

我生活的故事

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1 光明和声音

Light And Voice

带着一种诚惶诚恐的心情，我开始写我生活的故事。我的童年被一层浓雾般的帷幕笼罩着，如今我要揭开它，但却心有疑虑，犹豫不决。写自传往往是很困难的，由于时过境迁，事实和想象经常混淆在一起，难以辨认。描绘以前的经历，难免不知不觉地掺入了自己的想象。一些生动的往事不自觉地从我脑海中跳出，而另一些“监狱般的阴影却停滞在那里”。孩童时代，其他的一些酸甜苦辣也早已失却了往日的辛酸，渐渐消退；当经历了更多的新奇刺激后，我早年受教育时的一些至关重要的事件也已忘了。因此，为避免拖沓冗长，我将只尽力呈现那些对我来说最有趣和最重要的片断。

1880年6月27日，我出生在亚拉巴马州北部的一个小镇——塔斯甘比亚镇。

我的父系祖先来自瑞士卡斯帕·凯勒家族，移民定居在美国的马里兰州。其中一位瑞士祖先在苏黎世竟然是聋哑教育专家，他曾写过一本关于聋哑教育方面的书。谁会料到，他竟然会有一个像我这样又盲又聋又哑的后人。谁又敢说国王的祖先里不会有人曾是别人的奴隶；而奴隶的祖先里也许有人曾做过国王呢！

我的祖父，也就是卡斯帕·凯勒的儿子，自从他来到亚拉巴马州的这块大土地后，整个家族就在这里定居下来。据说，祖父每年都要骑马从塔斯甘比亚镇到费城，购置家里和农场所需的物品。途中所写的家信生动而详实地记述了他的历次旅行，许多信都被珍藏至今。

我的祖母是拉斐特的一位助手亚历山大·莫尔的女儿，是早期弗吉尼亚殖民地的一位总督亚历山大·斯波茨伍德的孙女。她还是罗勃特·E·李的二表妹。

我的父亲亚瑟·凯勒曾是南北战争时的南军上尉。我的母亲凯特·亚当斯是他的第二任妻子，比父亲小很多岁。母亲的祖父，本杰明·亚当斯，与苏珊娜·古德休结婚，并且在马萨诸塞州的纽贝里住了很多年。他们的儿子查理·亚当斯出生于马萨诸塞州的纽贝里，后来迁往阿肯色州的赫勒纳。美国内战爆发时，他代表南方作战，曾担任旅长，他与露西·海伦·艾弗里特结婚。海伦·艾弗里特与爱德华·艾弗里特和爱德华·艾弗里特·黑尔博士属于同一个家族。战争结束后，他们搬往田纳西州的孟菲斯。

在我失去视觉、听觉以前，我们住在很小的房子里，有一间正方形的大屋，和一间供仆人睡觉的小屋。那时候，依照南方人的习惯，他们会在自己的屋子旁边再加盖一间房子，以备不时之需。南北战争之后，父亲也盖了这样一间屋子，在他同我母亲结婚后住进了这间小屋。它被葡萄、爬藤蔷薇和金银花遮盖着，从园子里看去，整个小屋就像是一座用树枝搭成的凉亭。小门廊也藏在黄蔷薇和南方茯苓花的花丛里，成了蜂鸟和蜜蜂的世界。

凯勒家的老宅，离我们这个蔷薇凉亭不过几步，以前整个家族都住在那里。由于我们家和周围茂密的树木、篱笆都被美丽的绿藤所覆盖，所以邻人们都称我们家为“绿色家园”。这个旧式的花园简直是我童年时代的天堂。

在家庭老师到来之前，我经常沿着坚硬的方型黄杨木树篱慢慢地摸索，凭着自己的嗅觉，寻找初开的紫罗兰和百合花。有时，在发了一通脾气后，我也会独自到这里来寻求慰藉。我总是把炙热的脸庞藏在凉气沁人的树叶和草丛之中，去平静我烦躁不安的心。置身于这绿色花园里，真是令人心旷神怡。我会兴致勃勃地漫游，有时我触到那美丽的藤蔓，摸到了绿叶，闻到了花香，就认出那是一直蔓延到花园尽头，覆盖了那倒塌的亭子的藤蔓。这里有爬在地上的卷须藤和低垂的茉莉，还有一种叫做蝴蝶荷的十分罕见的花。因为它的花瓣很容易掉落，

像蝴蝶的翅膀，所以名叫蝴蝶荷。这种花能发出一阵阵甜丝丝的气味。但最美丽的还是那些蔷薇花。在北方的花房里，我很少能够见到南方家里的这种爬藤蔷薇。它一长串一长串地倒挂在门廊上，散发着芳香而没有一丝尘土气。清晨，经过露水的沐浴，它们是如此柔软，如此高洁，我不禁常想，上帝御花园里的曝光兰，也不过如此吧！

如同别的小生命一样，我的出生也是简单而普通的。我呱呱坠地，睁开了双眼。就像每个家庭迎接第一个孩子时一样，大家都充满喜悦。因为是家里降生的第一个孩子，名字不可随意乱起。每个人都把这事儿挂在心上，难免要费一番唇舌。父亲希望以他最尊敬的祖先的名字“米尔德里德·坎贝儿”做我的名字，而后不再发表意见，最后还是母亲一锤定音，以她母亲的闺名命名，叫我“海伦·艾弗里特”。但当兴奋的父亲抱着我去教堂受洗的途中，竟把它忘了——这合情合理，因为他本来就不是很乐意用这个名字。当牧师问起我叫什么时，父亲只记得决定沿用外婆的名字，一时之间便说出了“海伦·亚当斯”。

