

Old Lovegood Girls · *Gail Godwin*

IN THE LATEST LOVEGOOD College Alumnae Bulletin, I see that Mrs. Elizabeth McCorkle Snyder has given a memorial donation “in memory of Miss Carol Olafson, formerly P.E. and Health teacher.” I don’t recall Miss McCorkle (she was a spinster in those days) being a particular friend of our easygoing, tomboyish gym teacher, but perhaps she was made solemn—as I always am—by the finality of death: especially when it claims someone you have known. Also, knowing Miss McCorkle, I suspect she regards her donation as one more obstinate stone added to the fortress of memory. Memory, as she repeatedly instructed us, was our best defense against the barbaric forces that periodically try to trample down our gates and make rubbish of our glorious achievements.

Miss McCorkle herself was the very opposite of easygoing. One girl in our class had hysterics and had to go to the infirmary because she couldn’t memorize all the countries belonging to the British Crown in the year of Queen Victoria’s Jubilee for Miss McCorkle’s test the next day; and I still catch myself murmuring “. . . Antietam . . . Fredericksburg . . . Chancellorsville . . . Gettysburg . . .” at the oddest moments.

Last year I had to fly around the country a lot, and on one of my flights I sat next to a brittle, stylish woman whose business, she told me, was designing brochures for colleges to send out to prospective students. First she would visit the college and prowl around the campus for several weeks, she said; she would seek out old alumnae, ask around town for people’s impressions of the college—people who could be objective in their impressions; and then she would go back home to her drawing board and come up with an “image” of the college that could be suitably captured in a brochure.

“I’ve just returned from this junior college in North Carolina that you wouldn’t believe,” she told me. “In this day and time it’s an anachronism, that’s what it is. The girls there . . . well, they’re still *girls*, for one thing: they think of themselves as girls. And they’re good girls; they walk around that beautiful campus looking too good to be true. I wouldn’t be surprised if many of them were still virgins. No, I’m not kidding. This school is a hotbed of all the old virtues: you know, duty, loyalty, charity,

respect for all the old traditions of religion and society. The place is actually called Lovegood College. 'Love good.' And you should see their graduation ceremony, I was there for it. The 'girls' wear white, off-the-shoulder ball gowns, with hoops, and each girl carries two dozen long-stemmed roses. It's in the evening, and after they get their diplomas, they go out to the fountain in front of this gigantic old ante-bellum mansion with columns four stories high, and each 'girl' throws one dozen roses into the fountain. Then she hands over her second bunch to her *mother*—or some aunt or godmother if the mother is dead—and the mother graciously takes out one single rose and gives it back to the daughter. That's all she gets to keep for herself, the Lovegood 'girl': one rose. At the end of the ceremony, the pool around the fountain is clogged with roses."

"Really?" I said.

"Yes. It's all very symbolic." The stylish woman rolled her eyes and gave a little smirk of contempt. "The roses in the fountain mean she leaves part of herself at the school, consecrates herself to its purposes. And after she pays her dues to Mother—and all *that* stands for—she's got one rose to show for herself. You don't know how many dried roses were proudly displayed to me when I visited the homes of alumnae and had coffee—never anything stronger. Always served out of trousseau china cups in cozy kitchens decorated with Ethan Allen furniture. The really amazing thing is: the college is rolling in money, and most of it comes from old alumnae. It has endowments coming out its ears. It can buy the latest computers for its business students. It can send novice missionaries—it's a Presbyterian School—to Japan for a 'trial run' semester. It's all very strange." She seemed momentarily baffled by this unfashionable combination of virtue and money.

"You don't sound as though you liked the place very much," I said. "How will you design the brochure?"

"Oh, my dear, that's easy!" Her eyes gleamed with triumphant irony as she touched the sleeve of my jacket. "On the cover will be . . . just a single, long-stemmed red rose . . . with a drop of dew on it. They'll love it!"

After I got off the plane I wondered why I hadn't let her have it. What had held me back? My Lovegood charity? My Southern-bred disdain for people who started angry scenes? Or was I not just a little intimidated by her fashionable worldly cynicism? Do modern barbarians pose as cynics,

slipping stylishly through our gates, while we—fearing their ridicule—hesitate and are lost?

My father and I told everybody that the reason we had chosen Lovegood College for me was because it was the first college we visited, during that sweltering July weekend, where the president gave us lemonade and invited my father to take off his jacket. There were other factors, of course, but we left them out in the interest of a better story.

Actually, there were three colleges on our list. All were located in the state capital, a city twenty-five miles from the tiny tobacco-growing town where my father lived. As I was new to my father, and he to me, we wanted me to be near enough so that I could spend frequent weekends with him.

Our first choice had been St. Mark's College. Not only had I been raised an Episcopalian by my mother, but this college had a reputation as being the classiest of the three. Our first interview was there, but the rector's reserve inhibited my father's spontaneity and put us both on the defensive. The rector politely inquired why we had left things until so late: most incoming freshmen had applied the previous year. "My daughter has just come to live with me," said my father, refusing to elaborate, and I'm sure we both gave the impression, stifled as we were by the inhospitable surroundings, of having something to hide. Nevertheless the rector said a place *might* be found for me—assuming of course that my transcript grades were what I said they were—and the way we left it was that my father would call him on Monday morning and let him know our decision.

As we walked to the parking lot, my father said, "I don't know about you, but as far as I'm concerned he can wait for my call until Hell freezes over."

"I feel the same," I said.

We got into the black-and-white Mercury Montclair demonstrator that my father liked because it matched his black-and-white French Shriner shoes, and he started the motor and turned the air-conditioner on high. "The Baptist college comes next on the list," he said. "Are we sure we want a Baptist college? The Baptists can be so fanatical about alcohol."

"Maybe not, then," I said. We were on our Father-Daughter honeymoon, so to speak, and I wished to agree with him in all things. Baptists didn't move me strongly one way or the other.

So we by-passed the Baptist college, my father stopping at a pay phone to cancel the appointment, and then we drove in a leisurely, meandering way towards the older section of the city so we would not be too early for our appointment at the Presbyterian College. At last we descended a hilly street full of Victorian houses sinking into genteel decay, and, halfway down this street, the buxom four-story Corinthian columns of Lovegood loomed impressively into view.

“Now that must have been some place to live,” said my father. We both knew already that I was going to live there.

