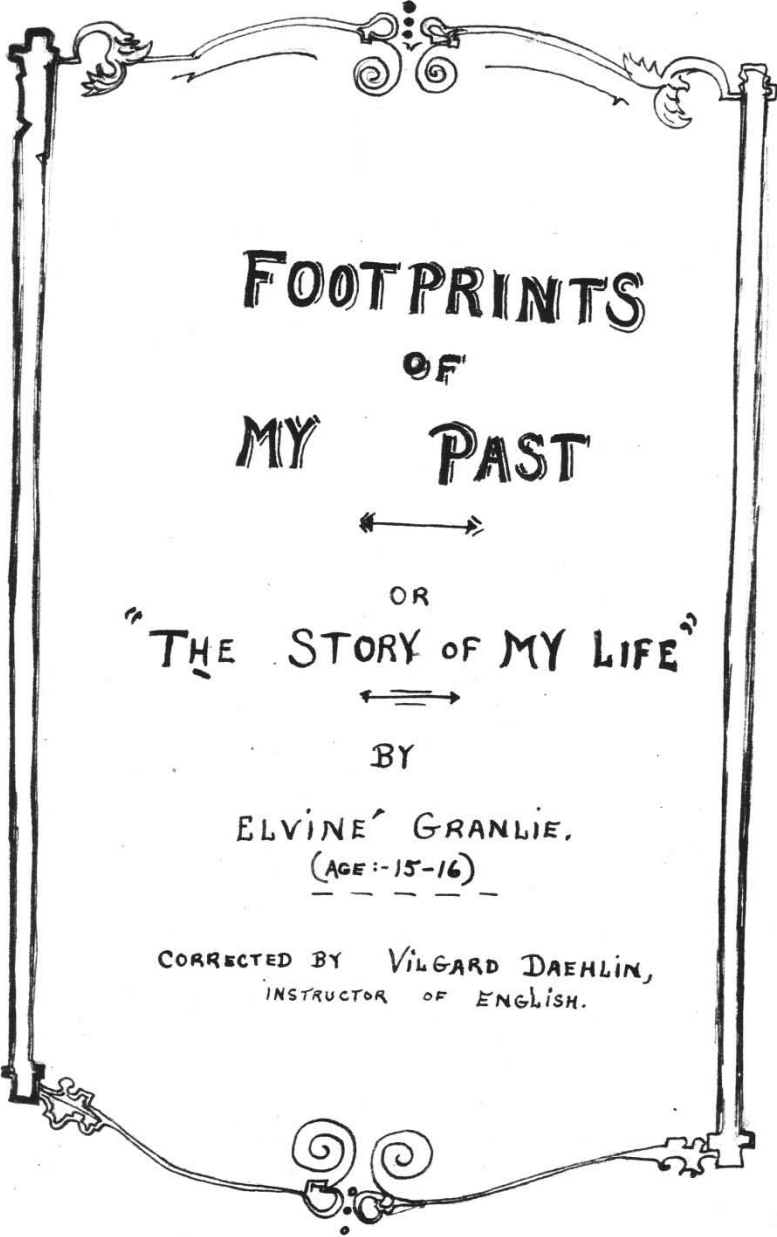


# FOOTPRINTS



MY PAST



FOOTPRINTS  
OF  
MY PAST



OR  
"THE STORY OF MY LIFE"



BY

ELVINE GRANLIE,  
(AGE: 15-16)

CORRECTED BY VILGARD DAEHLIN,  
INSTRUCTOR OF ENGLISH.

.....  
AND THUS SHALL EACH MAN PASS  
TO OLD AGE FROM HIS PRIME  
LEAVING ONLY FOOTPRINTS IN THE  
SANDS OF TIME.....

*An exceptional piece  
of work  
W. G. D. D. D. D.*

*Ax*

## CHAPTER I

UNDER THE BLUE SKY FAR ABOVE,  
CLOSE TO THE PRAIRIE LANDS,  
THERE IS A WORSHIPPED, HALLOWED PLACE  
WHERE MY CHILDHOOD HOME STILL STANDS.  
OH, FOR THE YEARS WE SPENT TOGETHER!  
OH, FOR OUR CARE-FREE HEARTS!  
OH, FOR THE THINGS WE GREW TO LOVE  
THAT FROM OUR MEMORY NEVER PARTS!



