CHAPTER II

THE DAUGHTER OF THE SOIL
Ellen Anderson Glasgow was born in Richmond on 22 April 1873, as the eighth child of Francis Thomas Glasgow who traced his roots back to the Scotch Presbyterians of the Shenandoah Valley. Her mother hails from the aristocratic settlers of Tide water, Virginia. The sharply divided ancestry of her parents paved way for the opposing impulses of the Cavalier and the Puritan, the aesthetic and the ethical, the Hellenic and the Hebraic in her and in the temperament of her fictional characters too. Her father, the director of the Tredegar Iron works was a dour Calvinist who instilled in Glasgow a "Vein of Iron". Yet she disliked his tyranny, his religious severity and his philandering, especially his alleged consorting with black women. She
considered him "more patriarchal than paternal". To her, her mother signified the more humane, kindly and gracious aspects of her heritage. She considered her generous long-suffering mother, "a perfect flower" of the Tide water aristocracy that in the parental conflict, she always supported her mother. She adored her mother so much that she felt deeply for the gentle lady who was a martyr to her father's stern temper. In fact her mother's sieges of depression saddened her.

Her shyness and headaches kept her away from school. She was schooled at home due to her inability to adapt to communal school experience. Mostly she led a secluded life finding solace in books. Guided by her older sister Cary and Cary's future husband Walter Mc Cormack she launched her intellectual pursuit covering a wide range of authors —
philosophers, scientists and novelists of the late Nineteenth century. It was Darwin and his followers such as Herbert Spencer, Thomas Henry Huxley, George John Romanes, Ernest Haeckel and August Weismann who shaped her world view. With avid interest she read 'radical' writers like Edward Gibbon, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, Arthur Schopenhauer, Hendrik Ibsen and Friedrich Von Schelling. Theories of political economy propounded by Thomas Malthus, John Stuart Mill, Walter Bagehot, Sir Henry Maine, David Ricardo and Karl Marx captivated her heart. Among the literary artists, though she read Fielding, Jane Austen, the Brontes, Dickens, Hardy, Balzac and Maupassant, she admired Walter Scott who was a great favourite in the South. This wide reading kindled her enthusiasm for writing.

Shuttling between the family residence in Richmond and their estate, Jerdone Castle,
she spent her time, as Julius Rowan Raper says, "in story-telling, reading, caring for animals, and listening to quarrels between her temperamentally opposed parents" (qtd in Baechler:171). In fact in her autobiography The Woman Within (1954) she reveals the deep desire in her heart to become a writer. She claims that she became a writer when she was seven thus, "but not until I was seven or more, did I begin to pray every night 'O God, let me write books! Please God let me write books!'". Her wide reading offered her the best models for her writing. She followed Hardy in producing rustic atmosphere and used George Eliot as a guide for morality, and Maupassant for plot.

Her observations of her parents' marriage and the independent streak in her to devote herself to art deterred her from marriage. Her writings reflect a distrust of
marriage. In many of her works, she has treated this subject with bitterness and lighthearted banter. Though she never married, she confesses in her autobiography, "I have known ecstasy. I have known anguish. I have loved and I have been loved" (WW 296). In 1907 she was engaged to the Reverend Frank Ilsley Paradise, an episcopal minister and in 1917 to Henry W. Anderson, a dashing successful Richmond lawyer. She broke both the engagements. Her relationship with Anderson was so stormy that she attempted suicide after spending an evening with him in 1918. She survived and so also her friendship with him that it lasted for nearly thirty years until her death.

She states very clearly in The Woman Within, "The obscure instinct that had warned me, in my early life, against marriage, was a sound instinct"( WW 245 ). But she had fallen
in love with a married man who is only mentioned as Gerald B, in her autobiography. Had he been available, she might have married him. Seven years after their meeting, he died plunging her into sorrow. This personal crisis led her into seeking solace from Eastern mysticism that she read the Upanishads, the Buddhist Sutras and the Bhagavad-Gita.

This wise, witty, well-read conversationalist, though diminutive, attracted many with her dazzling smile. Outstanding among her literary friends was the Richmond writer James Branch Cabell. It is said that he had given critical assistance to her when she wrote her Virginia novels, but she failed to acknowledge it gratefully.