家里的人告诉我说，我在婴儿时期就表现出了很强的个性，对任何事物都充满了好奇心。看到别人做的一些事情都坚持要模仿。所以，六个月时，我就会尖声地说“你好”。一天，我竟然清晰地发出了“茶、茶、茶”的音，吸引了每个人的注意力。甚至于“水”这个字，也是我在那时学会的。我生病后，虽然忘掉了以前所学的其它字，却仍记得“水”。我不时会断续发出“水”字的音来，直到后来学习拼写这个字，我才停止这种咿咿呀呀。

家人告诉我，在我刚满周岁时就能走路了。我母亲把我从浴盆中抱出来，放在膝头。突然间，我注意到了光滑的地板上，透过阳光摇曳多姿的树影，于是就从母亲的膝上溜下来，几乎是跑着去追那影子。冲动过后，我摔倒了，哭着要母亲把我抱起来。

然而好景不常。短促的春光里百鸟啁啾，歌声盈耳；夏日里果子惹眼，蔷薇飘香；秋天金光闪烁，漫山通红。三个美好的季节匆匆而过，在一个活蹦乱跳、咿呀学语的孩子心中留下了美好的记忆。在次年可怕的2月里，我突然生病，这场病使我失去了视觉和听觉，我又像婴儿一般蒙昧。医生们诊断的结果，是急性脑充血，说我无药可救了。一个清晨，我的高烧却突然地退了，就和它无端的到来一样。全家人的惊喜溢于言表。但是，他们，甚至医生哪会想到，我会永久失去听觉和视觉，再也听不到看不见了。

至今，我仍依稀记得那场病，尤其记得母亲在我高烧不退、昏沉沉、痛苦难耐的时候，温柔地抚慰我，让我勇敢地度过了恐惧。我还记得在高烧退后，眼睛因为干枯炽热、疼痛怕光，必须避开自己以前所喜爱的阳光而面向着墙壁。后来，我的视力一天不如一天，对阳光的感觉也渐渐地模糊不清了。除了这些短暂的记忆——如果可以称得上记忆的话——剩下的一切似乎都是不真实的，仿佛一场噩梦。一直到她——我的家庭教师到来之后，我才逐渐地习惯了充满了黑暗和冷清的世界，忘记了我曾经拥有的那个不一样的天地。是她把我从思想束缚中解放了出来。虽然我只拥有过19个月的光明和声音，但我却仍清晰地记得宽广的绿色家园、蔚蓝的天空、青翠的草木、争奇斗艳的鲜花，所有这些一点一滴都已铭刻在我的心中。

IT is with a kind of fear that I begin to write the history of my life. I have, as it were, a superstitious hesitation in lifting the veil that clings about my childhood like a golden mist. The task of writing an autobiography is a difficult one. When I try to classify my earliest impressions, I find that fact and fancy look alike across the years that link the past with the present. The woman paints the child's experiences in her own fantasy. A few impressions stand out vividly from the first years of my life; but "the shadows of the prison house are on the rest."

Besides, many of the joys and sorrows of childhood have lost their poignancy, and many incidents of vital importance in my early education have been forgotten in the excitement of great discoveries. In order, therefore, not to be tedious I shall try to present in a series of sketches only the episodes that seem to me to be the most interesting and important.

I was born on June 27, 1880, in Tuscumbia, a little town of northern Alabama.

The family on my father's side is descended from Caspar Keller, a native of Switzerland, who settled in Maryland. One of my Swiss ancestors was the first teacher of the deaf in Zurich and wrote a book on the subject of their education—rather a singular coincidence; though it is true that there is no king who has not had a slave among his ancestors, and no slave who has not had a king among his.

My grandfather, Caspar Keller's son, "entered" large tracts of land in Alabama and finally settled there. I have been told that once a year he went from Tuscumbia to Philadelphia on horseback to purchase supplies for the plantation, and my aunt has in her possession many of the letters to his family, which give charming and vivid accounts of these trips.

My Grandmother Keller was a daughter of one of Lafayette's aides, Alexander Moore, and granddaughter of Alexander Spotswood, an early Colonial Governor of Virginia. She was also second cousin to Robert E. Lee.

My father, Arthur H. Keller, was a captain in the Confederate Army, and my mother, Kate Adams, was his second wife and many years younger. Her grandfather, Benjamin Adams, married Susanna E. Goodhue, and lived in Newbury, Massachusetts, for many years. Their son, Charles Adams, was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and moved to Helena, Arkansas. When the Civil War broke out, he fought on the side of the South and became a brigadier general. He married Lucy Helen Everett, who belonged to the same family of Everetts as Edward Everett and Dr. Edward Everett Hale. After the war was over the family moved to Memphis, Tennessee.

I lived, up to the time of the illness that deprived me of my sight and hearing, in a tiny house consisting of a large square room and a small one, in which the servant slept. It is a custom in the South to build a small house near the homestead as an annex to be used on occasion. Such a house my father built after the Civil War, and when he married my mother they went to live in it. It was completely covered with vines, climbing roses and honeysuckles. From the garden it looked like an arbour. The little porch was hidden from view by a screen of yellow roses and Southern smilax. It was the favourite haunt of humming birds and bees.

The Keller homestead, where the family lived, was a few steps from our little rose bower. It was called "Ivy Green" because the house and the surrounding trees and fences were covered with beautiful English ivy. Its old fashioned garden was the paradise of my childhood.

