

## CHAPTER I



# The Bending of the Twig

A child of thy grandmother, Eve—a female;  
Or for thy more sweet understanding, a woman.

—SHAKESPEARE

“O mother, just listen to this that I found in to-day’s paper! Here’s my chance to go to college: ‘Recognizing the equal right of both sexes to the higher educational advantages, the Board of Regents have made provision for the education of women, and they are now admitted to all the departments of the University of Ortonville on the same conditions that are required of men.’\*<sup>1</sup> There! if that doesn’t come as near being a special Providence as anything that ever happened to me! Won’t it be glorious, mother? I’ll study hard, and win honors, and you’ll be as proud of me as if I were a boy.” And Wilhelmine Elliott stood with expectant face, while her mother said, quietly:

“You know, Willie, that we have never quite agreed upon this subject of the higher education of women, and I could never give my consent to have a daughter of mine make herself so conspicuous as to enter an institution founded and designed only for young men. Then, if there were no other objection, it could be condemned because of the ill-effects that would result to their health; for girls cannot tread the same path that boys do without detriment to their health, as the highest medical authority may be brought forward to prove.”<sup>†</sup>

“O mother dear, how can you say that?—for not all the high medical authority in Christendom can make me believe that I was born and

\*University of Ortonville: Anderson’s fictional name for the University of Michigan.

<sup>†</sup>the highest medical authority: Mrs. Elliott is referring to Dr. Edward H. Clarke (1820–77), a prominent Boston physician and the author of *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for Girls* (1873).

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Along the Diagonal Walk, the University of Michigan, 1870s. The campus of the University of Ortonville, the fictitious setting of the novel, was “not accustomed to resound with the tread of girlish feet, and the steps had hitherto been worn only by male devotees in their pilgrimages to the temple of learning.” (Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, BLo01936.)

destined to be an invalid, all my life, because I happen to be a girl. Have I ruined my health by keeping up with Frank’s class in the high-school? Look at me,” and she drew herself up proudly, but a moment after she burst into a merry laugh as she caught sight of her face and form in the mirror opposite; for they were, certainly, a glowing refutation of the theory that girls cannot do the same work that boys do, as far, at least, as the end of a high-school course.

“I know that you are an exception in the way of health, Willie,” replied the mother, “for which you should be very thankful; indeed, you have

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always been more like a boy than a girl, but now it is time that you were settling down, and paying attention to things that essentially pertain to woman's sphere."

"You look at things so differently from most mothers," said the girl, "for it was only yesterday that Mrs. Denton said to me that she would be perfectly happy if Ella were as much interested in getting an education as I seemed to be, instead of spending her time in flirtations, balls, and parties; and, on the other hand, you wish that I was like somebody else's daughter, and yet if I were like Ella you would not be satisfied with me."

"Mothers are queer things," she continued, laughingly; "they take opposite ground from the crow who always thinks her own are the whitest, for mothers think other people's children better than their own, mine does at least; but, now in regard to this college business, you know that, since father's death,\*<sup>2</sup> we have all been brought up with the idea that we must make our own way in the world, and what could be a better preparation for this than a good classical education; and when it is offered for the taking, it seems to me the blankest stupidity to refuse it. If you needed me at home to help you, mother, it would be different, but you do not; and why can't I take my part of father's estate and put it into an education, which will be my stock in trade?"

"You oblige me, my daughter, to give another reason, and one outweighing all the others, that makes me unwilling to have you go away from the restraints of home, and be exposed to the temptations of college-life; and that is the fact that you have never had a change of heart, have never taken Jesus as your Saviour, and, without this, education can be nothing but a curse. I have watched your growing tendency to unbelief with the anguish that only a mother can feel, who sees her loved ones going to destruction, and I say now and here that you can never have my consent to any step that will only make you a greater power for evil, because not begun in the fear of the Lord, which is the only true beginning of wisdom."

"I may as well tell you now, mother," said Will, "something that I have been going to tell you for a long time. I don't think that I ever can believe as you want me to in those things. I try to, but it grows more impossible every day. You have almost forced me to accept certain forms of religious belief; but, mother, I must be free." And the proud lip quivered. "I do love Jesus, although I have not been able to accept all the doctrines that you

\*<sup>2</sup>father's death: Olive San Louie Anderson's own father died when she was seventeen, just before she graduated from Mansfield High School in 1869.