If I failed to notice any striking want of rebelliousness in Lovegood girls during my first weeks at the school, it was probably because I was too busy being grateful and good myself. I was happy to be at Lovegood. The haven of security and propriety it offered was just what I needed. I was still panting hard from my close brush with downward mobility: last spring, I had abandoned hope of being at *any* college in the fall. My stepfather, still uncertain in his profession, did not yet make the kind of money that could send someone off to college without them helping; to add to his difficulties, there was now his own baby girl and another baby on the way. The two scholarships I had tried for had fallen through, and, in a late-spring period of vindictive despair, I had engaged myself to an Air Force man my mother thought wasn't good enough. I really do not know what I might have done (or not done) with my life if my father had not made his timely and dramatic appearance at my high school graduation. I had sent him an invitation as a sort of bitter jest: I had not laid eyes on him since I was child—and then only briefly, on two short occasions.

But as fate would have it—and I don't use the word lightly—the invitation reached him at the very time when he was doing a little bookkeeping: adding up the debits and credits of his life. He was forty-nine years old, and all he had to show for his efforts were a shelf full of tennis trophies, a modest brick bungalow which he had bought with what was left of his inheritance from his mother, and a small sum of money he had been able to put away during the last two years, because he had managed to stay off the bottle and take advantage of a booming automobile market. When my invitation arrived, it struck him suddenly that I might be a credit to him. I mean, in another sense besides being a tax-deductible dependent. He had been illegally claiming me as *that* for many years, he later confessed to me,

in one of his wry, dark, self-deprecatory moments.

On the morning of my graduation day, he put on his white suit, drove his favorite demonstrator across town to pick up his brother the Judge, also wearing his white suit, and then their sister Edie; then he doubled back to his side of town, to his boss's house, to pick up a young widow named Myrna—the boss's sister-in-law and my father's girlfriend, who hadn't been ready the first time he came by—and off they started, for a public high school two hundred miles away. Because of Myrna's dilatory toilette, they missed half of my salutatory address. I had no idea they were there until after the diplomas had been handed out and my father came up to me in the hall and introduced himself. Having kept an outdated picture of him in my head, I didn't recognize him at first. Then there was a brief, awkward meeting with my mother, who was seven months pregnant with my stepfather's second child, and after that I went out to a Howard Johnson's in the demonstrator with my new family. I was impressed with them: all three were large, handsome people with rich, authoritative, rather sarcastic voices. They teased one another a lot. My widowed aunt courted me in her dry, egocentric way, firing questions at me and insisting that I had my father's features; my uncle kept saying to the table at large, "Isn't she pretty . . . isn't she pretty"; with his thick thatch of gray hair and his air of benevolent gloom, he became exactly my image of how a Southern judge should be. My father was still very handsome, though he had filled out a lot, and I could see why he had taken the route of least resistance and been a playboy as long as he could. That evening I even thought Myrna was sweet. She was a lisping, fadingly pretty woman with a neat, full figure. She seemed in awe of me and laughed hilariously at the constant sarcastic banter of the other three.

"How about spending the summer with me?" my father said. "Or have you made other plans?"

I said I'd love to spend the summer with him.

"Where are you going to college?" demanded my aunt.

"I may not be going," I said.

"Not going to college!" exclaimed my uncle. "A smart girl like you."

I explained my stepfather's predicament. "So I may have to work a year first."

"We'll see about that," said my father. Shyly, he squeezed my hand under the table.

Lovegood College put on a memorable Orientation Pageant which took place in the school chapel. Its purpose was obviously to enamor newcomers of its traditions and knit us solidly into the community. New girls were seated in the front pews. Then the lights went out, the music teacher struck up "Lead On, Oh King Eternal," the Lovegood processional hymn, on the big pipe organ, and the old girls, carrying lighted candles, marched in twos up the center aisle, singing the fervent hymn. They divided into single file at the front and returned down the two side aisles to take their seats behind us. They had seen the pageant before.

First came the history of Lovegood, written and directed by the energetic Miss Elizabeth McCorkle. We had heard about this pageant: the history teacher always organized it the previous spring and handed out the parts to her favorite girls so they could memorize them over the summer. First came scenes depicting the grand life as it had been lived in this building during the golden ante-bellum days, when Lovegood was the proud plantation home of Horace Lanier Lovegood and his family and faithful slaves. Then came the darker scenes, when War raged and Lovegoods hid the silver and prayed for their absent loved ones in battle. Then came the scene in which the mansion was turned into a Confederate hospital and Lovegood daughters covered their curls with nurses' caps and tended the wounded. Finally came the stirring scene in which the enlightened Presbyterian educator, Dr. Manley Phipps, purchased the decaying Lovegood from the last living member of the clan, a gracious old lady in her eighties, who says, "I hope that future generations of Lovegood girls will be as happy and as carefree as I was in that house." Dr. Phipps was played with great dash by Miss McCorkle herself, wearing a top hat, striped trousers and morning coat. The doddering Lovegood daughter was portrayed very realistically by one of my roommates, a sophomore named Hermione Broadstead, who, at nineteen, had an uncanny old-ladyish air about her, even when her brown hair was not powdered white and she wore her everyday saddle-oxfords, sweater sets and pearls.

After the history pageant, there was another hymn, and the presidents of the various student organizations got up and advertised their activities. The most esteemed of these organizations were the Lovegood Daughters and Granddaughters Club (for which I was not eligible, as neither my mother nor grandmother had gone to Lovegood) and the Lovegood Christian Association, for which no girl was eligible until she had proved her spiritual and intellectual worthiness for an entire semester. Not only

must she maintain at least a 3.5 average in all subjects, but her moral character must be voted 'outstanding' by a unanimous committee of faculty and peers. As the current president of the Association related these stiff requirements in a surgary eastern Carolina drawl, I remember thinking her distinctly priggish. But I squashed the thought at once, because I decided I would try to get into this select organization: how proud it would make my father.

The final number on the program was a poetry-reading by our English teacher. A tall, mournfully beautiful woman, she mounted the platform, her narrow ankles teetering slightly in her high-heeled pumps. Fingering the brooch at the throat of her lacy, high-necked blouse, she explained to us in a voice that sounded as if she were either on the verge of tears or of some great emotion that the long poem she was about to read had been written by one of the state's renowned poets of the last century after a stay at Lovegood Plantation. "It was not uncommon, in those days, for a houseguest to write a poem about his host's home, if he had enjoyed a particularly happy stay there—and especially," the ghost of a smile lit up her pale, classic features, "if the houseguest happened to be a poet."