Her life was beset with many tragedies. After her mother's death in 1893, she suffered severe depression and a partial
loss of her hearing. This burden of deafness which assailed her in adolescence gradually started worsening. This handicap hampered her independent movement that she had to rely on her sisters, Rebe and Cary. Her Richmond friends too became her travelling companions that she enjoyed her trips to New York, the West, Maine and abroad. Her travels enriched her life and widened her contacts that she met writers like Joseph Conrad, Thomas Hardy and Henry James.

But as she says, "the long tragedy of my life" continued that she lost many of her beloved ones. In 1894, her brother-in-law and mentor McCormack committed suicide under sordid circumstances. Her brother too committed suicide in 1909 and her sister Cary died in 1911. The saddened Glasgow chose to live for the most part in her New York apartment until her father, from whom she still felt estranged
died in 1916. This brought her back to her family home in Richmond where she continued to live with Anne Virginia Bennett who was her companion, secretary, housekeeper and nurse rolled into one. Glasgow shared a very good rapport with her, for, they had similar love of letters and love of dogs. Their peaceful co-existence was disturbed every now and then with news of her friend Hanson Howland's remarriage, her publisher Walter Hines Page's death and Anderson's alleged war-time flirtation with Queen Marie of Rumania. Many of her literary friends like Carl Van Doren, Howard Mumford Jones, Allen Tate, Stark Young, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Cabell were very supportive that she could continue her career as a novelist.

But her sensitive nature rebelled against the term "maiden lady" with which she is described. When an anonymous reviewer in Time mentioned that she had lived "a thoroughly
conventional spinster's life", she gave an angry rejoinder, that as a matter of verity, she had never had the life of a conventional spinster, whatever that was. Or a conventional life of any other nature. But she remained unmarried after the two broken engagements and the man whom she loved could not get out of his marriage. But she had no regrets about that. Though to rationalize her single status and childless existence, she claims that she lacks the maternal instinct, she had a deep desire to nurture. It is very obvious from the excessive attachment to animals she had exhibited by bequeathing a substantial sum to the Richmond SPCA. Her adoration of dogs, especially her pet Sealyham, Jeremy can be seen, for, she had kept it embalmed, coffined and buried upon its death, to be exhumed and buried along with her when she died. Moreover, her seventy-eight piece collection of china, porcelain and pottery dogs kept in Richmond's Valentine
Museum is a standing testimony to her loving nature and fondness for animals.

This wealthy if somewhat slightly eccentric spinster led a rich life, travelling, throwing gala parties, caring for her pets and writing fiction. The personal charm she exerted over people is captured by Allen Tate thus, "The more I think about grand Ellen Glasgow, the more I fall in love with her. None of her books is as grand as she is" (qtd in Baechler:171). Though, on the surface, it looks as if she was leading a conventional life, she always had a rebellious streak in her. Its germination is seen in her early life itself in her rejection of her father's strict Calvinism. As Raper suggests, "Modern sciences and scepticism afforded the weapons she needed to defend her mind against her father's insistence that she conform to traditional theological authorities" (qtd in Baechler:172).
Her radical mind made her rebel against the intellectual convention also. She had clearly indicated her predilection, when she wrote to Carl Van Vechten in 1925, "Intellectual audacity always appeals to me" (qtd in Baechler:172).

Glasgow sought panacea for all the piled up unhappiness of the years, beginning with her delicate and misunderstood childhood in vigorous intellectual activities. But laconically she admitted that golf helped her more than philosophy to bear life. Anyway her writing helped her to a larger extent to mitigate her unhappiness.

