

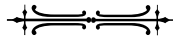
J. GRESHAM MACHEN



J. GRESHAM MACHEN  
at about 45 years of age.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN

*A Biographical Memoir*



Ned B. Stonehouse



THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST

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To  
MARILYN  
ELSIE  
and  
BERNARD



GREAT HEART. But here was great odds, three against one.

‘Tis true,’ replied Valiant-for-truth; ‘but little or more are nothing to him that has the truth on his side ...’

Then said Great-heart to Mr Valiant-for-truth, ‘Thou has worthily behaved thyself; let me see thy sword.’ So he showed it to him.

When he had taken it in his hand, and looked thereon a while, he said, ‘Ha, it is a right Jerusalem blade.’

VALIANT. It is so. Let a man have one of these blades, with a hand to wield it, and skill to use it, and he may venture upon an angel with it. He need not fear its holding, if he can but tell how to lay on. Its edge will never blunt. It will cut flesh and bones, and soul and spirit, and all. Heb. 4:12.

GREATHEART. But you fought a great while; I wonder you was not weary.

VALIANT. I fought till my sword did cleave to my hand; and then they were joined together as if a sword grew out of my arm; and when the blood ran through my fingers, then I fought with most courage.

GREATHEART. Thou hast done well; thou hast resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Thou shalt abide by us, and go out with us; for we are thy companions.

Then they took him and washed his wounds, and gave him of what they had, to refresh him; and so they went away together.

John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*





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## PREFACE

**A**lthough seventeen years have gone by since the passing of J. Gresham Machen, the lustre of his life has not dimmed for those who knew him well. He remains Mr Valiant-for-Truth par excellence, still vibrant in their memories, though he has long since gone up over the Delectable Mountains and across the river into the city of God. But memories falter and generations pass on, and it is well that a record should be made where reminiscences, gathered up and joined with other knowledge, may be stored so as to inform and quicken the faith and life of those to whom he may be little more than a name.

Machen's place within the history of our times, and especially of the twenties and thirties, has been so conspicuous that his life will continue to be of interest so long as men reflect upon the religious and ecclesiastical developments of the first half of the twentieth century. Even writers whose viewpoints were antithetical to his own—including the caustic sceptic H. L. Mencken, the idealistic but agnostic Pearl Buck and the penetrating Unitarian Albert C. Dieffenbach—acknowledged that he towered above his contemporaries in strength of character and fidelity to principle. There were also those who could mark the deeper channel of his life such as Caspar Wistar Hodge, his colleague and friend at Princeton, who characterized him at the time of his death as 'the greatest theologian in the English-speaking world' and 'the greatest leader of the whole cause of evangelical Christianity'. Machen will continue to attract attention, however, not only because of his place in the history of recent decades. For by his deeds and words he set in motion spiritual forces which have not spent their

strength. And if, as one observer who is to speak forth in these pages said, he was 'a saint of God who loves truth, seeks truth, finds truth, and upholds truth against all adversaries, however mighty', his witness cannot perish. As a testimony to the truth it may still serve to arouse the consciences of men of this day and may break forth with fresh intensity and power in the future.

Though he was one of the most publicized men of his day, he got, on the whole, an astonishingly poor press. His doctrinal position, for example, was often designated as that of 'extreme fundamentalism', when as a matter of fact he was not precisely described as a fundamentalist at all. Frequently pilloried as bitter and bigoted, he was in truth a man of profound humility and of rare sympathy and fair-mindedness. The concern to disclose what manner of man Machen really was has been one of the factors affecting the disposition of this biography.

