We regret that, after a careful examination, the enclosed manuscript does not prove available for the magazine. Thank you for submitting it to us, and kindly bear in mind that the return of an article does not necessarily imply a lack of merit in the contribution.

In accepting manuscripts many questions of individual editorial plan and policy must be considered. It frequently happens that articles unsuited to the present needs of one periodical may come within the scope of another.

Sincerely yours,

THE EDITOR.
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The Editor
"I plod away, though I don't like this sort of thing. I never liked girls or knew many." So wrote Louisa May Alcott in her journal in May, 1868, when in response to a request from her publisher she began "a girls' story", the famous and beloved "Little Women". A critic writing recently on "Subversive Miss Alcott" began her article with the phrase "It is a humorous reflection that Louisa M. Alcott did not like girls" and then went on to quote as evidence the entry in her journal, quite overlooking the fact that it was followed with the bracketted phrase "(Good joke. L.M.A.)".

Her journal bears evidence in many ways that she was interested in all young people. Their sex did not seem to make a difference. She was devoted to her sisters, to her nephews Mrs. Pratt's (Meg's) sons, and to her orphaned niece, Lulu, the daughter of Mrs. Nieriker (Amy).

The editor of her "Life and Letters" wrote that

"She kept up her interest in young girls and received with pleasure a visit from thirty pupils of the Boston University."

and her journal contains this entry:

"May 1880. Thirty girls from Boston University called; told stories, showed pictures, wrote autographs. Pleasant to see so much innocent enthusiasm, even about so poor a thing as a used up old woman. Bright girls! Simple in dress, sensible ideas of life, and love of education. I wish them all good luck."

Some unpublished personal letters end with such phrases as "Love to the lads and lasses" and "Love to the dear girls". The following reply was made to an invitation to be the guest of the newly formed Association of Collegiate Alumnae:
"I should very much like to meet the learned ladies on Sat. but fear I cannot be spared, as a new nurse begins her reign about that time and the original Periwinkle is needed to keep the Camps and Prigs in order. If the fates should be propitious, I will try to come, devoutly hoping that I shall not be expected to orate in all the dead languages at once, to tackle the higher mathematics or answer the vexed question of "What Shall We Do With Our Girls". Please accept my thanks for your kind remembrance of me even if I cannot avail myself of the invitation to behold the blooming nosegay of our new variety of girls of the period. Long may they flourish! With love to Mamma and best wishes to all I am, dear Miss Secretary, Cordially yours, Louisa M. Alcott."

Her interest in the education of girls is shown further by her reply to an invitation to read before a group of people who were endeavoring to open the gates of educational opportunity to girls:

"I am very sorry to say No—-but I am not a reader and certainly could not read my own rubbish. I will do anything that I can, even get on a stool and 'revolve' as I did for the Vassar girls, if that will aid the cause of education. But read or lecture I cannot much as I should like to oblige you. Forgive yours truly L. M. A."

When, under the presidency of Mrs. Abby Morton Diaz, the author of the "William Henry Letters", efforts were made to increase the financial resources of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston, the writer of this sketch arranged a benefit entertainment. She had a vivid memory of playing, as a child of nine years, the role of the Welsh Dwarf in Mrs. Jarley's Wax Works, in which Miss Alcott was the inimitable show woman, and of the delightful home evenings when Miss Alcott joined the young people of the family and their college friends in impromptu charades and played the nurse in a hospital scene or any role that came to hand with inimitable humor and skill. So she was
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for the cause, L. M. A."

Few little readers of "Little Women" know anything of the
noble and self-sacrificing life of the author of their dear story.
Her first story was printed when she was sixteen years old and
she received five dollars for it. She was thirty-three years old
when she wrote "Little Women". The intervening years had been a
continuous struggle. Her journal contains this entry in January,
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She seems in one respect to belong to the older generation of our time for she wrote "talked half the night with H. A. about the fast ways of young people nowadays, and gave the child much older-sisterly advice, as no one seems to see how much she needs help at this time of her young life." One can but wonder whether the advice was any more welcome or any more sound than that which is often vainly lavished upon the youth of today and yet anyone who knew and loved Miss Alcott can but believe that her words of counsel made a deep impression.

She was a woman of noble principles, eager to secure freedom for her sex, a stanch believer in suffrage, and in the new and progressive movement in medicine. She wrote in a personal letter "You are very welcome to the use of my name for the Festival. I owe too much to Homoeopathy not to be glad to add my mite", and she was the first woman to register as a voter in Concord. If she believed in a cause, she was fearless in expressing her convictions, regardless of its unpopularity.