Her success as a writer also was an uphill task. Recognition came very slowly. Though she kept an unsentimental novel Sharp Realities for publication in 1891 itself, it did not see the light of the day, for she
destroyed it and vowed never to write again due to an unpleasant experience with a New York publisher's agent. Later in 1891 she started writing *The Descendant*. At the death of her mother in 1893, she destroyed all but the first six chapters of the manuscript. Her brother-in-law's suicide in 1894 too rattled her. She resumed her writing as a therapeutic experience and finished writing *The Descendant*. But published it anonymously in 1897 as she was scared of the reaction of the reading public, especially the conservative Southerners to the smoldering radicalism contained in it. As expected, it created a mild sensation due to its daring statements. But the book was attributed to the popular male writer Harold Frederic. Taking it as a compliment to be read as a male writer and judged by established male literary standards, she remained silent. In spite of the overwriting and excessive melodrama, it reveals her imaginative force and
structural expertise. This apprentice novel holds a special place in her heart can be seen in her declaration, "the germ of my future work, as well as my philosophy of life, lay hidden in that immature effort" (qtd in DLB 9:47). Here the emphasis is upon the significance of heredity and environment, and the deterministic view of biological factors. She tries to show how the invidious bar of birth shapes the life of the protagonist, leads him into radically socialistic and destructive type of journalism, makes him a murderer and lands him in a felon's cell. Though he is blessed with a love of a woman who might have saved him, he scorns her love only to realize his folly when it is too late. Though this novel is pessimistic in tone and crude in its episodes, the genuine passion in its climax indicates future possibilities.
Phases Of An Inferior Planet (1898) which appeared under Glasgow's name did not cause any stir as it continued the theme of The Descendant, but the indictment here falls directly on conventional male attitudes. She presents again the philosophical theme of Darwinian determinism in her male and female protagonists, an intellectual and an artist respectively whose incompatibility ends in the collapse of their marriage. Here she asserts that passion is inexplicable, that love is fated and that fate controls the destiny of the denizens of this planet. Both the title and the denouement are clumsy. This work is highly theatrical, melodramatic and contrived. Though she portrays rebellion against convention, it is less convincing. In this work, Glasgow again bases her central characters in New York. The Wheel Of Life (1906) is another novel located in New York. Here she deals with the unreality of feminine expectations about
romance. In spite of its happy ending, this book treats romantic conventions with irony. The four sections of the novel — "Impulse", "Illusion", "Disenchantment" and "Reconciliation" — show the various stages through which the female protagonist goes to come to terms with her 'self' and the true meaning of 'love'. She attacks romantic myths and provides an alternative in her concept of love as transcendent of selfish passion. These three early novels based on New York show that she was slightly out of her elements, as though she lacked sympathy even for the best of the characters and disapproved of the others.

Glasgow found her Southern subjects and setting, especially Virginia in the novels of her second phase beginning with The Voice Of The People (1900), The Battle-Ground (1902), and The Deliverance (1904). Though all the three
are stories of love and marriage, they are novels of manners, truthfully presenting the lives of all classes who contributed to Virginia life. In *The Voice Of The People*, her wide range of characters includes aristocratic planter, poor-white farmers, lower middle class villagers and negroes. The protagonist Nicholas Burr is the spokesman for Glasgow's recurring theme, that people are the architects of their own destinies. The poor boy who succeeds despite his low birth was one of Glasgow's favourite themes in her early career. Her lively descriptions, evocative narration, ironic thrusts and authentic speech patterns of the uneducated village folk lift Glasgow to a status of a professional novelist. *The Battle-Ground* was a sword-and-cape Civil War romance. Here she gives an insight into Southern life where the old aristocracy still kept to the illusion that theirs was a truly feudal society. She points out their defect in their
flat refusal to admit reality. The strong point of the novel is the female protagonist who is noted for her indomitable spirit, optimistic, romantic conviction and courage. The romantic notions and affirmative note of this novel are direct reflections of Glasgow's romance in her personal life. The Deliverance (1904) is another novel written during the joy of her romance with Gerald B that the heroine and hero are united in the end, apparently to share a happy future. Its conclusion where the heroine goes to welcome the hero "across the sunbeams" (DL398) is indicative of that. In this book Glasgow reverses the strength of hero and heroine. The hero Blake filled with hatred and thoughts of revenge against Bill Fletcher is ultimately redeemed through the love of Maria Fletcher, the granddaughter of his enemy. In Maria's character, Glasgow gives a portrayal of strong female who has managed to escape the claims of inherited traits. The
Battle-Ground and The Deliverance were Glasgow's tribute to the romantic myth of her girlhood. Later when her great romance ended, she switched over to the ironic mode and was left quoting Oscar Wilde "The worst of romances is that they leave one so unromantic" (Wagner 32).

In The Wheel Of Life (1906) she mocks at the romantic myths and takes the protagonist Laura Wilde through an impulsive phase of romance, a world of "Illusion" and "Disenchantment" and a final "Reconciliation" with herself. The heroine moves past her own personal need and pain and finds peace in serving others who are less fortunate than her. Glasgow seems to find in non-involvement, the best protection against hurt. She acknowledges this feeling in her notes to her work In This Our Life, "Peace dwells in impersonality alone. Beyond the personal" (Box 3 of Ellen Glasgow 65)
collection). Glasgow is turning away from romantic idealization that Frederick P.W.McDowell calls this her "mystical phase", "a period in which she turned to moral and philosophical idealism to give her a sense of stability" (Wagner 34).