Then Miss Petrie—her first name was Fiona—read to us "The Melodies of Lovegood Plantation: Spring, 1851." The poem would not have survived the scornful hearing of the brochure-woman on the airplane for a minute, but read as it was in Miss Petrie's throaty, melancholy voice that reminded one of a cello, it could make the willing listener enter a kind of dream. Whatever narrowness or effusions the poem manifested, Fiona Petrie's reading of it made you long for some lost birthright of an irrecoverable past both glorious and innocent. I knew all about Miss Petrie through the student grapevine, which provided its own very effective form of orientation: from an impeccably old family in Beaufort, she had been the flower of her year when she had been presented in this very city, at some Terpsichorean Ball before World War II. Then she had gone away to college in Virginia, and something had happened: either a lover had been killed in the war, or married another—the grapevine wasn't sure—and after that, Miss Petrie stopped going out with men altogether. Now she and Miss Olafson, the pert, grinning gym teacher from somewhere in the Midwest, shared an apartment off-campus, driving to and from school each day in Miss Olafson's Jeep. Miss Petrie herself did not drive.

As I sat there under the spell of her voice, watching her delicate white fingers flutter occasionally to her throat, or brush away a curl of her short, dark hair, it suddenly occurred to me that what my father needed in his life was an elegant woman like this. He had me, of course, and he had told me several times during our summer idyll that I was the “the first thing worth being good for” that he had found in a long time. But I couldn’t *always* be there, and I had seen enough of his life in that dull little town to understand the opportunities for despair and dissolution it offered to someone of my father’s temperament who happened to be stuck there. It was all right for his brother, whose profession gave him status and power and back-slapping lunches with hearty lawyers and businessmen, not to mention the stagelike gratification of being always the calm character of authority who held sway over messier, violent lives. But what about my father, driving down dusty country roads in search of a farmer ready to trade up on a new Lincoln? What thoughts did he have? What regrets? What painful memories of unaccomplished dreams? He had confided in me, during a week we had spent at his boss’s cottage at Carolina Beach, that he regretted not having made more of himself, and told me I mustn’t let it happen to me. But, in a more upbeat tone, later, as we were lying together on the beach, working on our tans, he had told me I was his good angel, and that if he continued to win his battle against depression and alcohol, and if automobile sales continued like this, well, the future might not be so hopeless after all. Since that conversation, I had tried to picture a suitable future for my father, but, try as I would, I couldn’t get him out of that town. Where would he go? Except for those dilettante winters spent in Florida teaching tennis, after he and my mother divorced, he had always lived in this town. And, if he weren’t “Manager of Sales” at the W. O. Creech Lincoln-Mercury Agency, what would he be doing?

The other problem I had in trying to imagine a future for him was keeping Myrna out of it. He saw her almost every night. (Who else, in that town, was there for him to see? All the women his age were long-married; some were grandmothers.) She was his boss’s sister-in-law, and he had told me himself that “W. O.” was getting impatient for Myrna to find a new life for herself so that he could turn his garage apartment back into a rental property. My father was a dead-ringer for Myrna’s next husband. I knew they were physically intimate from the way they touched each other and played around, although — out of some paternal fastidious-

ness—he always went to Myrna’s garage apartment when I was sleeping at his house. I would hear him trying to let himself in quietly when he came home around 4 A.M.

Myrna had been nice to me, she had even tried to “win” me, in her uncertain, affected way, inviting me for little lunches in her apartment, consulting gravely with me, as gravely as her lisp would allow, over what kind of clothes a girl should take to college. I wished I could like her better, but there was something a little common about her. It was my belief that my father needed a higher sort of being, someone else “worth being good for” if he were to survive in that dusty little town. He needed a second angel in the house on whom he could depend to take over his happiness after I had gone out into the world in pursuit of mine.

*If you want a saint, go to Lovegood;
If you want good lovin’, go to St. Mark’s.*

In this way, the boys at State, Duke, and Chapel Hill summed up their dating experiences at two of the three women’s colleges in the capital city. There was another jingle that included all three colleges. The first two lines are too obscene to print, but the third line was:

and *Love Good girls.*

Even in salacious college-boy doggerel, we came out unscathed.

I knew, even in those first “good and grateful” weeks, that I was not completely a Lovegood girl. My nature was too restless and experimental to accept without question Lovegood’s definitions of womanly worth, to pledge myself—before conducting some experiments of my own—to conserving its standards. Also, by the standards of those doggerel verses, I had forfeited my “sainthood” the previous spring with my Air Force man, forfeited it deliberately and vehemently: if I was going to have to go straight from high school to adulthood, I had told myself, why should I not start enjoying at once the pleasures of adulthood?

But then my father had entered the picture and changed everything: I was to have a few more blessed years of carefree youth, after all. I was sorry I had committed myself so precipitately to the Air Force man, but then, during the summer, things had resolved themselves fortuitously after all. My intended wrote from his base in Seattle to confess that he had gotten a girl in trouble and had to marry her. While my father was at

work, I rode his bicycle down to the post office and mailed off an engagement ring he had never known I had. I remember thinking as I pedaled home, past the rose gardens of all the sleepy houses with their curtains drawn against the heat, how fortunate I was not to have been that girl who got “caught.”

So, if those first weeks at Lovegood I felt I was in some sense play-acting the ingenue, it was a role whose safety and simplicity refreshed and soothed me as I tucked in the corners of my Bates bedspread every morning and arranged my stuffed animals on top; as I went out with a Lambda Chi from State and wouldn't let him touch me for the first three dates; as I sat in the balcony of the civic auditorium, partaking of the operas and concerts which were included in the price of my tuition; as I walked uptown to church on Sundays in the bloc of Lovegood girls, all of us wearing white gloves and little pillbox hats with wisps of veils. It was as if I were monitoring myself—or, rather, as if the old me watched a diligent, privileged and thankful new self—as I hunched under the green-shaded lamps at the long table in the library and memorized for Dr. Fellowes, our Bible teacher, the names of the Children of Israel who went into Egypt; memorized in chronological order the battles of the War Between the States for Miss McCorkle, until the night watchman, a frightening looking grizzled old man with a limp, whom someone had nicknamed Old Orlick, came shuffling down the rows of books, jingling his keys at us late studiers so he could lock up the library at ten.

Lights Out was at ten-thirty on weeknights, though we were allowed to play our radios very softly until eleven. There was a program called “My Best to You,” on which songs were played for various Lovegood or St. Mark's or Sheridan College girls from their boyfriends at State. Sometimes the disc jockey, whose older, mellow voice reminded me a little of my father's, would read sad, nostalgic poetry over the air, and my roommate, Hermione Broadstead, who loved sad, nostalgic things, would weep softly in the dark.