*Winter had come. The bitter north wind swept fiercely over the prairies. It howled dismally and tore at the corner of the little sod shanty that my father had built there years ago. The row of trees that bordered on the north side stood still and frozen. It was always so in North Dakota when winter came. Every living thing sought shelter from the blizzards that raged all winter long. Even the shaggy coyotes that howled on the hill tops at night huddled in silent groups in some sheltered place. Cattle and horses were often lost in the storm. The early settlers did not venture out from their shanties or log cabins for days at a time -- they shivered round their fires when the whirling snow came down, marking the beginning of a long hard winter.*

*Time and again, I have heard my father tell of the blizzards that ravaged the country in the pioneer days. Many a staunch and brave*

*pioneer lost his life in the storm. Yet winter was glorious, and to me it shall always be so. Often as I hear the wind howl around the house at night, it seems like a spirit wailing in prison for the wild untamed places, where man's hand has not marred Nature's grandeur. In my dreams, I have seen those places. I have always loved the wailing of the wind, the fury of the storm and the howling of the coyote, for it was at a time like this, on December, thirteenth, nineteen sixteen, that I was born in the sod shanty on the prairie.*

*\* \* \* \* \**

*My father came from Norway in 1905. He was born in Mo Ranen in 1882. His parents were Lars Larsen and Ellen Anna Olsen. At the early age of eight, he had to seek employment out of his home. as his parents had a very large family to support and were quite poor. He worked at herding cattle and goats in the dark forests and mountainous regions of Norway. After attending grammar school and graduating, he began making plans to sail to America and make his fortune. He sailed for America in 1904, long after his father's death, and was likely to never to return to his native land of youth again. His sister, Olga, immigrated to America, settled in McKenzie County, North Dakota, and kept house for him until his marriage. An older brother, Alfred, has traveled extensively in Europe and America for many years, and is a fervent, enthusiastic Evangelist minister, preaching a "living Christ to a dead world." But what a world of difference there is in my uncle Alfred, with his cold tact and self-satisfied righteousness, compared to my father, Oluf, with his open-hearted, sympathetic and emotional nature and his very kindly understanding of human faults.*

*Of the rest of my father's family, there is not much to say. They all remained in Norway to shape their own destinies and live their own lives. Often, I know, my father longs for his childhood haunts and boyhood friends in the beautiful "land of the midnight sun." Often, his heart is heavy to think they are gone and all that he loves lives only in memories of "Granlie Norge."*

*My mother was born in Gunnarn, Sweden in 1881. Her maiden name was Esther Marie Ostrom and her mother's maiden name was Anne Frederica Hansen. As mother was the only girl in the family, she grew to be a belle in "beau monde." Under her mother's and grandmother's (Karen Ulrica Nilsohn) care, she grew to early womanhood with "frilly lace and rich silken gowns." After attending grammar school, she studied sewing and was known for her skill as a seamstress, as well as her ability to serve the "table d'hote" in charming style at the very fashionable "hotel garnis."*

*She came to America (after visiting and traveling extensively) on "the Empress of Britain." She went to visit Olga Larsen, her girlhood chum, and then it was that she became engaged to my father, Oluf Larsen Granlie. They were married at Arnegard, North Dakota, in 1912. My mother was then thirty years of age.*

*\* \* \* \* \**

*In the first years of their married bliss, they lived on my father's "sod shanty" on the claim. The hardships they endured and the perils they braved in their earlier years are only symbols of that sturdy, fiery blood inherited from their Viking ancestors.*

*My father farmed with oxen, as did his fellow pioneers. Young and filled with hope, they looked ahead to the future with laughing hearts. At first, they were sadly homesick for their Scandinavian homes, but Time, with its burdens of care and labor, gradually made them forget. Today, my hard-working parents can look back over the past as one of heavy toil, suffering and labor in the heat of the day, but they also have thankful hearts in reaping the fruits of a duty well done.*

