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ELAINE GOODALE EASTMAN AND THE FAILURE OF THE FEMINIST PROTESTANT ETHIC

RUTH ANN ALEXANDER

Elaine Goodale Eastman's childhood dreams of becoming a writer were not to be fulfilled as she imagined them. Her literary talent was subverted by conflicting forces in her life to which she also subscribed but that thwarted the artistic development of that talent. Although she wrote throughout her ninety years and couldn't remember a time that she wouldn't rather write than eat, she never satisfied "the notion . . . unreasonably in the back of my head that someday I might write a book that would live."¹ If she is remembered at all it is as the wife of the Sioux physician Charles Alexander Eastman, or Ohiyesa, not in her own right.

Elaine Eastman's books have not lived. Except for her memoir, *Sister to the Sioux*, recently published by the University of Ne-

braska Press, they are out of print and virtually unknown. Under her own name, she wrote three books that she called "pot boilers" for income during her marriage.² A fourth novel, showing more literary sophistication, appeared in 1928. Two serious works were published in 1935 when she was over seventy—*Pratt the Red Man's Moses* and her best novel, *One Hundred Maples*.³ Publication of her poetry was even more fragmented. In her final compilation of poems, *The Voice at Eve*, "the scattered verses" that had appeared in magazines over half a century were "bound between covers." In the introduction to them she comments wryly, "How broken-winged they flutter and fall, beside the soaring dreams of youth."⁴

Nurtured among the meadows, brooks, and woods of the Berkshires during the waning days of transcendentalism in the 1860s and 1870s, Elaine Goodale enjoyed a New England childhood consisting of plain and frugal living in the close family circle at Sky Farm, a Thoreau-like enthusiasm for the nature and wildlife about her, and heavy doses of Shakespeare, Dickens, Hawthorne, and Longfellow from the small but select family library. Her precocious literary talent resulted in the publication of *Apple Blossoms: Verses of Two Chil-*

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dren in 1879 when she was fifteen years old.⁵ The poems were culled from the childish scribblings of Elaine and her sister Dora and received favorable comment from such critics as Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Helen Hunt Jackson.⁶

Such an auspicious blooming in the lap of Yankee culture appeared to promise a distinguished literary career for the brilliant young woman. Late in life, Eastman wondered that "no effort was made to launch me upon the journalistic or purely literary career for which I had shown most fitness." Indeed, before she was twenty, she saw herself as destined for individual achievement apart from the usual path of marriage and motherhood available to most young women of her time. She described herself as a "non-conformist, indifferent to fashion and disliking the prescribed figure, firmly molded of steel and whalebone . . . an ardent votary of dress reform long before the movement had any general support." She had no interest in romance or love, rejecting "admirers" with "unconscionable indignation."⁷

THE FEMINIST PROTESTANT ETHIC

If Elaine Goodale Eastman did not become the writer she dreamed of, the reason can be found in the feminist Protestant ethic, which she imbibed with the plain living and high thinking of her childhood. The notion that the Christian virtues of hard work, frugality, and asceticism are related to material success, what has been termed the Protestant Ethic, provided the moral energy for nineteenth century American business and industrial leaders and the justification of rugged individualism that characterized them. This ideal model totally excluded women. A Horatio Alger heroine was inconceivable. More likely, an accomplished and attractive wife was thought to be the prize awarded to a man who assiduously practiced the Protestant Ethic—as Henry James noted in *The American*. Christopher Newman desired a wife as a kind of monument to perch on top of his pile of

money. In such an ethical system, a woman's "success" is measured by her husband's, and she polishes her skills and develops her talents to enable her to snare a man who will succeed in achieving God's favor on earth.

Women of ability and intelligence knew very well the risks attendant upon total dependence upon a man. He might die or desert or betray her instead of succeeding for her. Such women also chafed at being merely decorative or ornamental or a possession in a man's life. Therefore, without articulating or perhaps ever fully understanding it, they developed a corollary feminist Protestant ethic that sanctified their own activities, personal development, and work. A woman should practice all the virtues of the Protestant ethic—industry, thrift, enterprise, asceticism—and she should strenuously work toward self-improvement and education, but her efforts were to be used in the service of others—her husband, her family, a cause. She might work, but not for herself. While the Protestant ethic in the service of capitalism appeared to lead to selfishness, the feminist Protestant ethic was selfless. It enabled women to work in exciting, unconventional jobs, but not without cost to the women.

This philosophical assumption, though never baldly stated, provides the explanation and motivation for the achievements of many nineteenth century women. Missionaries, abolitionists and reformers, and suffragists reflect elements of it. Elaine Goodale Eastman is a case in point—in fact, her life illustrates not only the power of the feminist Protestant ethic but also its ultimate failure in providing satisfaction and fulfillment to a woman. In serving both a "cause" and her husband's career, she achieved temporary fame but never adequate recognition of her work.