Even in the days before my teacher came, I used to feel along the square stiff boxwood hedges, and, guided by the sense of smell, would find the first violets and lilies. There, too, after a fit of temper, I went to find comfort and to hide my hot face in the cool leaves and grass. What joy it was to lose myself in that garden of flowers, to wander happily from spot to spot, until, coming suddenly upon a

beautiful vine, I recognized it by its leaves and blossoms, and knew it was the vine which covered the tumble down summer house at the farther end of the garden! Here, also, were trailing clematis, drooping jessamine, and some rare sweet flowers called butterfly lilies, because their fragile petals resemble butterflies' wings. But the roses—they were loveliest of all. Never have I found in the greenhouses of the North such heart satisfying roses as the climbing roses of my southern home. They used to hang in long festoons from our porch, filling the whole air with their fragrance, untainted by any earthy smell; and in the early morning, washed in the dew, they felt so soft, so pure, I could not help wondering if they did not resemble the asphodels of God's garden.

The beginning of my life was simple and much like every other little life. I came, I saw, I conquered, as the first baby in the family always does. There was the usual amount of discussion as to a name for me. The first baby in the family was not to be lightly named, every one was emphatic about that. My father suggested the name of Mildred Campbell, an ancestor whom he highly esteemed, and he declined to take any further part in the discussion. My mother solved the problem by giving it as her wish that I should be called after her mother, whose maiden name was Helen Everett. But in the excitement of carrying me to church my father lost the name on the way, very naturally, since it was one in which he had declined to have a part. When the minister asked him for it, he just remembered that it had been decided to call me after my grandmother, and he gave her name as Helen Adams.

I am told that while I was still in long dresses I showed many signs of an eager, self asserting disposition. Everything that I saw other people do I insisted upon imitating. At six months I could pipe out "How d' ye," and one day I attracted every one's attention by saying "Tea, tea, tea" quite plainly. Even after my illness I remembered one of the words I had learned in these early months. It was the word "water", and I continued to make some sound for that word after all other speech was lost. I ceased making the sound "wah wah" only when I learned to spell the word.

They told me I walked the day I was a year old. My mother had just taken me out of the bath tub and was holding me in her lap, when I was suddenly attracted by the flickering shadows of leaves that danced in the sunlight on the smooth floor. I slipped from my mother's lap and almost ran toward them. The impulse having gone, I fell down and cried for her to take me up in her arms.

These happy days did not last long. One brief spring, musical with the song of robin and mocking bird, one summer rich in fruit and roses, one autumn of gold and crimson sped by and left their gifts at the feet of an eager, delighted child. Then, in the dreary month of February, came the illness which closed my eyes and ears and plunged me into the unconsciousness of a new born baby. They called it acute congestion of the stomach and brain. The doctor thought I could not live. Early one morning, however, the fever left me as suddenly and mysteriously as it had come. There was great rejoicing in the family that morning, but no one, not even the doctor, knew that I should never see or hear again.

I fancy I still have confused recollections of that illness. I especially

remember the tenderness with which my mother tried to soothe me in my waking hours of fret and pain, and the agony and bewilderment with which I awoke after a tossing half sleep, and turned my eyes, so dry and hot, to the wall, away from the once loved light, which came to me dim and yet dimmer each day. But, except for these fleeting memories, if, indeed, they be memories, it all seems very unreal, like a nightmare. Gradually I got used to the silence and darkness that surrounded me and forgot that it had ever been different, until she came—my teacher—who was to set my spirit free. But during the first nineteen months of my life I had caught glimpses of broad, green fields, a luminous sky, trees and flowers which the darkness that followed could not wholly blot out. If we have once seen, “the day is ours, and what the day has shown.”

2 童年记忆

Memory of The Childhood

生病后几个月的事，我几乎记不起来了。只隐约记得我常坐在母亲的腿上，或是紧拉着母亲的裙摆，跟着母亲忙里忙外地做家务。我开始用手抚摸各种物体，感觉着各种动作，用这种方法我学会了很多东西。我渴望与人交流，于是开始做一些简单的动作。这里，拉表示“来”，推表示“去”；摇摇头表示“不”，点点头表示“是”。当我想吃面包时，我就模仿切面包、涂奶油的动作。当我想要母亲晚饭做冰淇淋时，我会缩着脖子，做发抖的样子表示冷。母亲也尽力让我了解她的意思，我总是可以清楚地知道母亲想要什么，并跑到楼上或其他地方给她拿来。说实在的，在我漫长的黑夜里得到的所有光明，完全归于母亲的慈爱和智慧。

我慢慢地明白了很多关于我的事。5岁时，我学会了把洗衣店送回的洗好的衣服叠好并收起来，还能认出哪几件是自己的。从母亲和姑母的梳洗打扮中，我知道她们要出去，就乞求她们带着我。有人来时，我总被叫来见客人；他们走时，我挥手向他们告别，因为我还依稀记得这种手势所表示的意义。记得有一次，家里有几位先生来拜访我母亲，从开门和其他的一些声音，我知道了他们的来到。于是，我趁着家人不注意时，跑到楼上的房间，学着其他人的样子在镜子前梳妆，往头上抹油，在脸上擦了很厚一层粉，把面纱用发夹固定在头发上，让面纱下垂，轻盖在脸上。然后，我又找了一件宽大的裙子穿上，完成一身可笑的打扮后，也下楼去帮他们接待客人。