Glasgow repeats the same theme — love as transcendent of selfish passion — in The Ancient Law (1908). It chronicles the story of Daniel Ordway Smith who gives up his love for Emily Brooks and embraces humanity. He lives "the life which would find its centre not in possession, but in surrender which would seek as its achievement not personal happiness but the joy of service" (AL 61).

The Romance Of A Plain Man (1909) and The Miller Of Old Church (1911) mark an important stage in Glasgow's career as a
novelist for, she examines in them class change and woman's role in the custom-bound South. The *Romance Of A Plain Man* deals with Sarah Mickleborough's daughter Sally and her love for Ben Starr. Sally rejects conventional concerns about social position or money. Though ambitious, Ben Starr also makes the ultimate sacrifice of giving up his business for love.

The *Miller Of Old Church* is a historic landmark in fiction for, it ushers in the New South where the old, rigid Southern values were rapidly disappearing. It is at once local and universal in its appeal. As it vividly studies the local conditions and the transition in the social and economic life, it also portrays the universal in the inevitable struggle of the lower classes to rise and in the stiff resistance of the caste who jealously guard their position. Though the central story deals with the complex fortunes of Molly Merryweather, the illegitimate daughter of
Janet Merryweather and Jonathan Gay, the universality of its theme gives this novel its vitality and strength. In Angela we find the typical old-time Southern aristocracy with its innate pride, in the older Jonathan, the reckless, hot-blooded Southerner who maintains rigidly his family honour and traditions, in the younger Jonathan and Abel Revercomb, the new dignity of labor and tolerance, and in Molly, a mixture of two natures, combining the best qualities of both the upper class and the lower. The stigma of Molly's illegitimacy which was the cause of social ostracism once, finds acceptance in the present indicating the slow change in the Southern society in which social barriers have begun to yield.

In 1913, her novel Virginia brought recognition to her. This novel works synecdochically, the part standing for the whole. It draws the dull commonplace life of a
Southern lady between 1884 and 1912. Virginia is a Southern girl, an ideal female, named reverently after the land fulfilling the expected function of earth-mother and child-bearer. The title also relates to the location complete with its Southern attitudes and mores. Virginia stands for a state, a condition of the body and also for a state of mind. The novel suggests the sexual, familial, artistic, racial and economic tragedies of a nation of people who innocently assume that idealism is a moral position. The evasive idealism points out the desire to avoid the ugly realities. This seems to be the cause of the anguish and disillusionment of the naïve and sheltered individuals. Glasgow convincingly portrays Virginia's conflict between 'duty' and 'instinct', 'principle' and 'passion' and 'law' and 'life'. Virginia is a woman whose vital energy seems to have been deflected, by precept
and example, into a single emotional centre—love. Virginia's friend Susan Treadwell is created as a foil to her with her clear-headed independence. She sees men and things as they are whereas Virginia idealizes them. Susan is "the actual" and Virginia, "the ideal". Every page of the novel is tinged with irony. In it, Glasgow dramatizes, the dangers of sentiment and sacrifice.

**Life and Gabriella** which is one of Glasgow's mature novels appeared in 1916. It foreshadows Glasgow's own circumstances. The protagonist undergoes similar experience of disappointment in love and ultimately accomplishes a life for herself through work. This novel is another response to the same set of circumstances Virginia faced. Glasgow indicates in the title itself, life, not death, is to be Gabriella's prize. The sub title The
Story Of a Woman's Courage also affirms Gabriella's coming to independence. Gabriella is a standing example of a vital and witty woman who breaks from the genteel tradition and escapes to New York and finds salvation ultimately in a career. She is the best illustration of an emancipated woman, full of strength, firmness, courage and belief in life. As written in the preface to this novel, Glasgow shows that life was ideally to be a "continual becoming"(XV). Though Glasgow gives this story a highly conventional happy ending, she points out that the woman's life is separate from her romantic entanglement.

Glasgow has drawn male protagonists favourably in The Builders published in 1919 and in One Man In His Time which appeared in 1922. The Builders is a story of Blackburn, an idealist and Caroline Meade, a nurse-tutor in his household. The book's title comes from one
of the passages in which Blackburn insists that men move from materialism to idealism, from wanting merely things to wanting better conditions, "We are . . . a nation of idealists . . . . Because we build in the sky, I believe we are building to last" (TB 108). The heroine Caroline Meade is another Southern woman of good family who has taken up a career and is known for her fortitude and self-denial. The slow unfolding of Angelica Blackburn as the destructive force in the house shows Glasgow's mastery in characterization. But the main focus is on Blackburn who committed to his political life sacrifices his personal happiness for the good of his country. The heroine Caroline also understands his desertion of her, for, he is doing that motivated by unselfish patriotism. In this book, Glasgow identifies the conservative spirit with realism of the late Nineteenth century and the
progressive spirit of the early Twentieth century with romance.

