

ME: A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

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Me: A Book of Remembrance by Winnifred Eaton (Onoto Watanna) & Jean Webster

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WINNIFRED EATON (ONOTO WATANNA) & JEAN WEBSTER

ME: A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

Mrs Neil

ME

A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.

1915

To
"LOLLY" my friend who was
and to JEAN my friend who is

2129291

INTRODUCTION

The writing of this book seems to me one of the most astounding literary feats I have ever known. It is one hundred thousand words long; it was started on Thanksgiving day and finished before New Year's. The actual writing occupied two weeks, the revision another two. The reason for this amazing celerity lies in the fact that it is pure reporting; the author has not branched out into any byways of style, but has merely told in the simplest language possible what she actually remembered. The circumstances in which the book was written are interesting.

The author had been wrenched from her feverishly busy life to undergo an operation in a hospital; four days later she began the writing of this book. I will quote her own words:

"It seems to me as though these two weeks I have just passed in the hospital have been the first time in which I have had a chance to think in thirteen years. As I lay on my back and looked at the ceiling, the events of my girlhood came before me, rushed back with such overwhelming vividness that I picked up a pencil and began to write."

INTRODUCTION

I cannot imagine just what the general reader's attitude toward this work will be. I myself, reading it in the light of the knowledge I possess of the life of the author, look upon it not only as an intensely interesting human document, but as a suggestive sociological study. It is an illuminative picture of what may befall a working-girl who, at the age of seventeen, gaily ventures forth to conquer life with ten dollars in her pocket. You may object that many of her difficulties were brought about through her own initiative; that she ran to meet them open armed. This is, no doubt, true, but you must consider her ignorance and her temperament. It was her naïveté and generosity and kindly impulses that left her unarmed. She was unique in many respects—in her peculiar heredity, her extreme ability, and her total unacquaintedness with the world.

I have known the author for a number of years, and I know that the main outline of everything she says is true, though the names of people and places have necessarily been changed in order to hide their identity. The author has written a number of books that have had a wide circulation. The aspirations of the little girl of seventeen have been realized!

JEAN WEBSTER.

ME

ME

IT was a cold, blizzardy day in the month of March when I left Quebec, and my weeping, shivering relatives made an anxious, melancholy group about my departing train. I myself cried a bit, with my face pressed against the window; but I was seventeen, my heart was light, and I had not been happy at home.

My father was an artist, and we were very poor. My mother had been a tight-rope dancer in her early youth. She was an excitable, temperamental creature from whose life all romance had been squeezed by the torturing experience of bearing sixteen children. Moreover, she was a native of a far-distant land, and I do not think she ever got over the feeling of being a stranger in Canada.

Time was when my father, a young and ardent adventurer (an English-Irishman) had wandered far and wide over the face of the earth. The son of rich parents, he had sojourned in China and Japan and India in the days when few white men ventured into the Orient. But that was long ago.