我已经记不清楚什么时候意识到自己与别人不同了，但我肯定是在莎莉文老师到来之前。我曾注意到母亲和我的朋友们都是用嘴交谈，而不像我们之间用手比划。有时，我会站在两个谈话者之间用手触摸他们的嘴巴，可是我仍然无法明白他们的意思。这使我很恼怒，我奋力蠕动嘴唇企图与他们交谈，可是他们一点反应也没有。我生气极了，大发脾气，又踢又叫，一直到筋疲力尽为止。

我经常为了一些小事无理取闹，常常踢伤保姆埃拉。我也知道她很痛，所以当我气消时，心里就觉得很愧疚。可是一有事情到来，我又急躁得控制不了，不顺心的事情发生时，我还是会疯狂地胡踢乱打。

在那个阴郁的童年时代，我有两个朝夕相处的伙伴，一个是厨师的女儿——黑人小姑娘玛莎·华盛顿，另一个是一只名叫贝利的老猎狗。玛莎·华盛顿懂得我的手势，所以每次吩咐她做事情，她都能按我的意思完成。我很爱对她发号施令，玛莎或许认为与其跟我打架，

还不如乖乖地听话来得聪明。我活泼好动，做事又不顾后果。我非常了解自己的个性，总是喜欢我行我素，甚至不惜一战。那个时期，我跟玛莎在厨房度过了不少时光，我喜欢帮玛莎揉面团，做冰淇淋，磨咖啡，喂小鸡，不然就是为了几个点心而争吵不休。许多家禽都很温驯，它们在我手上吃食，乖乖地让我抚摸。有一天，一只大火鸡竟把我手中的蕃茄给抢走了。也许是受火鸡的启发，不久，我和玛莎把厨娘刚刚烤好的饼偷走了，吃得一干二净。之后便病倒了，不知那只火鸡是否也受到了同样的惩罚。

珍珠鸡喜欢在隐蔽处筑巢，我特别爱到花丛深处找它们的蛋。我虽不能给玛莎说“我什么时候想要去找蛋”，但我可以把两手合成圆形，放在地上，示意草丛里的某种圆形的东西，玛莎总是能够看懂。我们若是有幸找到了蛋，我绝不允许玛莎拿着蛋回家，我用手势告诉她，她如果拿着，一摔跤就会把蛋打碎。

早间和夜晚的时候，谷仓、马厩以及乳牛场，都给了我和玛莎无穷的乐趣。当我跟玛莎到乳牛场时，挤奶工人挤奶的时候，常常让我把手放在牛身上，我也因为好奇而被牛尾打了好多次。

准备圣诞节也是一件令人高兴的事，虽然我不明白这些是什么，但是只要一想起诱人的美食，我就分外高兴。家人给我们一些零食让我和玛莎都保持安静。这使我们多少有些不乐意，不过相对于整个快乐的心情也并无大碍。家人会让我们磨香料、挑葡萄干、舔那些搅拌过食物的调羹。我也和别人一样把长袜子挂起来，然而我并不真感兴趣，也没有那么大的好奇心，不像别的孩子天没亮就爬起来看袜子里装进了什么礼物。

玛莎·华盛顿也和我一样喜欢恶作剧。7月里一个酷热的下午，我和玛莎坐在阳台的石阶上，一位肤色像黑炭一样，把她毛茸茸的头发用鞋带扎起来，一束束的头发看起来就像很多螺丝锥长在头上；而另一位皮肤白皙，一头长长的金色卷发。一个是6岁盲童——就是我，另一个大两三岁——那是玛莎。我们两个人坐在石阶上忙着剪纸娃娃。玩了不久我们便厌倦了这种游戏，于是就把鞋带剪碎，又把石阶边的忍冬草叶子剪掉。突然，我的注意力转向玛莎的那头“螺丝锥”。一开始，玛莎挣扎着，不肯让我剪，可是最后还是勉强同意了。剪完玛莎的头发，为了公平，我也让她剪我的头发，若不是母亲及时发现赶来制止，玛莎很可能把我的头发统统剪光。

我的另一个伙伴是贝利，也就是那只老猎狗。它很懒惰，喜欢躺在暖炉旁睡觉，而不愿意陪我玩。我尽力教它手语，但是它很懒、又笨，根本不懂我在干什么。它有时候兴奋地爬起来，全神贯注地蹲着，像对着一只鸟。那时我不明白它为什么老是对着我干，但它这样激怒我只会惨遭一顿痛打。之后，贝利也只会无精打采地爬起来，伸伸懒腰，嗅嗅暖炉，然后在另一端躺下，一点也不理会我。我觉得自讨没趣，便又去厨房找玛莎玩。

童年的记忆片断零碎却清晰不可磨灭。这些事情总使那时的孤寂、无助和黑暗更清晰地在我心头浮现。

有一天，我不小心把水洒到围裙上了，便把围裙张开，放在客厅的火炉旁，想把它烘干。由于我太性急觉得干得不够快，便把裙子放在暖炉上。突然间，火一下子窜了出来，燃着了围裙，我的衣裳也被烧着了。我大叫起来，老奶奶维尼赶来，用一床毯子把我裹住，差点儿把我闷死，不过火倒是灭了。除了手和头发之外，我烧的并不厉害。

