Taylor: A-H

October 5, 1945

My dear Miss Taylor:

I read the pages which you sent and they are very nice.

It is quite all right with me to use both the text and the pictures.

Very sincerely yours,

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
INCORPORATED
Publishers New York
257 FOURTH AVENUE

September 24, 1945

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Val-Kill Cottages
Hyde Park, Dutchess County
New York

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Attached to this letter are the copies of Mrs. Dorothy Canfield Fisher's biographical sketches of you and Mr. Roosevelt which are to accompany Mrs. Enit Kaufman's portraits of you both in our forthcoming volume, AMERICAN PORTRAITS.

May we hear from you at your convenience about your permission for us to use both the text and pictures?

Yours sincerely,

Helen K. Taylor

Helen K. Taylor
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

HKT/km

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

Our late President was one of the towering personalities of our times. Can anyone see Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his true proportions? Isn't it impossible for any contemporary to back far enough off to get any perspective on a figure which so recently dominated the American scene? Ordinary personal biographical data are not only known but well understood in their human significance. The startling tragedy of paralysis in his middle years, and the sheer fury of purposeful will-power which made him after that catastrophe a thousand times more powerful and vital a man than before --- this is now and will be challenging, stimulating folk-stuff in the collective American mind, and we shall be safer from the poisons of self-pity and defeatism because of it.

We are still shaken by the thunder of the explosive events which succeeded each other from the beginning of the First World War, and by the reverberations, as heart-shaking as the events, of what Franklin Roosevelt did to cope with them. Not the most violently melodramatic author, no, not Victor Hugo himself at his most unbridled grandiose, could imagine a situation so exciting as that in which Franklin Roosevelt first walked, mastering the

terrible calamity which had befallen his body, out upon the platform in Washington to swear on the Bible to do his best for a nation on which in 1932 lay a paralysis like that he had conquered. It will be hard for the most gifted historians of the future to make Americans who did not live through that hour, realize the despair of our country, the passive hopeless bewilderment in which it waited for the catastrophe of total disintegration even worse than the nightmare at hand.

Never before had our nation, sinewy, bold and resourceful in the tradition of mastering circumstance of our long pioneer tradition, known such dismay. Probably never again, no matter what hard times are ahead of us, will it feel itself so baffled. It has seen that new problems, industrial, financial, social, are no more than emergencies like those which have threatened our country in the past, to be met with the same inventive resourcefulness which brought us through before. It was Franklin Roosevelt who proved that to the nation. Not one of us old enough to have listened to his first Inaugural address, can ever forget that his was the voice which gave the forward, marchi command, to a people dully marking time in the face of disaster.

We who still turn sick at the memory of those hours and days and months of misery and defeatist passivity during the depression, can hardly put up any objective yard-stick to measure the true stature of the man who, seeing the nation suffocating, swung

right and left to break the sealed windows and let in the breath of life. Intellectually, we, Franklin Roosevelt's contemporaries, are aware that the ability to cry forward, march! at a moment when such an order saves the day, does not mean omniscience in the commanding officer who does so. But we were too thoroughly frightened by that crisis, and hence too incredulously relieved at having weathered it, to set down even now, with steady hands, any considered, well-balanced, judicious opinion about him.

We lived, not only with one of the most skillfully persuasive personalities in history, but in close communication with him such as no leader has had since the long-ago days of folk-gatherings under oak trees and on hill-tops. With the miracle of modern science, dazzling in its newness to those who first experienced it, his voice came--familiarly real and personal--directly into our living-rooms, our work-shops, our kitchens, our libraries, our cheap hash-houses, our expensively handsome old-men's club rooms, our country and city school houses. It was as if a friendly neighbor, after a casual knock on the door, opened it and standing on the threshold, told us news, vital news, of our own community. The impression of those first fireside talks was indescribably vivid and fresh. All America heard that strong, vibrant voice, steady with the self-confidence of one who had fought with total personal catastrophe and won, telling us in our

hour of deadly fear, that fear was the only enemy to be dreaded.