*I am of Scandinavian descent and do certainly possess the burning passion and ambition of my Viking parents. However, I am French in my love of pleasure and artistic traits.*

*My only sister, Nora Linea, was born on July 12, 1913, and is the first child in our family. She was a rather puny and tiny little girl in infancy, and was two years old when I came to join her. Together we passed our babyhood in sunshine and laughter. We played in the sand by the side of the shanty and baked our mud pies in the warm sun. We traveled every hill and dale within a mile's breadth from home when our short, stocky legs were strong enough to carry us. On summer days, we rolled in the creeks nearby, and kicked and splashed in childish glee. We chased colored butterflies that flew across our paths. We trailed the gophers to their burrows and sought the tadpoles in the still pools.*

*In our play, we were in close contact with nature and began building up strong bodies and active minds for the strife and toil in life. Years passed and my father's farming progressed. He planned a new home, and when I was three years of age, we left the little sod house and moved into our new home, which father had built with his own hands, a few rods south of the sod shanty.*

*My mother well remembers the day we left the sod shanty. In the evening, she washed us and prepared to wrap us into bed for our first night in the new house. After my bath, I took my night dress on my arm and asked mother if we weren't going back home soon. Little did I know then, that I would be in that new home for years to come and would grow to love it better than any other place on earth!*

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## CHAPTER II

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER  
ALL MY HAPPY CHILDHOOD DAYS,  
AND THE HOME I KNEW AND LOVED  
MORE THAN ANY OTHER PLACE.  
I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER  
THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE ON THE HILL.  
ALL MY TEACHERS AND MY CLASSMATES  
LINGER IN MY MEMORY STILL.



*Our new home was built on a long level stretch of prairie. On the north and east side, rose rolling hills. To the west, one could get a good view of the surrounding lands. Even the wind mill of our nearest neighbor about a mile away could be seen towering over the little hills. A long row of poplars bordered the house on the north side. In the summer time, flowers bloomed in the shade of those trees. Training vines climbed over the fences. Wild sweet peas and dandelions grew in delightful confusion there. On early mornings, when the dew sparkled on their petals, they filled the air with their sweet fragrance. To me, it resembled the Greek gardens that grew in the time of Dionysus, the god of the vineyard.*

*On the west, a long road led past a row of willows and out on the fields. The barn and other buildings were built to the south. Beyond*

*these, was a country road leading through broad green fields through creeks and over hills and, at last, out on the main road.*

*My early childhood was not any different from that of normal child. As we sisters were nearly the same age, we found enough to interest us, and time never hung heavily on our hands.*

*When I was about five years old, my older brother, Oscar, was born. He was a stout little baby with very curly hair and dark eyes. As he grew to be a little older, he became my child playmate.*

*About one year after the birth of Oscar, my sister Nora started school. The school house was about one and a half miles southwest of our place, and Nora trudged back and forth every day, carrying her little lunch pail. This left me without any companion and I was left to my own devices. After I reached school age, I was fascinated at the blower-type wood furnace at school. In the winter, we moved our seats up around it while we studied.*

*My first teacher was Mr. Evanger, a tall man with small, sunken eyes and a crooked nose. The first book he gave me to read was a primer with many colored pictures of dogs, flags, flowers and trees. I studied my phonics eagerly, so that I should soon learn to read the stories. Patiently, I plodded through the*



*book. It opened a new world of fancy and imagination for me. I was taken out of myself and with deep absorbing interest, devoured all the books I could read.*

*My first years passed rapidly and when vacation came again, with sunshine and flowers, I needed the rest very much.*

## CHAPTER III

WHEN THE BIRDS FLY LOW IN THE HEAVENS,  
AND THE SPRING FLOWERS BLOOM ALL DAY,  
DING! DONG! COMES THE PEAL OF THE SCHOOL BELLS  
CALLING CHILDREN FROM THEIR PLAY.  
AH, WHEN THE SCHOOL HOUSE STANDS THERE SILENT,  
AND THE BELLS SHALL PEAL NO MORE,  
WE'LL BE CALLED AGAIN BY RINGING BELLS  
TO THE HAPPILY SEA-LESS SHORE!