SISTER TO THE SIOUX

In the 1880s and 1890s, Elaine Goodale achieved considerable eminence as an outspoken advocate for Indians. When she was twenty years old and in need of employment to

repair her family's fortunes, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, founder of Hampton Institute, offered her a position as teacher to about one hundred Sioux Indians who had been added to the enrollment of black freedmen at the Virginia school. Elaine later said that General Armstrong had the strongest influence on her life after her parents. "I caught fire from the irresistible enthusiasm, making bold almost at once to spread the new gospel of opportunity for the red man, through impassioned articles in the 'Independent' and other leading journals."⁸ Thereafter, throughout her life, she used her pen vigorously in the cause. Poetry gave way to polemic and, in her later life, to history. Both her 1935 biography of Richard Pratt, head of Carlisle Indian School, and her 1945 article on the history of the Ghost Dance and the Wounded Knee Massacre are now recognized as important historical documents on the transition period in plains Indian history.⁹

Thus the first force in the feminist Protestant ethic to subvert Eastman's literary aspiration was commitment to a cause, the cause of defending and educating the Indian. Her early fame rested upon her descriptions of the Dakota people and her exhortations to the nation on their behalf. Her writing grew out of her actual experience in getting to know these people. Not content to teach the Indians without understanding their culture, she persuaded Armstrong to arrange a visit for her to Dakota Territory in 1885. In the company of Bishop Hobart Hare, Herbert Welch, and Florence Bascom, she traveled from Crow Creek to the Lower Brule to Standing Rock to Rosebud to Pine Ridge in the late summer and early fall. When she returned to Hampton, she had received a "call," had "made up her mind to begin at the beginning in the heart of a newly transplanted, leaderless, bewildered little community."¹⁰ In 1886, she became a teacher at the Indian Day School at the White River camp on the Lower Brule.

For three years, Eastman labored diligently in this vineyard. The teaching was rigorous, demanding, and financially unrewarding, but

she sent a steady stream of letters and reports back to Eastern papers, turning out "propaganda rather than literature," as she later wrote.¹¹ She attended a Mohonk Conference on the Indian and knew most of the Indian reformers of this period of great change in United States Indian policy. In fact, by the end of the decade she had attained considerable fame as a champion of the Sioux.

Eastman was powerfully drawn to the "primitive life" of the plains Indian. She longed for an even deeper immersion in native life than she had experienced in three years of teaching. In the summer of 1889, she accompanied Whirling Hawk's band on a hunt in the Nebraska Sand Hills. Her passion for outdoor life, cultivated in the Berkshires of Massachusetts, found ample expression as she rode her pony across great tracts of prairie and plain, passing infrequent, lonely homesteaders or ranchers or a struggling frontier town. She lived like her companions, wearing a calico dress and moccasins, bathing in the streams, cooking over buffalo chip fires, eating antelope meat with relish, sleeping in a tipi. The middle-aged traditional Indian men of the party spoke no English, but she spoke Dakota and carried only a Dakota Testament with her. Yet even in this close proximity to her Indian companions, Eastman was ever the writer. She kept a journal and commented upon the sights she witnessed and the experiences she shared: the visit of Chasing Crane who brought word of the Ghost Dance to the camp, the birth of a child, trading with white settlers, picking mint and balm, working on a pair of Indian moccasins with porcupine quills.¹²

Such activity prepared her more fully for the position she sought and obtained in early 1890—Supervisor of Indian Education in the two Dakotas for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Eastman hired an Indian couple, purchased a team and wagon, and spent the summer camping out, visiting day schools on every reservation, initiating teacher's institutes, and frequently circumventing the government Indian agent to get better materials, more food, fresher air, and less rigid discipline for students

in these primitive schools. In addition she visited Sitting Bull and Big Foot's band and watched the Ghost Dance craze sweep across the reservations.¹³ November 1890 found her camped outside the Pine Ridge Agency among the Lakota.

MARRIAGE

The next months were fateful for Eastman and culminated in her marriage, the second force of the Protestant ethic that prevented her from fulfilling her dream of literary distinction. To Pine Ridge also had come in November a young, handsome, educated Santee Sioux, Charles Alexander Eastman, or Ohiyesa, as he was known in Dakota. If Elaine Goodale was a true daughter of New England, this young man was a true son of Native American culture. Born to the Mdewakanton band of the Santee Sioux in Minnesota, Ohiyesa was only four years old when remnants of his mother's family fled with him to Canada after defeat in the Minnesota Uprising of 1862. For more than a decade, he was reared to become a great hunter-warrior in the traditional plains Indian fashion. When he was almost fifteen, his father reclaimed him and they returned to live in the Santee settlement at Flandreau, South Dakota. His father, Many Lightnings, had converted to Christianity and had decided to follow the white man's way after he had been imprisoned for his part in the Uprising. When he found Ohiyesa in Canada, he persuaded his son that such a path was the only alternative for Indian survival. Ohiyesa took the name Charles Alexander Eastman and began the long process of learning English, white customs, the Christian faith, and American values. Thus, during the years that Elaine Goodale immersed herself in his culture and in getting to know his people and his country, her future husband acquired a New England education at Dartmouth, a M.D. at Boston University, and a reputation as the model young Indian who would assimilate into American life.¹⁴

Almost inevitably, in the course of six

weeks, the two fell in love and announced their engagement. Their romance took on heightened drama against the tension, horror, and trauma of the Wounded Knee Massacre of 29 December 1890. Both had counseled patience and calm during the Ghost Dance scare and had advocated supplying blankets, food, and medicine to quiet the rumblings of the desperate Indians. Both were shaken by the brutality of the army's response to Big Foot's pitiful band, which Charles discovered when he rode out in search of survivors and found many dead and wounded Indians. Both were horrified by the deaths of women and children. Elaine Goodale helped nurse the wounded that Dr. Eastman cared for in a converted church. This comradeship in the face of disaster sealed their relationship. Within six months they were married in a widely publicized New York wedding.