Such experiences, being primary and to some degree sensuous, are uncommunicable. They are also unforgettable. And they rise like a flood to dim the eye and overwhelm the mind of any one who tries to write reasonably enough to be within hailing distance of objective truth, about the man who for so many years was the pivot on which our history turned.

Even closer to us, pressing upon our hearts, is the matter of this great war. Franklin Roosevelt it was who, before many of us could see fire or smell smoke, turned us into fire-fighters --- in time. As we sacrifice our sons, and the wealth of our present and our future, to help put out that all-consuming fire, it is difficult to evaluate the skill with which Roosevelt led us out of the burning house to where we could do our share in saving the home which it had taken humanity such endless effort to build.

No, it can't be done. We are too close to him in time. We are still too intimately affected by his personality. History and the generations to come will have a considered estimate of him impossible for his contemporaries. But we may be sure that the estimate, like the man himself, will be of mighty proportions.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

There have been, off and on, through the centuries, many attempts to "emancipate" women. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century these attempts were focused as in a burning glass, till the fire was lighted which finally, some twenty-five years ago, gave women political equality.

But while this long struggle was going on, people of wisdom were beginning to see that if a human being is to draw his breath in the calm of real liberty, political freedom is only the most obvious and visible of the freedoms he needs. Exactly as cramping, exactly as tyrannical, and far harder to see and to break is the invisible, intangible, slavery of subjection to mores, to habit, to social standards, sometimes excellent and wholesome, sometimes poisonous and mutilating.

The first women who had the right to cast a vote had hardly more freedom to be themselves than before --- unless in the rôle of rebels against society. In that rôle freedom can always be secured, but at a price few normal human beings wish to pay.

In the meantime, the production ability of our marvellous machine-run industrial society had risen to top speed, but the ability widely to distribute these manufactured products had not

risen in proportion. Society had entered the blind alley (or what looks like a blind alley) along which it has been fumbling its way ever since. Naturally women were set upon by the myriad people with things to sell. At first only those women with a reasonable economic margin were subjected to this pressure to buy more than they or their families needed, as a means of distributing goods. Then, as the mountain of unmarketed goods mounted, and as producing dropped and unemployment rose, the fire of advertising and sales-pressure was opened on all women, including the poor, the slide into the unbalanced family budget being well greased with the installment system. It was a sort of eddy of the great depression in which women seemed helplessly engulfed --- whirling around and around under the push of the loud affirmation of salespeople that if they bought and bought and bought, whether they and their families really needed more goods or not, their husbands would love them more faithfully, their children would have more affection for them, their circle of friends would admire and respect them. The dark alternative picture implicitly or openly held up to them was that if they did <u>not</u> buy and buy and buy manufactured products, from lipstick to floor polish, the opposite of all this would come to pass, their husbands would cast them off, their circle of friends would look down on them, their children would despise them.

Step by step with this subtle new attack on the freedom of women to do what their best judgment told them was the right use to make of their lives, was the old, old, pre-industrial, pre-suffrage demand on them not to be themselves but to be their husbands' dutiful shadows, not to use their mature power to help in the fight to right old wrongs, to help bring justice to all, to stand for a decent society --- but only to keep their own homes in order and not to bother their heads about anything outside of it. Custom, backward opinion frozen into conservatism, savagely ignoring legal rights decreed that women should not be whole human beings with an increasing responsibility for what went on in their country, in the world. The only women who dared step out to fight that reactionary public opinion were at once lashed with such verbal whips as "freak" "rebel" "unnatural," "unlovable" --- this last cutting to the heart of any woman.