“I was down in Pine Level this week, showing a rich tobacco farmer the new Lincoln,” said my father, as he drove me home with him one bright October weekend. “When I told him I had a daughter at Lovegood, he said he'd tried like anything to get his daughter to go there, but she wasn't having any. She told him she wasn't about to be shut up in a convent. I

told him *you* seemed happy. Is it like a convent? I hope you don't think I railroaded you into going there. I honestly didn't know it was stricter than the other colleges. Is it?"

"A little," I said. "I mean, we're the only girls who have to be in by eleven on Saturday nights. And we can't even date during the week until our Sophomore year. But I don't mind it. In the first place, there's no one I'm mad to date, and in the second place, I'm enjoying concentrating on my work."

"It's nice to hear that," my father said.

"I don't think that man's daughter just meant the rules," I said. "There's something else about Lovegood. It's hard to explain. It's like . . . well, there's this *tradition* you have to uphold. I mean, you realize it's all a little outdated, but yet . . . but yet *you* don't want to be the one to break this tradition." Then, by way of explaining further, I quoted to him the repeatable one of the two college-boy slogans.

My father laughed. "And do you mind being a saint?"

I considered this for a minute, knowing what he was really asking. "I don't know if I'm a saint or not," I said at last, "but, well . . . I like *trying* to be one."

He seemed quite satisfied with my answer. We drove for a while through tobacco country without speaking. The harvests of the summer were already drying in barns, or being turned into cigarettes, and the fields had been plowed under to wait for the next planting in the spring.

Then my father said, rather shyly, "I'm *glad*, you know, that . . . well, how shall I say it? I'm glad I found you while you were still fresh and unspoiled by life."

In the evenings after supper, at Lovegood, my other roommate, a sophomore named Laura Jean Fletcher, who was already engaged to an Agricultural major at State, would put the lid up on the grand piano in the parlor and play for us until Evening Study Hall began. She was an emotional pianist, liberal with the loud pedal, caring more for throbbing chords and arpeggios than for a hundred-per-cent score of right notes; but she could play just about every well-known tune anybody could ask for. Hermione always asked for "When I Grow Too Old to Dream," and sometimes wept appreciatively while it was being played.

During these sessions at the piano, I would often slip out of the room

and climb the wide stairs to the fourth floor of the old building and go out on its top porch. Leaning my cheek against one of its mammoth, cool, white columns, I would look down at the soft night spread out before me and imagine I was in the last century. I would imagine I was one of the daughters of the household, rich and docile and protected, perfectly patient to wait up there—while piano music rippled gaily from a lower floor—until the man who would be good enough for me, perhaps even better, would ride up the curving driveway, its white pebbles gleaming under starlight, and enter the house and ask my father for my hand. On other evenings, feeling more pragmatic, I would stand up there seeing how many buildings I could recognize from their distant lights up on the capital's hill, or I would inhale deep draughts of the mellow, Southern fall air, and imagine myself rich and famous in some future life.

The more I saw of Fiona Petrie, the more I admired her. She would be just the right woman for my father. As I relaxed in the gentle oasis of her English hour, after the grim long-marches of memorization and feedback in Bible and History, I scrutinized her covertly while she read aloud to us in her cello-voice from *Paradise Lost*. I judged her to be somewhere in her early forties. She was a little too thin, but her structure was long-boned and feminine. Her face, though no longer blooming with youth, would retain its classic lines until she died. There was some silver in her crisp, black, curly hair, but it made her look distinguished. It would go well with the silver in my father's hair. And I loved the way she dressed: her dignified, well-cut skirts that floated as she walked; her large variety of old-fashioned blouses; her brooch, her cameo, and her pearls. What a contrast to Myrna's bright frocks with their revealing contours. But it was her voice that charmed me most, accompanied by certain poignant expressions that would flit, from time to time, across her face, as she read lines such as:

*From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve
OR:
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow
the brooks
In Vallombrosa.*

I worked hard in her class to become a favorite, but it was the type of work that came easy to me. I could memorize, if I had to, all the countries of the British Commonwealth in the days when the sun never set on it, and I had become quite adept at ferreting out the obscure kind of fact that Dr. Fellowes loved to spring on his quizzes. (Q. How tall was Goliath? A. Six cubits and a span. I Samuel, 17.4.) But it was much more compatible for me to be asked to write long, thoughtful essays on philosophical problems, or short stories with “epiphanies.”

Not only did I take great pains to shape my sentences so that they would be appealing as well as correct, but I cunningly chose subjects that would reveal to her aspects of myself—and of the man whom she might one day marry. And so far, things had gone well. “This moved me very much,” she wrote on my short story about a girl and her father lying on the beach, discussing how thankful they were to have been reunited. In the last line of the story, the handsome father murmurs against the sound of the waves: “Now I feel I have something to be good for again.”

The weather stayed mild into early November, and Miss Petrie and Miss Olafson would often eat their bagged lunches on the sunny steps outside the gym, so that Miss Olafson could stay in her sweat suit. After lunch in our communal dining room, where girls sat eight to a round table and rotated every other week, “so we would get to know everybody,” I would often join the two teachers outside, as they dawdled over their final carrot sticks or fruit. They always seemed pleased to have me join them, and I was pretty sure Miss Petrie must have said nice things about me to her friend, because Miss Olafson put herself out to make herself agreeable to me, asking me all sorts of questions about myself (many of which she could not have asked had she not known something of the content of my essays and short stories) and grinning to herself when I answered, as if she found my replies clever and amusing. A small, wiry woman with several dark moles on her face, she had none of Miss Petrie’s elegance or beauty, but her easygoing, joking, informal manner was an attractive contrast. And she seemed to be good for Miss Petrie. As she sat there peeling the apple or sectioning the tangerine they always shared, she would tease “Fiona” for not being able to drive or play tennis. Miss Petrie would utter a short, exhausted laugh as if it were being torn from her and say, “Oh Carol, I’m not co-ordinated and never will be.” But the English teacher’s

face would glow for a moment with just a hint of color, and she would smile faintly as her hands fluttered down to tuck her skirt around her knees. When they were married, I thought, my father would teach her to laugh—though she would never be capable of Myrna’s unrestrained giggles. I could already picture him teaching her to play tennis, standing behind her and putting his hands on top of hers on the racquet. At night, even when they got old, they would lie in bed, perhaps in some beach cottage near the sound of the waves, and she would read to him about the thick autumnal leaves and the brooks of Vallombrosa. The next thing that had to happen, of course, was for him to meet her, but first I wanted to prepare him for her as I had been preparing her—through my stories and casually scattered references—for him. During the Thanksgiving break I would begin to speak to him of Fiona Petrie, and, sometime before Christmas, I would arrange a meeting: maybe a “conference” they could have, about me.