大约在这个时候，我发现了钥匙的妙用。有一天早晨，我把母亲锁在了储藏室里。仆人们都在屋外干活，母亲被锁在里边足有3个小时。她一直在里边敲门，我却坐在走廊前的石阶上，感觉着敲门所引起的震动而咯咯笑个不停。经过这次恶作剧之后，父母决定要尽快请人来管教我，于是我的家庭教师——莎莉文小姐来了。但是很快我找了个机会把她也锁在房间里。母亲让我上楼送东西给莎莉文小姐，我把东西给她，转身便把门锁上了，然后将钥匙藏在客厅角落的衣柜下，不告诉别人。父亲不得不搭了一架梯子让莎莉文小姐从窗户爬出来，当时我得意极了，几个月之后，我才把钥匙交出来。

大约在我 5 岁时，我们从那所爬满蔓藤的房子搬到了一所新的大房子里。我们一家 6 口，父亲、母亲，两个异母哥哥，后来，又加了一个小妹妹，叫米尔德里德。我对父亲最初较清晰的记忆是，有一次我穿过一大堆报纸，来到父亲的跟前。那时，他独自一个人举着一大张纸，把脸都遮住了。我很疑惑，很想知道父亲在干什么，便学着他的模样，也举起一张纸，甚至戴了他的眼镜，以为这样便可以知道了。多年以后，我才知道那些纸都是报纸，父亲是报纸的编辑。

父亲性格温和，仁慈宽厚，非常热爱家庭。除了打猎的季节外，他很少离开我们。据家人说，他是个神枪手。除了家人，他最爱的就是狗和猎枪。他非常好客，很少有不带客人回来的时候。他最骄傲的是他的大花园，据说，父亲栽种的西瓜和草莓是全村最好的。他总是把最先成熟的葡萄和最好的草莓给我品尝，常常领着我在瓜田和果林中散步，抚摸着，使我感到无比快乐。

父亲还很擅长讲故事，在我学会了写字之后，他就把发生的许多有趣的事情用我学会的字，写在我手上。而最令他高兴的事，莫过于听我复述他讲过的那些故事了。

1896 年，我在北方度假，享受着怡人的晚夏，这时突然传来了父亲逝世的消息。他得病时间不长，病突然发作之后，很快就去世了。这是我最大的悲伤，也是我关于死亡的第一次亲身经历。

应当如何描述我的母亲呢？她是我熟悉的人，我反而不知道从何说起。

很长一段时间，我都把妹妹米尔德里德当作多余的人。我以前一直是父母惟一的宠儿，妹妹出生后，我的心情开始不平静起来，满怀嫉妒。她坐在母亲的腿上，占去了我的位置，母亲的时间和对我的关心似乎也都被她占据了。后来又发生了一件事，使我觉得不仅是母爱被分割，而且受了很大的侮辱。

那时，我有一个非常可爱的洋娃娃，我叫它“南茜”。它是我溺爱的宝贝和发脾气时的牺牲品，整个被折磨得不成样子。但是我爱她胜过任何会眨眼、会说话的洋娃娃。我常把她放在摇篮里，花一个多小时来安抚她。这摇篮和洋娃娃都是我的宝贝，不让别人乱动一下。然而有一天，我发现妹妹正舒舒服服地睡在摇篮里。那时，我正嫉妒她夺走了母爱，又怎么能够容忍她睡在我心爱的“南茜”的摇篮里呢？我非常愤怒，便冲过去用力把摇篮推翻。要不是母亲及时赶来接住，妹妹或许会被摔死。这时我已又盲又聋，处于双重孤独之中，当然不能领略亲热的语言，怜爱的行为以及伙伴之间所产生的感情。后来，在我受教育之后，享受到了人类的幸福，米尔德里德和我变得心心相印，我们经常手拉着手到处游逛，尽管她看不懂我的手语，我也听不见她咿咿呀呀的童音。

I cannot recall what happened during the first months after my illness. I only know that I sat in my mother's lap or clung to her dress as she went about her household duties. My hands felt every object and observed every motion, and in this way I learned to know many things. Soon I felt the need of some communication with others and began to make crude signs. A shake of the head meant "No" and a nod, "Yes", a pull meant "Come" and a push, "Go." Was it bread that I wanted? Then I would imitate the acts of cutting the slices and buttering them. If I wanted my mother to make ice cream for dinner I made the sign for working the freezer and shivered, indicating cold. My mother, moreover, succeeded in making me understand a good deal. I always knew when she wished me to bring her something, and I would run upstairs or anywhere else she indicated. Indeed, I owe to her loving wisdom all that was bright

and good in my long night.

I understood a good deal of what was going on about me. At five I learned to fold and put away the clean clothes when they were brought in from the laundry, and I distinguished my own from the rest. I knew by the way my mother and aunt dressed when they were going out, and I invariably begged to go with them. I was always sent for when there was company, and when the guests took their leave, I waved my hand to them, I think with a vague remembrance of the meaning of the gesture. One day some gentlemen called on my mother, and I felt the shutting of the front door and other sounds that indicated their arrival. On a sudden thought I ran upstairs before any one could stop me, to put on my idea of a company dress. Standing before the mirror, as I had seen others do, I anointed mine head with oil and covered my face thickly with powder. Then I pinned a veil over my head so that it covered my face and fell in folds down to my shoulders, and tied an enormous bustle round my small waist, so that it dangled behind, almost meeting the hem of my skirt. Thus attired I went down to help entertain the company.

I do not remember when I first realized that I was different from other people; but I knew it before my teacher came to me. I had noticed that my mother and my friends did not use signs as I did when they wanted anything done, but talked with their mouths. Sometimes I stood between two persons who were conversing and touched their lips. I could not understand, and was vexed. I moved my lips and gesticulated frantically without result. This made me so angry at times that I kicked and screamed until I was exhausted.