In her memoirs, Elaine Goodale Eastman speaks of her marriage as "the gift of myself to a Sioux." Her memoir entries significantly end at that point—indicating that Eastman saw *her* life as over. As a true follower of the feminist Protestant ethic, to her marriage meant subordinating her life to that of her husband. As she later wrote, "for many a year, every early dream and ambition was wholly subordinated to the business of helping my talented husband express himself and interpret his people." She used her talent and ambition to create a comfortable home for him, to bear and rear his children, and to advance his work and career. Her dream of writing, of achieving any great artistic accomplishment for herself, faded into the background. She carried the same missionary zeal into marriage that she had carried into her work with the Indians—indeed, in some respects it was simply an extension of that endeavor. She wrote that marriage "followed almost inevitably upon my passionate pre-occupation with the welfare of those whom I already looked upon as my adopted people." Almost fifty years later, looking back at this crucial moment in her life, Eastman wrote that she had had a "thrilling sense of two-fold consecration. I gave myself

wholly in that hour to the traditional duties of wife and mother, abruptly relinquishing all thought of an independent career for the making of a home. At the same time I embraced with a new and deeper zeal the conception of life-long service to my husband's people."¹⁵

Thus the two forces—her sense of dedicated service to a cause and her traditional concept of wife as helpmate to her husband—controlled Elaine's destiny until she was almost sixty. In the three decades following her marriage, she bore six children and took responsibility for much of their early education. She struggled to make a home for her husband, sometimes under difficult circumstances, wherever his fortunes took the family. They moved from Pine Ridge to St. Paul to Washington to Carlisle Indian School to Crow Creek reservation to Bald Eagle Lake, Minnesota, before they finally settled in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1903. Dr. Eastman found that pursuing a career and practicing medicine in the white man's world required political skills and competitive drive that he did not always have.

WRITER AS HELPMATE

Eastman's duties as a wife and mother did not stop her writing, however. She used her literary talent to support her husband's career and to improve the always precarious family finances. Very early in their marriage, Dr. Eastman became embroiled in a dispute with the government agent at Pine Ridge and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. His wife defended him by writing letters to papers—letters that, apparently, only solidified the opposition.¹⁶ When forced to leave government service and begin private practice in St. Paul, Dr. Eastman desperately needed additional income. Eastman recognized the potential of her husband's stories of his Indian childhood that he wanted to preserve for their own children. She suggested he write them down and she "carefully edited" them and submitted them to *St. Nicholas Magazine*, a publication that had

favorably received her first poetry fifteen years earlier.¹⁷ The stories appeared in the magazine in 1893 and 1894 and were collected into Charles Eastman's first book, *Indian Boyhood*, in 1902.

Forthcoming in the next two decades was a whole flood of works under his name, some for children, some for adults: *Red Hunters and the Animal People* (1904); *Old Indian Days* (1907); *The Soul of the Indian: An Interpretation* (1911); *Indian Child Life* (1913); *Indian Scout Talks: A Guide for Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls* (1914); *The Indian Today* (1915); *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916); *Indian Heroes and Chieftains* (1918). Immensely popular, these books made Charles famous as the leading Indian of these decades, a sought-after lecturer. Eventually, his writing and speaking absorbed all his time. The books have been translated and reprinted and some are still read today as classic Indian works. He is recognized as the first Indian writer of real fame among white readers.

Elaine Eastman's role in this outpouring has never been adequately assessed. Two additional works, *Wigwam Evenings* (1909) and *Smoky Day's Wigwam Evenings* (1910) carry her name as co-author. Significantly, these latter books do not recount Charles's life nor advance information nor opinion on Indian culture. Instead, they retell Indian stories, making the Indian oral tradition accessible to the non-Indian. Charles Eastman himself publicly recognized his wife's assistance. In *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* he comments, "we have worked together, she in the little leisure remaining to the mother of six children, and I in the intervals of lecturing and other employment."¹⁸ Elaine wrote the "Foreword" to *From the Deep Woods*, and *The Soul of the Indian* is dedicated to her: "in grateful recognition of her ever-inspiring companionship in thought and work and in love of her most Indian-like virtues."¹⁹