My father was not in a good mood when he came in the demonstrator to pick me up for the Thanksgiving weekend. It was the first time he had been so preoccupied and restrained around me, and I wasn’t sure how to behave. I didn’t yet know him well enough to know whether he liked to be jollied out of his bad moods, or asked what was the matter, or whether he was the kind of man who would rather you act as if you had noticed nothing unusual. I made pallid attempts at conversation, telling him how the whole Sigma Chi fraternity had come over to Lovegood College and stood in the driveway in front of the fountain and sung to all the girls who stood looking down on them from the three balconies, which seemed to amuse him some—at least it drew from him a dry smile; but I didn’t risk describing the charms of Fiona Petrie, as I had planned to on this very drive. I had learned enough about men from my mother to know that if you brought up things you wanted when they were in bad moods, they sometimes took offense at these things forever after, and you had destroyed your chances by not waiting for a more opportune moment to present your case.

I was disappointed to find we were having dinner with Myrna—my father usually saved the first night for me—but it turned out not to be so bad, since she and I could make friendly chatter and render his morose silences less ominous. When she and I went to the Ladies together, while

he was settling the bill, I asked her if she knew what was wrong. We were both lipsticking our mouths at the mirror and our eyes met, and her eyelashes trembled and she looked as though she was going to tell me something. But then she only said, "Oh, honey, he gets like that once in a blue moon. If I were you, I'd just be real sweet and gentle with him, and it'll pass."

He seemed in a somewhat better disposition the next morning, although he couldn't have gotten much sleep: I had heard him let himself in at 5 a.m. We went to my widowed Aunt Edie's for the big Thanksgiving meal in the middle of the day. It was not very cold, but overcast and gloomy, and when we arrived we found her arguing with her other brother whether it was cold enough to build a fire. "A fire is more hospitable," said the Judge. "Well, if my hospitality's not enough for you, I guess you'd better build one, then," she retorted. They bickered in this fashion even after the fire was built, and on through the meal, but I knew them well enough by now to understand this was their lifelong way of getting along. My father laughed at them, and pretended at several times to play the peacemaker between these spirited, sarcastic, older siblings, and, around three o'clock, we all parted: the Judge to go back to his house and take a nap, my father and I expressing our intention to do likewise, and Aunt Edie—as she brusquely announced—to clean up the mess, even though she had refused to let us stay and help her.

When we got back to my father's house, he excused himself to take his nap, and I tried to sleep, but found I couldn't, so I propped up the bed pillows and decided to read ahead in the Bible—we were up to Job, now—and make lists of potential "pop" questions Dr. Fellowes might spring.

I had been at this task for some time when a shuffly sound made me look up from my concentration. My father was standing in the doorway, with his arms crossed, looking down at me.

"Well, well," he said. "My little daughter in bed, reading the Bible." His voice was slurry and his eyes glittered at me in an unfriendly manner.

"Did you have your nap?" I asked gently, remembering Myrna's advice.

"Not really," he said. "I had too much on my mind."

"Would you . . . would you like to talk about it?" I closed the Bible and moved my notebook out of the way, so he could sit down on the bed if he liked.

But instead, he went over to the bureau and opened the top drawer. He rummaged around among my handkerchiefs and some stockings and things I had left from the summer. He drew out a packet of Air Mail letters with a rubber band around them. "Did you know you left these here?" he asked.

They were the letters from my ex-fiancé, the Air Force man. When I had come to live with my father I had brought the letters, just as I had brought the engagement ring in its little velvet box. At the time I hadn't made up my mind what to do: I told myself I still loved the Air Force man, but I didn't want to ruin my chances with my father, so I hadn't said anything about being engaged. A few more letters had reached me at my father's, but I had always told him they were from some boy I had dated who had since gone into the Air Force. When I had sent back the ring at the end of the summer, after my fiancé notified me of his sudden necessity to marry the other girl, I had considered making an emotional bonfire of the letters one afternoon when I was in this house alone. Oh, why hadn't I? Why hadn't I?

"I found them most enlightening," my father went on, not expecting me to answer. He probably had all the answer he needed from my face.

"You don't mean to say . . ." I tried the feeble defense of moral outrage, ". . . you don't mean you read my letters."

"*You don't mean you read my letters,*" echoed my father in a singsong, falsetto voice.

"Well, I'm just shocked," I said, sincerely this time. I was shocked. I had never seen him look at me in such a way. Also, now I recognized the unfamiliar new odor that had come into the room with him. It shocked me that he had broken his proud promise to himself, and that, since he was standing there with those letters in his hand, it might have something to do with me.

"If you think you're shocked, you can imagine what I felt," he said. "No, my dear, I was the one who was shocked. These intimate details . . ." he extricated one of the letters from the pack and with a grimace of disdain let it drop to the rug. "So tasteless . . ." Another letter was dispatched to the floor. "It made me wonder what sort of disgusting things you wrote in yours."

"Well, if I had known you were going to go sneaking around in my drawers, I would have kept carbon copies," I said in a cold voice. "Then

you could really have enjoyed yourself.” I felt frightened and sick at heart, but also very angry.

“No,” he replied quietly, all the nastiness suddenly gone from his tone. “No, I wouldn’t have enjoyed myself.” He looked down at the remaining letters, as though they had been something dirty he had just discovered in his hand, and put them on top of the bureau. “I don’t make a habit of snooping through people’s private things,” he went on, in a dangerously gentle way, “but, if you want to know the truth, I was lying here last week worrying about business . . . sales are in a slump . . . and wondering what it was all for . . . all the effort of being obliging and charming to perfect strangers so they just might buy an automobile from you . . . and then I thought of you, happy and safe in that school, and I missed you. I was suddenly amazed by my good luck. ‘You really have this lovely daughter,’ I told myself. ‘She really exists. She’s your own flesh and blood, and exactly the kind of daughter you would have picked out of a whole lineup of women. And she seems to like you, too.’ It made it all worthwhile again. And then I thought I’d like to have something of yours near me, to touch something you had touched. So I came in here and opened that drawer, thinking I’d maybe take one of your pretty handkerchiefs, and that’s when I found those. The odd thing was that, the minute I laid eyes on them, I knew the kind of things I’d find inside. I’ve written a few letters to women in my time. I knew it would be better not to open them, but by that time I couldn’t stop myself. It’s just like that bottle in there. I know once I break the seal I’m a goner, but when a certain point is reached, there’s no going back. What are you crying for? You have nothing to cry about. You have your whole life ahead of you. Think of all the Bible reading you can do.” The sarcasm had crept back into his voice, rich and deadly. “Think of all the *other* things you can do.” His eyes shone and he took a deep, deliberate breath, and I knew he was preparing his killing blow. At that moment he was like an actor, he had me totally in his thrall.

