CHAPTER IV

THE CLARION CALL
A new order which emerged in Southern society brought in its wake, a change in the position of the Southern women too. So far women have been living up to the woman-myths invented by man to flatter his own self-esteem and diminishing women. Bred conventionally, women were living decorously, virtuously following the norms set by the society however unjust they were. Unfree themselves, they did not bother with a mythology for themselves. They have been living for others, with romantic ideals of marriage. They were only the shadows of men, perpetually accommodating themselves to men. Pandering to their ego, tilling the fertile soil of men's vanity, they lived sacrificing their desires, ambitions and aspirations.
But the winds of change have swept aside all the biased crumbling ancestral values. The tremors that shook the society has shaken the complacency of men and brought to the forefront enlightened women with dawning self-knowledge. Over-riding the social codes which bar women from interesting lives and work, they become adventurous. Sunk in domesticity, they no longer waste their potential. They put it to the best use and emerge as successful-women, self-reliant and self-sufficient at times. Shedding the position of victims, they become victors.

The new awareness about the emancipation of women consequent to the advent of feminism is reflected in Ellen Glasgow's novels too. Her gallery of female protagonists includes women who defy and confront the inhibiting tradition of South and break out of
them. Many of her heroines assert their wills against forces that would slow them down in their bid for a self-directed, meaningful life. Dubbed as non-conformists, they rebel against their oppressors and the system and throw off the shackles of gender bias with courage and determination. Weathering the storms of life with fortitude and equanimity, they show themselves as spunky women and pillars of strength on whom even the men lean on.

Betty Ambler in *The Battle Ground*

Miss. Matoaca Bland, Sally and Sarah Mickleborough in *The Romance of a Plain Man*, Dorinda Oakley in *The Barren Ground*, Gabrilla Carr in *The Sheltered Life*, Susan Treadwell in *Virginia*, and Milly Burden in *They Stooped to Folly* are pictured as women endowed with indomitable will, fiery courage, clear thinking, intelligence, resourcefulness, adaptability and steely determination, who lead an
independent life choosing satisfying options of their own.

The heroine of The Battleground Betty is one of Glasgow's attractive creations with her strength and competence. This headstrong girl, mortified at her bright red hair, tried to have it conjured away by the old Negro, in her childhood. But as she grows up, she becomes less fiery and less romantic and more responsible. As a childhood companion of Major Lightfoot's grandson Dan, Betty remained kind and loyal to him. He in his turn, took a whipping for her when she set the Major's woodpile afire as they were playing Indians. But to her disappointment, Dan is attracted towards her beautiful sister Virginia Ambler. It takes a long time for him to realize Betty's sterling qualities.
His involvement in a bar room brawl precipitates his quarrel with the Major and his relationship with the Major is ruined. It is Betty's turn to stand by him in his disgrace. This opens his eyes towards Betty and it dawns on him that Betty sincerely loves him. Feeling ashamed, he decides to mend his ways to be worthy of her. "There was not only sweetness in the thought of her, there was strength also" (BG 194). She is a woman "who could face life smiling because she felt deep in herself the power to conquer it" (BG 194).

She had become for him at once a shield and a religion. He looked outward and saw her influence a light upon his pathway; he turned his gaze within and found her a part of the sacred forces of his life — of his wistful
childhood, his boyish purity, and the memory of his mother. (BG 194)

Dan goes to the Civil War with a copy of Morte d' Arthur marked with Betty's blue ribbon on a passage which indicates what is true love:

For there was never worshipful man nor worshipful woman but they love one better than another, and worship in arms may never be foiled; but first reserve the honour to God, and secondly the quarrel must come of thy love; such love I call virtuous love. (BG 291-2)

As Dan is going through the ordeal of war, Betty does heavy farm work and house
chores and waits for him. In fact Betty feels like a woodland creature that has been trapped. She wants to march with the army and fight. Her courage flutters upward as the flags:

It was not the sound of the cannon that she dreaded, nor the sight of blood . . . but the folded hands and the terrible patience that are the woman's share of a war. The old fighting blood was in her veins; she was as much the child of her father as a son could have been . . .

(BG 286)

The fire of South is burning in her veins. But she has to look after the household. During war time, she struggles to keep up the common tenor of the old country life. Rising at daybreak, she has to oversee the milking of the cows, to start the fieldhands to the ploughing,
to help the women start the looms. She has to look after the rations of the servants, measure the meal, slice bacon, husk the corn, count the bags of grain before the wagons reach and attend a negro frolic even in war years. "From sunrise to sunset the girl's hands were not idle for an instant" (BG 378). Though she works like a man, in the evening she will sit with her yarn and knit busily for the army. Though her heart aches, hiding it, she cheers her mother. "Her sunny humour had made play of a man's work as of a woman's anxiety" (BG 378).

Though the negroes were freed by the Governor's will, they willingly stay with Betty and she looks after them. She herself shares their rations of corn meal and bacon and guards her small supplies for Mrs. Ambler and the two old ladies. Betty has no high regard for
worldly goods. She gives away even her jewels for the soldiers fighting for their cause.

Her grandfather considered girls delicate. He used to say, "A girl is like a flower, If a rough wind blows near her, her bloom is faded" (BG 393). But time has changed. The war has changed people and their attitude. As Mrs. Ambler admits, "You are very strong, my child... and I think it makes us all lean too much upon you" (BG 395). In spite of the growing anxiety about the dwindling supply of food, Betty plods on. Betty's abounding energy is the moving spirit of the place.

