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Henry Swan

Who I Am

When I was born, my parents were living in a large, three-story house situated in the residential district of Denver, Colorado. I was the last of three children and an ~~ol~~ only son. My father, born of a good family with but small means, had educated himself at Princeton, and, after spending one or two years as an engineer and contractor, had at last established himself in the bond business in Denver. A few years after my birth, he entered the banking business, the business in which he is still engaged. My mother too was of good stock, being the daughter of one of the early settlers in Denver. Oddly enough, both my parents are natives of Denver, although my father's family was primarily from the South and my mother's from Illinois.

My elder sister was nearly three when my second sister was born;

my birth, in May of 1913, came two years later. My second sister, being of too sweet a nature for this world, died when I was seven. I was then too young to realize the full extent of this sorrowful event; but, being the first really unhappy occurrence in an otherwise carefree life, the impression it made on me was so strong that the days immediately preceding and following her death stand out most vividly among my early memories. Between me and my remaining sister, the difference in age threw a natural gap, unmollified, as before, by my other sister. Dissimilar in almost every respect, our characters were the same in one, perhaps the most important — obstinacy. For this reason, we were seldom in harmony together, and, although quite fond of each other at heart, we were continually at swords points. As the years advanced, however, the gap has slowly closed,

until now a more amiable relationship between brother and sister would be hard to find.

From an early age I was interested in books; and, throughout my life, I have read more or less widely, passing, as all must do, through the "Motor Boys" and "Boy Allies" type of story to the more mature and classical literature. At six, I attended school for the first time, although I could at that time read. By virtue of this ability, however, I skipped several of the early grades, and found myself in a class normally two years above my age. I learned easily, however, and managed to maintain a fairly high scholastic average without a great deal of effort.

When I graduated from grade school, I entered junior high school in a class especially designed to prepare for Eastern preparatory schools many boys who were planning to

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attend such a school before entering college. In its courses, the class followed exactly the weekly bulletin sent from the Hill School. Coming as I did from a school in which I had had little or no training in art of studying, and being faced as I was, with the high standards of an eastern preparatory school, I soon realized I had dropped into a world which was over my head. The result was I became obsessed with a morbid propensity for work, to such a degree, indeed, that my health and growth suffered materially. My effort, however, was not without reward; for I obtained the highest honors of the school and had the distinction of having the highest scholastic average throughout the three years of junior high school of anyone who had graduated from the school during its six years of its existence.

All this I accomplished in spite of the fact that I was two years younger than my class mates, and the fact that we were maintaining the standard of the stiffer preparatory school instead of the usual junior high school course.

In spite of my extended and assiduous labor in this school, I spent there three of the most enjoyable years of my school life. Our class was composed of not more than sixteen, and, being in all of each other's classes for three years, we come to know one another intimately. Since we were special in studies, we came to consider ourselves special in discipline and privileges; and, whatever time not spent in class or in the principals' office, we employed, in the argon of the student, in "raising Cain."

After junior high school, I spent one year at high school in order to avoid entering Exeter

and subsequently college at too young an age. The year I spent at high school gained me little from an academic point of view. My course consisted of such subjects as Commercial Art, Typewriting, and Stenography. This year, however, was intended, not to advance me in my preparation for college, but rather to accelerate my growth and maturity. In this, I hope, this year was to some degree successful; for I obtained a working knowledge of art, of music, and of typewriting — things which lie beyond the reach of the average student preparing for college.

The following year I came to Exeter as a lower middler, still almost a year younger than the average. This discrepancy in age and maturity has proven an obstacle to me in my relations and competitions with ~~other~~ my classmates. At first, the work was difficult.

made even more so by my years idleness; but by a little diligent effort, I managed to raise my average sufficiently to merit second honors. For two years I have maintained that level by the proper cramming for tests, by a certain amount of luck, and by the minimum of study.

All my life I have enjoyed travelling, and have been fortunate to have been able to do a great deal of it. During the World War, when I was quite young, we spent a year or two in the South in order to be near my father who was stationed as a navigation instructor in the aeronautical training camp at Pensacola, Florida since he was too old to be sent overseas. Later we spent some winters in California for the sake of my mother's health. Since then, we have travelled each year during my father's vacation, and, although I have never been across the ocean, save to Bermuda, I feel that

Living in the West, so near both ~~t~~ the barren stretches of the plains and to the rugged grandeur of the mountains, I have had the opportunity of learning to love the outdoors. To hunt the startling sage-chicken ~~on~~ the rolling, sage-covered prairie, to tramp the woods, already turned to gold by the touch of autumn, searching for the monarch of the western ~~birds~~ fowls, the mountain grouse, to lie in a cold, damp blind, waiting for the wily Greenhead Mallard, and watching the earth come to life early on a chill October morning, to fish the clear, icy streams tumbling through a quiet, wooded valley over which tower the majestic, snow-capped peaks of the surrounding mountains — these, perhaps, are my greatest pleasures. Each summer, I spend as much time in the mountains as possible, and there is nothing, in my opinion, which can afford a more complete relaxation than the utter calmness

and serenity of the hills.

As a natural corollary to my love of Nature is an innate fondness of athletics. All of my family are more than usually athletic, and each excels in his or her chosen field. This is a fortunate bond between us; for, as we all like to take part in sports, we do a great many things as a family — more, indeed, than any other of my acquaintance. My favorite sport and the one in which I have attained the highest degree of efficiency is tennis. I am fond of almost all sports, however, and spend much of each ~~year~~ summer sailing, swimming, and riding on the small farm, where we spend most of the summer months.

After living as much in the outdoors as I have, one would expect a well developed, healthy body. My growth, however, was retarded by sickness when I was quite young; but in

the last few years I have grown quite tall and soon, I hope, will start to broaden out and gain a little weight.

At present, I am undecided as to what I will do after graduating from college. Success or failure in my chosen field, however, is a matter of the future; but whichever it is, I certainly will not be able to say that I did not have the advantages of a good home and good schooling.