But Elaine's contribution to the writing was certainly more direct and specific than diffuse "inspiration" or generalized "influence." She claimed she "collaborated more or

less" on all of his books.²⁰ In a letter to Dartmouth, she asserted, "Dr. Eastman's books left his hand as a rough draft in pencil, on scratch paper." These she typed and revised, "omitting, and rewriting as necessary."²¹ A niece from Flandreau who spent the summer of 1903 with the Eastmans at Bald Eagle Lake in Minnesota recounted that Elaine would settle at her typewriter in the evening "with Charles and his notes for the day" and compose the chapters of the new manuscript—presumably *Red Hunters and the Animal People*.²²

WRITER OF POTBOILERS

In addition to her contributions to Charles's books during the first thirty years of their marriage, Elaine wrote some work of her own—occasional essays, poems, plays, and pageants, published in obscure papers, if at all, and the three books which she referred to as "pot-boilers": *Little Brother o' Dreams* (1910), *Yellow Star: A Story of East and West* (1911), and *Indian Legends Retold* (1919). The last book used Indian material she had used profitably before, but the two earlier works drew upon her own life and experience more fully and indicate some of the creative imagination she had for both fiction and poetry.

Little Brother o' Dreams is thoroughly romantic and sentimental, presumably designed for juvenile readers. Set on a mountaintop farm that resembles the Sky Farm of Elaine Goodale's own childhood, the story has a gossamer plot and shadowy characters. The "Little Brother" of the title is a lonely, crippled, fatherless waif who fills his childish days with imaginary friends in the trees and animals around him and who makes up poems about them. A little girl befriends him and her family attempts to introduce him to the big world of cities, education, and art, but he rejects it after awhile to care for his dying mother at the poor, mountaintop farm and then to live with the bees, the birds, and the trees as a solitary poet. The little girl grows up and eventually finds "Little Brother o'

Dreams," and they are united in love.

The mountain setting is poetically evoked in a style studded with natural images, appropriate to "Little Brother." Eastman probably reveals her own frustrated poetic impulse through this character. The snowstorm becomes "White Bird singing"; the brook in spring bursts "its icy armor and [runs] boisterously over the meadow, half-laughing and half-crying, and all but breaking its heart for pure joy"; an old curly maple holds Little Brother on her lap like a mother.²³

Yet there is a solidity to her descriptions of hiving bees, chimney swallows, lilies, daisies, cinnamon roses, snakes, and cocoons that bespeaks genuine knowledge and familiarity. Eastman's enthusiasm for nature is reflected in the country images of her early poetry. One of her early volumes was even sub-titled "In Berkshire with the Wildflowers" and one poem, "Ashes of Roses," was set to music. But she saw more in nature than poetic images; she was fascinated by botany. She says that in her childhood, the Goodales had an "artist friend . . . to instruct us in botany and sketching."²⁴ The niece from Flandreau who summered with the Eastmans in Minnesota in 1903 remembered that Elaine Eastman sent the children out in the morning to collect specimens for their botany study and identified them from a book in the afternoon. She noted that Eastman had "never had a course in botany and was learning as much as the children."²⁵

In *Yellow Star*, Eastman's other early fictional work, she created a heroine in her own image. Although the heroine, Yellow Star (or Stella), is an Indian by birth (in fact, she is the surviving baby in the Wounded Knee Massacre), her industry, her self-reliance, and her sense of service are modeled on Elaine's own values and character. The story opens when Yellow Star has been brought back to a New England village as a young woman to pursue an education. The missionary who adopted her has died, but his widow refuses to abandon her adopted daughter. They live with Aunt Sophia who does not welcome the girl because she believes Yellow Star can never

leave her "savage" ways. Although Yellow Star remains loyal to her ethnic heritage and staunchly defends Indians when they are attacked by thoughtless schoolmates as "cruel" and "treacherous," she struggles to "belong" in the New England community. Gradually, she wins the hearts of everyone—her classmates, including her poor but hard-working friend Ethan, her teacher, the crusty old New Englander Uncle Si, even her sharp-tongued Aunt Sophia. The story line in this respect resembles that of *Anne of Green Gables*, *Rebecca of Sunnybrooke Farm*, *Heidi*, or *Eight Cousins*—popular juvenile stories of the time.

Yellow Star conquers because she is strong and self-reliant. She saves her friend Cynthia from a raging bull, she collects herbs and pulls weeds to earn money for clothes after the death of her adoptive mother, she nurses Uncle Si back to health, she is top student of her class, she even improbably saves the baby of Blue Earth, an Indian woman in a Wild West show that Yellow Star attends. After graduating from school, Yellow Star does not go on to college, although admirers offer to finance it, but returns to a South Dakota reservation to serve her people. Yet she is not welcomed by the government agent nor the missionary's wife, who cannot accept an "educated" Indian. She does not know whether she belongs in white or Indian culture, until Ethan, now a doctor, comes for her just in time to help her fight a raging prairie fire. Together they plan to go back East where she will study nursing.