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have taught me. What do we judge people by, if not by their every-day lives; and what have I done that is so bad, mother? Have I ever done a dishonest or dishonorable thing? And yet you deny me your consent and blessing when I want to do something entirely proper, and that some would even call praise-worthy, simply because I am not a professing Christian; and, therefore, you cannot trust me away from home for fear that I will bring disgrace upon you. I cannot disobey you, mother, but I feel that I am right, and once more I ask your consent to my going to college." And she stood with flushed cheeks before her mother.

As she looked at the bowed head, where threads of gray were fast taking the place of the darker locks, and as memory brought back the years in which she had been watched over and cared for tenderly by this mother, her conscience smote her, and slowly the gray eyes filled with tears at the thought that she had been the cause of adding a new pang of sorrow to that mother's heart.

"Wilhelmine," began Mrs. Elliott in a sad voice, "I never thought to hear such things from the lips of a child of mine, least of all from a daughter. You have in effect denied the Bible and Saviour; and, my child, such a thing cannot but bring its own curse. These long years have I looked forward to the time when I could lean upon your arm, but I cannot lean upon an arm that does not draw its support from the God of Abraham."

Will threw herself on her knees before her mother and took her hands as she said, pleadingly: "Mamma darling, why can't we live happily, and each believe what seems best? You know that I want to be good and true, and believe what is right; but I can't be forced."

It was a common situation, but one of deep interest. The mother, with deep lines of care upon her face, the inward struggle of the true mother's love and tenderness, as it tried to break through the hard shell of doctrinal religion with which it had surrounded itself; the one prompting her to clasp the child in her arms and assure her of confidence and belief in her, while the other prompted her to feel that her daughter was under God's wrath and curse, and must have no encouragement in plans for the future until, by conversion, she had been passed up into the light of God's smile.

The kneeling figure was in some respects a contrast. There were no lines of care upon the youthful face, and fresh, joyous life leaped in every vein; but there was the same firm mouth, the dark eyebrows, the finely-cut, sensitive nostril, and, more than all, the same strong will, so that Mrs.

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Elliott was arrayed against herself when opposed to her daughter. She answered the pleading tones:

“Yes, Willie, you talk about each one believing as he thinks best; but there is only one right way, and if you do not take it you are lost. I should be willing to consent to anything in the way of education, if you were only a Christian, for then I would know that you could not go wrong. You talk about being true and noble, and so you are, my darling child; but you lack the one thing needful, which will keep you from falling into sin when you are tempted. What have you to keep you true and noble when you come to the trials of life?”

“Why, mother, I have the honor that I have inherited as my birthright, and the moral teachings that you have given me by precept and example, and I feel sure that they will keep me.”

“But you must have God’s blessing, or you will fail. I hope you will go to your room and ask him to forgive and help you, for your sin is against him in rejecting his offers of mercy.”

Mrs. Elliott was a Presbyterian of Scotch descent, and she kept the law to the letter, believed to the uttermost the five points of Calvinism,\*<sup>3</sup> and, with the true Calvinist’s spirit, would have forced her children to Christ at the point of the sword, thinking it was for their eternal happiness; while all the time she was doing it her mother’s heart would have bled for their sufferings, so strangely do hearts and creeds sometimes clash. She had been for ten years a widow; for, when the rebellion broke out, William Elliott went as surgeon, and received a mortal wound in one of the early engagements, so that he only reached home in time to give his little family a parting blessing, and express the hope that he would meet them in heaven.

He left four children—Henry and Frank, the two elder; Wilhelmine; and the youngest, little Harriet, who, from an injury to the spine, was condemned to the life of an invalid, however long or short it might be.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Elliott, who was an only child, went home to live with her parents, and the home of her own childhood became that of her children. Here she had passed the days of her widowhood, taking care of her aged parents as long as they lived, and devoting herself to her family. Above all things she prayed that they might be kept from the growing skepticism and irreligion

\*five points of Calvinism: These points form the core of the ideas of the religious reformer John Calvin (1509–64).

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of the day,<sup>5</sup> and brought to see the truth as it is in Christ. At the time the story opens the elder son was engaged in business in a distant State. Frank and Wilhelmine had just graduated from the high-school of the place; and while her brother immediately took a situation as book-keeper in one of the banks of the city, Will was waiting for further developments to determine her career. She declined going to a fashionable boarding-school to "finish off,"\*<sup>6</sup> and heard with longing heart the boys of her class talk of going to college, for she was a good scholar, and had stood shoulder to shoulder with the best boys of the school.