When Dan returns from the war, broken in health and spirits, she greets him with maternal solicitude. She feels strongly, it is her turn to do something for the soldiers, the survivors of the war. Betty always looks at the brighter side of life that the Major tells
Ben up as "Common". The entire story shows how he labours to become worthy of her. In his attempts to reach the top, he pulls Sally down into a life of misery and poverty which she admirably withstands with her typical upper-class fortitude. She has changed with the times and becomes highly adaptable, and hence a survivor. Sally is inherently strong and loving in adversity and bears everything cheerfully and courageously. Sally with her long heritage of passionate principles and lovely manners, "her power of sustained sympathy, of sacrifice" (RPM 372) represents the best of the old South. Her aims are always high that she admits, "it is the big things, after all, that I've wanted most of my life" (RPM 372). True to her wishes she gets Ben Starr who possesses the determination to act on her ideals. The General advises Ben to marry a woman without "any opinions of her own" for, he believes, if she has opinions, she will
stop believing in gentleness and self-sacrifice. But here, the woman becomes the man's inspiration, it is her opinion which goads him on to climb the ladder of success. Sally seems to have inherited her mother Sarah's courage. In spite of the storm, Sarah walks out boldly with her daughter Sally after a bitter fight with her husband. Thus Glasgow creates Sally a combination of rare qualities and acknowledges, "... she was, in a measure at least, a mingling of all those characteristics we used to think of as especially Virginian" (WW 74).

The character of Aunt Matoaca is modelled on a Miss.Van Lew, supposedly a Northern spy, but certainly the first suffragist to protest paying a tax in the levying of which she is not represented. Though a radical, she has her class prejudice as for as Ben is concerned, for, she staunchly
opposes it. She is a woman of principles who refuses to marry the General because he had obligations to another woman. Though she entertains new feminist thinking, her failure in love hurts her. She seems to assuage her broken heart by out-spoken political convictions. This inspired spinster takes part in a protest parade and collapses under the emotional strain and dies. Glasgow's ambivalence makes her picture Aunt Matoaca hysterically ineffectual but the fact is, she dies for a cause. In the end, Sally appreciates the aunt, "poor Aunt Matoaca was right". She is right in believing that women must have larger lives outside their domestic sphere and must not remain sentimental and romantic.

In Dorinda Oakley of Barren Ground, we find a female version of Glasgow's "Plain man", sharing in the strength of the independent
yeoman farmers. She is a new elemental woman, different from the genteel women who are subjected to Virginian codes of feminine conduct. Dorinda is an expression of a triumphant life. She is a betrayed woman, a victim who with determination changes her life to become a victor.

Dorinda hails from a yeoman class of land owners which Glasgow calls a 'good family'. With a father from a poor and illiterate family and her mother from austere Calvinist stock, Dorinda has to face conflict from the beginning. The family atmosphere with a stupid, inarticulate father, Josiah the bitter and taciturn brother, Rufus the younger, impetuous and irresponsible brother, mother's pet and Mrs.Oakley, a Puritan beset with hallucinations of missionary life, was not very conducive for Dorinda's happiness. Dorinda
works as a clerk in Nathan Pedlar's general store, leading an uneventful life.

Love is viewed askance by the Oakleys due to some female relatives meeting with failure and ruin. Yet Dorinda falls in love with the "citified" handsome young doctor Jason Greylock who has returned to attend his alcoholic father, She mistakes her desire for love and fails to understand that her biological nature controls her. She abandons the grey and the brown clothes she has always worn and uses the money she has been saving for a cow, to buy sky-blue material for a dress to charm Jason. They get engaged and they become lovers. Dorinda, egged on by the romantic ideas read in the books, surrenders to the temptations of nature. Though Jason promises marriage when he seduced her, he fails to fulfil it. The day Dorinda finds herself pregnant, she hears that Jason has married
Geneva whom he had courted the year before. When confronted, the white-livered Jason meekly confesses that he is forced into this marriage by Geneva's menfolk.

The angry Dorinda tries to kill Jason and fails. Thrusting aside all religion, with a parched and blackened soul, she leaves Pedlar's Mill and heads for New York to remake her life. There is an unbreakable "vein of iron" in her like the enduring pine tree. From her ancestors Dorinda inherits the strong will that sustains her. In New York she meets with an accident and miscarries. In her depression, she regards herself as a "dead tree walking". Her youthful resilience sees her through the emotional shock, and soon she finds work in the office of Dr. Burch. Besides that she looks after his children too. She refuses a suitor as she has finished with love. She is determined to fill her life with something
better. Though dreams of Jason haunt her, she diverts her energies from destructive love to constructive work.