Yellow Star embodies many of Eastman's characteristics and beliefs. Her delight in outdoor life, her love of learning, her enthusiasm for plants and herbs, her competence in domestic skills—all of these evoke Eastman's own qualities. More significant in illustrating the two driving forces in Elaine's life are Yellow Star's desire "to serve" and her acceptance of woman's traditional role with a man. These reflect the two forces—a calling and marriage—that channeled Elaine's energies away from her own literary ambition. For example, when Yellow Star "was nearly fifteen,

... the eager childlike wish to *belong* was already partly obscured by the more womanly and deeper desire to *help*."²⁶ Furthermore Yellow Star chooses to stay with the unbending Aunt Sophia after the death of her mother rather than live with her more hospitable friends. She returns to the reservation rather than go to college. And finally, she settles for the subordinate role of nurse and wife to the physician Ethan—after she has rejected an Indian suitor. Yellow Star, the Indian, was committed to following the white Protestant ethic for women.

Eastman's motivations in finding time, while rearing six children, to write her own work as well as to revise and edit her husband's were probably multiple. Her need to write was always strong. Later she spoke freely of having deserted "literature for life" and of her son who said she was "always a poet" whether she put words on paper or not.²⁷ Before she took the position as supervisor of Indian education, she turned down an offer from Bishop Hobart Hare, whom she greatly admired, to become a "lady missionary" at Pine Ridge. In a letter to him, she said she had an "artistic" motive in wanting to be free to live closer to Indian people. "Before I went into this Indian work, my art was everything to me."²⁸ Charles Eastman's biographer David Reed Miller agrees that Elaine Eastman welcomed writing as a chance to use her skills and to participate more fully in her husband's projects. He did not succeed as a physician at Pine Ridge, St. Paul, or Crow Creek; his work for Indian involvement in YMCA, his lobbying for Indian claims in Washington, and his naming of Indian tribal members required long absences from home. In these activities, his wife could neither participate nor save him from failure. But in writing his story and preparing it for publication, she could be a genuine partner.²⁹

The overwhelming motivation for Elaine Eastman's efforts to prod her husband to publication and to write herself was, however, financial. The family constantly needed money. Although she acknowledged her husband's

talents, Eastman spoke of his career attempts as "dubious experiments" and "abortive efforts" that were trying to the spirit and pocketbook.³⁰ Recently, an Eastman granddaughter recalled "the financial strain" that had apparently been part of the family lore about the couple. Charles would give the shirt off his back to whoever came in, his granddaughter claimed, but his wife had to keep food on the table.³¹

In desperate moments, Elaine Eastman put words on paper, exploiting her husband's rich fund of stories and knowledge of Indian life to bolster the family finances. The *St. Nicholas* stories of 1893-94 followed the sad surrender of the Eastman's first home when Dr. Eastman was forced to leave his position as government physician at Pine Ridge. The family faced a more severe crisis later. In 1899, when they left Washington after Charles Eastman had lobbied unsuccessfully for the Santee land claims, the Eastmans owed a substantial amount of money to their landlady. Through her former connection with Richard Pratt, head of Carlisle Indian School, Elaine Eastman obtained a job as editor of *The Red Man* and the family moved to Pennsylvania. Eventually her husband found employment there, too, as outing agent, but before the year was out had contracted pneumonia and nearly died. When he recovered, in 1900, he secured an appointment as government physician at Crow Creek Reservation, but this ended in disaster three years later when Dr. Eastman was forced out.³² These difficult years are omitted from his autobiographical writings.

Not surprisingly, it was during this time that Dr. Eastman began to publish his writings in book format. *Indian Boyhood*, composed largely of the *St. Nicholas* stories, emerged in 1902, and *Red Hunters and the Animal People* came out two years later. In both of these works, his wife had a strong hand, first at Crow Creek and then at Bald Eagle Lake.

In this difficult time for the family, Elaine Eastman did what any woman nurtured in the feminist Protestant ethic might do: volunteered her talents and industry to sustain the

family and enhance her husband's talents without surrendering her primary role as wife and mother. She collected, transcribed, edited, perhaps even wrote, her husband's stories of his life and people. This required no breach of loyalty to her earlier commitment to "the cause" of publicizing the traditional culture of the Indian people whom she so admired. It was, in fact, a continuation of it. She had relished her journey into Indian life in the Nebraska hunt and could genuinely share her husband's desire to preserve "the fragmentary recollections of my thrilling wild life expressly for the little son who came too late to behold for himself the dream of savage existence," as the dedication to *Indian Boyhood* reads.³³ But the financial motivation for her action was certainly strong: the debt to the Washington landlady was finally paid off in 1906, presumably when royalties had begun to ease the financial burden. Significantly, however, Elaine Eastman left "Indian country" in 1903, never to return. Thereafter she celebrated Indian life from the comfort of the Massachusetts home to which the Eastmans had moved at her request.³⁴

The popularity of Dr. Eastman's books made him a sought-after lecturer, and his wife took over the management and publicity of his twenty-five or more annual appearances, in addition to continuing her writing chores.³⁵ Elaine Eastman's love of the outdoors never waned even in the East, and Dr. Eastman grew to find great solace for his disappointments in "civilized life" in the woods after 1910. He became active in the Boy Scout movement, an enthusiasm that led the Eastmans to open a girls' camp at Granite Lake, New Hampshire, in 1915. The camp, which they proposed would be "in harmony with the original philosophy of the Native American," was a family project. Eastman managed the camp, the three older girls were counselors, the three younger children helped out, and Dr. Eastman acted as "an Indian in residence," telling stories, playing games with the children, and teaching classes in archery and swimming. Eastman's work was hard—she was remem-

bered by some campers as stern, unsmiling, businesslike.³⁶ Yet others visited her for years and remembered her with affection, admiration, and respect.³⁷