Her prophecy made in 1868 came true. "Perhaps we are to win after all and conquer poverty, neglect, pain and debt, and march on with flags flying into the new world with the new year."
The growth of myths is an interesting and rather simple process. Biography is a fruitful field. All that is needed to start with is a more or less accurate record of the events in the subject's life. The gaps may be filled in by the fancy or prejudices or critical judgment of the biographer. On the death of a noted person, the popular conception of him is confirmed or radically altered by the official story of his life. This is the starting point for a series of comments or reminiscences and the myth business is well underway. In fact there is a varied crop, some quite the opposite of others. One such instance is worth noting just now.

Fifty years ago Louisa Alcott died, beloved in all parts of the world. An old and close friend shortly published the story of her life with passages from the journal which she had revised from time to time. Perhaps a myth began here for in making selections from another's writings it is almost inevitable that personal traits and preferences of the editor should appear. When Louisa was ten years old she wrote in her journal:

"I was cross today and I cried when I went to bed. I made good resolutions and felt better in my heart. If I only kept all I make, I should be the best girl in the world. But I don't, and so am very bad [Poor little sinner! She says the same at fifty.--L.M.A.]."

Probably few children have written as frank records as she did without an occasional wail of this sort. Her "Imagination Book" gave ample vent for self-reproach, but when such moods are assumed to have dominated her life it is well to remember such entries as one written ten days previously:
"I ran in the wind and played be a horse and had a lovely time in the woods with Anna and Lizzie. We were fairies and made gowns and paper wings. I flied the highest of all."

Was she really very different from any active little girl with a strong body, a keen mind, and a vivid imagination? Each entry could have been supplemented with more of the same character and the exclusion of the others and two quite different characters would have been created.

Down through the years since her death the "stormy wayward heart" became the focal point of many attempts to sketch her character and has even been developed into "a psychiatric quirk," while another writer who knew her well wrote of her as "buoyant and free."

Recently a number of critics have made fresh attempts to analyze her character. Their interpretations are as varied as they are numerous. One critic, writing on "Subversive Miss Alcott," began her article with the phrase "It is a humorous reflection that Louisa M. Alcott did not like girls" and then went on to quote a passage entered in Louisa's journal when she began writing "Little Women." "I plod away though I don't like this sort of thing. I never liked girls or knew many," but the critic quite overlooked the fact that the passage was followed by the bracketed phrase "[Good joke. L.M.A.]."

There are not many living who knew her well or have records of interest. It is possible that from an assortment which the present writer treasures some selections may add to the picture, real or mythical, of a woman who was really great as well as beloved.
Her journal bears evidence in many ways that she was interested in all young people. Their sex did not seem to make a difference. She was devoted to her sisters, to her nephews, Mrs. Pratt's (Meg's) sons, and to her orphaned niece, Lulu, the daughter of Mrs. Nieriker (May).

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I remember well the different incidents of this visit to Concord which I organized among my fellow students.

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The following reply was made to an invitation to be the guest of the nearly formed Association of Collegiate Alumnae:

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The Sunday night suppers when she joined us quite simply were a real treat, especially the talks with my mother for they had many interests in common. Her stories were unfailing in merriment. Even
the tragic experience at Fruitlands had its humorous side. She
told how Mr. Lane, the English member of the curious household,
would come into the kitchen early in the morning and greet the
women as they prepared breakfast with such strong language that
they would remonstrate and he would then say, "What do the words
matter when I mean 'good morning, it is a nice day!'"

Her devotion to her father and her affection for him were
unfailing and yet with a kind of wistful humor she could tell of
episodes in which his personal qualities must have been trying to
say the least. At one time a friend, believing that Mrs. Alcott
was not clad warmly enough, gave Mr. Alcott ten dollars with which
to buy her a shawl in Boston whither he was about to go on a busi-
ness trip. The family eagerly awaited his return and the gift for
the mother. He came bearing a load of books which he displayed to
the expectant group. "But where is Mother's shawl?" was the impa-
tient inquiry. There was no reaction possible after long years of
experience but patient resignation as he explained that in passing
a favorite bookstore he had seen in the window some books he had
long wanted and, having the unusual experience of money in his
pocket, he bought them. There was a funny side to it and Louisa
fortunately saw it and could even describe it.

