

CHAPTER LXXI .

CHANGING PHASES

By Grace

My education is taking place during an era of scientific research. The world during the past years has been obsessed with a desire to explore everything in minutest detail, and make everything run according to scientific law. I am told that life changes completely every seven years. And, indeed, today I am totally different from the Grace of six, who wouldn't go to the movies even when bribed with quarters and who couldn't possibly eat an entire sundae. Thus, because I think there may be some truth in what the scientists say (or perhaps because I lack originality) I shall divide my twenty-one years of experience into three phases. Whether they are phases of progress is an open question, but, at least, they are changing phases.

Phase 1 (1911-1918)

May 30, 1911 - what a splendid day for a birthday! To begin with, a holiday; and then it is the season when spring is just ready to burst into summer. A perfect birthday! A perfect Mother! A perfect Father! Perfect brothers and sisters! It should be a perfect life. I am at that age now when it is my privilege to have high ideals. Well - it is better to have strived for perfection and failed than never to have tried at all, I suppose.

Although I was born in Wisconsin, my earliest recollections are of West Newton where I was brought at the age of five months. There were happy times and squabbles with the neighborhood boys in my sandbox.

There were delightful moments with my fairy Godmother, Auntie Youker. Then, one incident, which doubtless is clearer to others than to me, was the morning I was burned. I remember standing by the table, which at that time was just at my eye level. Seeing the cup which usually held my milk, I reached for it and, of course, I spilled it. (The Goops doubtless could find a moral) Unfortunately, instead of being milk on this particular morning, it was hot coffee. I do not remember the pain, nor those who cut my scalding garments from my left arm. However, I can still see, in my mind's eye, the room over at Mrs. Ravinius' house to which I was taken. Mother and Father being down in Porto Rico, Mrs. Ravinius was kind and generous enough to take me into her home and care for me as she would have cared for her own child. I can remember the fear I experienced when I heard the doctor's footsteps approaching the bed, but I can remember no pain. How fortunate it is that one can forget so completely the hard parts of life.

Although I do not remember my arrival, I do clearly remember when at the age of four we all packed into our open Paige touring car and headed for Philadelphia. It was raining, and even yet, if I close my eyes and let my mind wander back, I can smell that suffocating smell of damp isinglass and rubber and experience again that feeling of utter despair at leaving my beloved sandbox.

These next years (1914-1918) to most of the world meant the Great World War, but I must confess it made very little impression on me. I do vaguely remember George blowing on an Alto Horn, but it might have been practice for a Boy Scout band for all I knew. Then, too, I do remember sitting in Auntie Youker's lap and learning to knit squares. And also I remember leaning with my chin on the table, simply spellbound, watching her

knit socks with a queer round machine operated with a handle. Then later Charles arrived in a Khaki uniform, and it was much fun to sit in his lap and play with the intriguing metal crossed guns which decorated his suit.

However, the experiences which really made an impression on me were those happy hours spent with my invaluable friend, Dorothy Watson. We played dolls together, visited our fairy Godmother, Auntie Youker, went to the Zoo on special occasions, and, rain or shine, we were inseparable from morning until evening. When we were six, we were permitted to start school. It was a perfectly terrible school, most of the children being low-class Italians, and my recollections are not very pleasant. Also, at this time, my recollections of a siege of Whooping Cough are most vivid, but would not make pleasant reading.

Phase 11 (1918-1925)

Oh, yes, I do remember evenings at 225 East Penn Street, spent in the great front living room sitting before the open fire and toasting my woolen pajamas before preparing for bed. But all the difficulty of getting coal enough allotted to us to heat the house went above my head, and I thought it was a great lark to move to Walnut Lane and have a new room. I missed Dorothy Watson terribly, but we still went to the same school.

These next seven years were filled with such restless activity that it makes me tired just to think about it. School lasted from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon. Then on Mondays I went to the Y.W.C.A. where I was a member of the gymnasium class. Tuesdays I took lessons in elocution. Wednesdays I went to dancing class. Thursdays I took a music lesson. I had been taking music lessons on the piano since

I had been five, but as yet I was not applying myself very earnestly. Fridays I went to the Y.W.C.A. swimming pool and took lessons and in general lost any ability I might have gained during the summer at Wildwood Crest. Saturday mornings I went over to Miss Schell's house and learned to make pen and ink sketches, to copy casts in charcoal and make pastel drawings of still life, and to make water color sketches.