Eastman used the camp experience in *The Luck of Old Acres*, a 1928 novel that represents a step forward from the "pot boilers." The story centers around the adventures of the Bell family, who turn their New England farm, Old Acres, into a summer camp to bolster family income. The Bells possess too many sterling qualities to be believable—courage, imagination, good looks, resourcefulness, industry, loyalty, and talent. The other characters, neighbors, visitors, and campers, spend most of their time praising and admiring Mother Bell and her five children, and the story is weak in conflict. Nonetheless, Elaine Eastman had based the character Lorna upon her beloved daughter Irene Taluta, who had died of influenza in 1918 on the threshold of a promising operatic career. The book is dedicated to "our singer," and Lorna is also gifted with a beautiful voice and independent spirit.

Turning the farm into a camp is Lorna's idea, growing out of her love of outdoor life and her study of plants and trees with her grandfather, a retired minister. The mother cooks and manages the place while the other children pitch in with a will to teach eager campers swimming, canoeing, hiking, nature study, farm work, and handicrafts. They stage an amateur circus and an opera, and they help fight a fire. The setting emphasizes good food, vigorous exercise, fresh air, and much time in the woods and mountains. At the end of the summer, the family has earned enough money for Lorna to study voice, her brother to go to college, and the other children to school.

Significantly, the father of the family is missing, believed to be dead after a train accident. Lorna is devoted to her father and distressed when she hears her mother crying at night and when she recognizes the weariness and worry her mother feels over the camping project. Although *The Luck of Old Acres* was not published until 1928, the missing and carefree character of Harry Bell may reflect

some of Elaine's growing dissatisfaction with her marriage during the camping years 1915-1921. The grandfather in the story recalls that Harry slipped "easily out of life and the domestic responsibilities which had not seemed to weigh too heavily upon him at any time." Lorna is, however, devoted to her father, and is like Harry in her "dash of daring, a passion for adventure, a confidence and verve that really amounted to genius."³⁸ Irene had been Charles's favorite daughter, accompanying him and singing on some of his lectures. Lorna also uses a moose call to summon the children, and Dr. Eastman was famous for his moose call.³⁹ Lorna's loyalty to her father is repaid when Harry Bell is joyfully reunited with wife and children at the end of the story.

A MARRIAGE COLLAPSES

In real life, however, the Eastman marriage broke up at the camp in August of 1921. Elaine Eastman had found that selfless devotion to both cause and husband were increasingly unsatisfactory antidotes to the stresses and strains of the marriage. The ostensible reason for her husband's abrupt departure from her life was the charge by a pregnant counselor that he was the father of her child.⁴⁰ Although the charge was apparently untrue and never proved, it was the catalyst that ended the marriage and Charles eventually lived with his son, Ohiyesa, in Detroit, deeding the camp to Elaine. She struggled with it a few more years, finally selling it for a small profit in 1924.⁴¹ The Eastmans never divorced nor even admitted publicly their severed relationship, and the family has kept the reasons for it very private. The couple never reconciled, remaining separate even in death. He was buried in Detroit in 1939 and she in 1953 in Northampton, Massachusetts.⁴²

This was not the first scandal in which Dr. Eastman's name had surfaced. In the difficulties with the government agent at Crow Creek, he was accused of having improper relations with Augusta Hultman, superinten-

dent of Grace Boarding School. The basis for the charge appeared to be largely political, and both Dr. Eastman and Hultman denied it, but both were relieved of their positions at Crow Creek.⁴³ In addition, Charles Eastman biographer Raymond Wilson accepts the claim of Dr. Herbert B. Fowler that he was a grandson of Dr. Eastman, although Elaine Eastman was not his grandmother. Fowler claims to have had considerable contact with Dr. Eastman, especially in the years following the separation, when Fowler summered at Dr. Eastman's cabin in Ontario. Who Fowler's grandmother was or when and where Dr. Eastman met her have not been revealed—certainly, the family has refused to recognize Fowler's claim. But even Fowler claims that the accusation made at the camp was unfounded.⁴⁴

A MATURE NOVEL

In her last and most mature novel, *One Hundred Maples*, written long after the separation, Elaine Eastman dealt with marital infidelity and illegitimacy. The character Amy, who claims to have the perfect marriage combining both career and wifehood, does not realize that her husband, Jim, has been unfaithful until the woman and child visit her to seek her support. Amy has championed such women in her law practice and confronts Jim with her knowledge, saying that she is willing to accept his personal failure and to take responsibility for the child. Her real betrayal comes when Jim refuses to admit his responsibility either in conceiving or in caring for the baby. "I couldn't pretend to believe Jim when I knew him to be lying. I couldn't back him up in denying his own son . . .," Amy claims. Eastman comments in her own voice, "And yet there are those who believe to this day that Amy parted from her husband because he took a mistress."⁴⁵ Although men do not come off very well in the novel, perhaps Eastman was speaking for herself as well as Amy. She was less troubled by her husband's sexual peccadillos, if any, than by his failure to live up to her ideal of selfless devotion to children and

the family.

