemed to me, however, not so much a matter of finding real crudeness in Henry's work as a certain difficulty (which Mr. Mason shares with many others) in believing that such astounding performances can be really as good as they seem. Issuing from an untaught person, little beyond childhood, it is natural that critics, expecting weaknesses, are determined to find them. So, departures from ancient law are set down as breaches of musical taste instead of efforts to win for musical art a freedom already partly achieved by artists of the brush.

In short-story writing everybody but Henry James was beaten into shape with hammer and tongs more than 20 years ago. Novelists have been battered much with the billies of the chapter-police who warn them that divisions must be of equal length and end with made excitement goaded by cruel suspense. Writers there are who neither laugh at rules nor reason about them but ignore them. Rules are indispensable to mediocrity and useful to modest talent. They hamper genius, which learns them in order to break them with larger wisdom.

In August 1913 certain generous people, Jaime and Cary de Angulo, husband and wife, whose names I am not permitted to mention, began giving Henry \$10 a month in order that might have less anxiety about our income and more time for study. They soon increased the sum to \$20.

I had then been an invalid for several months. There is a cavity in each of my lungs. As I coughed and had hemorrhages we supposed the trouble was tuberculosis. Mrs. Veblen invited us to pass the winter in her cottage in Carmel. It is 100 miles south of our home. The winters are sunny, and warmer than here. She thought I could not survive the winter at home,

It was a noble offer, on many counts. First because she exposed herself to possible infection. She knew I would observe every possible precaution, yet - precautions have not always been adequate to make safe those who care for a tuberculous patient. She urged me to go. She said Henry needed me; that for his sake I ought to try to get well.

I went. In fair weather I slept under a pine tree and stayed out-of-doors most of the time. I kept my clothes and bedding separate from the others, boiled my dishes, fumigated the rooms with sulphur frequently, burned my napkins and otherwise tried to safe-guard Henry, Mrs. Veblen and others. I did not kiss anyone for more than a year.

My long-continued illness doubled Henry's burdens and made his friends determined to secure for him an income sufficient to enable him to give his time to study.

Professor Seward of Stanford University tried to get a scholarship for him. The matter has, as yet, reached no climax. The scholarships ap-



Figure 2. Henry Cowell and his mother, Clarissa Dixon, ca. 1914. Courtesy of New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the David and Sylvia Teitelbaum Fund, Inc.



plied for are all given out, at present. He may win on the next vacancy. Meanwhile a fund was raised by musical friends, and besides the \$20 a month mentioned previously another gave \$25 a month, to be continued 6 months, and my son Clarence sent \$3 a week for several months of my illness. The generosity of Mrs. Veblen has been without limit, for, besides money helps she gives herself; and - there are so many who have treated us generously I cannot even write their names. We are not made to feel like beggars, but like members of a devoted family group. Oh, there is goodness in the world - loveliness most glorious. I do not even know the names of all who have contributed money to the fund for Henry. Professor Seward of Stanford University and Mrs. Bates of Palo Alto know more of this matter than I do, as they have both exerted themselves determinedly in Henry's behalf. Some of the donors are Dr. Terman and Mrs. Terman, Miss J. D. Dawson.

After September a new danger to life threatened me. In March I went into a hospital in San Francisco, where Dr. Jacob Schwarcz performed a successful operation, removing a cancer from my left breast. In the course of medical examinations previous to the operation it was, happily, discovered that I had no tuberculous germs - not a germ. The pulmonary symptoms had all been secondary effects of a weak heart. Henry wrote me that he had not been as happy for a year as he was when I wrote him that it was all a mistake about my having tuberculosis.

As soon as Henry could free himself from engagements already made, he went to San Francisco in order to spend the Hospital's visiting hours with me.

It was a glad day when he came to my bedside. It actually made me better. My vital force was increased for 3 days by the pleasure of his presence afternoons and evenings; then he ceased to come.

He was in the home of his father and Mrs. Cowell. He had a sudden, violent attack of illness, thought by one doctor to be rheumatism, by another blood-poisoning from a rubbed heel.

I did not know how serious his illness was nor how terribly he suffered, until afterward. Frequent messages came that he was "better" - "improving" - and I wondered why he was so long getting well enough to visit me.

After the fever and inflammation had subsided, the right leg was drawn backward at his knee. He began walking on crutches. In two or 3 days after he had the crutches, he visited me. I was then a guest in the home of my kind and generous friend Mrs. Villa Reynolds.