Although we knew that, while serving as an army nurse, she
had been stricken with a terrible illness which nearly cost her her
life, we were never aware that it had left indelible marks. A
heavy cold or a sprained ankle would lay her up for a time, but it
is quite impossible to assent to the opinion that "her life was one
long increasing misery." Nor did her "demonic" or "Cassandra"
temperament reveal itself. There was no evidence of "starved and
deafened emotions when she happily and eagerly rejoiced in making
plans for little motherless "hulu" or in her ability to bring com-
fort and happiness to her father.

Her first story was printed when she was sixteen years old
and she received five dollars for it. I remember her telling of
receiving small sums, which at the time seemed large, for the tales
she sent to magazines. Inadvertently she once signed her name
Louisa M. Alcott instead of L. M. Alcott. The check in payment was
for a greatly reduced amount. The publisher (I think it was Frank
Leslies) said his payment was always less for women. Many times
later when she was famous he offered to pay her fabulous sums for
her stories but she told us of the delight she took in refusing to
write again for his magazine. She was thirty-three years old when
she wrote "Little Women." The intervening years had been a con-
tinuous struggle. Her Journal contains this entry in January,
1868:

"I want to realize my dream of supporting the family and
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happy in the way she was. Her prophecy made in 1868 came true. "Perhaps we are to win after all and conquer poverty, neglect, pain and debt, and march on with flags flying into the new world with the new year."
S. P. Breckenridge
for
Miss Sacbat
January 23, 1939.

Miss Marion Talbot,
5717 Kimbark Avenue,
Chicago, Illinois.

Dear Miss Talbot:

Although your article on Beacon Hill is very interesting, it is not quite our sort of material, reverting too far into the past to suit our purposes. I am grateful to you, however, for the opportunity of reading it.

Yours very sincerely,

M. E. Tracy,
Editor.

met/G
encl.
ROMPING ON BEACON HILL

by Marion Talbot.

How strange to think of coupling two such terms as romping and Beacon Hill! So might say thousands of Americans to whom Beacon Hill is almost a shrine and who at least would assent to Dr. Holmes' (Oliver Wendell Holmes) statement that "Boston State-House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar."

The Hill rising from the shore would have been conspicuous for its height even after its three peaks were leveled. Crowned with its noble State House, a masterpiece of the architect Bulfinch, its southern slope given over to an open park, Boston Common, with wide paths called malls (for Boston was once dominantly English), its streets lined with comfortable houses and walked by the statesmen, poets, artists, historians, orators, clergymen who gave the name of "little Athens of America" to the town, it is not strange that the Hill as well as the State House and even the whole of the old town took on the epithet "Hub."

But after all "a cat may look at a king." Thoughts of the world events that took place on the Acropolis would not overawe a Greek child and prevent him from discovering its resources for play even within the sacred walls of the Parthenon. And so it was with the little girls of Boston who lived two generations ago on Beacon Hill in the centre of the Athens of America. What
joy lay hidden in those hillsides which, in the days when the horse and family carry-all toiled up Beacon Street, seemed precipitous! The broad, steep mall on the Common from the State House corner to West Street lured the boys in coasting time and pedestrians were given no chance there except to stand on the sidelines and watch the great double runners with their heavy loads of youngsters dash by "lickety split."

The little neighborhood girls had their chance too. From their homes under the shadow of the State House down Hancock Avenue they scampered, past the house where Henry Adams was born, dragging their small wooden sleds, "Dart," or "Flash," or "Lightning," and soon reached the little path on the Common whose gentle slope offered a chance for such daring stunts as riding two on a sled or even "belly-bumping." Here their friend the policeman stood guard and no rough boy was allowed to interfere or frighten, and when the thaw came in the spring or sometimes in mid-winter what glorious rushing streams ran down the gullies made by rubber booted youngsters in the slush next the curbway. What skillful engineering it took to build dams of snow strong enough to hold back the surging waters! It would not do to take liberties near the mansion where "Madame" Harrison Gray Otis, the "grande dame" of Boston, lived. It was quite awesome to watch the fine equipages bring the social lights of the town to pay their respects to her at her annual receptions on Washington's birthday and there was some satisfaction in knowing that one of her kin at least was not "scared of her" for, one year, he sent in orders to all the dealers to deliver coal at her house at the
very hour when her reception took place and the street was so blocked with heavy teams that the fine folk could not reach the door except on foot!

