

**AN AMERICAN GIRL AND
HER FOUR YEARS
IN A BOYS' COLLEGE.
[NEW YORK-1878]**

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An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College. [New York-1878] by Olive San Louie Anderson

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OLIVE SAN LOUIE ANDERSON

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[NEW YORK-1878]**

*122
From the author's collection*

AN
AMERICAN GIRL,

AND HER

FOUR YEARS IN A BOYS' COLLEGE.

And son, which is the title

BY
SOLA,

NEW YORK:
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1878.

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Annie S. Beakes
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AN AMERICAN GIRL.

CHAPTER I.

THE BENDING OF THE TWIG.

"A child of thy grandmother, Eve—a female;
Or for thy more sweet understanding, a woman."

SHAKESPEARE.

"O MOTHER, just listen to this that I found in to-day's paper! Here's my chance to go to college: 'Recognizing the equal right of both sexes to the higher educational advantages, the Board of Regents have made provision for the education of women, and they are now admitted to all the departments of the University of Ortonville on the same conditions that are required of men.' There! if that doesn't come as near being a special Providence as anything that ever happened to me! Won't it be glorious, mother? I'll study hard, and win honors, and you'll be as proud of me as if I were a boy." And Wilhelmine

Elliott stood with expectant face, while her mother said, quietly :

“ You know, Willie, that we have never quite agreed upon this subject of the higher education of women, and I could never give my consent to have a daughter of mine make herself so conspicuous as to enter an institution founded and designed only for young men. Then, if there were no other objection, it could be condemned because of the ill-effects that would result to their health; for girls cannot tread the same path that boys do without detriment to their health, as the highest medical authority may be brought forward to prove.”

“ O mother dear, how can you say that?—for not all the high medical authority in Christendom can make me believe that I was born and destined to be an invalid, all my life, because I happen to be a girl. Have I ruined my health by keeping up with Frank’s class in the high-school? Look at me,” and she drew herself up proudly, but a moment after she burst into a merry laugh as she caught sight of her face and form in the mirror opposite; for they were, certainly, a glowing refutation of the theory that girls cannot do the same work that boys do, as far, at least, as the end of a high-school course.

“ I know that you are an exception in the way of

health, Willie," replied the mother, "for which you should be very thankful; indeed, you have always been more like a boy than a girl, but now it is time that you were settling down, and paying attention to things that essentially pertain to woman's sphere."

"You look at things so differently from most mothers," said the girl, "for it was only yesterday that Mrs. Denton said to me that she would be perfectly happy if Ella were as much interested in getting an education as I seemed to be, instead of spending her time in flirtations, balls, and parties; and, on the other hand, you wish that I was like somebody else's daughter, and yet if I were like Ella you would not be satisfied with me."

"Mothers are queer things," she continued, laughingly; "they take opposite ground from the crowd who always thinks her own are the whitest, for mothers think other people's children better than their own, mine does at least; but, now in regard to this college business, you know that, since father's death, we have all been brought up with the idea that we must make our own way in the world, and what could be a better preparation for this than a good classical education; and when it is offered for the taking, it seems to me the blindest stupidity to refuse it. If you needed me at home to help you, mother,

it would be different, but you do not ; and why can't I take my part of father's estate and put it into an education, which will be my stock in trade ? ”

“ You oblige me, my daughter, to give another reason, and one outweighing all the others, that makes me unwilling to have you go away from the restraints of home, and be exposed to the temptations of college-life ; and that is the fact that you have never had a change of heart, have never taken Jesus as your Saviour, and, without this, education can be nothing but a curse. I have watched your growing tendency to unbelief with the anguish that only a mother can feel, who sees her loved ones going to destruction, and I say now and here that you can never have my consent to any step that will only make you a greater power for evil, because not begun in the fear of the Lord, which is the only true beginning of wisdom.”

“ I may as well tell you now, mother,” said Will, “ something that I have been going to tell you for a long time. I don't think that I ever can believe as you want me to in those things. I try to, but it grows more impossible every day. You have almost forced me to accept certain forms of religious belief ; but, mother, I must be free.” And the proud lip quivered. “ I do love Jesus, although I have not

been able to accept all the doctrines that you have taught me. What do we judge people by, if not by their every-day lives; and what have I done that is so bad, mother? Have I ever done a dishonest or dishonorable thing? And yet you deny me your consent and blessing when I want to do something entirely proper, and that some would even call praiseworthy, simply because I am not a professing Christian; and, therefore, you cannot trust me away from home for fear that I will bring disgrace upon you. I cannot disobey you, mother, but I feel that I am right, and once more I ask your consent to my going to college." And she stood with flushed cheeks before her mother.

As she looked at the bowed head, where threads of gray were fast taking the place of the darker locks, and as memory brought back the years in which she had been watched over and cared for tenderly by this mother, her conscience smote her, and slowly the gray eyes filled with tears at the thought that she had been the cause of adding a new pang of sorrow to that mother's heart.

"Wilhelmine," began Mrs. Elliott in a sad voice, "I never thought to hear such things from the lips of a child of mine, least of all from a daughter. You have in effect denied the Bible and Saviour;