

IN THE BEGINNING

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The man without a country has my sympathies. Though I am an American, there is no one place which I can really name as my native habitat. I was born in England, my father and mother having moved there, he to write the great American novel, and she to contribute her addition to the human race. Before a year had passed we had removed to Mentone, France, Dad having been as successful in his undertaking as Mother. There is little I can say about my early life in France; the mind of a one year old is not wise enough to record incidents for future reference. When the twelve-month lease on the house we occupied had run out, Mother decided she had had enough of French housekeeping; accordingly, she and I set out for "home", leaving Dad, who was engaged on another prize-winning novel, behind. "Home", to Mother, means Toronto, Canada, and so it was with that destination that our bags were labeled.

Summer in Canada was adventurous. There were all my newly-met relatives to entertain with my childish antics, and, in turn, their capacities for pleasing were yet to be tried. I must have been a remarkable child; friends I made that year still mention my charm and endearing qualities to my parents, though it has been lo! these many years since they have seen me.

My fourth birthday was celebrated in Los Angeles, California. This, if any, might be called my home town, for it was all of three years before we again took to the road. My fourth year was an eventful one; Mother fell seriously ill, and was said to be dying. Overheard conversations intrigued me; I had not yet seen a dead person, and my scientific curiosity was aroused. I begged to be allowed to visit her in the hospital, arguing, reasonably enough — "but I have never seen a person die!" Unfortunately for my curiosity, but luckily for me, Mother survived, and I had the privilege of nursing her back to health. She assures me that my tender head-rubbing was her best medicine. Despite my cold-blooded acceptance of possible death, I was overjoyed to have my Mother home with me once again, and would sit quietly for hours in her room, content just to be with her.

Meanwhile my education was being fostered in the most advanced kindergartens and at the age of five I entered the first grade of a private school. School life was dull; having been taught at home, I was more intelligent than my classmates, and thus started my journey on the road to egotism. Fortunately, in two years my life was changed. I was abruptly taken from school and told that we were soon embarking for Europe.