In those pre-bicycle days boys belonging to the wealthy classes sometimes had the indulgence of a new invention, the so-called velocipede, an extraordinary two-wheeled contraption, the front wheel several feet in diameter, the rear wheel very small, giving slight aid to the venturesome rider in his attempts to keep his balance up in the air before his admiring and envious associates. One of the pet diversions of little girls was to take pains to get near a velocipede rider with a reputation for courtesy and see him try to keep upright with his hands on the handle bar and at the same time raise his cap in salutation. If the experiment proved a genuine success, velocipede and rider were prone on the ground, the rider quite abashed and the little girls giggling happily. Up and down Mt. Vernon Street sidewalks would ride jauntily the courageous young gentleman with the little girls keeping conveniently near, watching for more fun.

Nearly every house, even for a whole block, had a one-story extension in the rear, the roof of which was used as a clothes yard and fitted up with posts across which clothes lines might be strung, and here and there was a clothes reel. This series of roofs made a mine of resources for active, well-bred children whose reading was always carefully supervised, who never knew what a comic strip was, and were entirely without experience at any type of moving picture. Yet they invented hair-breath escapes in scaling vast mountain heights and indulged without let or
hindrance in the most daring feats of piracy, kidnapping, burglary, garroting, and other criminal acts which forebode ill for their future reputation. Their adventures were often very alarming to the neighbors and it was not unusual for one observer to send her maid with the message, "Madame Iasigi sends her compliments to Mrs. T---- and thinks she should not let her children run such risks as they are doing." The children were lithe and active, the mother serene and interested in seeing the young imaginations try to find expression, and the result was no harm but loads of fun for the youngsters.

Spring time brought its chances for different sports. The great elms which bordered the Beacon Street mall offered tempting quarters for "playing house." Each tree could have its designated use, as kitchen, nursery, parlor, and the steep bank which had to be climbed to reach them gave added semblance to the imaginary house. Under those same elms just beginning to bud little girls clad in white muslin and bedecked with flower wreaths pluckily tried to carry out the English custom to which they had fallen heir and on May Day, which was almost invariably bleak and raw if not raining, to perpetuate in the new land the gay frolicking which their great-grandmothers had enjoyed in Merrie England.

Visitors today approach the State House with a kind of awe deepened by the profound impressions made on them as they have gazed on the marvelous Saint Gaudens monument to Colonel Shaw facing the State House. They climb the imposing flight of stone steps leading to the old building with a heightened feeling
of patriotism. Little thought have they of the wonderful games of "playing fairy" that two generations ago took place around the fountains which stood in the open spaces at the sides where Horace Mann and Daniel Webster looked on in statuesque silence. Perhaps too they cannot see what a marvelous place for playing hide and seek the great pillars make, nor what an adventure it was to climb to the cupola once in a while, or to creep into the Senate Chamber or House of Representatives and see how the State of Massachusetts made its laws. But the civil war veterans who were the caretakers understood and the enterprise of these children was seldom challenged.

In the rear of the State House a forbidding looking building stood for some years. It looked meant for eternity. Its huge granite blocks gave it the semblance of a fortress. Here was stored the water needed by the small city. This friendly purpose perhaps allayed any fears its grimness might cause the youngsters for it too became the means of sport and excitement. There were of course no windows in it but the stones in the walls were laid like blind arches and the flat blocks at their base rising to different levels above the sidewalk stirred a spirit of adventure among the children. There was always rivalry to see who would be the first to climb to the next highest stone. "No fair" would be the chorus if any child permitted "boosting" or surreptitious help of any kind. It was a hazardous sport, but the guard of the building, rotund of figure and jolly of countenance, known familiarly as "Fatty Reservoir," knew just when to stop the sport short of actual danger.
Up and down the streets walked men known throughout
the land and occasionally they would stop and speak a friendly
word to the romping children--John A. Andrew, the great war gov-
ernor, carrying his green baize bag under his arm; or Francis
Parkman, the historian, whose form, bent and frail, nevertheless
bore marks of the soul burning within it; or ruddy-cheeked,
silver-haired John G. Whittier, often a welcome guest at Governor
Claflin's home near-by; or the pastor of the West Church, Cyrus
A. Bartol, also silver-haired and always wearing a shaggy gray
cape, a "moth-eaten angel" as Phillips Brooks called him.