I think I knew when I was naughty, for I knew that it hurt Ella, my nurse, to kick her, and when my fit of temper was over I had a feeling akin to regret. But I cannot remember any instance in which this feeling prevented me from repeating the naughtiness when I failed to get what I wanted.

In those days a little coloured girl, Martha Washington, the child of our cook, and Belle, an old setter, and a great hunter in her day, were my constant companions. Martha Washington understood my signs, and I seldom had any difficulty in making her do just as I wished. It pleased me to domineer over her, and she generally submitted to my tyranny rather than risk a hand to hand encounter. I was strong, active, indifferent to consequences. I knew my own mind well enough and always had my own way, even if I had to fight tooth and nail for it. We spent a great deal of time in the kitchen, kneading dough balls, helping make ice cream, grinding coffee, quarreling over the cake bowl, and feeding the hens and turkeys that swarmed about the kitchen steps. Many of them were so tame that they would eat from my hand and let me feel them. One big gobbler snatched a tomato from me one day and ran away with it. Inspired, perhaps, by Master Gobbler's success, we carried off to the woodpile a cake which the cook had just frosted, and ate every bit of it. I was quite ill afterward, and I wonder if retribution also overtook the turkey.

The guinea fowl likes to hide her nest in out of the way places, and it was one of my greatest delights to hunt for the eggs in the long grass. I could not tell Martha Washington when I wanted to go egg hunting, but I would double my hands and put them on the ground, which meant something round in the grass, and

Martha always understood. When we were fortunate enough to find a nest I never allowed her to carry the eggs home, making her understand by emphatic signs that she might fall and break them.

The sheds where the corn was stored; the stable where the horses were kept; and the yard where the cows were milked morning and evening were unfailing sources of interest to Martha and me. The milkers would let me keep my hands on the cows while they milked, and I often got well switched by the cow for my curiosity.

The making ready for Christmas was always a delight to me. Of course I did not know what it was all about, but I enjoyed the pleasant odours that filled the house and the tidbits that were given to Martha Washington and me to keep us quiet. We were sadly in the way, but that did not interfere with our pleasure in the least. They allowed us to grind the spices, pick over the raisins and lick the stirring spoons. I hung my stocking because the others did; I cannot remember, however, that the ceremony interested me especially, nor did my curiosity cause me to wake before daylight to look for my gifts.

Martha Washington had as great a love of mischief as I. Two little children were seated on the veranda steps one hot July afternoon. One was black as ebony, with little bunches of fuzzy hair tied with shoestrings sticking out all over her head like corkscrews. The other was white, with long golden curls. One child was six years old, the other two or three years older. The younger child was blind—that was I—and the other was Martha Washington. We were busy cutting out paper dolls; but we soon wearied of this amusement, and after cutting up our shoestrings and clipping all the leaves off the honeysuckle that were within reach, I turned my attention to Martha's corkscrews. She objected at first, but finally submitted. Thinking that turn and turn about is fair play, she seized the scissors and cut off one of my curls, and would have cut them all off but for my mother's timely interference.

Belle, our dog, my other companion, was old and lazy and liked to sleep by the open fire rather than to romp with me. I tried hard to teach her my sign language, but she was dull and inattentive. She sometimes started and quivered with excitement, then she became perfectly rigid, as dogs do when they point a bird. I did not then know why Belle acted in this way; but I knew she was not doing as I wished. This vexed me and the lesson always ended in a one-sided boxing match. Belle would get up, stretch herself lazily, give one or two contemptuous sniffs, go to the opposite side of the hearth and lie down again, and I, wearied and disappointed, went off in search of Martha.

Many incidents of those early years are fixed in my memory, isolated, but clear and distinct, making the sense of that silent, aimless, dayless life all the more intense.

One day I happened to spill water on my apron, and I spread it out to dry before the fire which was flickering on the sitting room hearth. The apron did not dry quickly enough to suit me, so I drew nearer and threw it right over the hot ashes. The fire leaped into life; the flames encircled me so that in a moment my clothes were blazing. I made a terrified noise that brought Viny, my old nurse, to the rescue. Throwing a blanket over me, she almost suffocated me, but she put out the fire. Except

for my hands and hair I was not badly burned.

About this time I found out the use of a key. One morning I locked my mother up in the pantry, where she was obliged to remain three hours, as the servants were in a detached part of the house. She kept pounding on the door, while I sat outside on the porch steps and laughed with glee as I felt the jar of the pounding. This most naughty prank of mine convinced my parents that I must be taught as soon as possible. After my teacher, Miss Sullivan, came to me, I sought an early opportunity to lock her in her room. I went upstairs with something which my mother made me understand I was to give to Miss Sullivan; but no sooner had I given it to her than I slammed the door to, locked it, and hid the key under the wardrobe in the hall. I could not be induced to tell where the key was. My father was obliged to get a ladder and take Miss Sullivan out through the window—much to my delight. Months after I produced the key.

When I was about five years old we moved from the little vine covered house to a large new one. The family consisted of my father and mother, two older half brothers, and, afterward, a little sister, Mildred. My earliest distinct recollection of my father is making my way through great drifts of newspapers to his side and finding him alone, holding a sheet of paper before his face. I was greatly puzzled to know what he was doing. I imitated this action, even wearing his spectacles, thinking they might help solve the mystery. But I did not find out the secret for several years. Then I learned what those papers were, and that my father edited one of them.