When one of the finest universities in the country opened its doors to women, it seemed to her, as she said, a special Providence in her behalf, and she had not expected opposition of such a character as she found in her mother. One great source of anxiety concerning skeptical influences thrown around her children had come from the bosom of her own family; for Mrs. Elliott's father, during his lifetime, had been called an unbeliever.

Adam Conway had startled the community in which he lived when, at the ripe age of thirty-five, he had his name taken from the church-books, having been a member from his youth. A life of the widest philanthropy and purest morality was necessary to enable him to outlive the prejudice caused by such an extraordinary step, and such a life was his. No tale of distress was ever told to him in vain, and in every benevolent enterprise his name stood first on the list of subscribers.

Good people would often say, "Squire Conway lacks only one thing of being perfect, and even as he is I guess he will not come far short of the kingdom." He was an aged man when Mrs. Elliott, their only daughter, came to live at the old home after the death of her husband.

Mrs. Elliott knew, of course, of her father's peculiar way of thinking, and much grief it gave her to feel that her dear father was still out of the ark of safety and city of refuge. She feared the influence, too, upon her children, but hoped to shield them by prayer and correct teaching. Not long after they were settled in the old house, Will, who was a mere child, came in from play one day and, with big-eyed wonder, asked what an infidel was, for Jennie Irwin had said that her grandpa Conway was one; and her mother would not allow her to play with Will for that reason. Mrs. Elliott took the little one upon her knee, and tried to explain the meaning

\*fashionable boarding-school to "finish off": Boarding schools, or female academies, allowed well-to-do young women to spend a few years learning the "feminine" arts before coming home to find a husband.

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of the word in language suited to the understanding of the child. "Oh, he is like the man in my catechism that is going to be burned 'cause he won't believe as they want him to, and they can't make him. Will they burn my grandpa?" and the little face grew troubled, and tears gathered in her eyes at the thought.

Mrs. Elliott explained to her that they did not burn people now, and that the men who had been burned were not all bad men; and, while she took care that the child's trust in her grandfather should not be shaken, she yet made the best of the occasion, as she never failed to do, to show her her obligation to love and serve God.

"But what has grandpa done that is bad?" persisted the child; and she was greatly relieved when the mother assured her that her grandpa was a man of the noblest character. Her mother kissed the eager face, and told her that she would understand these things when she grew older.

When she got down from her mother's knee, the puzzled expression was only half gone, and, taking her little catechism, she was soon lying full length in the grass, looking at the picture of John Rogers,\* who is about to be burned at the stake, while his family gaze at the painful spectacle. "Poor man!" she murmured; "how bad those people are to burn him so! and there are lots of his little children seeing their father die in the fire, and pretty soon he'll be all gone, and then they will not have a father. I wonder why he did not believe as they wanted him to, and they would not have him burned him so? What makes people believe things? When I grow big I will not believe anything. Maybe I can't help it, though."

Not long after she was fast asleep, while the beetle hummed drowsily in the afternoon sun, and the wind played with the golden curls and turned over the leaves of the book; and it was not until the maples were casting long shadows across the yard that they found her, hidden as she was in the long grass.

Her grandfather assumed a new interest from that time in the eyes of the child, and she sometimes climbed upon his knee and, putting her arms around his neck, would whisper, "What makes you be a infidel, grandpa?"

As Mrs. Elliott and her mother were influential members of the Church, they often entertained ministers; these ministers often fell into discussions with 'Squire Conway; and Will was always interested in the

\*John Rogers: An English Protestant martyr (ca. 1500–1555) who was sentenced to death for denying that the real body and blood of Jesus Christ were present in the sacrament.

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result of their arguments, even before she could understand much of what they said. Old Mrs. Conway died several years before her husband, and her last breath was a prayer for "father's" conversion. The old gentleman became somewhat deaf, but his mental faculties remained strong and clear till the end. During his last days the beauty and simplicity of his character were noted by all who visited the sick-room. Will was a favorite with her grandfather, and was constantly by his bedside; and sometimes she would come out of the room and burst into tears, saying, "O mamma, he is so lovely and patient, I can't bear to have him die."

The church-people tried hard to turn the mind of Adam Conway at the eleventh hour. They felt that a calm, peaceful death in his own belief would have a bad influence, and the Rev. Mr. Chetham was heard to say that he had no doubt that 'Squire Conway would show such terror at the approach of death, and be so distracted with remorse, that it would be a remarkable warning, and he would be able to point to it and say, "See what the death-bed of an unbeliever is!" but that he should not be afraid to die, and should meet the king of terrors with as much calmness and resignation as if he had lived within the pale of the Church, was not at all within his expectations. They had prayer-meetings in his room, and tried to construe his words into a recantation or acknowledgment of a life-long mistake; but they were disappointed, for Adam Conway died as he had lived, in charity with all men; and we trust that the God who knew his longings after the truth dealt kindly with him, and that the mysteries of the future were duly unveiled to eyes prepared to see them.