And as the play hours of childhood passed on Beacon Hill
one queries whether these youngsters in later life have used
their imaginations and creative skill to find joy and gaiety in
the solemn and heavy responsibilities which they have been called
upon to meet in domestic and public life.
5½ pages, 1 carbon  $ .77
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the great double runners with their heavy loads of youngsters dash by
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small wooden sleds, Dart, or Flash, or Lightening and soon reached the little
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[Paragraphs of text that are not legible due to the quality of the image]
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success, relocated and rides were gone in the crowd. The riders quite abashed and the little girls giggling happily. Up and down the Mt. Vernon St. sidewalks could ride quaintly, the companions some gentleman with the little girls keeping conveniently near, waiting for more fun.
Nearly every house ever for a whole block had a one-story extension with near the roof of which was used as a clothes yard and fitted up with posts across which clothes lines might be strung and here and there was a clothes reel. This series of roofs made a mine of resources for active well bred children whose reading was always carefully supervised, who never knew that a comic strip was and were entirely without experience at any type of morose picture. Yet they invented their breadth, escapes in scaling vast mountain heights and indulged without let or hindrance in the most daring feats of
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In those pre-bicycle days boys belonging to the wealthy classes sometimes had the indulgence of a new invention, the so-called velocipede, an extraordinary two-wheeled contraption, the front wheel several feet in diameter, the rear wheel very small, giving slight aid to the venturesome rider in his attempts to keep his balance up in the air before his admiring and envious associates. One of the pet diversions of little girls was to take pains to get near a velocipede rider with a reputation for courtesy and see him try to keep upright with his hands on the handle bar and at the same time raise his cap in salutation. If the experiment proved a genuine success, velocipede and rider were prone on the ground, the rider quite abashed and the little girls giggling happily. Up and down Mt. Vernon Street sidewalks would ride jauntily the courageous young gentleman with the little girls keeping conveniently near, watching for more fun.

Nearly every house, even for a whole block, had a one-story extension in the rear, the roof of which was used as a clothes yard and fitted up with posts across which clothes lines might be strung, and here and there was a clothes reel. This series of roofs made a mine of resources for active, well-bred children whose reading was always carefully supervised, who never knew what a comic strip was, and were entirely without experience at any type of moving picture. Yet they invented hair-breadth escapes in scaling vast mountain heights and indulged without let or
hindrance in the most daring feats of piracy, kidnapping, burglary, garroting, and other criminal acts which forebode ill for their future reputation. Their adventures were often very alarming to the neighbors and it was not unusual for one observer to send her maid with the message, "Madame Iasigi sends her compliments to Mrs. T---- and thinks she should not let her children run such risks as they are doing." The children were lithe and active, the mother serene and interested in seeing the young imaginations try to find expression, and the result was no harm but loads of fun for the youngsters.

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Editor of the Atlantic Monthly

Dear Sir:

My friends, Mr. Edgar J. Goodspeed, Miss S. P. Breckinridge, and Mrs. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, are urging me to publish some account of my memories of Louisa May Alcott, since they differ in rather important respects from the recently published views of people who never knew her. If you can use the accompanying article, I trust I may know promptly. It would be gratifying to appear again as a contributor as I did fifty or so years ago when Mr. Aldrich was editor—"A Lenten Bit," I think it was called.
Suggested Titles

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT - FIFTY YEARS AFTER

GLIMPSES OF THE REAL LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

PERSONAL GLIMPSES OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT IN REAL LIFE
The growth of myths is an interesting and rather simple process. Biography is a fruitful field. All that is needed to start with is a more or less accurate record of the events in the subject's life. The gaps may be filled in by the fancy or prejudices or critical judgment of the biographer. On the death of a noted person, the popular conception of him is confirmed or radically altered by the official story of his life. This is the starting point for a series of comments or reminiscences and the myth business is well underway. In fact there is a varied crop, some quite the opposite of others. One such instance is worth noting just now.

Fifty years ago Louisa Alcott died, beloved in all parts of the world. An old and close friend shortly published the story of her life with passages from the journal which she had revised from time to time. Perhaps a myth began here for in making selections from another's writings it is almost inevitable that personal traits and preferences of the editor should appear. When Louisa was ten years old she wrote in her journal:

"I was cross today and I cried when I went to bed. I made good resolutions and felt better in my heart. If I only kept all I make, I should be the best girl in the world. But I don't, and so am very bad [Poor little sinner! She says the same at fifty.--L.M.A.]."

Probably few children have written as frank records as she did without an occasional wail of this sort. Her "Imagination Book" gave ample vent for self-reproach, but when such moods are assumed to have dominated her life it is well to remember such entries as one written ten days previously:
"I ran in the wind and played be a horse and had a lovely time in the woods with Anna and Lizzie. We were fairies and made gowns and paper wings. I flied the highest of all."

Was she really very different from any active little girl with a strong body, a keen mind, and a vivid imagination? Each entry could have been supplemented with more of the same character and the exclusion of the others and two quite different characters would have been created.