*Autumn came again and with it came the pealing of the school bells and the message that vacation was over. After three long months of rest and play, I entered my second school year.*

*My brother, Oscar, started school that year and Nora was in her sixth year. Our teacher was Mr. Day, a young able man who ruled his thirteen pupils with a firm hand. By his help, I completed the third and fourth grade in my second year of school. I studied hard and was very fond of reading books and poetry. That school year was not a time of perpetual bliss, however, because of the older pupils bullying, and they kept us in constant fear of their teasing. I shall not dwell upon the many insults and injuries we received. Nevertheless, as "every rose must have a thorn," we endured it. Mr. Day was my teacher the next year also. I studied even harder. At the end of the year, I received a diploma and a*

*story book as a gift from my teacher for reading the most books of all pupils that year.*



*When I think back to the times now long past that I have spent as a pupil in that little school house, all the plodding through arithmetic, history and grammar that seemed such a hardship to me then, now gives me pleasure. The times we ate our lunch in cool shade of the school house, and on hot summer days, when we took our books out on the long green grass and refreshing shade to study our lessons, I shall never forget. The times we played "Washington's poke" and "Run, Sheep, Run!" around the house, the long, steep hill that we coasted down in winter time and the large sand bank by the road, where we built houses and long, paved roads, are in mind as emblems of the years gone by.*

*Almost every year at Christmas time, we gave a program at school for the entertainment of our parents. At a time like this, we prepared long beforehand on the dialogues, songs and recitations we were to give. I live again in the hushed excitement, where we stood behind the curtains (which were sheets borrowed and hung up for that purpose) before the program was to begin. We peered out at the audience with awed faces, and giggled and pinched each other to keep from laughing. I remember well as if it was yesterday how I marched out on the stage in a clean, starched dress and began in a slightly trembling voice, "What means this glory round*

*our feet,' the Magi mused, 'More bright than morn'," and how I ended in a ringing voice quivering with feeling. I have always liked to recite and nothing gives me more pleasure than to take the role of some imaginary being and mould it to reality. It is that feeling that causes me to give vent to an inborn liking to write fairy tales and compose poetry above all else.*

## CHAPTER IV

SLOWLY THE WEARY PILGRIM TRODS  
THE LONG, STEEP AND STONE WAY --  
THROUGH THE DARK DEPTHS OF THE TROUBLED NIGHT  
TO THE GLEAMING SUNSHINE OF THE DAY.  
TIME ROLLS ON AND THE YEARS PASS BY.  
THE PILGRIM, COLD AND STILL, IS LAID  
WITH CLASPED HANDS ON A WEARY BREAST  
TO REST IN PEACE IN A SILENT GRAVE.



*My school career has been rather short. In spite of the fact that I made it my sole duty to study in school, I missed some of the essential things in school life. Above all, I neglected my health. I was constantly, when out of school, sitting alone in some dark corner, pouring over a novel or some poetry. Needless to say, I ruined my eyesight and have regretted it many times in later years.*

*In my fourth year of school, I entered the sixth grade with Miss Benson as my instructor. This school year was not much different from any other. However, when five months of that term had passed by, I was suddenly taken very ill.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*On February ninth, after my forenoon classes were over and we had just finished our luncheon, I was walking from my desk to the*

*library when the whole world seemed to come to a sudden stop. All was darkness before my eyes and I felt as if I was whirling headlong into space. I clutched at the doorway in the hall for support, and gradually the world was righted again. Pale and ill, I finally gained my seat.*

*Miss Benson excused me as soon as she heard that I was ill. I lay down in her coat until school was dismissed, and by that time, I had a high fever. I shall never forget when I was brought home and tumbled into bed where I was to spend four long miserable months.*