Will had been a source of great solicitude to her mother from her birth. Extraordinary vigor of body and mind kept her in the fore front of every sport, and on the verge of every danger; yet there was no lack of native caution in her composition, and, in spite of appearances to the contrary, the risk of life and limb, which she seemed daily to encounter, was less than usual instead of greater. Solicitous neighbors had their hearts in their mouths as they watched her dashing down-hill on her sled with the boys, or out-stripping all but the boldest on the skating-pond, or climbing to the farthest hay-loft; but, fortunately for her peace, the mother slowly discerned the true quality of good sense and prudence that underlay the apparent recklessness of animal spirits, and she was content to give Will the liberty she gave her boys, whose constant companion she became. Nevertheless, the mother's duty of training this daughter for what she



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appreciated as woman's sphere\*<sup>7</sup> constantly pressed upon her. To hold the restless, vigorous body to tasks of sewing and darning was more grievous to the parent than to the child; yet it was done, for Mrs. Elliott had extraordinary patience, and was exceedingly conscientious in the performance of that which she considered right, and her path of duty was usually no less clear than her walk in it was steadfast. But to remould and curb the nature, that she only half understood, until her power to mould was past, was her anxious and almost futile task, for the vigorous body fed a brain no less vigorous.

Will was what mothers call a reasonable child, and, approached on that side, there was little or no contest between her and her mother; but, unfortunately, Mrs. Elliott had yielded reason to faith so wholly that, in all matters relating to the moral training of her children, she was incapable of exerting that sway which she could easily have held had she met them on natural ground.

Hers was the task of shaping these children's souls by the line and plummet offered her in the Bible, according to John Milton† and Calvin, or rather by that portion of the Bible distilled into the Westminster Catechism,‡<sup>8</sup> which formed the basis of her moral code. Dishonoring human nature by the belief in original sin and total depravity, she was compelled to set herself in antagonism to the children she loved until they, too, accepted her definitions of faith and goodness. And to such a parent, in the perversity of natural things, a child is born with an organic tendency to skepticism; a child whose reason revolted at the formulæ accepted by all about her. The patient mother, as the years drew on, in which she looked for a yielding of her daughter's reason and will to the rule of faith and conduct that guided her, and to which she believed all mortals should yield, found only more and more hostility; but every evidence of Will's waywardness of soul was but a fresh confirmation of her own belief in natural depravity.

\*woman's sphere: Most of nineteenth-century society believed that the home was the proper and only sphere of action for women.

†John Milton: The English poet (1608–74), best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, which related the story of the origin of Satan, the creation of Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. His work reflected the severe Christianity of Calvinism.

‡Westminster Catechism: A catechism is a summary of Christian beliefs; the Westminster Catechism was steeped in Calvinist doctrine.

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After much weeping and prayer, the mother nerved herself afresh to the task of subduing this nature, or rather of bringing it into subjection to God, for toward herself Will's temper was one of sweet dutifulness. All that subjection of spirit with which the Puritan held himself in obedience to the stern decrees of a loving but just God, led to the expectation of the same subjection from his children; the family knew but one law, in all the complicated interworking of domestic machinery, the law of the parent's will. Could this great gain but have coexisted with the recognition of the child's God-tending nature, toward whom the parent's hand were only needed to guide, how blessed would be the years of childhood! But, to a nature full of tenderest sensibility, as was that of Mrs. Elliott's eldest daughter, the very loveliness was taken from life by this steady effort to dominate reason and faith, which it was a part of her religion to maintain. For the mother well knew that Will was sweetness itself, in her desire for love; and in the hours of temporary illness, or the twilight moment, when she gave herself up to caress her, she yearned, as only mothers can, to break down the wall of partition which, as years advanced, became more real between them.