“But what I can’t understand,” he said, “is why you say you’re happy at that school. That strict, maidenly school where the girls are shut up at eleven, and the Sigma Chis sing downstairs from a proper distance. I mean, isn’t it rather like bolting the barn door after the horse has been stolen?”

He turned abruptly and left the room. He slammed the door to his room, and I heard him—deliberately loudly, I thought—unscrew a bottle

cap and slosh whisky into a glass. I put my head down into the pillows and sobbed. Even as I went on crying, I was planning how I would pack up and leave that night. I would take everything—yes, the handkerchiefs and the unfortunate letters in which the Air Force man had described the charms of my body in treacherous detail. I would flush those letters piecemeal down one of the powerful Lovegood toilets, which is what I should have done in the first place.

“In a few minutes, my father was back. He stood over me, arms dangling at his sides, tears running down his face.

“Can you ever forgive me? You’re all I have.”

“You’re all *I* have.”

“No, that’s not true,” he said sadly. “You have your mother. You’d be in a sorry mess if all you had to depend on in this world was me.”

“That’s not true. You’ve changed my life. You made *me* have something worth being good for.”

“You’re good enough as you are. You’re a perfectly normal, healthy young woman. I don’t know what I expected. That rotgut puts terrible words in my mouth.”

“Don’t drink anymore.”

“I won’t. I stayed off it for two years. Come watch me pour it down the drain.”

“And I’ll destroy those awful letters,” I said magnanimously, leaping up from the bed.

But he dismissed this idea with a weary wave of his hand and, suddenly looking ill, staggered from the room. Presently I heard him retching in the bathroom. The toilet flushed several times, and then he came out and went to his room. He slept for several hours, during which time I tore the letters quietly into small pieces and stuffed them into a side-pocket of my suitcase. I certainly did not want to risk stopping up his toilet with them.

Later that evening, we drove out to a diner on the highway and had sandwiches and coffee. He had wet-combed his hair, and it lay flat on his head, giving him a chastened look. As he sorrowfully stirred his coffee, he looked up at me from time to time with a wry, sheepish smile. His breath now reeked of Listerine.

“You look as though you’d just lost your last friend,” I said, trying to cheer him up.

“I probably have,” he replied.

We were tender and careful with each other the rest of the weekend. But we both knew our father-daughter idyll would never be quite the same.

"It seems to me there are two kinds of goodness in this world," I wrote in my end-of-term essay for Miss Petrie. "There is the docile, innocent kind that comes from never having tasted the apple, never having had any hardship or challenge, in your safe paradise, to even tempt you to want to taste it. And then there is another kind—far more difficult and admirable, in my opinion—that evolves out of a person's individual experience. A person lives, learns, fails, makes errors and foolish mistakes, even sins: But I do not think this necessarily means that that person is "defaced, deflowered" and cursed to death, as Adam tells Eve she is (Bk.IX, PL) before he, too, tastes the fruit. On the contrary, this person might determine all the harder to shape a life full of discipline and meaning. I respect this self-chosen, hard-won goodness more than I respect the namby-pambies who have never had a fright when they looked into the mirror and saw where their lives were leading them. Have they ever really looked at their natures, or do they just docilely accept authority's word for what their natures are? For natures are as varied as individual fingerprints, and what may be good for my roommate might be shirking the real challenges for me. Or vice-versa, of course. Besides, if goodness only means "innocence," if it only means never experimenting, never straying from the accepted paths, then the whole concept of redemption—on which Christianity is founded—becomes meaningless."

"You have plunged into deep waters here," Miss Petrie wrote under my 'A-minus,' and I admire your courage. I, too, have worried over the 'different kinds' of goodness and concluded, as you seem to be in the process of doing, that there is no formula for the way I know I must live—which sometimes makes it very hard. The 'minus' is because of all the split infinitives. You really have to watch those."

It was January and my father and Fiona Petrie still had not met. There had not even been an opportunity for me to prepare the ground. Shortly before Christmas vacation, it had been discovered that my wisdom teeth were impacted, and, since I was still covered under my stepfather's hospitalization insurance, it was decided that I would go to visit my mother for Christmas and have a dental surgeon remove all four teeth under anesthetic at the hospital. "I'll miss you, of course," said my father, when I

phoned him to tell him the news, “but God knows I can’t compete with a paid-up Blue Cross policy.” He had chuckled softly over the phone, and I suspected he was secretly relieved to have a little breather from me after the Thanksgiving scene.

I did not tell my mother about it, partly because I didn’t want her to fear for my safety around a father who drank, but mainly because the scene—and the drinking—might be fairly attributed to my own sneaky behavior. I had let my father think I was innocent and “unspoiled” when I wasn’t. But, as I lay in the hospital bed for a day and a night, I went over and over what had happened, and had to admit to myself that if I had had it to do over—starting from the moment I had been re-united with my father—I would have done nothing differently: except destroy those letters. Did that make me a liar and a hypocrite? I supposed so. But what had been done had been done. If my father had been so set on keeping his prize horse safe in the barn, then maybe he should have stayed around all those years and looked after it. Besides, what business was anybody’s private love life to anybody else? I hadn’t questioned him about what he and Myrna did until 5 A.M. up in “W.O.’s” garage apartment.

Of course, things were different for men. But why were they different? Why were fillies cautioned to stay in the barn and stallions encouraged to romp about the fields, sowing wild oats? Why had I been so careful to pretend I was still in the barn, when I had been outside to have a look around? The more I thought over my motives for playing the innocent ingenue, the more I realized they probably boiled down to a single thing: my market value. Was Lovegood College, then, behind all its traditions and candlelit ceremonies and quaint, maidenly rules, simply a very successful market for brides? Judging from the number of engaged sophomores—judging from the hallowed place we’d made for ourselves in the college-boy jingles—it certainly seemed possible.

My father had asked, in his *coup de grâce*, why I said I was happy at that school. *Was I happy?* Most of the time I was. There were small irritations—such as the night Hermione Broadstead had cried because I was reading with a flashlight under my covers after lights out. I was torturing her, she said, because she had to decide whether or not it was her duty, under the honor code, to report me. Hermione was nineteen years old. Shouldn’t people of nineteen have more serious ethical problems on their mind? But I had turned off my flashlight because I was fond of Hermione

with her old-fashioned dependability and her generosity (she was always slipping “surprises” under her roommates’ pillows) and even the ubiquitous little heart-shaped lavender sachets she scattered all over our closets and drawers. In a way, she was like Lovegood: she stood for a safety and a simplicity that I hadn’t quite had enough of yet.