One day when she begins to talk about the farm to the doctor, her interest in life is revived. The farm becomes the focus of her emotions that she studies new techniques of agriculture to revitalize it. At the moment she has to satisfy herself with the smell of pine and life-everlasting in the wind of New York. After two years, she returns home to see her father who has had a stroke. She takes up the responsibility of the farm after Oakley's death. She understands her father's kinship with the land and realizes that "the place was more to her than soil to be cultivated; that it was the birth place and burial ground of hopes, desires and disappointments"(BG 273). This tie with the land brings her permanent liberation of the spirit.
In her new reverence for her father, she refuses to cut down the pine trees for timber. She works hard and makes the farm a thriving dairy and earns the respect of the local farmers. She takes care of her mother who is crushed from lying to protect her son Rufus who killed a man in a drunken brawl. Her pious mother, broken by the ordeal dies soon. She has heard Jason's wife has become insane. She commits suicide and Jason takes to drinks and neglects his practice. "While others decline, Dorinda gathers strength, lingering often for inspiration beneath the great ancestral pine" (Thiebaux 118). She labours and grows rich, acquiring lands and cattle that once belonged to her rivals and enemies. Her final triumph is the purchase of Five Oaks, the Graylock homestead from Jason. When Jason seeks reconciliation and forgiveness, she shows contempt, rejoicing in her hardness. "... This was the instinct for self-preservation
which has made her resolve in her youth that no man should spoil her life . . . . She had discarded forever the allurements of youth, she felt securely middle-aged, but it was the middle age of triumphant independence" (BG 401).

Dorinda has stood fast against disappointments of love and found strength in the land. She has a happy moment of awareness of her achievement. "Firmness of purpose, independence of character, courage of living" (BG 423) are the attributes, she has gleaned from her great-grand father's religious books. "She has inherited, she realized, the religious habit of mind without the religious heart" (BG 423). It is not Christianity but the Puritan drive to work has been her salvation. She thinks of the measure of life as success or failure. In her search for meaningful life, though plagued by empty feelings, she has never turned to God for comfort. The moral
fibre that had stiffened the necks of martyrs lay deeply embedded in her character. Moreover her robust commonsense also saved her:

After all, it was not religion; it was not philosophy; it was nothing outside her own being which had delivered her from evil; The vein of iron which had supported her through adversity was merely the instinct older than herself, stronger than circumstances, deeper than the shifting surface of emotion; the instinct that had said, "I will not be broken". Though the words of the convenant had altered the ancient meltle still infused its sprit.(BG 473-4)
At thirty three Dorinda enters into an unromantic business like marriage with the store-keeper Nathan Pedlar. She marries him because he is useful and because she can dominate him. To her, he is only a companion and never an object of emotional dependency. In fact Dorinda seems more devoted to John Abner, the club-footed son of Nathan. She respects Nathan's decency, his information and good judgement. With his advice and with the help of coloured helper Fluvanna, she increases her land holdings. She never allows her marriage to interfere with her work. The submissive Nathan in no way could attract or disturb the authoritative Dorinda. She is content with her nine loveless years of marriage. Then at forty-two Dorinda is widowed when Nathan dies heroically in a train accident, saving many lives from the wreck. When the town puts up a memorial, Dorinda is pleased with her role as a hero's widow. She
cherishes his memory but misses his person very little.

After Nathan's death, Dorinda busies herself with producing dairy products for World War I, she nurses the community during the influenza epidemic, making the rounds on her white horse. Meeting Jason, Dorinda looks down at him from her horse "like some mature Joan of Arc". Jason willingly admits his degeneracy and her superiority. Dorinda leads a life of peace and contentment secure in her success. Her final trial comes in the shape of the invalid Jason who is dying of tuberculosis in the poor house. This strong comely woman takes him in and nurses him. Pity for a wasted life makes her patient with him. She nurses him through a bout of haemorrhage until he dies. At his funeral, she is emotionally shaken, perhaps for the first time in thirty years. "Not pain, not disappointment, but the
futility of all things was crushing her
spirit. . . . Youth can never know the worst,
she understood, because the worst that one can
know is the end of expectancy" (BG 521).
Dorinda recovers her hard-won optimism with
dawn and experiences a sense of renewal. Life
has washed over her while she slept and she was
captured again in the tide of material things.
She has put her life's energies into the land
and now her lover also into the earth. She is
able to draw from both sustenance. "Her own
electric vitality passes into the earth to
mingle there, as it were, with her lover's
body . . . . Their joined energies are
transmitted through the earth to re-enter the
woman who now feels herself recharged with
cosmic energies" (Thiebaux 120). "Endurance,
Fortitude. The spirit of the land was flowing
into her, and own spirit strengthened and
refreshed, was flowing out again towards life.
This was the permanent self, she knew" (BG 524).
Dorinda will find happiness in future, in "the serenity of mind which is above the conflict of frustrated desires" (BG 524). Her victory is the result of work and discipline and a sacrifice of the colour of life for the comfort of order. She drowns her sorrows and disappointments in gruelling and endless work and achieves success through intelligent farming. With contentment, she looks forward to a ripe old age with John Abner to whom she will leave the farms. Her courage in rejecting the illusion of emotion for the reality of success, Glasgow considers a brave answer to evasive idealism.