Down through the years since her death the "stormy wayward heart" became the focal point of many attempts to sketch her character and has even been developed into "a psychiatric quirk" while another writer who knew her well wrote of her as "buoyant and free."

Recently a number of critics have made fresh attempts to analyze her character. Their interpretations are as varied as they are numerous. One critic, writing on "Subversive Miss Alcott," began her article with the phrase "It is a humorous reflection that Louisa M. Alcott did not like girls" and then went on to quote a passage entered in Louisa's journal when she began writing "Little Women." "I plod away though I don't like this sort of thing. I never liked girls or knew many," but the critic quite overlooked the fact that the passage was followed by the bracketed phrase "[Good joke. L.M.A.]."

There are not many living who knew her well or have records of interest. It is possible that from an assortment which the present writer treasures some selections may add to the picture, real or mythical, of a woman who was really great as well as beloved.
Her journal bears evidence in many ways that she was interested in all young people. Their sex did not seem to make a difference. She was devoted to her sisters, to her nephews Mrs. Pratt's (Meg's) sons, and to her orphaned niece, Lulu, the daughter of Mrs. Nieriker (May).

The editor of her "Life and Letters" wrote that "She kept up her interest in young girls and received with pleasure a visit from thirty pupils of the Boston University."

and her journal contains this entry:

"May 1880. Thirty girls from Boston University called; told stories, showed pictures, wrote autographs. Pleasant to see so much innocent enthusiasm, even about so poor a thing as a used up old woman. Bright girls! Simple in dress, sensible ideas of life, and love of education. I wish them all good luck."

I remember well the different incidents of this visit to Concord which I organized among my fellow students.

Some unpublished personal letters end with such phrases as "Love to the lads and lassies" and "Love to the dear girls."

The following reply was made to an invitation to be the guest of the nearly formed Association of Collegiate Alumnae:

"I should very much like to meet the learned ladies on Sat. but fear I cannot be spared, as a new nurse begins her reign about that time and the original Periwinkle is needed to keep the Gamps and Prigs in order. If the fates should be propitious, I will try to come, devoutly hoping that I shall not be expected to orate in all the dead languages at once, to tackle the higher mathematics or answer the vexed question of 'What Shall We Do With Our Girls.' Please accept my thanks for your kind remembrance of me even if I cannot avail myself of the invitation to behold the blooming nosegay of our new variety of girls of the period. Long may they flourish! With love to Mamma and best wishes to all I am, dear Miss Secretary, Cordially yours, Louisa M. Alcott."

Her interest in the education of girls is shown further by her reply to an invitation to read before a group of people who were
endeavoring to open the gates of educational opportunity to girls:

"I am very sorry to say No--but I am not a reader and certainly could not read my own rubbish. I will do anything that I can, even get on a stool and 'revolve' as I did for the Vassar girls, if that will aid the cause of education. But read or lecture I cannot much as I should like to oblige you. Forgive yours truly, L. M. A."

When, under the presidency of Mrs. Abby Morton Diaz, the author of the "William Henry Letters," efforts were made to increase the financial resources of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston, the writer of this sketch arranged a benefit entertainment. She had a vivid memory of playing, as a child of nine years, the role of the Welsh Dwarf in Mrs. Jarley's Wax Works, in which Miss Alcott was the inimitable show woman, and of the delightful home evenings when Miss Alcott joined the young people of the family and their college friends in impromptu charades. She would play the nurse in a hospital scene and gobble up the delicacies intended for the patient, or take any role that came to hand with inimitable humor and skill. So she was asked if she would help in the proposed entertainment. Unfortunately she was feeling the limitations on her strength--"a sad heart and a used-up body" her journal notes--and replied as follows:

"Mrs. Pratt and Fred are at your service for Jarley and a farce whenever you want them. . . . . I shall be glad to help all I can, but as Mrs. P. likes acting and I don't and as both cannot be in town at once, I shall hand this post over to her. Yours for the cause, L. M. A."

The Sunday night suppers when she joined us quite simply were a real treat, especially the talks with my mother for they had many interests in common. Her stories were unfailing in merriment. Even
the tragic experience at Fruitlands had its humorous side. She told how Mr. Lane, the English member of the curious household, would come into the kitchen early in the morning and greet the women as they prepared breakfast with such strong language that they would remonstrate and he would then say, "What do the words matter when I mean 'good morning, it is a nice day!'"