Several weeks into the spring semester, I came out of classes one morning to find a telephone message in my mailbox: my father had phoned saying he would be driving up that afternoon and hoped he could see me and take me out to dinner. He would arrive sometime between four-thirty and five.

I took this to be a sign of reconciliation. We had not seen each other since the Thanksgiving weekend, although we had exchanged several cheerful and newsy letters—carefully avoiding any reference to ‘the evening.’ Now he was exercising perfect tact, I thought, by coming up for the afternoon like this, rather than suggesting I come home with him for another weekend. This way, we could feel each other out, quietly looking into each other’s eyes over a table in a restaurant, assessing how we stood with each other before we started over. I must wear just the right dress.

As I came out of the mailroom, I saw Miss Petrie floating ahead of me in her swinging skirt and high heels. What was I waiting for? Wouldn’t this afternoon, when my father and I were beginning again, also be an ideal time to instigate another beginning?

“Miss Petrie!”

She stopped and waited for me. By now, a definite bond of affection had been established between us, and she always gave me a pleased and rather possessive smile when I sought her out.

I told her my father was coming to the school late that afternoon and if she was still around it would mean a lot for me to have him meet her. She said she’d be delighted, and would wait for us in the upstairs parlor, where she would be waiting for Miss Olafson anyway, since this was one of those days the gym teacher stayed late to give private tennis lessons on our new indoor court.

A little after four-fifteen, I put on my beige lambswool polo coat and climbed the stairs to the fourth floor. It had come into my romantic imagination that I would stand out on the top balcony, between the two central columns, and watch for my father’s car as it came down the hilly street

on which we had first approached this school together. I remembered how he had looked admiringly up at the imposing facade and said, "Now that must have been some place to live." I had a superstitious wish for him to look up and see me standing there all alone in the coat he had bought for me, a devoted daughter looking small and protected between the mammoth white columns of the old plantation home.

Many cars came down the hill, but no black-and-white Mercury Montclair. My hands grew cold in the raw air, and the colors of the cars became harder to make out as the early winter dusk closed in.

A car came into the college grounds, but it was an old green Studebaker, and I resumed my fruitless scan of the distant cars descending the hill. The car door of the Studebaker slammed, and the *crunch, crunch* of a man's footsteps approached below on the gravel. I looked down and recognized my father's loose, rolling walk. Everything looked darker about him, and then I realized it was because he was wearing a dark overcoat and I had grown used to him in light summer suits. I started to call out to him, but he looked so absorbed in his thoughts; I was afraid it might startle, or even anger, him if I were suddenly to shout "hey!" or "yoo hoo!" Besides, the whole point was for him to have seen me first. But why was he driving that undistinguished old Studebaker?

I rushed down the four flights of stairs and found him chatting politely with the girl on reception duty. "Oh, good girl," he said, when he saw me in my coat, "you're all ready to go." He seemed happy to see me, but his face fell a little when I told him I wanted him to step upstairs for just a few minutes and meet Miss Petrie. "She's my favorite teacher," I said, "and I admire her more than just about any woman I know."

"Well," he said, squaring his shoulders and making the best of it, "by all means, let me meet this paragon. It's just that I promised to be back at a sensible hour tonight, and I want us to have a nice long dinner."

"It won't take very long," I assured him. But my hopes fell a little. Maybe I should have waited and introduced them at a later time. But wasn't time, more than ever, of the essence when he was already "promising" somebody to be home at a sensible hour?

Miss Petrie was sitting in one corner of the sofa, grading papers on her lap. The upstairs parlour, with its flowered chintzes and soft lamps and hunting prints, was a cozy, congenial room, and the English teacher, with her dainty gold-framed reading glasses, looked as relaxed as if she were bent over her work in her own home.

When I introduced my father to her, she cordially extended her right hand to him, at the same time giving a little push to the glasses, which fell gracefully to her bosom and hung upside down from the grosgrain ribbons to which they were fastened.

"I've heard so much about you," she said, in her solemn cello-voice, "and need I tell you it was all glowing? Please sit down."

"Well, my daughter seems to admire you pretty glowingly, too," he said. He sat down in a wing chair perpendicular to the sofa, on the other side of Miss Petrie's lamp. I sat down beside Miss Petrie on the sofa.

They were both well-brought-up people who knew how to fill up silence with formal compliments and pleasantries. She told him I resembled him remarkably and he told her it was kind of her to say so—for his sake. She told him it was a pleasure for her to have me in her class. "I oughtn't to say this in front of her, but I look forward to her papers just to see what she's going to say next. Her mind works in such interesting ways."

"I would like to see some of those papers," said my father, and then we both looked away from each other. Remembering, no doubt, that he had already seen some other "papers" which involved me.

There followed a silence that must be filled up.

"Did you—" Miss Petrie began, addressing my father.

"Are you—" he began at the same time.

Then they both laughed uneasily. "You first," he said.

"No, I insist. *You* first."

"I was only going to ask if you were by any chance one of the Beaufort Petries."

"I am indeed." She sounded pleased. "I am one of the few still left. Too many girls ran in the family. At least," and she smiled ruefully, "I've held on to the name."

"Yes!" replied my father animatedly. Then he seemed to feel he had been too animated. He sank back into the wing chair, looking pensive.

There was a very long silence in which we all sat looking very interested in what anybody might say next.

Then in bounded Miss Olafson in her coat and tennis shoes, her tennis racquet in its case under her arm.

"Well, well," she said, grinning, "I'm so glad I'm not too late to meet the glorious father." My father, who was on his feet at once, offered his hand to her hearty grip.

Then they talked tennis for a few minutes, Miss Petrie looking from one to the other with interest and relief. We were all on our feet by then.

"That wasn't so bad," said my father, as we headed towards the parking lot. "They're both nice women. The Petries are a very distinguished family. I often heard my mother speak of them. *She* seems a sad person, though. Now that Olafson is a cheerful old girl."

"What happened to your demonstrator?" I asked, as he opened the creaking door on the passenger side of the Studebaker and waved me in with a mock bow.

"Ah, it was never 'my' demonstrator. It was W.O.'s demonstrator. We sold it to a man in town who said he admired the way I looked in it and maybe some of the look would rub off on him. Now W.O. says I have to look good in this for awhile, until we can get it off the used car lot. Hop in. With our combined beauty, we ought to be able to transform it into a desirable chariot in no time."

Over dinner, he went on in this mocking, high-flown manner, and I couldn't decide whether he was in arrogantly high spirits or desperately low spirits which he camouflaged with this lordly, sarcastic banter.