And so the burden only grew greater as the years developed the romping, impatient, but loving little girl, into a beautiful woman, whom a mother's pride silently felt to be a radiant contrast to her companions; and it was with only a half-joy that she watched the dancing eye, blue in the skylight and gray in the shadow—the moist, enthusiastic eye, that lighted up a face as mobile as the soul behind it. Will did not know whether she was pretty or not. She felt that she was altogether too large, and, in the condition of semi-hostility to all the conventionalities among which she found herself, was ever ready to admit the worst, in regard to her face and figure. She knew that her smile was bright and her teeth brilliant, and that she was perfectly well and ready for anything; but her brothers never flattered, and Will did not fully know, until years had opened to her the knowledge of the beautiful in art, that hers was a magnificent form, and that her oval Greek face was as faultless in proportion as it was vivacious in expression. Perhaps there was one point of beauty of which she was early conscious and suitably vain, and that was her hand—a large, snowy hand, maybe a trifle too opaque and bloodless, but exquisitely proportioned, and as strong and firm as was her friendship.

The vexed question of religious belief was the cause of the only trouble Will had ever known, and just now, as the story opens, she was in an

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unusually sore state of mind on that subject. The Sunday before, there had been communion at the Presbyterian church, and, after the regular service, when the communicants were asked to take the middle pews and the others the side ones, it happened that Will was the only one who sat on the side, for the rest of the non-professors went home; but Mrs. Elliott never allowed her family to leave before the sacrament was administered. So Will sat all alone, and tried to look very unconscious while her friends in the middle pews cast solemn and pitying glances at her, and the minister talked about the final separation of the sheep from the goats, accompanying the words with appropriate gestures. Through the open window came the warm, mellow sun, and far off she could see the blue hills. How she longed to leap through the casement and get away from everybody, and walk in the fields, or lie under some tree and think! Everything seemed to her glad and free, except people who went to church and believed in the Bible and Saviour. Her thoughts went back eighteen hundred years, and she seemed to see Jesus walking with his disciples in the fields where lilies-of-the-valley grew, and about which he talked. The face of the Master was one of wondrous beauty, and she thought, if she could only have been one of them and heard him talk, she, too, would have believed and loved him. She saw him again on the shore of the sea of Galilee, and he always had the same rapt expression of devotion as he talked and pointed upward. Finally, she saw him on the cross, and now the beautiful face is distorted with pain. A great crowd are watching to see if he will not perform some miracle, and get away; but he dies, and the people go home, and wonder what will happen next, for it is all very strange. And is this the same one about whom they now talk so much, and dispute concerning his divinity and humanity? She was aroused by the solemn tones of the minister saying: "Take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it unto them, saying, drink ye all of it." Mr. Reynolds was an old-fashioned Presbyterian minister—one who had never been softened by any of the ideas of liberal Christianity—and one who never temporized to please a mixed congregation. He was of the real old school, whose very shirt-collar seemed to say, "God, having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation, by a Redeemer." And when he cleared his throat on a frosty Sabbath morning, it sounded as if he said, "All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are

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under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever." And, when he came to make a pastoral call, he always seemed to bring the everlasting fire much nearer; and children never felt quite safe to go on with their play until the reverend gentleman was entirely out of sight. After the sermon to-day, he came and spoke to Will, and told her that he hoped it was the last time she would trample upon the offer of salvation, and grieve away the Holy Spirit, who, he felt sure, was striving with her. But, could he have looked into her heart at the time, he would have called it anything else than a *holy* spirit, that was striving with her. To make matters worse, old Mrs. Johnson had overtaken her on the way home, and told her that she ought to be ashamed, having such a good Christian mother, to hold out so against the means of redemption. There had been many repetitions of such scenes, with variations, during the communion seasons of several years. At first she received their exhortations and reproaches with a guilty feeling that they were in the right, and she in the wrong; but she felt that she would some time come out strong on the Lord's side. Yes, she would join the church, of course, if they would just let her alone a little while, and let her put off the evil day as long as she could. Then, as she grew older, these same exhortations and reproaches made her angry and defiant. What business had they to torment her continually about her soul? Was not her soul her own, and was not its salvation of more concern to her than to them? And, besides, was not she as good in her every-day life as they? Yes, some of them would even do things that she would scorn to do; and she wondered if the Lord really thought as hardly of her as those church-people did. Then she found somewhere among her grandfather's books a copy of Renan's "Life of Jesus,"\*<sup>9</sup> which she read with eagerness. Here was a great man who did not believe in the Bible or Jesus as she had been taught, and why might he not be right? Besides, she did not see how a man could be bad who could write such a beautiful dedication to his dead sister as she found in the beginning of the book. This helped to give form to her shapeless doubts and questionings, but she said nothing, for she would not give her mother needless pain. But this unlucky opening of the University of Ortonville by which Will saw the realization of her darling ambition, and her mother's refusal to consent to her going on such grounds, brought all the rebellion of her nature to the surface, and resulted in the disclosure

\*Renan's "Life of Jesus": J. Ernest Renan's *The Life of Jesus* (1863) depicted Jesus as a historical figure of flesh and blood rather than a supernatural divine.

