

My Maiden Effort

"Tegnaby," teng'nabi

"Shot." Referring to the shot which killed Charles XII.

"The shot" is the common reference in Swedish books to Charles XII's death.

"Having but one name." The use of fixed surnames did not extend much farther back than the latter part of the tenth century. They first came into use in France, and by the Normans were introduced into England. Prior to the Reformation surnames were less fixed than now. Younger sons particularly, dropped their patronymic, and often, instead, adopted the name of their estate or place of residence, as did Tegnér.

"Apples of Sodom," Therenot says: "There are apple trees on the sides of the Dead Sea which bear lovely fruit, but within are full of ashes."

"Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste." -- BYRON.

"Loup-garou," lou-ga-rou. The French for bugbear.

The above brilliant and absorbing paragraphs are fragments from My Maiden Effort. There were more of them--something like 250 in all. It was not an effort born of a desire to express myself. I had never had that torment. On the contrary, I naturally detested all direct self-expression, regarding it as an invasion of

my privacy. My maiden effort was not ~~even~~ born of a desire to say something, nor of need. It was merely an attempt to do a good turn to a perplexed editor who had appealed to me to help him out of ^a difficulty. This editor's periodical was known as "The Chautauquan." Its pages ^{were} mainly given to ^{publishing} the readings selected by a board of directors for the Chautauqua Scientific and Literary Circle. At that time these reading courses had tens of thousands of followers scattered throughout the country. The majority of them lived in remote places--on farms, in the mountains, in small villages. They had access to few, and many of them to no books of reference. The result was that the editor of the magazine and the directors of the courses were besieged with letters, asking how to pronounce this word, what was the meaning of that, what more could they tell one about this person, where was this town? The burden of reply became so heavy that it was suggested that the Chautauquan publish in connection with each month's readings a series of notes, clearing up, ^{in advance} as far as possible, the points of difficulty that were making so much trouble. "And," said the directors, "let it be done at once."

The editor could not put his hand on a suitable person. I was in the vicinity and known generally for always having my head in a book. And so I was asked, as a friendly service, to prepare the notes for one month. I did them--pronunciations, translations, definitions, explanations of allusions--biographical, historical, mythological, scientific, and so forth. And then ^a deadly corvée! ^{publishing} I was too unsophisticated in the ways of the world

to realize that what the editor really had in mind was trying me out, having a hope, though, as I learned afterwards, little expectation that I would "do" for his new department. My first effort convinced him that I would. He published my pickings and asked me to go on.

Much as I detested the work, the sight of the things in type produced a queer sense of compulsion and responsibility--I had begun something and I must finish it, and so I took on the department--or the department took me on. I soon found other things engulfing me,--all the various things that an "organ" must do to serve and boost its constituency. It was not long until I found myself with a make-up on hand. That was the end of my own great work passion and the beginning not of a new passion but of many new tasks.

You see, I had never had the writer's call, never, as I said, felt the need of self-expression, had always had a natural repugnance to revealing myself, to say what I felt had offended me, it was mine, let others keep their hands off! Yet I had my work passion--it was to be a biologist.

The one and only reason that I desired to be a biologist was that I might spend my days in the world that a bi-nocular microscope reveals. Never had anything so thrilled me as chasing ~~protean~~ ^{protean} amoeba. Never have I so gloated over any achievement as discovering under the microscope the delicate foraminifera and mounting them on slides.

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Somewhere in the junk that I have collected in my lifetime I have still a few dozen of little brown slides of these tiny shells, marked and dated--laughable remnants of a great passion.

My maiden effort shattered that dream. It led me into fields about which hitherto I had had no curiosity, and of which I had only the vague awardedness the college gives. It put into my hands tools which I had never been taught to use, and in which I had only the most perfunctory interest. If it had not been for My Maiden Effort, who knows, I might today be living with my binocular in the vivid, active world of the protozoa.

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By IDA M. TARBELL

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MOTION PICTURE CENSORSHIP

We are very glad to report that a bill (actively opposed by the League) providing for state censorship of motion pictures in Massachusetts was vetoed by Governor Coolidge. His statement together with the opinion of the Attorney General of Massachusetts is printed herewith.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Executive Department, Boston,
June 4, 1920.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

A bill entitled "An Act relative to the approval and public exhibition of motion, picture films," being House Bill No. 1540, is herewith returned without approval. Hereto attached is the opinion of the Attorney General that the second section, which is the important section of the bill, is unconstitutional, and that section 4, which undertakes to provide for a court review, is not in a form which expressly preserves the constitutional rights of trial by jury, although it is possible that it might be interpreted to give that right. The entire purpose of the bill would fail with the failure of section 2, and the entire bill would fail if the courts should determine that the right of trial by jury is not provided for according to the Constitution. There is no need to point out that unconstitutional legislation would be entirely useless, would bring about expense to the Commonwealth which would be without avail and would cause the appointment of persons and the installing of machinery all of which would be a total loss to the Commonwealth.

CALVIN COOLIDGE.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Department of The Attorney General,
State House, Boston, June 3, 1920.

His Excellency Calvin Coolidge, Governor of the Commonwealth.

Sir:—Your Excellency has requested my opinion upon the constitutionality of House Bill No. 1540, entitled "An Act relative to the approval and public exhibition of motion picture films." Section 2 of said bill provides:

"On and after January first, nineteen hundred and twenty one, it shall be unlawful for any person to sell, lease, loan or use for public exhibition or commercial purposes any motion picture film unless the said film has been submitted to and approved by the commissioner."

The language of this section is not limited to the inspection and approval of motion picture films to be used for public exhibition within the Commonwealth, and, in this respect, it goes farther than the motion picture censorship laws which were upheld in *Mutual Film Co., v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*, 215 Fed. 138, affirmed 236 U. S. 230, and *Mutual Film Corp., v. Kansas*, 236 U. S. 248. It is my opinion that this section is so broad that it would apply to a sale, lease or loan in this Commonwealth of a motion picture film made in this state and on its way into another state, and would also apply to a film in the original package in which it might be shipped into this state from another state or from a foreign country. If so, it is to that extent in conflict with that clause of section 8 of Article I of the Constitution of the United States which confers on Congress