Selectivity has been demanded for another reason. Though some details had to be searched out with a microscope, in the main the biographer has suffered from an embarrassment of riches so far as sources are concerned. The books, articles, reviews, sermons, addresses, newspaper and magazine stories, for the most part well known or readily accessible, give all the information that a student of his life might fairly ask for. But there were also his letters, copies of letters and miscellaneous papers and memoranda, thousands upon thousands of them, cramming some thirty drawers of his filing cabinets. And among the letters, there was as precious and memorable a collection as a biographer could ever hope to peruse, those exchanged between Machen and his mother over a period of nearly thirty years. During the earliest stages of this undertaking, a decade or so ago, a somewhat different scope was in view. But when Machen's letters to his mother were found in Baltimore a few years ago, to be integrated with her letters to him found in his files, the story could not be other than a personal one, although of course the public aspects of his career could not be neglected.

The maturing of Machen's thought and the development of his scholarly labours are extensively illumined in these pages, but an exhaustive evaluation of his significance as a theologian has not been

undertaken. Nor has it proved practicable to dwell at length upon the history of the institutions with which Machen's name was prominently associated. Their backgrounds and beginnings, the principles involved and the motive forces which were operative are reflected upon, but the developments of the final years, which are otherwise most fully documented, are presented here only in summary fashion. Hardly any aspect of his life fails to find at least brief mention, but countless details which in the telling would have required another volume or two have been passed over. In sharpest contrast is the fullness with which his years abroad in 1905–06 and 1918–19 are treated, the periods when, lacking the opportunity of face to face conversations with family and friends, he most completely reveals his mind and heart.

Regrettably I could not bring to this undertaking the skill of a professional man of letters, but every other advantage has been mine, including the sympathetic understanding possible only in a friend and associate. To mark the point where personal observations began, it may be noted that it was in the fall of 1924 that I first entered his classes in Princeton. A growing admiration of his life and labours and the beginnings of personal friendship were to characterize the student years that followed. Our relationships were to become far more intimate, however, in the year 1929 as association in the same department of the seminary and the larger aspects of academic and ecclesiastical life was entered upon. Those seven and one-half years were far too few from my point of view but, crowded as they were with delightful and satisfying contacts, my cup of thanksgiving continues to overflow at the remembrance of them.

A very special expression of gratitude is due the Machen family—especially Dr Machen's brother, the late Arthur W. Machen, and Mrs Machen, but also their children. Miss Mary Gresham Machen and Mr Arthur W. Machen, Jr. Not only was I given complete freedom in the use of letters, papers and the scrapbooks prepared by his mother's loving hands, but my every inquiry was patiently and helpfully answered. Though the labour involved has been exacting, and its completion seemingly long delayed, their confidence and encouragement

have been most refreshing. Gratifying also has been their response to *God Transcendent* and *What is Christianity?*, offered as earnest of the larger undertaking.

It is my pleasure to express here also my deep appreciation of the encouragement of many others, including the trustees, faculty, alumni and friends of the seminary. The generosity of the trustees and of my colleagues in support of and adjustment to a term's leave of absence, granted to expedite the completion of the biography, must be singled out for particular thanks. In this as in all other matters I am also deeply grateful for the unfailingly heartening support of my wife.

A few notes, the minimum that seemed required, appear at the close.<sup>1</sup> They are mostly bibliographical, but there is also a necessary one on the correct pronunciation of J. Gresham Machen. The notes also offer the opportunity of making particular acknowledgment of the courtesy of a number of publishers in permitting quotation of certain copyrighted materials.

<sup>1</sup> [These have now been incorporated into the text as footnotes.]



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

**T**he present edition is revised only to the extent of a few minor changes in details and the elimination of typographical blemishes. It is a privilege also to add here an expression of cordial appreciation of the generous reception given the book since it first appeared a few months ago and of the publisher's anticipation of continued interest.

N.B.S.



## ONE

# MACHENS AND GRESHAMS

The Machens – Arthur Webster Machen – Career and Character –  
The Greshams – Life in Baltimore – Contacts with Lanier.

John Gresham Machen was born in Baltimore on July 28, 1881, the second of three sons in the family established on February 13, 1873, when Webster Machen was united in marriage with Mary Jones Gresham in Macon, Georgia, the home of the bride. At the time of the marriage Mr Machen was forty-five years of age, having been born on July 20, 1827, while Miss Gresham, whose natal day fell on June 17, 1849, was in her twenty-fourth year.