Dorinda's capacity for friendship with men, her kindness to Nathan's children, her firm justice to the Negroes, her love for animals and the land do not mask her hostility towards men and feminine women. The feminist theme is embedded in the severe terms of a
woman's determination to live free of sexual entanglement and her vengeful contentment at seeing her lover brought low. The Calvinist theme refers to the heroine's vein-of iron, a legacy from the Scotch Irish forebears. The agrarian theme shows the yearning towards the land that impels Dorinda to reaffirm her bond with it. As Glasgow intended Dorinda triumphs through the deep instinct for survival which has strengthened into a dynamic force. Dorinda finds her fulfillment, as Glasgow herself did, through work. Hence Glasgow repeatedly affirms her heroine's will to live without delight. It is through agrarian metaphor Glasgow elevates Dorinda above the human fray to an almost mythic status. Though Dorinda stifles love, she shares in the rhythms of the seasons and rejoices in the fruits of her labour. In this she fulfils her role of the idealized farmer, glorified in the legends of South. Glasgow has
drawn her as a serenely strong, isolated but self-reliant heroine.

The masculine treachery, cruelty and the bruised female psyche form the focal point of the novel *The Sheltered Life*. Yet, in the end, it shows awareness on the part of the woman about her unacknowledged sacrifice and the resultant disillusionment. This novel offers a close scrutiny of the social and personal lives of four unhappy women, "each of whom suffers as a result of the restrictions placed on her by society" (Baechler 176). In Archbald household, there are three disheartened women, Cora Archbald is the self-effacing widowed daughter-in-law of General Archbald. She has two daughters, Etta Archbald and Isabella Archbald who despite their difference in temperament and character lead a lonely life. The plain and therefore unwanted Etta leads the life of a spinster. The high-
spirited, attractive Isabella, unwilling to surrender to the pressures of the aristocratic code, defiantly marries a carpenter and is still unhappy.

Archbalds' neighbour George Birdsong's devoted wife Eva Birdsong celebrated once for her physical charms and genteel manners plays a pivotal role in this novel. Both young and old were appreciative and jealous of her exceptional beauty which has developed into a cult. All the eligible bachelors in the neighbourhood had been vying with each other for her hand, but Eva has chosen a poor lawyer George Birdsong with whom she has eloped. The intellectually talented woman plays a subordinate role of a home-maker concentrating on her physical appearance, for, that is what is expected of her. No one, including her husband, bothers about her inner beauty. Eva, for all her charm and docility, is a victim of
her husband's infidelity. Though Eva knows the philandering husband's affairs, she stomachs them silently in the name of propriety. "Having sacrificed a music career to marry her improvident young lawyer husband, she must maintain the fiction that theirs is a blissfully perfect marriage" (Thiebaux 146). But the entire neighbourhood knows about the plight of this wronged woman. Etta Archbald's comment puts the position of Eva in a nutshell, "Look at all that Eva gave up when she was married. Yet I am sure she would never waste a regret on her sacrifice, if only George would be faithful" (SL 21).

The silent suffering takes a heavy toll on her physical appearance, that she becomes a shadow of her previous self. The psychological trauma makes her physically ill too. Unaware of the inner turmoil, the external world can only appreciate her beauty
or mourn the loss of it. Eva's illness brings her a wisdom too late but at least she could pass on the wisdom to Jenny Blair and warn her not to repeat her mistakes:

When you have never been yourself for forty years, you've forgotten what you are really . . . I'm worn out with being somebody else — with being somebody's ideal. I want to turn round and be myself for a little while before it is too late, before it is all over. (SL 121)

Thus Eva bemoans the loss of her identity and the role of the society in it. Rouse, appropriately points out "Eva Birdsong embodies a myth and is its victim. She is the personification of the Southern beauty; she is crushed by the demands of that myth"(110).
Eva's glamour, disinterested passion for self sacrifice are symptomatic of traditional sanctities. "These qualities might have been dynamic and regenerative influences upon the society whose finest achievement has been Eva, had they been allied in this social order to honesty and truth. . . she becomes the sacrificial victim to amenity and pretence" (Martine 60). Eva who moved through life behind a perfect smile, never complaining, breaking through to reality only when her health, her life itself, is threatened. Eva is all womanliness and perfection — embodiment of ideals the society demands. Her tragedy as a person is that she has accepted the illusion of woman's suitable role as a perfect wife. Glasgow makes the young doctor John Welch, her spokesman when he says, "I honestly believe that she has never drawn a natural breath since she was married, If she dies . . . it will be the
long pretense of her life that has killed her" (SL 153).

Eva told Jenny once, "you will understand still better when you are older . . . you will know then that a great love doesn't leave room for anything else in a woman's life. It is everything . . . you can never give up too much for happiness" (SL 55, 57). Glasgow gives Eva as well as the readers the realization of the falsity of this stance towards life. When Eva comes to sound the depths of her own self-imposed hypocrisy, her reassurance changes to admonition:

whatever you do, Jenny Blair, never risk all your happiness on a single chance. Always keep something back, if it is only a crumb. Always keep something back for a rainy day. (SL 271)
Giving up all for love is to become a slave to fear, fear of losing love. The maiming operation destroys her beauty. She suffers post-operative nervous breakdown and behaves erratically, breaking into panic, weeping wildly and wandering off alone. She sinks into deeper void of terror and madness. She neglects her house work, and her garden runs to ruin foreshadowing her own fate. At this stage, the secret meeting of her young friend and protegee Jenny with her husband, comes to light. When she sees Jenny and George embracing in the library, it is too much for her to tolerate that in rage, she breaks out of the stereotype of a docile woman and shoots her husband. While George lies dead in his chair with lips bloodied, Eva sits rigidly staring into the twilight, her face like a skull. "We can only infer that at this moment, stripped of illusion, she confronts at last her rage at her ruined life" (Thiebaux 148).
But others assert, it is an accident, exonerating both Eva and Jenny. The males in authority judge this event as unintentional and the women as innocent. They have shielded Eva from any disagreeable encounter with the law. The powerful kin protect the guilty. The sheltered life goes on as before. Eva's secret thoughts are locked from the readers. But we realize, what remains for her is emptiness. Even her vindication becomes a loss for her. Eva ultimately becomes an epitome of the wasted woman, her tolerance leading to destruction, her happiness turning into a tragedy.