Her devotion to her father and her affection for him were unfailing and yet with a kind of wistful humor she could tell of episodes in which his personal qualities must have been trying to say the least. At one time a friend, believing that Mrs. Alcott was not clad warmly enough, gave Mr. Alcott ten dollars with which to buy her a shawl in Boston whither he was about to go on a business trip. The family eagerly awaited his return and the gift for the mother. He came bearing a load of books which he displayed to the expectant group. "But where is mother's shawl?" was the impatient inquiry. There was no reaction possible after long years of experience but patient resignation as he explained that in passing a favorite bookstore he had seen in the window some books he had long wanted and, having the unusual experience of money in his pocket, he bought them. There was a funny side to it and Louisa fortunately saw it and could even describe it.

Although we knew that, while serving as an army nurse, she had been stricken with a terrible illness which nearly cost her her life, we were never aware that it had left indelible marks. A heavy cold or a sprained ankle would lay her up for a time, but it is quite impossible to assent to the opinion that "her life was one long increasing misery." Nor did her "demonic" or "Cassandra"
temperament reveal itself. There was no evidence of "starved and deafened emotions when she happily and eagerly rejoiced in making plans for little motherless "hulu" or in her ability to bring comfort and happiness to her father.

Her first story was printed when she was sixteen years old and she received five dollars for it. I remember her telling of receiving small sums, which at the time seemed large, for the tales she sent to magazines. Inadvertently she once signed her name Louisa M. Alcott instead of L. M. Alcott. The check in payment was for a greatly reduced amount. The publisher (I think it was Frank Leslie) said his payment was always less for women. Many times later when she was famous he offered to pay her fabulous sums for her stories but she told us of the delight she took in refusing to write again for his magazine. She was thirty-three years old when she wrote "Little Women." The intervening years had been a continuous struggle. Her Journal contains this entry in January, 1868:

"I want to realize my dream of supporting the family and being perfectly independent."

In February, 1869, she wrote:

"Written eight long tales, ten short ones, read stacks of manuscripts and done editorial work. Acted for charity twelve times. Not a bad two months' work. I can imagine an easier life, but with love, health and work I can be happy, for these three help one to do, to be, and to endure all things."

"Little Women" was written later in that year. She wrote in her Journal, after sending in twelve chapters to the publisher, he "thought it dull; so do I. But work away and mean to try the experiment; for lively, simple books are very much needed for girls, and perhaps I can supply the need." In August she was advised by
the publisher to keep the copyright. Her comment later was "an honest publisher and a lucky author, for the copyright made her fortune, and the 'dull book' was the first golden egg of the ugly duckling."

She seems in one respect to belong to the older generation of our time for she wrote "talked half the night with H. A. about the fast ways of young people nowadays, and gave the child much older-sisterly advice, as no one seems to see how much she needs help at this time of her young life." One can but wonder whether the advice was any more welcome or any more sound than that which is often vainly lavished upon the youth of today and yet anyone who knew and loved Miss Alcott can but believe that her words of counsel made a deep impression.

She was a woman of noble principles, eager to secure freedom for her sex, a stanch believer in suffrage, and in the new and progressive movement in medicine. She wrote in a personal letter, "You are very welcome to the use of my name for the Festival. I owe too much to Homeopathy not to be glad to add my mite," and she was the first woman to register as a voter in Concord. If she believed in a cause, she was fearless in expressing her convictions regardless of its unpopularity. It is a serious mistake to describe the rewards of her life as sterile or to believe that to her pleasure and duty were antagonistic and mutually exclusive. Duty did not appear to its "faithful child," as her father called her, in the guise of a thwarted life or a psychological vice but rather as an unfailing source of joy and satisfaction. It is fortunate that in a none too unselfish generation there are still heroines who are
happy in the way she was. Her prophecy made in 1868 came true. "Perhaps we are to win after all and conquer poverty, neglect, pain and debt, and march on with flags flying into the new world with the new year."
The following letters written during the last ten years of her life give intimate glimpses of some of Miss Alcott's personal activities and interests. There seems to be no public record describing the funeral services which took place at her home in Louisburg Square, Boston, where her father had died two days before her death. Mrs. Pratt was her sister, Anna, world known as "Meg."
Oct. 2nd

Dear Miss Marion:

You are very kind to remember the promised visit, and I am sorry to lose it, but we have been so busy with company since I came from the sea-side that I have had no time for more pleasuring.

Next week I go to the Bellevue for some months perhaps, and while in town hope to see you all and hear of the various good works you are interested in.