At the birth of Gresham,<sup>1</sup> as he was called in the family, his father accordingly had just entered upon his fifty-fifth year, and there may have been those who predicted that the paternal influence would likely prove negligible. In any case, the providential ordering of events accomplished a quite different result. For Arthur W. Machen lived until December 19, 1915, and the interval of more than thirty-four

<sup>1</sup> The name J. Gresham Machen, and especially the maternal family name Gresham, is frequently mispronounced. At the request of the publisher of *The Literary Digest*, Machen wrote at some length on the subject, and on the background of this information the magazine in its issue of July 14, 1934 carried the following key over the name of the lexicographer Frank H. Vizetelly: 'gress' am, not gresh' am; may' chen, not may' ken.' The chief pitfall in the pronouncing of the name, as Machen said, is in the drawing of the 's' and 'h' together in Gresham. The 'h' is silent as in 'Markham' or 'Badham.'

years following Gresham's birth was for him a period of extraordinary physical and mental vigour. He rejoiced to see the day when his son, after a period of agonizing heart-searching and disquiet, had come to find sure ground under his feet and had embarked upon his career as an ordained minister of the gospel and a duly installed professor in Princeton Theological Seminary.

Although the influence of the father upon his son was remarkable, that of the mother naturally enough excelled. She survived her husband by nearly sixteen years. When she passed away on October 13, 1931, Dr Machen was fifty years of age and had attained a position of world-wide influence and fame. Her son was to survive her by only a little more than five years, and thus she remained in intimate contact with him throughout nearly his entire life. Physical well-being of an enduring kind was never her good fortune in her adult life, but there was a compensation of extraordinary mental and spiritual force to the end of her life span of eighty-two years. And it was her rare intellectual alertness and accomplishments, reinforced by a profound and childlike Christian faith, which made those fifty years of motherly devotion and comradeship an extraordinary feature of his life. The fact that Gresham Machen never married was evidently a contributing factor in these relationships, for though he enjoyed the companionship of women, and was plainly not a bachelor of set purpose, as matters turned out his mother was the one woman who decisively influenced his life. No one ever seriously rivalled her in her capacity to satisfy his need of deep spiritual sympathy or in her hold upon his affection and admiration.

These considerations suggest the propriety of treating our subject's ancestry at some length in this opening chapter. Quite apart from one's knowledge of his forebears Machen's life would be fascinating, and in view of its dynamic—one might almost say meteoric—character, he might be classed with those who have 'no need of ancestors.' To neglect his ancestral background would, however, result in a grave impoverishment of our knowledge of his life. Machen was the child and heir of parents whose religious, cultural and social outlook conditioned his life and thought to a considerable degree. His life was so deeply rooted

in ancestral soil and so intimately intertwined with the mature stock from which it sprang that inquiry into his family background serves to illumine many aspects of his life and career. Memorial volumes prepared by loving hands bring to light many heroic figures on both sides of the family, but attention will be focussed here chiefly upon his father and mother.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Machens*

Arthur Webster Machen was the son of Lewis Henry Machen and Caroline Webster Machen, who were married in the City of Washington in the year 1816. Miss Webster was a native of New Hampshire who had been residing with her father in Washington for a number of years. The Machens, however, were Virginians of English ancestry, and the influences of the South were to be dominant in the history of the family. Although Lewis Machen was born in Maryland, and spent brief periods, including the last year of his life, in that state, and although he lived in Washington for more than thirty years, ties of ancestry and affection bound him to Virginia. He maintained his residence there for nearly twenty years towards the end of his life.