One Man In His Time came as a sequel to The Builders. Both are political novels. While The Builders is set at the beginning of World War I and One Man In His Time is set in post-war Richmond. Both picture the conflict between old and new order. The young hero, Stephen Culpeper a descendant of a wealthy Virginia family, though appears outwardly secure is in fact a moving shadow. He feels a total stranger in an age which has become completely commercial with degraded manners. The hero is supplemented by the character of Corinna Page, an independent, emancipated woman in her late forties just like Glasgow at that time. In spite of repeated disappointments and sadness in life, she lives alone rejecting the option of marriage. Her practical philosophy comes out as a warning to young Patty Vetch who
is in the throes of a love affair. She insists on Vetch retaining her 'self', Corinna is patterned on Glasgow's own self-image with her self-assurance and self-knowledge. In this novel, Glasgow has used three male characters. Apart from Stephen Culpeper, Gideon Vetch, the powerful new governor of Virginia, and elitist John Benham, the politician are two of the leading male characters. Glasgow's friend Anderson's many personal traits are presented in both these characters. Glasgow's fluctuating sympathy indicates her ambivalence towards Anderson. Anderson's closeness to his mother which caused problems in Glasgow's romance with Anderson is reflected in Stephen Culpeper's possessive mother who spoils his romance with Patty Vetch. Contrary to the title, Corinna Page is central to the novel. "Glasgow's ability to present Corinna as both passionate and philosophical, suffering yet enduring, is the real achievement of One Man In
His Time" (Wagner 64-5). Though both these works were considered inferior, they are important because of portrayal of Henry Anderson in them. "For Glasgow as writer, the greatest gift she could give to the man she attempted to love was a novel written for/about/in honor of him" (Wagner 66).

Breaking away from the conventions of both the romance and the novels of manners, Glasgow has written Barren Ground (1925) which she considers "almost a vehicle of liberation" (Geismar 258). It marks a turning point in her career. It was her favourite work too. She admits, "Creative energy flooded my mind and I felt, with some infallible intuition, that my best work was ahead of me. I wrote Barren Ground, and immediately I knew I had found myself" (WW 243). She explains how this novel evolved. "A novel like that grows slowly. For ten years I carried that idea in
my mind and I gave three years to the actual writing" (CM 244-5). She has put her whole heart into this book. She feels that it is the truest novel ever written. She is true "to life and to the inevitable change and fall of the years. That book deserves to live. It is a perfectly honest interpretation of experience, without illusion, without evasion" (CM 237). The central theme is Character is Fate. Glasgow believes that human lives are ultimately, "determined by the factors which comprise the character of each individual" (Rouse 90). It tells us the story of Dorinda Oakley from a Calvinist farmer family in rural Piedmont Virginia. The artist-heroine goes on a heroic quest for essential meaning and finds it through pastoral vision. Glasgow's main concern is to show Dorinda Oakley coming to terms with her psychological and social heritage. Glasgow has created Dorinda's life out of her own sorrow, anger,
resentment, despair and hope for something better. "Out of her love of beauty and her faith in the fortitude which she believed sustained her, Ellen Glasgow drew the sources of Dorinda's survival, if not her triumph" (Rouse 86). Glasgow sums up the theme thus, "one may learn to live, one may even learn to live gallantly, without delight" (Geismar 260). Her heroine is universal in the sense, she exists "wherever the spirit of fortitude had triumphed over the sense of futility" (Geismar 260). The novel hinges on the word "barren" which has various levels of irony. The childless Dorinda could be termed "barren" but ironically she wrests from the unyielding land, fruit, success and promise for the future. The meaningful pattern of life is symbolically represented in the titles of the three parts of the novel: "Broomsedge", "Pine" and "Life-Everlasting". "Broomsedge" has associations with betrayal of
the land and of Dorinda and with the smothering tradition, "Pine" stands for strength, beauty and a belief in growth and hope of achievement and "Life- Everlasting" indicates meaningful achievement in spite of hardship and disappointment. This novel possesses both epic and tragic qualities. The narrative moves with dignity and Glasgow carries out experiment in style trying to give stream-of-consciousness effect.