I am anxious to get Harry Wheeler, my poor little neighbor, into your father's Hospital (as we call the Homeopathic one). Can you tell me if there is a free bed to be had, and if not, what it costs to put a patient in a paying bed? Harry is in a bad way, and needs the intelligent care, nursing, food, etc., that he cannot get at home. He is in a nervous state, twitches all the time, abscess on ankle, dizziness, and all sorts of woes sad to see in a bright boy of fifteen.

I shall come and investigate if there is any chance for him. Meantime I am working at his mother to let him go and want my facts.

Best love to your dear mother who I hope is well. Also the boys and Edith and the Herr Papa.

Poor Mrs. Cheney! What can one say to her?

Yours ever,

L. M. Alcott.
Oct. 14th

Dear Mrs. Talbot:

The foot is still lame and I can't get my boots on, so scuffle round in shoes.

But I hope by Sat. I can be proper, and will come then and have a dish of the chat I like best.

It is very kind of you to want me, and I'll try to come boots or no boots. Sprains are so slow. I get all out of patience with mine and then it gets the better of me again.

Love to the dear girls and regards to the Dr.

Yours cordially

L. M. Alcott
Dec. 27th

Dear Mrs. Talbot:

Many thanks for the lovely fern and very kind thought that sent it. A pleasant surprise as I came home from my Xmas dinner in the eve.

I have been trying to come and see you, but baby has been poorly and I almost dead with a cold that went from head to foot and used me up. I hope you are nicely again. I never can imagine you ill, and take great comfort in seeing one hearty woman.

Now my woes must find a vent, and perhaps you can tell me where to look for hope and help.

My girl is to be married next week and I'm a lost housekeeper without I can find "an angel for nine shillings a week," as Mr. Emerson used to say.

Where do you get your girls? Is there a place anywhere in which you can hope to find a cook who doesn't drink and steal and all the rest of it?

Cooking, washing, ironing and a little sweeping are the labors set apart for the queen of the kitchen, $4.00 a week the wages, and a missus who can lend a hand at trying moments thrown in.

Can you throw a gleam of light upon the gloom which now envelopes my soul?

Love and best wishes from all to all.

Affectionately yours,

L. W. A.
Dear Mrs. Talbot:

Much obliged for your reply on the girl question.

I had already been to Hollis St. to look up a woman who advertised. She was gone, but another was found who had a good character and sent me to her last missus to confirm it. So she is to try for a week and if she suits "all is quiet on the Potomac," for a time at least.

If she doesn't suit and your girl's friend is still to be had I shall be glad to try her.

This domestic upheaval has prevented my running over to see how you were. Better I hope. The weather is not just what one wants for invalids but it's better than the warm, damp days we have had.

Poor Mrs. Willis is enjoying measles and very bad sore throats, and neighbors all about are in like case, so I mount guard over the precious baby as I don't want her to add any other worry to the teething trial.

Can't Dr. Talbot invent something to make the process easier?

Wish I had a million for the Hospital. Mrs. Wells said yesterday, "Well, if my sore throat does prove to be diphtheria I shall go at once to the Homeopathic Hospital and there I shall be taken good care of." "Hear! Hear!" says I, and Mrs. Willis said no more about her allopathic messes in which she firmly believes.

Mrs. Hosmer dined with me today, looking very tired after a long spell of nursing, for Florence has been very ill with the poor eyes, and does not leave her room yet. A grand coffee party is the next maddeningly exciting event in Concord.

Did you know that Ripley Bartlett was engaged to Myrtle Whitcomb? Also Sallie Bartlett has a son. These thrilling facts are all the news I have to offer.

Hope you like rambling notes for here is a pleasing mixture.

Love to the lads and lasses and much to yourself.

Yours truly,

L. M. A.
Jan. 2nd

Dear Miss Marion:

... ...

Father is comfortable, and seems to be resting at a sort of half way house before it is decided whether he is to stay a little longer or to slip away to the longer life which he is so fitted to enjoy.

His right side is still helpless, he takes no solid food, seldom leaves his bed, and talks very indistinctly. The papers of course know better than we do, and insist that he is much better. We do not expect miracles at eighty-three, and hope the serene soul will not linger in a feeble body till life is a burden...

Gordially yours,

L. M. Alcott
Dear Miss Talbot:

Yes - come tomorrow. All will be very simple as she wished it.

Will not the dear mother come also, and can she feel like saying a few words on this occasion. Louisa would wish it, I am sure.

I have asked Mrs. Cheney and Livermore to say something and Dr. Bartol.

All will be very informal and we have asked but few friends besides the relatives. But you were one of her "girls," and I shall love to see you.

Affectionately,

Anna B. Pratt

Wed. A.M.