When his father Thomas Machen, who had been born in Virginia in 1750, died in 1800, young Lewis, then only nineteen years old, was compelled to undertake the support of his widowed mother and three sisters. He soon found employment as a clerk in the office of the Secretary of the United States Senate, a connection he was to maintain for nearly fifty years. To one with his mental vigour and capacity this position was never completely satisfying. He undertook it, as he said, only because he was prompted by a 'strong moral necessity ... for the benefit of those who had a claim to my protection and exertions.' This sense of duty marked the man in all of his life, and indeed was one of the distinguishing qualities of his son Arthur and his grandson Gresham.

<sup>2</sup> The memorial volumes are *Letters of Arthur W. Machen with Biographical Sketch*, compiled by Arthur W. Machen, Jr; *Stories and Articles by Arthur W. Machen*, collected by Arthur W. Machen, Jr (Baltimore, 1917); and *Testimonials to the Life and Character of John Jones Gresham* [by Minnie Gresham Machen] (Baltimore, 1892). All were privately printed.

Though the position in the Senate office did not afford the most congenial employment, there were solid compensations for one who was a spirited patriot. After a few years he received a spectacular opportunity to prove his patriotism, for he was responsible for preserving the archives and secret documents of the Senate in the year 1814. They would have fallen into the hands of the British or have been consumed in the fire which destroyed the Capitol had not Lewis Machen, acting with foresight, energy and courage in the panic which had developed at the approach of the British, arranged for and overseen their removal into the country. The fifty years of his activity in the office of the Senate brought him into intimate contact with many of the great men of the day, and, for one as intellectually and morally alert as he was, it was inevitable that he should be actively interested in public affairs. He was a Whig rather than a Democrat, and in 1828 wrote a series of vigorous articles in opposition to the election of Andrew Jackson.

The articles, which were published in the *National Intelligencer*, appeared under an assumed name no doubt due to the precarious nature of his own position, but his authorship was generally recognized. When his superior in the Senate office indicated his decided disapproval of this political activity, Lewis Machen defended his rights as a citizen with characteristic eloquence and courage.

Upon entering the public office, I engaged to perform, to the best of my ability, a known and prescribed duty; to conform to the instructions of the head of the office relating to that duty; and to receive as an equivalent for the services thus rendered, not as a consideration for rights abandoned, the compensation which might be allowed by law. But I never did engage to become an automaton or a machine; to look on unmoved, or without effort, when I should see the republic institution of my country in danger, or to surrender a single right of an American citizen.

In the office and during the hours devoted to its duties, I acknowledge and obey an official superior. When my official duty has closed, I stand on an equal footing with any man that

breathes. In the hours of relaxation from the toil and drudgery of office, my thoughts shall wander as discursive as the air; my opinions, uncontrolled by human authority, shall be embodied in any form my judgment shall approve; and while others are extinguishing life in dissipation, or permitting their faculties to grow torpid from disuse, it shall be my endeavour to treasure up these precious fragments of existence, and devote them to objects which I may deem beneficial to my family or society, and pleasing to that Being who has the time of all at his command.

It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that Lewis Machen was an extremist. That there was nothing provincial about his outlook is indicated, for example, by his advocacy of the Whig party, and in particular by his enthusiasm for the views of Daniel Webster. While not an abolitionist, he did regard slavery as an evil which would disappear from natural causes more happily than from sudden emancipation. Although concerned to preserve the rights of the States, his loyalty to the union was such that he regarded those who about 1850 'seriously concocted and traitorously planned the dissolution of this Confederacy' as worthy of being visited with 'the severest moral retribution.'

Not all 'the hours of relaxation' were taken up with political interests. He was intensely devoted to his growing family. After residing for a few years in a rented dwelling, he had erected a commodious home on Maryland Avenue, in Washington, where the family lived from 1822 to 1843. Arthur W. Machen was born in this home in 1827, one of seven children of whom only three survived infancy or childhood, the others being a sister Emmeline, born in 1817, and a brother James, born in 1831.