Soon after, a well-known physician advised Henry to go to a hospital and have his leg straightened and put in a cast. He might have a stiff leg for life, the doctor said, but it had better be stiff straight than crooked.

This advice, coupled with the peremptory arrogance of the doctor,



roused Henry's anger. On the way to me from the doctor's office, he wrote "Anger Dance" on the street-car.

I wrote to the doctor that I was unwilling to have Henry's leg operated on, at least before something else had been tried. I sent Henry to Dr. [blank space], an osteopathic practitioner.

In one treatment his foot moved 2 inches toward the ground. In 3 weeks he walked without crutches; and, at last (2 months later) his leg is entirely well. Only 8 treatments were required to cure him.

We came home in June. It is now August.

Soon after our return home Mr. Arthur Lewis, Composer, spent 3 days with us and gave Henry much generous help. Henry learned the proper Sonata form for a 1st movement and promised to write some 1st movements and show them to Mr. Lewis for criticism.

Since then he has written first movements of 3 sonatas. The First is surely destined to be numbered among really great productions, if he continues its power to the end. The Second is pleasing, melodious, and captures the ear immediately. I have not tired of it yet, though I have heard it many times, but I hardly believe it will wear as well as the First. The Third, also, is a masterly production.

In Carmel Henry had written a work of striking originality which he called the Sonata Progressive. He knows, now, that in form it is not really a sonata, so his sonatas will be numbered from the First, written this summer.

While we were in San Francisco, after Henry began convalescing, he wrote a "Letter" each day for 17 days to Mrs. Veblen. Were she a whit less brilliant in intellect they would have told her nothing, for they were all musical compositions. Among them were "Maid and Hero," "The Popular Melody" and "The Zones", all now included in the programme for Henry's next concert, which was to have been given in Fairmount Hotel, San Francisco, next Monday, (Aug. 31, 1914), but has been deferred because of matters rising from the dreadful war recently begun in Europe.

Five etudes are among Henry's compositions. The Fourth and the Fifth were written this summer. The Fifth is, I believe, greatest, but I am not sure; for the Fourth stirs the blood like nothing else (unless, perhaps, The Marseillaise Hymn) - and music, whose chief appeal is not intellectual but emotional, is, perhaps, most truly come into its own when it stirs irresistibly, with invincible power.

The "Sonata Progressive", though not in true sonata form is, in conception, greater than any sonata because both form and conception are new. The conception is a series of examples In Simile, of Classic, Romantic and Modern musical art. It was written in December, 1913. He is now writing what he calls "The Resume", which is along the same line as to conception, but is a work of greater magnitude, beginning

with a barbaric primitive, or savage, music, including compositions of the folk-song order and passing through different historic gradations of musical understanding and the principles and degree of progress of various schools of musical art. It is very ambitious, very original and also, withal, very beautiful.

September 10th, 1914

Last Monday, Sept. 8th, 1914, Henry finished "The Resume." It was written in less than a week, a week interrupted twice: once by an evening out and once by part of a day in Palo Alto.

"The Resume" has 10 divisions. It begins with a "Savage Dance" which is truly and gloriously aboriginal. The melody, though exquisitely beautiful, is extremely simple. The accompaniment is mostly monotonous, representative of simple, primitive instruments that produce no varieties of sound. The effect is saddening to the spirit, as if all sorrow had been wailed forth in musical cadence.

"The Chorale" follows. It is as truly and surprisingly representative as the other. In fact, each of the 10 numbers is so thoroughly illustrative of the manner it is mean[t] to illustrate that I find it impossible to say this or that one is better than the others.

Mrs. Veblen had been kept in ignorance of what was happening, the intention being to give her a pleasant surprise. Monday afternoon the composition was finished. Shortly afterward Henry mounted his bicycle and rode over to invite Mrs. Veblen to spend the evening with us. She returned with him. "The Resume" was to be played that evening. We were all three so excited that we scarcely ate any supper. (We had dined at noon.)

Mrs. Veblen and I both quivered, laughed and cried, as the music went on from majesty to majesty. I broke into uncontrol[l]ed crying on the Sonata - not because it is pathetic in effect but because my excitement had reached a climax that had to express itself.

At the end Mrs. Veblen assured Henry that this composition places him at once in the highest rank as a composer. "What you had done before," she said, [""]was full of promise, but this - nothing better has ever been done by anyone" - something like that she said.

The day before Henry composed the Fugue, he was troubled about how he should learn a fugue form. He knew nothing about it and had no models among our books.

I suggested that he go to Palo Alto and have a conversation with Mr. Flint, or some other person whose learning could be trusted on that subject.