However it is Jenny belonging to the younger generation who is the protagonist of the novel. Jenny insists on her right to individualism: I'm different I'm different . . . I'm alive, alive, alive, and I'm Jenny Blair Archbald"(SL 3). Unfortunately she has
Few achieving women to imitate. She chooses Eva as her model which dooms her. Certain genetic and primordial forces which are inherent in her, drive through her. It is the atavistic life force, the sexual vitality that sweeps her away in its claws that she does not resist. So Jenny becomes an egotistical survivor, willing to assert her sexual energy and to shunt others aside. Glasgow condemns this hard-heartedness of younger generation who takes advantage of both the generations. "Even as she allows herself to yield to the demands of "biology", she can take privileged refuge in the lies and evasions offered by "civilization" without ever confronting the consequences of her actions" (Thiebaux 151). Glasgow strongly criticizes in Jenny, the deplorable and destructive happiness-hunters of the new dispensation. There is an ambivalence in Glasgow's treatment of women. While she deplores the sacrifice of the older woman, she
seems to admire and idealize her martyred status. She grants Eva the right to slay her husband but makes the ending non-committal. As Thiebaux opines, "If Glasgow feels the exploited Eva requires pity, she forces the younger, freer woman to excite animosity"(152). The spirited independent Jenny rejects the role of the Southern debutante and declares that she wants to do something with her life — either to become an actress or a suffragette. But Glasgow makes her accept the male duplicity and double standard, and makes her pursue a shallow, treacherous course. "Ultimately, Glasgow is signalling the dangers for women, whether liberated or not, of locating their identities in their sexuality"(Thiebaux 152).

The central irony of the novel depends not on its female characters but on the men who hold power like Archbald. Archbald assigns the
women of his family conventional roles and keeps them locked there. Socially and politically the strongest character, he could have created change and eased the misery of the women, but he remains the spokesman supreme for the traditions of the sheltered life. He believes in proper conventions of a woman's role as wife and mother, of woman's dependence on men, and of woman's suffering. People endowed with a "sparrow vision" are not in a position to correct certain age-old assumptions and ultimately it is the women who pay the penalty.

It is indeed such narrow vision which makes Oliver Treadwell choose the clinging Virginia Pendleton with a limited personality in Virginia. The competent Susan Treadwell, a good friend is set as a foil to Virginia for, Susan decides that her happiness will not depend on any man. Her clear-headed independence makes her a typical Southern girl.
Introduced as a pair, both Virginia and Susan marry and have children. But Susan's marriage never dominates her life. She succeeds in being herself, as she sees men and things as they are and accepts them with humorous sympathy and never idealizes them. Neither is she impatient of imperfection. She is the softened intellectual. While Virginia is exhausted, Susan with her six children has kept her youth and interests. She has never given "herself" to others. The inviolability of her soul has preserved the freshness of her body. Glasgow pictures in Susan, "the actual" and in Virginia "the ideal". Virginia's education designed to paralyze her reasoning faculties, succeeds in making her a helpless victim of the ideal. But in Susan, we find a self-achiever who, with the same education, finds fulfillment even in that restrictive culture.
Glasgow's personal choices in life show that part of the vacillation that marks her female characters is probably her own indecision. Her personal response is often that of the traditional Southern gentlewoman she censures. As her biographer E. Stanly Godbold, Jr. states, "Ellen herself was one day an old-fashioned Southern girl and the next day a modern intellectual . . . In all of her life she was not able to shed either role, nor was she able to reconcile them" (99). If Virginia shows the influence of paralyzing education, on the other end of the scale, we find Gabriella Carr in *Life and Gabriella* who uses modern education for her needs. Glasgow describes that character like this:

Gabriella was the product of the same school, but instead of being used by circumstances, she used them to create her own
Gabriella had the courage of action and through molding circumstances wrested from life her happiness and success. (Overton 32)

Though she has romantic fantasies, she has realized that one cannot live entirely on emotional response. She tries to achieve independence with a direction. The title indicates Gabriella wages a war with the circumstances of her life, the social expectations, cultural attitudes and religious formulae. This strong woman, unafraid of either work or society leads a self-sufficient life. Life, not death is to be Gabriella's prize. The novel's subtitle, "The Story of a Woman's Courage" also signals her character.

Gabriella lives in Post Civil war Richmond with her widowed mother and her
married, but separated sister Jane, in genteel poverty. Fashioning lampshades, her mother waits for some man to support her family, be it a husband for Gabriella. Meanwhile Gabriella gets a job as a saleswoman in Brandywine and Plummer, an emporium which is a sanctuary for distressed ladies of the highest blood in Virginia. There she learns the lucrative art of millinery.