For surely children and family win out in this novel. Although it explores, in a very contemporary way, the dilemma of the modern woman who tries to juggle a yearning for self-realization with the demands of wifehood and motherhood, it ultimately affirms the primacy of the home and the traditional role. The central character, Ellen Strong, is modeled on both Eastman and her mother. Ellen is poetic and imaginative, with literary ambitions, but she finds the life of a New England farm wife at the turn of the century too hard and stultifying to endure—Eastman's mother had left the farm and returned to her own parents when Elaine was grown. The child Ellen loves the woods, hills, and fields and ranges freely over them. At college she meets Amy and Marcia, both committed to feminism, careers, and independent lives. They encourage Ellen's literary ambition and both are shocked when she marries Bart, the neighbor farm boy, to grub away on the farm, rearing children and keeping house. Ten years later, Ellen feels empty and trapped in the drudgery of serving husband and children. She tries to be loyal to her dream of writing by stealing time from the household, but when her rebellious little boy, Tommy, drowns in a ditch, she is overcome with grief, guilt, and anger at her husband. Taking her baby girl, she leaves her older son with Bart and flees to her friend Amy in Seattle.

Amy appears to have achieved what Ellen has not—a satisfying career, a devoted husband, a planned pregnancy. Although a nineteenth century woman, Amy even aspires to what contemporary women call the "Super-woman" syndrome:

A woman, married or single, retained all the rights of a normal person. It was equally clear that a wife must ask no less of herself in the marriage relation than in any other. . . . Accordingly, she must be ready to welcome her husband as hostess—the chate-laine; no other engagement must replace the traditional one. There must be a dinner

perfect of its kind, however simple; adequate service . . . invariably flowers, and a wife as fresh and daintily dressed, with no hint of the office about her.⁴⁶

Consequently, Amy comes home from the office an hour ahead of her husband.

Amy's plans for "having it all" go awry. Her pregnancy is difficult; her husband is unfaithful—he even makes a pass at a shocked Ellen; her baby is born dead. Ellen fears that Amy's notions of equality have demanded more than Jim can give, leading to the break-up of the marriage. A disillusioned Ellen leaves Amy on the brink of divorce to visit Marcia.

Marcia's life is different from both Amy's and Ellen's. She has remained single and successful—a professional woman teaching chemistry at a university. She has traveled, studied, met interesting people, and turned down suitors. She confesses that her only love was a married man who ultimately refused to leave his wife for her. Now, she tells Ellen, her closest relationships are with dogs and horses who offer "physical companionship without moral responsibility." To Ellen, Marcia appears organized, purposeful, efficient—and cold. She does not envy her "barren victory." "It was not so much what Marcia had missed," Ellen muses. "No—it was that she couldn't understand—would never know that she had missed it."⁴⁷

In the final chapter, Ellen returns to her husband, older son, and farm, not without misgivings but conscious of the needs of the children and the steady devotion of the plodding Bart. He agrees to provide some conveniences that will give her time and a place to write, but ultimately, service to her family triumphs. After the anguished cry of hunger for self-fulfillment, Ellen accepts a compromise. Such a compromise was never available to Eastman, but she was well aware of the dilemma of modern woman. She dedicates *One Hundred Maples* to her only son, Ohiyesa II, "for a better understanding of woman's world."

CONCLUSION

During the last thirty years of her life, Eastman lived with her daughters in Amherst and Northampton, Massachusetts. She continued to write, publishing both *The Luck of Old Acres* and *One Hundred Maples* as well as numerous articles and *Pratt the Red Man's Moses* under her own name. Her husband, on the other hand, published nothing. He had plans for both a biography of Sacajawea and a historical novel of Pontiac, but they were never realized.⁴⁸ Elaine was the writer in the family, but Charles furnished the material and none of the books she wrote alone achieved the quality or popularity of *Indian Boyhood* or *The Soul of the Indian*, the literary offspring of a dynamic couple.

In her later years, Eastman was well aware of her disappointment in serving a cause and a husband rather than herself:

No, I won't say that the adjustment was easy or that I was never lonely, restless and haunted by a secret sense of frustration. Every woman who has surrendered a congenial task and financial independence will understand. Loving the joys of motherhood, my pleasures must be vicarious ones. He traveled widely, even to London, and met hosts of interesting people. I was inevitably housebound.⁴⁹

She also recognized that allegiance to the values of the feminist Protestant ethic was "neither wise nor modern," but she claims it was in her blood as a tenet of both her grandmothers. She reiterated that point at the end of *One Hundred Maples*. Ellen's decision to stick with the farm and her husband is also defined as a victory for the grandmothers and great-grandmothers.⁵⁰

One wonders what their lives might have been like had Charles Eastman been able to practice medicine successfully in "Indian country" and had the family not returned to New England in 1903. In spite of the failure of her marriage and loss of direct participation in the