And we laughed, too, knowing that students devote long and serious study to mastering a fugue form; but Henry said he must make some kind of a fugue, even if it were imperfect in form. His composition would be incomplete without it.

So he went to Palo Alto; not wholly to study fugues: he had promised music lessons to 3 persons. One did not appear, one had not bought her book, so he gave only one half-hour lesson besides doing a few errands. When he returned he gave me an outline of the proper form he had sought.

"When did you learn it?" I asked, amazed that he could remember it.

"From Mr. [blank space]" (I forget the author's name) - 's Dictionary", he answered. "It is a Musical Dictionary and contains several pages about fugues." (I do not remember his exact words but I have given the substance of them).

Saturday, Sept. 19, 1914

Henry began work in the University of California last Tuesday. He is to go from our Valley home to Berkeley every Tuesday, attend lectures by Professors Stricklen and Burden(?), have one hour with Prof. Seegur, head of the Musical Department. On Thursday he again attends lectures. There are to be piano lessons outside the University work by Uda Waldrop, also, counterpoint by Dr. Sabin of San Francisco. Henry will remain in the city from Tuesday till Thursday, staying nights with his father. He is to study English with Dr. Seward of Stanford University, who has for a long time taken much interest in Henry's welfare and tried in every way he could to advance his chances for being educated. The lessons in French with Mrs. Veblen will continue, perhaps irregularly, as Henry will now be greatly pressed for time.

August 31st, 1915

The school year ended for Henry in May. Some months before that time he began taking pupils. All winter we received \$30 per month from the fund previously mentioned. The \$20 per month first contributed ceased more than a year ago because of other expenses rendering it too difficult to raise. Also, the fund, paid \$25.00 I owed for hospital service (money I had borrowed from dear Mary Ralph, a true friend in an hour of need). The rest of our living expenses were defrayed by Henry's earnings. Since April 1st he has earned all we have had excepting \$25.00 which we needed in July (because at that time I again was operated on for cancerous tumors. They were small; 5 were removed. I was in Palo Alto's Peninsula Hospital.)

August 15th, 1915, Henry began his second year of study in the musical department of the University of California, in Berkeley. He does most of our housework, teaches 9 piano pupils, (one free, 8 paying \$1.00 per hour) 2 voice pupils (friends - not paid pupils, excepting in the larger sense, for they give him true appreciation, devoted friendship, staunch loyalty, all beyond price, so that it is a kind of sacrilege [*sic*] to list them as "non-paying".) Besides this work, Henry travels some 40 to 50 miles

3 times a week. If he does not distinguish himself in the University work it will be because of human limitations, which will not permit him to have more than 24 hours in his day, nor to be 2 places at once, working in each at a separate employment.

During recent months Henry has composed a 'Cello-Piano Sonata (for Mr. Search), a 5(?) -part orchestral piece for Mr. Seegur. It is called "A Scenario". It follows an outline written for the purpose by Jaime de Angulo. The following songs: "Among the Rushes" (words by Clarissa Dixon) "The Meadow-Lark," "The Two Patriots," "The Haven," "A Song of Courage" and a number of Child-Songs (words by same author). Also "If Swart Death be a Gypsy" (words by [blank space] ), music to a sonnet by George Sterling, "Weep for the World's Woe", words by Shelley, and 2 Shak[e]speare pieces music written in old English style. He is now working on "A Programme" which is to have some instrumental pieces, some voice solos and at least one piece designed for a cumulative, summing-up effect at the end, which will combine orchestral and vocal work. Some of the songs are written; "Song of Motherhood," words by Laura Smith Wood. A terror-song (words by C.D.), "International Hymn" (words by C.D.). His bold plan is to represent the chief human passions, especially the most primal, rising at the last to love universal.

## NOTES

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The above transcript follows the typescript prepared by Sidney Robertson Cowell (date unknown), currently housed in the Cowell Collection in the Music Division of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Spelling and punctuation have been left as in the original, except for a handful of obvious typos, or as noted by brackets. In matters of style, we've generally left things as Sidney had them. The text and the accompanying photographs are published here with the generous permission of the David and Sylvia Teitelbaum Fund, Inc.

1. Clarissa Dixon, "Material for Biography," 1914-1916, Cowell Collection, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundation. Quoted with permission of the Estate of Henry Cowell.

2. Ibid.

3. See Clarissa Belknap Dixon, *Janet and Her Dear Phebe* (New York: F. A. Stokes Company, [1909]). Available online at <http://www.frogpeak.org/dixon/index.html>.