When George Fowler, a Southerner living in New York comes courting her, she falls in love with him. Her behaviour changes radically, when she becomes engaged to him. She too comes to believe, "there is nothing but love in the world" (LG 97). George who hates independence in a woman, is happy that she is pliable now. She even agrees to live in New York with his parents after marriage. When his vices become apparent, Gabriella with her superior commonsense decides, "She would be
true to him, but she would be true with her eyes open, not shut" (LG 129). Though she realizes her husband loves drinks and other women, she is caught in a maze of dependency because of her children — a daughter and a son. But when George leaves her for another woman, she obtains a divorce and turns to work for support and solace. Realizing her own resources, she secures a position in the fashionable Maison Dinard as a saleswoman and milliner. Never bitter, she raises her children on her own with the help of Miss. Polly the Richmond seamstress who comes to stay with her.

For the next fifteen years, she never makes friends, never sees the city around her and cuts herself from all emotions, and works her way to professional and financial success. Eventually she buys her way into the Dinard
business. When she seeks advice from an elderly judge about a loan, he agrees to help, for a price. The enraged Gabriella, calmly but firmly indicates that she would prefer to be treated "as a gentleman". For years, she has closed her heart to love which is destructive. There is no room for any other emotion except maternal solicitude. But her children are becoming independent as she enters her late thirties. Her beautiful daughter is shallow and selfish. Only her son is her emotional mainstay. Though, she has achieved success, her life seems empty. Reappraising her life of renunciation, she becomes restless. "... She saw that she had always been growing farther and farther away from tradition, from accepted opinions, from the dogmas and ideals of the ages" (LG 386). It has not made her very happy.

At this point she moves to London Terrace and gets acquainted with her neighbour
the rugged Ben O' Hara who outrages her sensibilities with his lack of refinement and crude tastes. But, on further analysis, she discovers that that self-made railway magnate, has made it to the top hailing from the city slums. He attracts her as he does not drink. Moreover she starts admiring his faithfulness to his cocaine-addict wife whom he nurses for years until her death. She likes his vitality, his self-assurance and his selfless simplicity. When the derelict George lurches home to Gabriella to die a drunkard's death, it is Ben O' Hara who comes to her help and makes arrangement for the funeral. On his sensible advice, she sheds a forgiving tear for George.

On her thirty-eighth birthday when O' Hara proposes she rejects him and returns to Virginia to see her family and to investigate the status of her former fiance Arthur Peyton whom she rejected choosing independence. She
is disappointed to see the ascetic, refined
Arthur who looks faded and is resigned to a
life of renunciation. So far Gabriella has
clung to her idealization of Arthur Peyton just
as her mother has enshrined her dead husband.
She has used this ideal to protect her from any
actual emotional involvement. The interim
short-lived marriage with George has only made
her find "safety in hardness". Now she feels
that an unconquerable isolation is closing in.
She realizes that she admires and loves Ben O'
Hara. Her "strength, her firmness her courage,
and her belief in life" (LG 420), makes her go
after him. Atlast Gabriella has found a man
she can marry and live happily ever after.
Though Glasgow has given a conventional ending
of happiness, it is given as a reward for
Gabriella's strength. In her personal voyage
of independence she has found the right partner
who, in all her endeavours, will only encourage
her.
Glasgow refers to Oliver Goldsmith's verse in *They Stooped to Folly* where she reflects on the status of the fallen women of three generations. Virginius Littlepage the successful lawyer's old Aunt Agatha was seduced and left pregnant in the 1880's. Never recovering from her disgrace, she confines herself to the bedroom at the back and wears out her life. This life of isolation has made her an eccentric that she visits soda fountains often with her furry gray shawl and gobbles away banana splits and sweets. She spends her time watching films about sin and passion. Her talks, invariably monologues, centre around propriety and persecution. She feels that woman are hunted for men's sport. But she keeps herself satisfied quoting her father's opinion about women that a woman's mind is like a flower, designed to shed fragrance, not sense.
While this sweet Victorian lady feels martyred, the voluptuous Amy Dalrymple, the tarnished seductress leads yet another kind of life. Divorced for adultery, she goes abroad, remarries and becomes a widow. The war offers some avenue of escape to many fallen women. The war gives a new interest to Aunt Agatha that she sews pajamas for the soldiers. Amy joins the war as an ambulance driver, saves soldiers under fire and is decorated for heroism. Though the Queensborough society still has not accepted her, this warm-blooded woman leads a life according to her whim, discreetly choosing lovers whenever she wants. Even the dignified the fifty-seven year old lawyer Virginius Littlepage, attracted by the cooing dove-like Amy used to indulge in day dreams about her. He desires her without respecting her. Her irresistible physical attributes make his head buzz like murmuring bees. But he is not bold enough to venture into an affair. His life
long habit of repression wins, that ironically he finds himself advising her to take up charity work to occupy her energy. Moreover as a divine punishment, his wife dies peacefully on her couch while he is dallying with Amy. His guilt keeps him faithful to her memory.

Victoria Littlepage is a prim and proper wife, outwardly a womanly woman who is trained to soothe male vanity. But she turns out to be subversive of the order which she has striven to maintain. She regards her husband unexciting and has her own secret fantasies over an imagined lover who would carry her in a wild horse. As she has never really liked men, she maintains a tender friendship with Louisa Goddard, an unmarried woman. Glasgow shows here, the interdependence of two women, as the men fail to understand their feelings. In fact Victoria is tired of her ladylike role as a benign influence for a better world. Though
her daughter Mary Victoria seeks the mother's help in reforming her husband, Victoria gradually detaches herself from the business of living. "Mystically contained, she feels as if a "luminous veil" enveloped her, shielding her from sensation and obligation and releasing her from time" (Thiebaux 140). Victoria appears sane in her withdrawal and female bonding.