The home was a place of culture of a very exceptional kind. Although Lewis Machen was denied the advantage of a college education, interest in learning welled up within him so spontaneously that he gained a far wider culture than is common today among those who are under compulsions of one sort or another to acquire an education or an education of a sort. His love of literature extended beyond the English classics to works in Latin, French and Spanish

which he read with ease. He inculcated a love of these good things in his children, not only by specific instruction but also by the acquisition of a remarkable library. The library contained not only his own favourite writings, but he also acquired others such as the Greek classics that his sons might be tempted to read them. The library grew as he added items, to the extent that modest income allowed, from the sale of the private library of Thomas Jefferson and of the famous Kloss collection. Collectors' items, including examples of the famous presses of the early centuries of printing, found a place in the library, as did also books chosen for their fine bindings and artistic illustrations. In this home therefore, under parental tutelage and example, a passionate love of books and a deep but unaffected love of learning and beauty were part of the atmosphere breathed by the children. Arthur Machen was to inherit many of these books, and they formed the foundation for the establishment of his own distinguished library. Of more importance still he acquired a taste for these fine things in his early years that was to develop in later life into solid and mature appreciation and knowledge.

Still another quality (besides patriotic ardour and intellectual appetite) distinguished that Washington home, a quality that was to prove an even more basic influence for the future. The home in which Arthur Machen was reared was characterized by a robust piety. His mother was also remembered for the purity and strength of her religious faith, but the father fulfilled his task as head of the family in matters religious in his characteristically virile way. It was a family where the Bible was honoured and read as the word of God; where family prayers were part of the routine without being merely routine exercises; where membership in and attendance upon the services of the Christian church were regarded as sacred obligations and genuine privileges.

The faith of Lewis Machen had not come without consideration of the appeal made by rationalism and infidelity. When it came, however, it found expression in a childlike faith in Christ as the crucified Redeemer; it likewise embraced the comprehensive unity of biblical truth. Although he was brought up as an Episcopalian, he joined



the Presbyterian Church in early manhood out of deliberate preference, soon became an elder, and to the end of his life was an ardent believer in Presbyterian doctrine. At the time of the division of the Presbyterian Church into the Old School and New School in 1837, he was an elder in the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Washington. In the course of developments, the other members of the session and a large majority of the congregation cast in their lot with the New School, but Lewis Machen sent a brief letter to the session in which he demanded his dismissal to a congregation maintaining without dilution the Calvinistic doctrine of the Westminster Confession. A longer formulation of his point of view, although not actually sent, is especially illuminating as to the clarity and vigour of his Christian faith. It included the following:

The manifestation of opinion, in the recent election of the pastor of the church, leaves me no room to doubt the prevailing sentiment. By the choice which they made they distinctly ratified the acts of the session, and gave their adhesion to the New School Assembly. To remain longer in their communion would neither conduce to the benefit of the church, nor to my own spiritual improvement. If I attempted, while remaining, to check by reason, persuasion, or remonstrance, the force of the prevailing error or misapprehension, I should be regarded only as a refractory member, daring to resist the will of a majority and to think for himself. If I remained a silent and passive spectator, this apparent acquiescence would make me a participator in their acts, or, at least, render me a very equivocal supporter of the cause which my conscience approved.

I have therefore been compelled, by a sense of what is due to others as well as to myself, to retire from your communion.

It cannot be disguised that the Presbyterian Church is rent into two parties, differing essentially from each other on fundamental points; the one maintaining the Calvinistic doctrines of the Confession of Faith according to their obvious meaning; the other, either denying them altogether, or so explaining them as to make them in effect Arminian or Pelagian. Twenty years ago I

assented to the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, not without hesitation, but after the best examination in my power, and with a conviction of their conformity with the divine will, revealed in Scripture. Subsequent reflection and experience have furnished no cause for recantation. I shall adhere, then, to the standards of the church, and to that division of its members which shall most unequivocally, and consistently, maintain them.