At this point, a critical one, Eleanor Roosevelt appeared on the American scene, and began being herself, out in the open where folks could see the process. If there ever was a case of the need producing the person, this was one! Here was a woman-citizen such as myriads of American women had longed to be, deeply interested in her home, in her housekeeping, in her grandchildren, on excellent good terms with her husband, but

also burning, as all people with hearts must burn, in pity, in remorse for the undeserved sufferings of the under-dog in our society. She stood staunchly by, not only those members of the younger generation related by blood to her (as all true women have always done) but extended that innately decent responsibility of the mature for the young to all younger Americans, tolerant of and patient with the inevitable lack of good judgment of adolescence, exactly as all decent women have always been towards the adolescents in their own family circle. She extended the neighborly feelings of responsibility towards the misfortune of neighbors other than those who happen to live in her literal geographical neighborhood.

The emancipation of the better qualities of American women accomplished by the example (not the exhortation) of Eleanor Roosevelt is beyond calculation. What she has done, is to help the best and most potentially useful of American women to see life in its true proportions. She has shown that there is room in a woman's day for her duties to her personal circle as wife, mother and grandmother, to her country as citizen, with time enough left over for enjoyment --- the kind of enjoyment possible to human beings of dignity and intelligence. She has proved, as Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress" proved so long ago, that the lions in the way of forward progress are really chained to their places, and incapable of harming those

with courage enough to walk straight forward.

An old story about the beautiful new-rich Empress Eugenie and that great lady, Queen Victoria, runs this way: Both of them came into the same box at the opera together on a gala evening and stood together facing the applause of the crowd. When they sat down, the new-rich beauty looked behind her to make sure her chair was still there. The old Queen sat down without looking, taking for granted that the chair would be there. Mrs. Roosevelt has taken for granted with the same grande dame unconscious security that it is possible for a well-bred American woman to be a mature, responsible, useful citizen of her country, without being a "freak" or unlovable; that it is possible to present all the year round a distinguished appearance with a minimum of time spent in buying; that it is possible to show in the larger world of the nation the same mother's patience and understanding for the vagaries of the yeasty young which is the traditional rôle of the mother of grown-up children, without being politically anything that anyone of us would not be willing to be. In short, that it is not only possible but highly desirable for a woman to act on the best and noblest in her nature without apologizing for being superior.

She has walked straight through the intangible terrifying

barriers of meaningless old custom and outworn usage, and has shown them to be no more than last year's spider-webs. And after her, have poured an army of American women, released to usefulness and dignity.

STORE MEMO

To HQ WAM

FROM STORE NO.

DATE 10/2/45

STAMP NUMBER HERE

CITY

SUBJECT

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I thought this good looking poster would interest you.

Sincerely

Eric B. Lee, Mgr

THOM McAN STORE #290
672 THIRD AVE.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

MANAGER
ASSISTANT

SIGN HERE

August 27, 1945

Dear Miss Taylor:

I have your letter and the photographs which you enclosed. I am afraid I do not think the photograph of my husband a very good likeness. I am never much interested in photographs of myself.

Before giving any permission to include material about my husband and myself, I should like to see the text.

Very sincerely yours,

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
INCORPORATED
Publishers New York
1866
257 FOURTH AVENUE

August 22, 1945

I'm very glad my husband & I are in the book
I would like the book

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
c/o Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance
1013 13th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

As you will doubtless remember, some time ago you posed for a portrait by Enit Kaufman which was intended for use in a book of seventy-five of Mrs. Kaufman's pictures, with text about each person by Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Mr. Roosevelt also posed for his portrait. This volume, to be entitled AMERICAN PORTRAITS, will be published next spring.

As the time approaches for us to begin manufacture, we would like to have your permission to include the material about yourself and about your husband. You will see the text within the next two months, but the photograph of Mrs. Kaufman's portrait of you and of the late President are just ready. I am enclosing them with this letter.

All seventy-five pictures in the book will be reproduced in black and white, and this photograph will give you some idea of the final result except that the size will be somewhat reduced. Perhaps it is necessary to explain that, while we would like very much to reproduce them in full color, this cannot be done because of prohibitive manufacturing costs. The volume is intended for a wide general market, and we feel that a comparatively modest price to the consumer is essential.

Will you let us hear from you about these pictures at your early convenience? You may keep the prints as we have other copies.

Yours sincerely,

Helen K. Taylor
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

HKT/km