Victoria's daughter, Mary Victoria who returns from her tour of war time nursing with a soldier husband who seduced Milly Burden. She lacks concern for Milly's stronger claim to her husband Martin Welding. Self-indulgent and lacking direction, the young act out their desires and ultimately find themselves unhappy. Failing to reform Martin, she finds herself alone and abandoned by him, waiting for her baby to be born.
Glasgow deals with the altered sexual morality as a sign of the new times. The war has transformed the women giving new sexual mores. The old world called the sexually experienced woman as "unvirginal", woman who has "forgotten herself". But the new woman found in the same predicament demands the right to live fully. Glasgow is ambivalent, for, she could neither accept the destructive Victorian judgement nor countenance the bold modern tendency of loose behaviour in love. The old morality created a crippling myth about female chastity as a force giving solace and boost to male ego. It considered the wilful bold women as "impediments" and the docile women as "inspirations". Glasgow makes Victoria Littlepage who is considered as an inspiration, say that such position is both strenuous and unrewarding.
Milly Burden, brought up a Calvinist mother who is obsessed with sin and divine wrath, breaks the myth created by male. She is the new liberated woman. Though bruised at heart by her precipitous plunge into sexuality, it cures her also. She becomes hard and insists on her rights to happiness without an object. Though she appears at times as if she is pining for Martin's love, she no longer wants him when he abandons his wife and asks her to run away with him. She rejects him and decides to leave Queensborough to search for something better than love. She chooses to be independent in New York, free from the constraints of living with her mother. She no longer harbours any romantic illusion. She simply refuses to recognise the existence of the Southern code or the fact of her "ruin".

Ada Fincastle in Vein of Iron is a complex creation of Glasgow. Though her
religious and social inheritance is typically Southern, she reacts differently to the buffets of life. Scarred by hardship and disappointment in love, she never becomes hardened. In her, runs the vein of iron of endurance and resistance to evil and difficulty. It is tempered like steel due to her bitter experiences with Ralph, and it has endowed her with resilience and spiritual forces that she patiently withstands her sufferings. At the end of the novel, she returns to the manse with her family, presumably to a better life. Glasgow associates "the vein of iron" with the Fincastles, as she considers it to be the special characteristic which belonged to the Calvinist settlers of Virginia. Hence, Ada is endowed with this image of endurance in the face of disaster.

Corinna Page in *One Man in His Time* serves as an idealized self-portrait of Glasgow
in her middle age. She, presented as one of the last and best of the Southern great ladies, is of Glasgow's age and outlook. She holds court in her old print shop surrounded by tapestries, roses and marigolds. This flower of Virginia aristocratic tradition looks as if she has stepped from an old painting. This well-bred, intellectually honest woman stands for mystery, romance and authority. As she clings to the elegant manners of the fading past, she is looking forward, with caution to the bracing reformist politics of the new age. "Corinna stands midway between her gracious traditions and the desire to be part of the present" (Thiebaux 77). Though untried in romance, she determines to do without love, for, she thinks that there ought to be something more permanent than love to live by. So she rejects the lawyer Benham who woos her and becomes a spouse to Gideon Vetch, a socialist, and mothers his daughter Patty. She
sets out to improve Patty's manners and style and there develops a tender womanly bond between the two which gives her a satisfaction which even a relationship with a loving man cannot give. In spite of all achievements and friends she feels, her life is empty, "a gray lane without a turning that stretched on into nothingness!" (OMT 119). The angst that mars her happiness is her feeling of superiority that all men are inferior. Though disillusioned in this aspect, "she moves with the ageless charm of a truly beautiful, candid woman through a world that recognizes her quality" (Wagner 62).

Corinna's grasp of the male psyche gives her power. She is a woman experienced in love and flirtation and now men have ceased to interest her because she knows them too well:

She knew by heart the very machinery of their existence,
the secret mental springs
which moved them so
mechanically; and she felt
to-day that if they had been
watches she could have taken
them apart and put them
together again without
suspending for a minute the
monotonous regularity of
their works. (OMT 142)

When Gideon Vetch is killed, she muses on her
life and on her real disinterest in finding a
second husband. When she gets engaged to
Benham, there is no excitement or expectancy.
Corinna's comment to a friend that "One dreads
the lonely fireside as one grows older" (OMT
211) only shows that her engagement is a matter
of propriety rather than of heart. Hence it is
easy for her to sacrifice herself so that Alice
Rokeby can recapture Benham. For all her stoic
endurance, there is pain in her heart and a
poignant sense of loss. She knows she can never find rest and love. But, out of this vacuum and deprivation, comes fortitude. She is never dependent on men. She is the giving, generous friend but as she tells Patty, she realizes that a woman must salvage something of herself in any relationship:

Just so much and no more . . . . Give with the mind and the heart but keep always one inviolable sanctity of the spirit — of the buried self beneath the self.