Over dessert he told me had some bad news and some good news. Which would I prefer to hear first?

"The bad," I said. "Then there will be something to look forward to."

"Well, I *hope* there will," he replied in the gentlest tone he had used all evening.

The bad news was that he had "overextended himself" this year, and, since the car business was terrible at the moment, I was going to have to contribute . . . I was going to have to contribute quite a bit . . . if I wanted to stay at that happy college.

The good news was that he and Myrna had been married last weekend.

That summer I earned money as a lifeguard at a girls' camp. During my sophomore year at Lovegood, I was the recipient of financial aid kindly found for me through the president, that same agreeable figure who had served us lemonade on a hot July day and invited my father to remove his jacket. For part of the money I was obliged to work in the library, shelving books and making bulletin board displays, which I enjoyed a lot. The other part of the money came from one of the college's many endow-

ment scholarships. All I had to do for that part was to write a thank-you letter to the man who had established the scholarship in honor of his mother, who had been a Lovegood girl.

During my sophomore year at Lovegood, I visited my father, but not as frequently as the previous year. He and Myrna put up a cheerful married front, but he often wore the sheepish look I had seen that night in the diner after our scene, and, as for Myrna, she became graver and more dignified and hardly ever giggled anymore.

I slept at my aunt's house when I visited them, and after we had all had supper and sat around and talked, and my father and Myrna got in their Studebaker—which W.O. had decided to give to my father (as a reward for marrying his sister-in-law?)—I would get undressed and go to bed and my aunt would come in and sit in a rocking chair with her knitting and literally talk me to sleep. She made fun of herself for being a lonely old woman crazy for company, but, all the same, she would tell me, there were lots of old stories she could tell about my father, stories I might be glad I had heard some day, even if I had yawned through the telling. One story she told me was about when they were all children: she and the Judge and the brother who had died during an operation and my father. Everybody was in the kitchen one evening, helping their mother dry the supper dishes, everybody but my father, that was. *He*, the youngest, the precious last-born, was standing outside, his back to the house, watching the sunset in a dreamy, faraway manner. "Make him come in and help," demanded my aunt, but their mother had said, "Let him be, let him be. He is such a different child, my baby, and one day, you wait and see, he will be a great man."

My aunt told me that my father was by nature a perfectionist and it made him hard on people. "But the person in all the world he's hardest on is himself," she said.

My aunt also told me that it had been a good thing that Myrna had a little income of her own. "I don't know what they would have done without it," said my aunt. "Your father really overextended himself last year, but he wanted you to be a carefree college girl. I told him you were perfectly able to help out, and so you are."

I graduated with a 4.0 average from Lovegood College and threw my roses into the fountain. I never did get into the Lovegood Christian Asso-

ciation. Because of my excellent grades I was able to get a full scholarship to Chapel Hill (where the rules were less stringent, and the ratio of men to women was 10 to 1; the reason why, in those days, women were not allowed to enter the university until they were juniors: the temptation of all those boys would be devastating, the authorities felt).

I remained friends with Miss Petrie, and got to like Miss Olafson a lot, too. They sometimes invited me, during my second year at Lovegood, to go home with them for supper. Then Miss Olafson would drive me back to school. They had a warm comfortable apartment, and Miss Olafson did all the cooking, as she said Miss Petrie's lack of co-ordination also extended to kitchen matters. She teased Miss Petrie about it. The first time they showed me the upstairs of their apartment, I didn't know what to say when Miss Olafson pointed out their bedroom. There was just one double bed. But then Miss Olafson explained they used the other bedroom for Miss Petrie's library and study. "Fiona stays up late grading papers," the gym teacher said with her friendly grin. "Me, thank God, I leave my work at school."

A few years later, I met my old history teacher Miss McCorkle on a bus, and she told me she was now Mrs. Snyder. She had met her husband, a widower, in the Adult Sunday School Class at the Presbyterian Church to which we all used to march, wearing our white gloves and our pillbox hats with their little wisps of veil. We got to talking about old Lovegood girls, who had gone on to what college and married whom, and then she told me that Miss Olafson and Miss Petrie had gone. "Carol Olafson got an offer from a college—one of those offers you just can't refuse—and Fiona stayed on at Lovegood for another year," said Mrs. Snyder, *née* McCorkle, "but she pined her heart out all year, and now she's gone to join her, even though there was no teaching job for her in that town."

I sat there beside my old history teacher thinking: so it probably wouldn't have worked out with my father anyway.

"And how is your father?" asked Mrs. Snyder, thinking she was getting us onto a more cheerful subject.

I had to tell her he had died during my junior year.

"Good heavens! That fine figure of a man? What was it—heart attack?"

I told her no, actually it had been "by his own choice." That was the phrase I used in those days. I explained to her that it had been coming for a

long time, that he had been a perfectionist and life had disappointed him, but most of all he had disappointed himself. On top of that, business got very bad, and there was a serious drinking problem. His second wife had tried to save him, but he hadn't wanted to be saved.

"Well, I'm sorry to hear this," said the history teacher. She looked sternly out the window of the bus. "But I will certainly pray for him," she said, after a minute. "And Mr. Snyder will, too."

In the recent Lovegood Alumnae Bulletin in which I saw that Mrs. Elizabeth McCorkle Snyder has given a memorial donation "in memory of Miss Carol Olafson, former P.E. and Health teacher," I also noted that the college had reached its \$5.4 million capital fund-raising drive a year early. My donation is included among those dollars. I have given money faithfully over the years to that college, adding to the amount each time my own fortunes increased. How I would explain my loyalty to Lovegood to somebody like that stylish, cynical woman on the airplane, I don't know. I probably couldn't give a cynical listener any satisfactory answer.

But I tell myself it is for a variety of reasons, some idealistic, some sentimental.

Like that old Lovegood family daughter in the school pageant who, in her quaking voice, tells Dr. Manley Phipps, enlightened Presbyterian educator, I, too, could say: "I hope that future generations of Lovegood girls will be as happy and carefree as I was in that house." Or words to that effect.

I also like the idea of some girl like myself—her heart divided between the traditions and glories of the past and the uncertain demands of the future—leaning her cheek against one of those magnificent white columns and knowing she may dream and study and play the innocent ingenue a little longer.

But perhaps most of all I cherish the image of some father—beset by the bitter intelligence of how soon youth is over, how sour some dreams may turn—who nevertheless can lay his head down on his pillow and rest secure in the knowledge that his daughter rests and dreams in a protected and honorable place, gathering her young strengths for the coming fray.