"cause" in the last third of her life, Elaine Eastman never fully surrendered her loyalty to either of her ideals. She never divorced or even publicly admitted the separation, and she continued to write about Indians as she had known them at the end of the nineteenth century. According to her granddaughter, she was a wonderful grandmother, writing poems for birthdays of grandchildren, reading her Bible and prayer book every day, participating in vigorous arguments on politics with her son-in-law, and retiring to write soon after breakfast. The grandchildren visited their Uncle Ohiyesa and grandfather in Ontario, but for Elaine and Charles the estrangement was permanent.⁵¹ Elaine Goodale Eastman's loyalty to the feminist Protestant ethic prevented her from fulfilling her own literary aspirations, but she was not prepared to give them up. She did not become a poet, but neither did she become embittered. "For the ideal is and always has been to me the supreme reality," she wrote. "No—the voice heard at eve is still the same voice that spoke upon the mountain top, out of the rainbow mists of morning, all of sixty crowded years ago."⁵²

NOTES

1. Elaine Goodale Eastman, *Sister to the Sioux: The Memories of Elaine Goodale Eastman 1885-91*, edited by Kay Graber (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978) p. 67.
2. Elaine Goodale Eastman, "All the Days of My Life," *South Dakota Historical Review* 2 (July 1937); reprinted from Elaine Goodale Eastman, *The Voice at Eve* (Chicago: the Bookfellows, 1930), p. 172.
3. *Pratt the Red Man's Moses* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1935); *One Hundred Maples* (Brattleboro, Vermont: Stephen Day Press, 1935).
4. "All the Days of My Life," p. 183.
5. Elaine Goodale Eastman and Dora Read Goodale, *Apple Blossoms: Verses of Two Children* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1878).
6. *Sister to the Sioux*, p. 11. The critics remarked more on the unusual achievement of such young poets than on the intrinsic merit of their work. Eastman commented that the critical standards applied to her work were not high.
7. "All the Days of My Life," pp. 178, 174; *Sister*

to the Sioux, pp. 13-14.

8. "All the Days of My Life," p. 9.
9. "The Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890-91," *Nebraska History* 26 (January 1945): 26-42.
10. *Sister to the Sioux*, p. 29. A detailed analysis of the intellectual basis for and the religious fervor of the Indian Reform movement in which Elaine Goodale immersed herself can be found in Frederick Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) and in Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976).
11. "All the Days of My Life," p. 12.
12. *Sister to the Sioux*, pp. 96-113.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.
14. See Charles Eastman, *An Indian Boyhood* (New York: McClure, Phillips and Company, 1902; reprint Fenwyn Press, 1970) and Charles Eastman, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1916).
15. *Sister to the Sioux*, p. 171; "All the Days of My Life," pp. 181-82.
16. Raymond Wilson, *Ohiyesa Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 177.
17. "All the Days of My Life," p. 182.
18. *From the Deep Woods*, p. 186.
19. *The Soul of the Indian: An Interpretation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), n.p.
20. "All the Days of My Life," p. 182.
21. Wilson, *Ohiyesa*, p. 131.
22. David Reed Miller, "Charles Alexander Eastman: One Man's Journey in Two Worlds." Master's thesis, Grand Forks, University of North Dakota, 1975, p. 218.
23. Elaine Goodale Eastman, *Little Brother o' Dreams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910) pp. 3, 14, 33.
24. *Sister to the Sioux*, p. 3.
25. Miller, "One Man's Journey," pp. 218-19.
26. Elaine Goodale Eastman, *Yellow Star: A Story of East and West* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1911), p. 97. Italics in original.
27. "All the Days of My Life," pp. 181-82.
28. Elaine Goodale to Bishop Hobart Hare, 6 May 1888. Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.
29. Miller, "One Man's Journey," p. 203.
30. "All the Days of My Life," pp. 181-82.
31. Telephone interview with Cynthia Whitbeck Risk, Northampton, Mass., 11 August 1986.
32. Miller, "One Man's Journey," pp. 184, 187-88.
33. *Indian Boyhood*, n.p.

34. Wilson, *Ohiyesa*, pp. 97, 125.
35. "All the Days of My Life," p. 182.
36. Miller, "One Man's Journey," p. 267.
37. Eleanor Mensel to author, 24 May 1987.
38. *The Luck of Old Acres* (New York: Century Company, 1928) pp. 10, 157.
39. Miller, "One Man's Journey," pp. 265, 318.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 269.
41. Eleanor Mensel to author, 24 May 1987.
42. Wilson, *Ohiyesa*, p. 188.
43. Wilson, *Ohiyesa*, pp. 112-15; Miller, "One Man's Journey," pp. 191-20.
44. Wilson, *Ohiyesa*, p. 164.
45. *One Hundred Maples*, pp. 221-22.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 187.
48. Miller, "One Man's Journey," pp. 310-11.
49. "All the Days of My Life," p. 182.
50. *One Hundred Maples*, p. 285.
51. Whitbeck Risk interview, 11 August 1986.
52. "All the Days of My Life," p. 184.