*I have still a confused recollection of that illness. I dimly remember the long painful days where I lay with my face to the wall "like a nun shunning the world." Of course, the doctor came and the neighbors offered their sympathy. Then I grew to find the value of a good father. Time and again, he sat by my bed, rubbing my tired back gently until I fell asleep. My mother also watched me by my bedside. It seems that nothing on earth can strengthen the family ties more than when one of the loved ones is caught up from the very clutches of death at the edge of the grave and restored to life.*

*As I have said before, this illness was the turning point of my life. I was left out of all childhood play, and grew to be a serious and thoughtful girl. I pondered at the mysteries of life. I thought of the earnest and deep things that have mystified man since the time of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, and which remain unsolved as yet.*

*During the long months of my recovery, when I was strong enough to sit up in bed, I began writing to pass my time away. Often, I could not sleep during the night and I would lie on my bed staring wide-eyed*



*at the low lamp that burned at the side of my bed, composing poetry and trying to find words that would rhyme. Then when I hit upon some words that were fitting, I would turn up my lamp, flooding the room with light and write the poem down lest I should forget it before morning came. (The first poem I ever wrote before this was title "A Little Prayer", which began something like this: "I have a father on earth and a Father in Heaven, Both are the ones that I love ...." and considering that I was only seven years at the time I wrote this, it perhaps merited the praise I received.)*

*I shall never forget my father's hearty praise that day, as he read my poetry and remarked that I would surely be a poet some day. Neither will I forget how I sought refuge upstairs in later years in my thrilling sense of elation and firmly resolved in my childish mind "to try ever so hard until I should someday be a noted writer and poet."*

*Today, I still cherish that aspiration.*

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## CHAPTER V

EVERY SEASON BROUGHT US JOY,  
HAPPINESS AND LAUGHTER!  
THE MEMORIES OF OUR SPLENDID WEST  
SHALL CLING TO ME HEREAFTER!  
I SEE THE WAVING, GOLDEN FIELDS,  
THE COOL AND SHADY LANE.  
I WALK BENEATH THE SUNNY SKIES  
OF CHILDHOOD ONCE AGAIN.



*In May, I was well on my way to recovery. It was well known that I could not continue school that year. Miss Benson, on adding up my averages, decided that I could well pass my grade, though I had missed four months. That was a load off my mind and I believe it aided my recovery.*

*When the days became milder and the snow had gradually been sinking away, I was allowed to sit in the open door in the sunshine. The great rocker was moved out on the front porch, and when I was pillowed in it, I would sit and gaze out towards the barn yard where the chickens were scratching vigorously, the calves jumping and chasing each other, and where the tiny pigs were squealing with all their might for their mother.*

*The grass was now a pale green color and here and there purple specks were seen on the hilltops. Crocuses and butter cups bloomed everywhere. Spring was the new awakening of life for all the earth, and*

*I felt it most keenly after my long illness. After I was able to move about, I worked in my little garden on the south side of the house. I planted the delicate roses and jasmines. I trained the wild morning glories to climb up the side of the wall, and not peep in through the window. When I was not in my garden, I was upstairs singing like a lark. I wanted to be left alone with my thoughts, and always sought refuge upstairs.*

*I started all my little toys and belongings in a large trunk that had been my father's from Europe. I write in my little journal of my secret thoughts, and stored them in the lid of my trunk. I lavished all my spending money on buying treasures to fill it and proudly exhibited them to my envious companions. That trunk still stands today, filled with all the treasures that I gather by the way side in the road of life, and is a token of all my work and play in my younger years.*

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*The summer passed rapidly and soon autumn and threshing came again. Threshing is the time of year I like almost better than Christmas. I like to hear the hum of the machine as it chops the bundles into little bit of straw, and to see the grain pour out of the pipes into the wagon. At evening, the tired horses were tied to the racks while the men came stomping up to the porch, and one by one, filed into the supper table. It was with regret that I saw all the threshers leave, for I knew that they would not visit again for another year. Before that time, school would have started.*

*In my last year of school, I was a thin and nervous child. I studied harder than ever, and with my teacher's help, I completed the seventh and eighth grade in one term. Miss Walla was my last and best teacher. To her, I owe my deepest affection for her kind help and advice. At the time when I was the most thoughtful and sensitive, she helped me make a success of my last year.*