During the winter, even if I didn't actually contract some contagious disease, I usually was pretty well worn out by summer time. But then came the glorious summers when one could live in a bathing suit and play all day on the beach and eat the luscious fresh fruits from the Jersey farms.

Phase III (1925-1932)

It was about this time that a group of Camp Fire Girls was organized under Miss Hartman at the First Methodist Episcopal Church. A rather up and down relationship with a girl around the corner, Miriam Supper, at this time culminated in a most steadfast friendship. Together we put our whole hearts into the Camp Fire, and what fun we did have! Soon we began to build our own versions about it in our play and had "secret societies" as we called them. The most famous of our "secret societies" was called C.I.C. Even now I shall not disclose what those three mysterious letters represent, and I can't possibly tell all the exciting adventures we had. For one whole glorious day we rigged up a tent out of blankets, and spent from morning until dark way out on "the point" at Wildwood Crest. And then one birthday I received a tent, and we camped out in my back yard for a week. We built a fire place and cooked our own meals and thought life quite wonderful except one night when there was a terrible thunderstorm.

Camp Fire, I believe, made one of the finest contributions to my life. It taught me to love the out-of-doors, and to know the value of good health. The Camp Fire Group dissolved as the original girls reached college age. However, during our membership, Miriam and I both attained next to the highest rank - Fire Maker. The symbol of the rank is a silver bracelet with the letters WOHELO around it, which are the first two letters of the three words; Work, Health, Love. And even though I no longer sit about the Camp Fire, nor enter into the ceremonials, I still have those three words as a guide to that perfection which it is youth's privilege to seek.

In 1925 I entered my first really good school. The grammar school which I had attended was in a very poor district and although there were a few very fine boys and girls, the discipline was necessarily very rigid on account of the undesirable element. I took it all very much to heart, and my days were filled with terror. But the new Roosevelt Junior High School was glorious. It was so "grown up" to have different rooms and teachers for different subjects. I took a great interest in everything and was class secretary, and helped run "The Outlook", swam on the swimming team, and felt pretty much as if I were indispensable to the school. Miss Kruger was my advisor; that is, I was in the division which reported to her at nine o'clock each morning. She read the Bible to us and started us off to our classes at nine fifteen. Miriam Supper was in this same division and shared my great devotion to Miss Kruger.

Miriam and I were not very happy in Sunday school, and we wanted Miss Kruger to be our Sunday School teacher. Miss Kruger did not meet our plan with the enthusiasm we had expected. However, when Miriam and I became so insistent that we would call to her from the street as she passed

in her car - "Please change your mind, Miss Kruger," she finally took a class of five girls. Sunday school immediately became an event to be looked forward to from week to week. Often after I had entered college, I had reason to be thankful that I had had someone like Miss Kruger to interpret the Bible to me. She made religion human, and living, real and vital.

For a long time now I have been wanting to mention the influence of another personality on my life. Dr. Thomas, the pastor of the First Methodist Church, became an inspirational guide to me and I still enjoy and benefit by going to hear his splendid sermons.

Senior High School again plunged me into a dismal building on East Haines Street. The work became more difficult and the teachers more exacting. Sophomore year with Miss Buckley in Latin and Miss Miller in History was a nightmare. My Junior and Senior years were spent in the fine building on High Street. My class was the first to try co-education. It evidently proved to be a success because all the classes thereafter were co-educational.

Again I was secretary for my class, but I was beginning to be absorbed in preparing for college and my extra curricular activities were much less than in Junior High School. I began, however, to be more and more interested in music. I studied piano with Miss Paddock, first at the Curtis Institute of Music and then at Friend's School. She was truly a wonderful personality. She taught me to love and appreciate music. My music lessons were great events and, what is more remarkable, I enjoyed practicing.

My pal, Miriam, was also very musical and we wanted to join the High School orchestra. They already had an excellent pianist - so what to do!! Mother consulted the leader, George Spangler, as to the advisability

of my taking up the Viola. Mr. Spangler pointed out many difficulties in the way of learning the Viola and suggested that I take up the Bass Viol. Mother came home and told the idea as a joke, but to me it was no joke. No one will ever know the nights of sleepless excitement I had before I finally had an old German musician, Mr. Luck, whose father was in Napoleon's band, to teach me to play the Bass Viol. Within three weeks I was playing in the High School Orchestra. And not long afterwards the Board of Education gave us a harmonium and my pal Miriam was chosen to play it. What fun it all was.