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of her skepticism above described. So, this glorious afternoon in the early autumn, Mrs. Elliott went to the missionary-meeting with a heavy heart, and Will went up to her own room to think over what had happened.

"Strange," said the girl, as she walked slowly up and down the room, "that the old, old story is so spoiled for me that I cannot bear to hear it mentioned. I wish I had never heard it till now; how beautiful it would seem! And it is beautiful now," she continued, as she paused before a picture of Christ stilling the tempest, that her mother had given her on her last birthday, "when I can separate it from those hard, dreadful things in the Catechism. How glad I am that we have to settle our final accounts with the Lord, and not with the compilers of the Westminster Catechism! There was a gentle knock at her door, followed by a little pale face, and a voice that said:

"May I come in, Willie? I sha'n't disturb you while you study."

"Oh! it is you, Hally, is it? I thought you were asleep, or I should have been looking for you long ago. I have something to tell you."

Then followed a recital of her hopes about going to college, and how her mother had dashed them, for the moment, to the ground.

"Never mind, Willie, we'll see what can be done about it." And a little white hand caressed lovingly the brown curls. "I've set my heart on your going, too, and I'll talk to mother. Won't it be splendid for you to go and study all the things that Jack Adams talks so glibly about, and said you never could do them because you are a girl? You are so grand and strong, you can do anything you try." And the blue eyes grew bright and the pale cheeks flushed, thinking of the triumphs that her darling sister would win in college.

Harriet Elliott, or Hally, as every one called her, had been thrown from a carriage when a mere child, which resulted in an incurable injury to the spine, and her life always hung on a very slender thread. She was thirteen years of age, a little, pale, patient shadow, with premature habits of thought and reflection unnatural and painful in one so young. To use Will's words, "she had been attacked by ministers and church-people while in such a weak, helpless condition, that they finally brought her to confess herself the chief of sinners; and it really was absurd to hear the little thing, that did not know a wrong thought, mourn over her shortcomings, and question her acceptance and effectual calling."

But there was one subject upon which she was not at all orthodox, where her puritanism failed entirely, and that was in her thorough adoration and approval of her elder sister. No matter what Will did or

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thought, the little invalid always found ground for forgiveness, if not of approval, and once said in a most heterodox way, when Mrs. Downs was talking of Will's refusal to join the church: "Well, well, such broken-backed creatures as I need a prop of that kind; but I see no use in forcing it on to Will until she feels the need of it."

There could scarcely be a greater contrast than the two sisters presented: the one, tall, fearless, and independent, with bounding step, and glowing face; the other, small, slight, with slow, feeble step, and thin, pale face, always patient, though she had no prospect but a life of pain. To the younger, the elder was everything that is strong, brave, and noble; and Will grew to value more the love and approval of her little sister than of any one else.

Mrs. Elliott was finally induced to give a reluctant consent to Will's going to college. It was with a heavy heart and many misgivings, however, as to the eternal welfare of her daughter, that she packed the large, new trunk, and saw that all her clothes were in good order—careful and loving mother that she was. Some hot tears fell among the piles of clothes in the trunk; for she felt, since the conversation that has been described at the beginning of the chapter, that she would never be brought back to the fold, and being exposed to the miscellaneous beliefs and unbeliefs of a university town like Ortonville made any hope of her conversion still more improbable. And yet the mother had a secret pride when she heard others talk of Will going to college, and predict for her a brilliant career. She gave her a new Bible, and hymn-book, a copy of the "Confession of Faith,"\* and, the day before she went, sent for the minister to talk and pray with her.

He talked to her of the dangers and temptations she would meet, and warned her to avoid certain skeptical books. The poor, dear man could hardly have hit upon a more certain plan to insure their early perusal. Will clung to her mother at parting, and whispered: "You will believe in me, mamma darling, that I will do right! You must say so, or I can't be happy," she pleaded; and the mother forgot her creed as she said, "I do believe in you, my precious child." Then there were a rumbling of wheels and a waving of handkerchiefs, and she was gone. "What a happy home mine would be," thought Will, as she leaned back on the cushions of the carriage, "if there were no such thing as religion!"

\*Confession of Faith: The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646) was one of the forms in which the doctrine of Calvinism made its way to America's first settlements.