My father was most loving and indulgent, devoted to his home, seldom leaving us, except in the hunting season. He was a great hunter, I have been told, and a celebrated shot. Next to his family he loved his dogs and gun. His hospitality was great, almost to a fault, and he seldom came home without bringing a guest. His special pride was the big garden where, it was said, he raised the finest watermelons and strawberries in the county; and to me he brought the first ripe grapes and the choicest berries. I remember his caressing touch as he led me from tree to tree, from vine to vine, and his eager delight in whatever pleased me.

He was a famous story teller; after I had acquired language he used to spell clumsily into my hand his cleverest anecdotes, and nothing pleased him more than to have me repeat them at an opportune moment.

I was in the North, enjoying the last beautiful days of the summer of 1896, when I heard the news of my father's death. He had had a short illness, there had been a brief time of acute suffering, then all was over. This was my first great sorrow—my first personal experience with death.

How shall I write of my mother? She is so near to me that it almost seems indelicate to speak of her.

For a long time I regarded my little sister as an intruder. I knew that I had ceased to be my mother's only darling, and the thought filled me with jealousy. She sat in my mother's lap constantly, where I used to sit, and seemed to take up all her care and time. One day something happened which seemed to me to be adding insult to injury.

At that time I had a much petted, much abused doll, which I afterward named Nancy. She was alas, the helpless victim of my outbursts of temper and of affection, so that she became much the worse for wear. I had dolls which talked, and cried, and opened and shut their eyes; yet I never loved one of them as I loved poor Nancy. She had a cradle, and I often spent an hour or more rocking her. I guarded both doll and cradle with the most jealous care; but once I discovered my little sister sleeping peacefully in the cradle. At this presumption on the part of one to whom as yet no tie of love bound me I grew angry. I rushed upon the cradle and overturned it, and the baby might have been killed had my mother not caught her as she fell. Thus it is that when we walk in the valley of twofold solitude we know little of the tender affections that grow out of endearing words and actions and companionship. But afterward, when I was restored to my human heritage, Mildred and I grew into each other's hearts, so that we were content to go hand in hand wherever caprice led us, although she could not understand my finger language, nor I her childish prattle.

3 漫漫求医路

The Long Way of Curing Sickness

随着年龄的增长,我渴望表达自己的愿望越来越强烈。几种简单的手势,也越发不敷应用了。每次无法让别人了解我的意思时,我都要大发脾气。我仿佛感觉到有许多看不见的魔爪在紧紧地抓着我,我拼命挣扎想解放自己。我极力挣扎,并不是觉得这会起作用,只是因为心里有股反抗的烈火在熊熊燃烧。到头来,我总要放声大哭,直至筋疲力尽。母亲倘若在旁边,我就会一头扑到她怀里,悲痛欲绝,甚至连发脾气的原因都给忘了。此后,通过某种方法表达思想的愿望越来越强烈,以至每天都要发脾气,有时甚至每隔几小时就闹一次。

父母忧心如焚,却又没有什么办法。我们居住的地方离聋哑学校都很远,而且也几乎没有人愿意到如此偏僻的地方,来教一个又盲又聋又哑的孩子。当时,一些亲戚朋友甚至怀疑,像我这样的人是否还能接受教育。然而母亲从阅读狄更斯的《美国札记》中看到了一线希望。狄更斯在这本书中提到一个又聋又盲又哑的少女——劳拉,经由郝博士的教导,学有所成。然而,当母亲得知那位发明教育盲聋人方法的郝博士已经逝世多年,他的方法也许已经失传时,非常痛苦。即使那些方法没有失传,懂那些方法的人愿意到亚拉巴马州这个偏远小镇来教我这个小女孩吗?

大约6岁时,父亲听说巴尔的摩有一位著名的眼科大夫,治好了好几个似乎没希望治愈的盲人。父母立即决定带我去那里治眼睛。

这是一次非常愉快的旅行,我至今依然记忆犹新。在火车上我交了很多朋友。一位妇女送给我一盒贝壳,父亲在这些贝壳上钻了孔,这样我就可以用线一个一个串起来。很长一段时间,这些贝壳带给我无限的快乐和满足感。列车员和蔼可亲,每次来查票检票时,我便拉住他的衣角。他允许我玩他检票的剪子,那时,我便几个小时地趴在座位一角,把一些零碎的卡片打上小孔,一点也不厌倦。

姑妈用毛巾给我做了个大娃娃,可是却没有眼睛、耳朵、嘴巴和鼻子。这么一个临时拼凑的玩意儿,即使孩子的想像力,也说不出那张脸是个什么样子。非常奇怪的是,别的都行,

但唯独没有眼睛对我却是个莫大的打击。我坚持让每个人想办法，可是最终还是没有人能为布娃娃加上眼睛。忽然，我灵机一动，计上心来。我溜下座位，摸姑母缀着大珠子的披肩，扯下两颗，指给姑母看，让她缝在洋娃娃的脸上。姑母带着疑惑拉着我的手去摸她的眼睛，核实我的用意。我使劲地点点头。她缝上了珠子，我欣喜不已。但没多久，我便对布娃娃失去了兴趣。整个旅途中，吸引我的事层出不穷，我忙个不停，一次脾气也没有发。