The Romantic Comedians (1926), They Stooped To Folly (1929) and The Sheltered Life (1933) form an ironic trilogy of Southern manners and morals. They continue her gallery of self-directed, purposeful and newly tolerant women. Glasgow claimed that The Romantic Comedians was written "for my private diversion" (CM 211). She called this novel "a tragicomedy of a happiness-hunter". She chronicles Judge Honeywell's propensity for
young and beautiful women, his courtship and marriage with young Annabel Upchurch, the end of that marriage and his recovery from deathbed with infatuation for the young nurse. This novel offers ironic description of love that is dependent and impossible of fulfillment. It deals with the pangs of this destructive passion, the agony of love without love. The main characters like Amanda, Annabel and Honeywell are close to caricatures. The real triumph is the judge's sister, Edmonia Bredalbane, a flamboyant woman who flouts convention and pursues pleasure. Glasgow would like to think of this novel as one in which "although the setting is Virginian, the characters belong to no particular age or place" (CM 223). In fact Glasgow is eager to promote it as universal, though it offers social criticism of the South.
In *They Stooped To Folly* the second book in the trilogy of tragic comedies, Glasgow observed that this story grew from a consideration of the "two pre-eminent woman myths which have exerted a benign or evil influence over the English novel" (CM 227) the myth of woman as inspiration and the modern myth of woman as an impediment to man's higher activities. This novel is an answer to assumptions often made about women. The story revolves around the "ruined" women of three different generations — Aunt Agatha, Mrs. Dalrymple, and Milly Burden. As Glasgow says, "Here was sentiment; here was chivalry; here was moral tradition; here was a well-honoured invention of man" (CM234). The subject rich in ironic possibilities is a serious satire on contemporary society. This novel dedicated to her friend James Branch Cabell in acknowledgement of *Something About Eve* shows
her fiction had sprung from both personal and literary interests. This novel treats betrayal in male-female relationships and the entanglement of age and youth while the old remain repressed and stabilized despite their yearnings, the young act out their desires.

When *The Sheltered Life* came out Glasgow was approaching sixty and was fragile in health. She made this period, a time for stock-taking. She became more open in her remarks about life and society. In it she was dissecting the culture of the South. Yet it has universal significance. Her explanation to Allen Tate in a letter, about the title proves this:

*By the Sheltered Life, I meant the whole civilization man has built to protect himself from reality. As you perceive, I was not concerned*
with the code of Virginia, but with the conventions of the world we call civilized. (qtd in Showalter: 176)

Though it is a comedy of manners, she calls it "an expression of the tragic vision which is the end of all vision" (qtd in Showalter: 176). It is intimately connected with her own experience that it creates a bond between her knowledge and narrative craft. In it character, action and atmosphere interact and reveal the tragedy caused by the code of polite behaviour and by the pretenses of a cult of Beauty. It also points out the evil lurking in assumptions of innocence. Though she considered this work, one of her perfect works, to her great disappointment, it was not her work which won the Pulitzer Prize but T.S. Stribling's The Store. Even Allen Tate was furious that T.S. Stribling had received the
award which ought to have gone to Glasgow, . . .

The Sheltered Life is there to make the award ridiculous in the years to come" (qtd in Wagner : 91). Anyway, Glasgow says with pride about this work, "One thing I know this novel is good, more intense than They Stooped To Folly, more sympathetic in treatment, and, I think, deeper and richer in substance" (qtd in Wagner : 92). To her:

The novel is experience illuminated by imagination; and by the word "experience" I am trying to convey something more than attitude or a gesture. In The Sheltered Life as in Barren Ground, my idea has been to give the scene an added dimension, a universal rhythm, deeper than any material surface (qtd in Wagner : 92).
This novel presents five women characters each suffering due to the restrictions imposed by the society. The main action centres around two women: Jenny Blair Archbald, who grows from a nine-year old into a dangerous teenage flirt and Eva Birdsong the ravishingly beautiful wife of the unfaithful George Birdsong. The story traces Jenny's infatuation with the philandering George and, the strain Eva undergoes which leads ultimately to her shooting her husband. Though the Archbald family has shaped the tragedy, Jenny refuses to take responsibility for it and her grandfather General David Archbald excuses her, blaming it on her youth and innocence. Thus Glasgow portrays the ruin caused by the conventions of sheltered life. Allen Tate gives the highest tribute to this work, calling it "the most thorough and sustained novel"
Vein Of Iron, Glasgow's eighteenth novel was published in 1935 when she was sixty two. Its working title was The Will To Live. In it, Glasgow depicts the characters with the vein of iron as survivors. The major themes are: individual determination versus social pressure, personal belief, family traditions, loyalties, romantic love and beyond, feminine and artistic struggle for fruition. As the novel encompasses thirty years, it gives scope for the evolution of the characters. Our attention is equally divided between John Fincastle, the philosopher-minister and his daughter Ada Fincastle who is in search of romance. In Fincastle's passionate love of knowledge we find Glasgow's own interest. Glasgow herself acknowledges this in her notes, "For twenty years, in my early youth, my chief
interest was the study of philosophy; and all that I read and thought was embodied in my favourite character [John Fincastle]" (qtd in Wagner: 95). In Ada Fincastle, Glasgow portrays a passionate woman who loves with a "single heart". Glasgow shows what a woman's life can become after she has lived past the tragedy of sexual betrayal. Ada is forced to live with the evidence of her mistake and she has a complex series of decisions to make throughout her life. This novel is meant to be a study of endurance and unbreakable will. As she says in her notes for Vein Of Iron, "Fortitude is the ultimate virtue" (Box 5 of Ellen Glasgow collection). Glasgow also describes how the novel ultimately ends, "As sense of individual responsibility becomes weaker, communal (civil) responsibility necessarily increases" (Box 5 of Ellen Glasgow collection).
After *Vein of Iron* Glasgow wrote for nearly another decade extending the themes she has already dealt with. In fact she was concentrating on prefaces to twelve of her novels and her autobiography. In spite of frequent interruptions due to poor health, she plodded on and published in 1941 *In This Our Life*. This novel became a popular Hollywood movie starring Bette Davis, Olivia de Haviland and Dennis Morgan. This novel won for Glasgow her first Pulitzer Prize which she had missed earlier. Though in 1940 she was honored with the prestigious Howdells Medal from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, this was indeed a much coveted prize for her.

The nihilistic reading the critics gave to this work, made her write a sequel to this work. *Beyond Defeat* was completed in 1944. But Glasgow was reluctant to publish it. Hence it came out only in 1966.
In This Our Life centres around Asa Timberlake and his daughter Roy. Asa mirrors the tragedy of a social system which lives by material standards alone. Roy represents the youth of the adventurous heart, of the everlasting search for perfection, of the brave impulse to hazard everything upon the chance of happiness. Glasgow's troubled vision of life is evident here. Her pity, her malice, her hatred of sham, her longing for strength, her hatred of cruelty, her search for values and her yearning for something good to hold by are poured out here. She wished to present the intrinsic life of a community as portrayed through group consciousness. Her theme was revealed as "the conflict of human beings with human nature, of civilization with biology" (Rouse 123). She used a sharp, cruel pen and her ironic view darkens to a bitterly sardonic tone but her bitterness is modified
with a pity for all tormented mortals like Asa. Though some consider this work unpleasant, it is neither despairing nor morbid. It is a serious one, no doubt sombre in tone. But the strength of the characters like Asa and Roy offsets the dark evil found in the novel. Asa belongs to the declassed aristocrat of Southern culture who is caught between tradition and revolt, between the values he no longer believes in and those he cannot accept. His great merit is that he can at last evaluate his own dilemma. Asa is caught between his natural desires and his family feeling. To achieve his goal, he must pursue a course of progressive adaptation to things as they are. It's his view that "there is only one success, a minimal one, without which the word "success" has no significance; to live in unity with man and nature" (Raper 250). Critic Thiebaux found fault with this book saying, "The quality of the writing often seems hasty . . . . The sections
about love, especially, resemble the more hackneyed examples of popular fiction" (169).

