

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."