Soon I discovered that bass players were in great demand. I was asked to lead the basses of the All-Philadelphia High School Orchestra. Later I was invited to play with the Philadelphia Woman's Symphony. Twice I played with them when they gave concerts at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel and once I went to Atlantic City with them to play in a concert. My interest in the Bass Viol became so strong that Father, who always encourages any spark in his children, bought me a very fine old Italian instrument. We dubbed the bass Louis because we were told it had been used in the court of Louix XIV. However, we later found that it was the court of Ludwig I, but the name Louis still sticks.

All this and not a word about my travels! First there were the auto trips when I was quite young. When I was fourteen came my first trip abroad. The next summer came a cruise to the West Indies and South America. Then came the trip out West with the boat trips first to Alaska and then to Hawaii. The next summer Mother, Father and I went on a cruise up the fjords of Norway and on up past Spitzbergen to the Polar Ice Cap. And then to pile thrill on thrill, the next summer we took to the air and flew from Vienna to Budapest, to Bucharest, to Constantinople; from Constantinople

to Athens; from Athens to Brindisi. The next summer I planned to spend a quiet summer studying music at Columbia University, but even that was interrupted by a week-end cruise to Nova Scotia on the Leviathan and a trip to Bermuda with Mother, Father and Marion. Last summer again we went to Europe with the express purpose this time of giving me a background for my general examination in Art.

Yes, by my Sophomore year in college I had decided to major in Art. When I entered Wellesley in the fall of 1929 I had planned to major in Music, but one changes lots of ideas in college. Perhaps that stimulation of thought is one of the most valuable things one gains at college. College is really more than just a "debunking" process, though I must confess that I was disappointed in college. Yet, I suppose it is valuable just to learn that after all the college graduate may not be the cream of the earth.

I enjoyed some of my classes some of the time, but I find already the Biology I was subjected to in my Freshman year and the Bible I labored over in my Sophomore year are very vague. I soon found that the subject treated in a given course mattered in reality very little. I found it to be the personality behind the course which made it something to serve through life or something to be forgotten the day in June when the final exam was written. There are certain professors and instructors in Wellesley who have influenced my thinking to a great extent. There is Mr. Hamilton in the Music Department, Dr. Wolman, who taught me Junior Bible, Mr. Cambell and Mrs. Hawes in the Art Department, and Miss Conant in English Composition.

In my college career I was somewhat interested in the College Orchestra, being Assistant Librarian Freshman year, Librarian Sophomore

year and President Junior year. One year a funny thing happened. The Harvard Orchestra came to give a concert. They had no bass player so they borrowed Louis and me.

During Freshman and Sophomore years I enjoyed the companionship of a most delightful and unusual girl - Marion Gilchrist. We were so inseparable that most people did not know which name belonged to which girl. We were drawn together by a mutual admiration of Dickens and as our friendship grew, we found we had many other things in common. Among the other things were tuna fish salad and chocolate ice cream. Her interests were literary while mine were in the fields of Music and Art. But as all the Arts overlap to some degree, we enjoyed going to each other's lectures.

But perhaps the one thing above all other things which developed our friendship into a lasting devotion was the long walks we enjoyed together in the sunshine or, at sunset, or under the stars. New England is indeed one of the most beautiful spots of the earth, and Wellesley Campus is a delightful 300 acres in the midst of New England country. Marion and I enjoyed the campus to the full, from fall with the brilliant coloring around Lake Waban, through winter with the pines bowed down with snow, to the spring with the daffodils blooming on North Hill.

Junior year I came to know more intimately Jeanne Nicolas, whom I had known somewhat Freshman year. She is extremely musical and we derived untold pleasure from the concerts which we attended in Boston. And then there were the quantities of crackers and peanut butter and jelly which we devoured over our tea cups as we tried to solve the problems of the world.

And now I am a Senior. I have processed to chapel in my cap and gown; I am twenty-one and am embarking on a new phase which promises to be a glorious adventure. This book is history and not prophecy, though, so I shall conclude.

THE FAMILY ORCHESTRA



GRACE AS CAMPFIRE GIRL