到了巴尔的摩后，齐泽姆医生热情地接待了我们。检查一番后，他表示无能为力。不过他鼓励我们，说我可以接受教育，并建议父亲带我去华盛顿找亚历山大·贝尔博士，他也许会给我们提供有关聋哑儿童学校以及老师的信息。依照齐泽姆医生的建议，我们又立刻去华盛顿找贝尔博士。一路上，父母愁肠满腹，顾虑重重，而我却毫无察觉，只是感觉到到处旅行好玩极了。那时虽然我还是个不懂事的孩子，但同贝尔博士接触时，就感到他温厚而热情。他把我抱在膝上，让我玩弄他的表。他让表响起来，这样我可以感觉到表的震动。博士懂得我的手势，我立刻喜欢上了他。当时我并没有意识到，这次会面将成为我生命的转折点。从此，我将从黑暗走向光明，由孤独走向友爱，并开始拥有了开启知识的金钥匙。

贝尔博士建议父亲写信给波士顿柏金斯学校的校长安纳格诺斯先生，问他那儿是否有人适合做我的启蒙老师。柏金斯学校是《美国札记》中描写的郝博士为盲、聋、哑人孜孜不倦工作的地方。父亲立刻发了信，数周后接到了安纳格诺斯先生热情的回信，信中告诉我们一个令人欣慰的消息：老师已经找到了。这是1886年夏天的事，但等到莎莉文小姐来到我们家时，已经是第二年的3月了。

就这样，我走出了埃及，来到了西奈山。一种神圣的力量渗入我的灵魂，赐予我光明。从这座圣山上我听到了这样的声音：“知识给人以爱，给人以光明，给人以智慧。”

MEANWHILE the desire to express myself grew. The few signs I used became less and less adequate, and my failures to make myself understood were invariably followed by outbursts of passion. I felt as if invisible hands were holding me, and I made frantic efforts to free myself. I struggled—not that struggling helped matters, but the spirit of resistance was strong within me; I generally broke down in tears and physical exhaustion. If my mother happened to be near I crept into her arms, too miserable even to remember the cause of the tempest. After a while the need of some means of communication became so urgent that these outbursts occurred daily, sometimes hourly.

My parents were deeply grieved and perplexed. We lived a long way from any school for the blind or the deaf, and it seemed unlikely that any one would come to such an out of the way place as Tusculumbia to teach a child who was both deaf and blind. Indeed, my friends and relatives sometimes doubted whether I could be taught. My mother's only ray of hope came from Dickens's "American Notes." She had read his account of Laura Bridgman, and remembered vaguely that she was deaf and blind, yet had been educated. But she also remembered with a hopeless pang that Dr. Howe, who had discovered the way to teach the deaf and blind, had been dead for many years. His methods had probably died with him; and if they had not, how was a little girl in a far off town in Alabama to receive the benefit of them?

When I was about six years old, my father heard of an eminent oculist in Baltimore, who had been successful in many cases that had seemed hopeless. My parents at once determined to take me to Baltimore to see if anything could be done for my eyes.

The journey, which I remember well, was very pleasant. I made friends with many people on the train. One lady gave me a box of shells. My father made holes in these so that I could string them, and for a long time they kept me happy and contented. The conductor, too, was kind. Often when he went his rounds I clung to his coat tails while he collected and punched the tickets. His punch, with which he let me play, was a delightful toy. Curled up in a corner of the seat I amused myself for hours making funny little holes in bits of cardboard.

My aunt made me a big doll out of towels. It was the most comical, shapeless thing, this improvised doll, with no nose, mouth, ears or eyes nothing that even the imagination of a child could convert into a face. Curiously enough, the absence of eyes struck me more than all the other defects put together. I pointed this out to everybody with provoking persistency, but no one seemed equal to the task of providing the doll with eyes. A bright idea, however, shot into my mind, and the problem was solved. I tumbled off the seat and searched under it until I found my aunt's cape, which was trimmed with large beads. I pulled two beads off and indicated to her that I wanted her to sew them on doll. She raised my hand to her eyes in a questioning way, and I nodded energetically. The beads were sewed in the right place and I could not contain myself for joy; but immediately I lost all interest in the doll. During the whole trip I did not have one fit of temper, there were so many things to keep my mind and fingers busy.

When we arrived in Baltimore, Dr. Chisholm received us kindly: but he could do nothing. He said, however, that I could be educated, and advised my father to consult Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, of Washington, who would be able to give him information about schools and teachers of deaf or blind children. Acting on the doctor's advice, we went immediately to Washington to see Dr. Bell, my parents with a sad heart and many misgivings, I wholly unconscious of his anguish, finding pleasure in the excitement of moving from place to place. Child as I was, I at once felt the tenderness and sympathy which endeared Dr. Bell to so many hearts, as his wonderful achievements enlist their admiration. He held me on his knee while I examined his watch, and he made it strike for me. He understood my signs, and I knew it and loved him at once. But I did not dream that that interview would be the door through which I should pass from darkness into light, from isolation to friendship, companionship, knowledge and love.

Dr. Bell advised my father to write to Mr. Anagnos, director of the Perkins Institution in Boston, the scene of Dr. Howe's great labours for the blind, and ask him if he had a teacher competent to begin my education. This my father did at once, and in a few weeks there came a kind letter from Mr. Anagnos with the comforting assurance that a teacher had been found. This was in the summer of 1886. But Miss Sullivan did not arrive until the following March.

Thus I came up out of Egypt and stood before Sinai, and a power divine touched my spirit and gave it sight, so that I beheld many wonders. And from the sacred mountain I heard a voice which said, "Knowledge is love and light and vision."