*During that year, I wrote two poems which were printed in our school paper, and received a prize for a fairytale "The Discontented Pumpkin." This encouraged me greatly and with Miss Wall's advice, I tried to improve my writing.*



*I graduated at the age of twelve. When I left the old school house, I couldn't express my feelings. Joy mingled with sorrow. There I had spent many joyful hours in my short school career and had shed my bitter tears over my disappointment.*

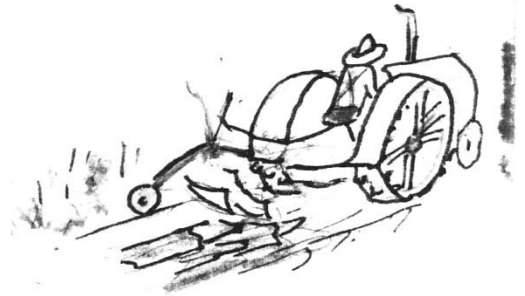
*I can still hear the faint chorus of voices as we ran down the familiar path the last time:*

*"We can play with zest  
For we passed the test  
And we aren't coming back at all."*

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## CHAPTER VI

LOW HANGS THE PALE BLUE SKY ABOVE,  
AND GRASS IS GREEN BELOW.  
THE CALM WIND STIRS THE BUDDING LEAVES,  
ROCKING THEM TO AND FRO.  
LIKE A COOL HAND UPON MY BROW,  
I FEEL THE WHISPERING BREEZE.  
AH, WHAT A LIFE IS VACATION TIME  
ON BALMY DAYS LIKE THESE!



*There is little left to tell of my life. Almost four years have passed since I left the little school house on the hill. It is true, many things have happened in that time, but it still remains the same.*

*As one sees me now, I am a freckle-faced, commonplace girl, quiet and studious. My reserved manner has led many to believe I am bashful. I have heard some say I have too good an opinion of myself, but I believe the judger is mistaken. I have ever so many faults. Though I have always tried to do what I think is right, I have made mistakes because it is only human. I am never myself nor at ease with others, and I like best to be alone to think my thoughts and dream my dreams.*

*The two years that followed after I finished grade school, I spent at home. School had been too strenuous and I needed the rest to build up my health. In those years, I led an active life. I rode our horses at a dead gallop over the hills. I built little farms in the sand for my brothers. We waded in the cool creeks and made little caves in the clay*

*hills. We picked the crocuses and butter cups, and found little bird nests in the tall grass. We carried luncheon to the men who worked in the fields and trailed the tractor and the plow, rolling in the soft dark soil it overturned.*

*When autumn came and threshing was over, we burned thistles in the fields and chased the slow field mice through the stubble. We rolled and jumped in the new threshed stacks, and rode home on the high hay loads at noon. The air was sweet and fragrant with the incense of new-mown hay.*

*Then at night time, we were lulled to sleep by the pitter patter of the rain drops on the roof or the low rumble of thunder in the distance. Through the open window, we heard the clear cry of the killdeer out in the cool night, and the cracking of the frogs in the creeks.*

*When the snow came down, we coasted and rolled down the long sloping hills. Sometimes we played upstairs with our toys. I tended my large mamma doll with real hair and seeing eyes, with motherly care. My brothers played head of the house. When we tired of this, we built long roads in the beds, and drove the play cars over them at high speeds. Always, we were passing our time away without trouble or worry, and this is what makes my vivid memories of childhood so dear to me.*

*I am sorry to say that life was not all bliss. In spite of the fact that we children played very happily together, we had many bitter quarrels. These do not give me any pleasant memories, but I feel that I cannot overlook them as I have undertaking to tell as much as I can of my life.*

*Our fierce Viking-passions and high-strung, sensitive personalities have made our childhood disagreements one of agony and bitter wrath.*

*I cannot begin to relate all that we four children have experienced. It would fill a novel much larger than this or any novel ever seen, and time or paper would not allow it.*

