

**A NEW ENGLAND
GIRLHOOD, OUTLINED
FROM MEMORY**

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A New England girlhood, outlined from memory by Lucy Larcom

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LUCY LARCOM

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FROM MEMORY**

A NEW ENGLAND
GIRLHOOD



BY LUCY LARCOM

A NEW ENGLAND GIRLHOOD



SAT AND SEWED THERE THROUGH THE SUMMER
AFTERNOON (*page 146*)

J.B.

L.

E 198422

I DEDICATE THIS SKETCH
TO MY GIRL FRIENDS IN GENERAL
AND IN PARTICULAR
TO MY NAMESAKE NIECE
LUCY LARCOM SPAULDING

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Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy!
— When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity : —
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience by a sinful sound ; —
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction.

WORDSWORTH.

ADAM
EVA
VAUGHAN

PREFACE.

THE following sketch was written for the young, at the suggestion of friends.

My audience is understood to be composed of girls of all ages, and of women who have not forgotten their girlhood. Such as have a friendly appreciation of girls — and of those who write for them — are also welcome to listen to as much of my narrative as they choose. All others are eavesdroppers, and, of course, have no right to criticise.

To many, the word “autobiography” implies nothing but conceit and egotism. But these are not necessarily its characteristics. If an apple blossom or a ripe apple could tell its own story, it would be, still more than its own, the story of the sunshine that smiled upon it, of the winds that whispered to it, of the birds that sang around it, of the storms that visited it, and of the motherly tree that held it and fed it until its petals were unfolded and its form developed.

A complete autobiography would indeed be a picture of the outer and inner universe photographed upon one little life’s consciousness. For

does not the whole world, seen and unseen, go to the making up of every human being? The commonest personal history has its value when it is looked at as a part of the One Infinite Life. Our life — which is the very best thing we have — is ours only that we may share it with Our Father's family, at their need. If we have anything within us worth giving away, to withhold it is ungenerous; and we cannot look honestly into ourselves without acknowledging with humility our debt to the lives around us for whatever of power or beauty has been poured into ours.

None of us can think of ourselves as entirely separate beings. Even an autobiographer has to say "we" much oftener than "I." Indeed, there may be more egotism in withdrawing mysteriously into one's self, than in frankly unfolding one's life-story, for better or worse. There may be more vanity in covering one's face with a veil, to be wondered at and guessed about, than in drawing it aside, and saying by that act, "There! you see that I am nothing remarkable."

However, I do not know that I altogether approve of autobiography myself, when the subject is a person of so little importance as in the present instance. Still, it may have a reason for being, even in a case like this.

Every one whose name is before the public at all must be aware of a common annoyance in the frequent requests which are made for personal