Beyond Defeat written as a sequel to In This Our Life tries to prove a point. Glasgow felt, "so many readers missed the point of that book that I should like to do a less subtle approach" (qtd in Thiebaux: 171). This is the story of Roy Timberlake overcoming the hardships incurred due to one-night affair with a stranger, and returning to Queensborough with her son Timothy born out of that reckless night. "She had fought on beyond defeat, and she had won the kind of peace that is victory" (Thiebaux: 171). Roy renews her bond with Craig and from a bad past, they try to salvage "the living seeds of tomorrow". This homecoming is in fact a return to a place of rootedness where they expect only an endless becoming.
Though Glasgow vowed to Walter Hines Page that she would not write short stories to divide her power or risk her future reputation, she wrote twelve short stories by 1925. The stories are of three general types — stories with ethical dilemma, stories with relationship between men and women, and tales of uncanny and the supernatural, with a psychic emphasis. In The Shadowy Third and Other Stories the influence of Edgar Allan Poe can be seen. The Past, Whispering Leaves, Dare's Gift and Jordan's End have spirit characters. All these ghost stories use the first-person narrator. Romance and Sally Byrd, The Difference and The Professional Instinct constitute a "marriage group". These stories preach a moral that in marriage the woman gives up everything, while the man gains himself a servant. The double standard in marriage irked Glasgow that she depicted the husbands as selfish brutes.
Thinking Making It So catches Glasgow in a rare sentimental mood about marriage that she describes a romance by correspondence between two middle-aged lovers. The Artless Age describes a teenage courtship. A Point in Morals and Jordan's End focus on an abstract moral problem of euthanasia or mercy killing. Her short stories reveal a dazzling talent for condensation. Her irony and paradox show up very well in a small space.

In addition to her novels and short stories, she wrote twenty-seven poems, which came out in a volume called The Freeman and Other Poems (1902). A collection of her critical prefaces for the Virginia edition of her novels entitled A Certain Measure: An Interpretation and Prose Fiction) (1943) and her autobiography The Woman Within (1954) completed the bulk of what Glasgow had written.
Her verses are filled with images of struggle, battle, rebellion, madness, pessimism and death, reflections of her morbid sensitivity. Her religious poems show her defying the God of tradition. As she moved towards mysticism she believed in a creed where all souls are luminous with love. Her sense of the fellowship of living things includes all creatures and plants. Several poems such as *Justice* and *To My Dog* express her feeling for animals. Though her verses are unconventional, they are strong. But many reviewers condemned them as cheap tragical utterance that she produced no other volumes of poetry. But after a long time she wrote three poems of which there was one on woman's suffrage called *The Call*. On the whole, her poetry "shed light on her personal anguish as a young woman, her sense of herself as a rebel, and her attempts to resolve her religious doubts" (Thiebaux 176).
Glasgow had written and published the prefaces to thirteen novels in *A Certain Measure* in 1943. It gave her a means of creating an identity as writer. She described this work as "mingling of autobiography and literary criticism" (Wagner 116). What Glasgow says about this work is quite significant: "Much of myself went into that writing. It gave me an opportunity to ramble over my mental universe" (qtd in Wagner:116). In it, she describes the art of writing and its centrality to her life, for, she feels, all creative writing is an extension of personality. She admits, "I wrote solely in obedience to some inward pressure" (CM 68). In her notes for *A Certain Measure*, she describes the process of writing fiction as "a faint incandescence" which pricks through the darkness of memory, "a phosphorescent glimmer" and "an unapprehended sensation" (qtd in Wagner:120). She felt that she wrote novels not for art's sake but "to
increase our understanding of life and heighten our consciousness" (qtd in Krutch 442).

The Woman Within (1954) which was published posthumously was Glasgow's memoirs. It reveals the author's self-pity and vanity in contrast to the picture of the woman who seemed in life so gay, bright and full of sympathy for others. Anyway it shows her dedication to her art. After the first publication, she thought that she needed a steadier control over her ideas and material, a philosophy of fiction and a prose style pure and flexible. She realized too, "Life must use art; art must use life . . . . One might select realities, but one could not impose on Reality . . . . Truth to art became in the end simple fidelity to one's own inner vision" (WW 125). Glasgow summed up her artistic credo as follows:

I had always wished to escape from the particular into the
general from the provincial
into the universal. . .
From the beginning I had
resolved to write of the
South, not in elegy, as a
conquered province, but,
vitally as a part of the
larger world. (qtd in
Auchincloss:39)

Anyway without Glasgow, there would be a great
gap in American fiction, particularly where it
concerns the South. She has brought in serious
literature to the South. Dr. Joseph Collins has
paid the highest tribute to Ellen Glasgow when
he said ". . . In style she has no superior and
few peers amongst the fiction writers of the
day in this country. . . She has the gift of
character delineation and she has learned how
to give value to perspective"(qtd in
Rouse:133). Glasgow wrote of Southern men and
women as she saw and understood them and
fundamentally of the essential human being, showing ultimately her concern for human values.