*At the age of thirteen, I entered high school in Watford City. On resuming my studies again, my old passionate love for books was revived. I studied with enthusiasm of a sound mind, and the energy of radiant bound health. I was fascinated at first by the bustle and activity of city life. My teachers were very satisfactory and helped me make my first year of high school a success. I did not miss the honor roll more than once.*



*But I missed the active outdoor life I had led. I longed to have one grand gallop over the prairie with the cool wind blowing through my hair. I missed the family scenery and home-like places, and had it not been for the company of my brothers, I would have fared badly indeed.*

*The little school house in the country had been closed because there were not enough pupils. That winter, it stood cold and lonely on the hill. Often, I imagined it must have longed for the pattering of childish feet over the floor.*

*Mother moved into town with us and father stayed out at the farm. We rented a little house at the northwest side of town and there we spent our winter. When spring came again, we drove in our car from home every morning and evening. I passed all my subjects in the final, being exempt from two.*

*I am now in my second year of high school. I was confirmed in the Lutheran Church of Watford City, November 29, 1931. I am now centering my interests on my school work.*

*I find this life very tedious. It has become a dull routine of passing to and from classes, and of studying my lessons. I cannot seem to get anywhere in my studies for always my mind is far away where the sun hangs low on the horizon and casts its radiance over rolling hills.*

*The sunlight is streaming through the window of my room as I write this. I am alone, and except for the soft tick of the clock, all is silent. Likewise, there is sunlight in the early dawn of my life today. In another ten minutes, I shall conclude the story of my life as it has been, but I cannot help wondering when the twilight of my life falls, if it shall be a glorious sunset whose iridescent rays linger even though the sun has gone.*

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*As yet, I have no definite plans for my future. Above all else, I would like a literary career. To write books has been my favorite aspiration almost since infancy. I have had, truly, considerable instruction in English expression and plot construction. Always have I loved to study the human beings around me, and am fond of sitting back*



*from all social gatherings, and studying the characters of the people I see there. Most of the time, however, I have been disappointed in my survey of characters. I have found none outside my home that I care to be intimate with, or call my friends.*

*I know that if I write the articles of literary value, I could be a writer. What a world of sacrifice it would mean to dedicate myself to my life work, and give up all my inclinations to drift along the "easiest way"! However, it would be worth it a thousand times, "for that is the price of success."*

*Above all, I should like to travel in foreign lands and obtain subject material for my novels. In my eleventh year, we spent a few weeks of our vacation at Michigan, North Dakota. It was my first year of any travel, this trip on which our parents took us, and I enjoyed it more than all else.*

*I still vividly remember the long graveled roads we toured in our automobile, the long stretches of desolate meadows on the Indian Reservation, and the beautiful unmarred prairie lands with all the beauty of Nature in its glorious flowers and patches of cactus. I can still see the towering structures of the large cities we passed through, that so clearly bear resemblance to man's great progress. I can hear the roar and rumble of the great trains that flashed by us. They awakened in me a great love of travel, and gave birth to a strong determination in my mind to devote my life to writing and painting of wild life before man has totally destroyed it.*

*Therefore, today I resolve to be a writer. If I fail my resolution, it will not be the lack of effort on my part, but it will be the retarding, discouraging influence of the people who associate with me, and who have always scorned my literary attempts.*

*At the age of fifteen now, I have decided that no matter what happens, I shall do my best in whatever comes and mend my faults in building good morale of beautiful girlhood. Today, I am still a child, but at the age of eighteen, I will be a young woman. Then, I want to be able to look back over my childhood as having done the best I could, and look forward to the future with the determination to do better.*

*Whatever I may have done, or may do, in my youth that is wrong and foolhardy, I will never neglect the right even then.*

*This concludes the story of my life. Even though it has been far from perfect, I must hope for the best, and build a strong, upright soul. We are all merely pedestrians on the road of life, carrying a burden of faults. We must remember that the mysteries of life are ours to solve; we must bear our tribulations like patient pilgrims.*

*Then, at last the grave is but a "quiet resting place, and the end of life's long journey."*

**THE END**