(OMT 286)

She knows, "Things will fail. . . . if we lean too hard on them"(OMT 291). In a way, she has escaped from a marriage that would never have been fulfilling. Her destiny is the destiny of the strong, a woman with the vein of iron who can give away everything, yet endure.
"Glasgow's ability to present Corinna as both passionate and philosophical, suffering yet enduring, is the real accomplishment of One Man in His Time" (Wagner 64-5).

Glasgow's last novels In This Our Life and Beyond Defeat portray different types of women in Lavinia Timberlake and her two daughters Roy and Stanley. Lavinia is coddled by her husband Asa Timberlake due to her ill-health. But she uses her invalidism meanly to tyrannize her family especially her self-sacrificing husband. This hypochondriac with her warped judgment supports her younger daughter Stanley blindly and spoils her.

Stanley the pouting sexpot is flashily attractive and completely self-centered. She twists men and sentimental women around her finger with her sweet appearance and innocent looks. "Her innocence masks an insidious evil
quality more dangerous than poison. She is completely amoral; her only governing influence is desire. If she wants something, then she must have it" (Rouse 125-6). And she wants Peter Kingsmill, her sister Roy's husband, though she is engaged to Craig Fleming. She steals Peter without compunction, leaving a heart-broken Craig who takes to drinks. But the happiness-hunters become miserable soon due to Stanley's lifestyle. Unable to live any longer with Stanley, Peter commits suicide. Stanley returns to Queensborough and is shielded by her mother. Trying to escape from herself, Stanley seeks the anodyne of speed in the fast sports car and runs over and kills a child. She shifts the blame on to a colored boy and escapes punishment with the help of her uncle. She interferes once again in the life of her sister Roy and is the cause of Roy breaking her engagement with Craig. So this pretty petulant
girl leads a life selfishly without any remorse.

Roy is a study of contrast to her sister. She is strong and stable. She refuses to grieve or hate when she is deserted by Peter. Though hurt, she gives Peter his freedom through divorce. She buys a red hat and continues her work in an interior decorator's shop. Loved by her ineffectual father, she has learned to respond to true affection, but she is helpless to play games for power over men. She is no match for Stanley who is the epitome of modern selfishness. Once again she falls a victim to Stanley's machinations and loses Craig too. Hurt and angry, this martyr sets out on a rainy night and encounters a young Englishman who is as lost as she. She goes with him to an apartment where she gives him the comfort of her body and spirit. She returns home the next
morning to get her clothes and leave Queensborough permanently.

Beyond Defeat written as a sequel to In This Our Life is supposed to continue the story of Roy and her son who is conceived on that night of indiscretion. The novel opens with her homecoming, bringing with her, her fatherless child. "Of the past, nothing was left but herself and the things she remembered. . . Yet in those three vital years, torn up from the deepest roots of her heart, she had lived and died, and been born over again. . ."(BD 5). Roy has suffered hardship, poverty, sickness and loneliness with her illegitimate child. This seems to be a punishment for flouting sexual love, family bonding, masculine control and patriarchy. But Glasgow makes it a kind of affirmation. The child she conceives impersonally, she will have to herself, so retaining her feminity and her independence.
Glasgow ponders over the decay of confidence in traditional marriage and shows through Roy, the willingness to experiment, however disastrously, with "open marriage". Glasgow pinpoints the deliberate use of sex as a vindictive expression on the part of women who revolt against tradition, conventions or institutions. Roy's wild sexual act is like a flare of light in the darkness of her mind. She has fought on beyond defeat and come home. It is a return to a place of rootedness, a kind of resurrection. Roy renews her bond with Craig and the three together seem to form a family. Roy has won the kind of peace that in itself is a victory.

She realizes the truth of what her doctor told her:

He said we were all trying to escape from our roots in nature . . . in the simple
goodness of living. . . . We could only run round and round in a circle, until we edged nearer a precipice, or came back to win or to lose the fight within ourselves. . . . This was when I began to see that my help could not come from outside. (BD 125)

Once Roy has learned this, she becomes a survivor. Asa and his lady Kate who are rooted in nature and in simple goodness of life welcome Roy. In her child's presence Roy understands that life does not stop because it has been broken. The child represents the endless becoming in the unknown future. From the era which is passing from the tradition which is changing, Roy salvages the living seeds of tomorrow. "Roy Timberlake represents Ellen Glasgow's vision of a member of the
younger generation who may find salvation when others are lost" (Rouse 126).

Thus Glasgow pictures her women made of tougher fibres, endowed with indomitable will, fiery, at times reckless courage, clear thinking, intelligence, resourcefulness, adaptability and steely determination. Many of her heroines lead an independent life choosing satisfying options of their own. Some rebel and do not conform to the traditional notion of women. Their defiance, in the midst of the effete Southern belles, makes them appear aggressive and even harsh but, they are full of vitality, poise, self-knowledge and self-assurance to face any eventuality. Triumphing over their adversities, they have proved their potential as seekers, survivors and achievers. Though they seem to defy customs and conventions, these new women still have qualities of love, tolerance, compassion,
Tolerance and forgiveness, demonstrating that they have not lost totally their essential feminine qualities. Except for a few utterly selfish and ruthless she-devils, Glasgow's heroines are still "womanly" women. The clarion call Glasgow gives to wake up and break out of the traditional mould apparently sounds feministic, is still predominantly feminine.