In pursuing this course, I am actuated by no unfriendly spirit, and I have felt the difficulties which surround the points in controversy. To reconcile the foreknowledge of God, and his absolute control over all events, with that free agency of man which makes him accountable for the moral conduct upon which these events apparently depend, is not the work of human reason. The brightest intellect has never yet penetrated the mysterious cloud which envelopes this subject. Taught by experience the fallibility of my judgment, I bow with submission to that divine word which represents God as the moral governor of the world and the absolute disposer of events; operating by his spirit upon the hearts of men; and, according to the councils of his own will, making some of the fallen posterity of Adam vessels of wrath, and others vessels of mercy. I do not impugn the sincerity, the purity of motive, or the ability, of those engaged in the propagation of opinions which many, equally sincere and pure and able, have deemed erroneous or pernicious. But forced by circumstances to take a position on one side or the other, I prefer submitting to any inconvenience, and sharing any obloquy, to a negative support, or actual abandonment of the cause of truth and vital Christianity. In adopting an alternative which at best is painful, I can only pray the Great Head of the Church so to influence the hearts and guide the determination of his professing followers as to banish all discord, error, and self-delusion, and hasten his reign of universal righteousness and peace.

I remain,

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
L. H. Machen,  
Late Elder in the 4th Presb. Church.

*Arthur Machen*

At the time that this letter was written, young Arthur was twelve years old, and thus at an age when his father's Christian faith, not to speak of other qualities, would long before have begun to make a deep impression upon him. His early education was received in private schools, the last being Abbot's Select Classical Seminary, a school conducted by a Mr Abbot, a New Englander, from which he was graduated in 1842. Such records as have been preserved from those days indicate that, in addition to English and Algebra, the curriculum was largely made up of French and Greek and Latin, in all of which he did excellent work. It also appears that he had developed a talent as a story-teller, an accomplishment which won him first prize in class competition, and was afterward to provide some helpful income as well as diversion.

Following graduation he entered Columbian College (the forerunner of George Washington University) and studied there for at least one year. But the plan to continue there so as to prepare for Harvard was not realized, for in 1843 Arthur Machen interrupted his academic career because of rather delicate health, and was not to resume it until 1849. The interruption coincided with the removal of the family from the Washington residence to a farm of some 725 acres near Centreville in Fairfax County, Virginia, about twenty-five miles from Washington. One of the reasons for the purchase of the farm, named 'Walney,' was the father's purpose to improve the health of the family. Since Lewis Machen was detained by duties in Washington during a considerable part of the year, the management of the farm fell largely upon the shoulders of Arthur and his younger brother James. There was more than supervision, however, for the boys engaged in the actual labour too, with solid rewards accruing in the form of greatly improved health. But for Arthur Machen the farm did not bring an end to intellectual pursuits. The winter season brought some opportunity for concentration upon classical and other studies, but even in going to market with cattle he had available in his pocket some intellectual pabulum. This habit of carrying books in his pockets was one that carried over into the next generation, for

Gresham Machen never went anywhere, it seemed, without having immediately at hand a large supply of reading matter, and even specified that his top coats should be tailored with spacious additional inside pockets for this purpose.

At long last, in 1849, in his twenty-second year, Arthur Machen's plan to enter Harvard was realized, but not without some modification of the original programme. For now he decided to dispense with the arts degree which had been in view and to enter the Harvard Law School at once. The two-year course, leading to the bachelor of laws degree, however, whetted his appetite for more academic training, and he remained for a year of graduate study. That his academic attainments at Harvard were of an exceptional kind is shown by the consideration that he enjoyed the respect and confidence of his professors to an unusual degree. Professor Parsons, engaged in the preparation of a book on contracts, sought and secured his aid, not only in the preparation of notes for the volume but also in the contribution of a chapter on slavery. His academic success may also be measured somewhat from the fact that his thesis won the prize in the class competition for the year 1851.

Though he remained for a year of graduate study, the reader should not conclude that this was made possible by the affluence of his father. The fact is that Lewis H. Machen could ill afford to contribute financially to the support of the son. Arthur Machen was, however, so independent and energetic that he largely earned his own way. The occasional assistance of Professor Parsons provided some pecuniary returns. But a more substantial and steady income resulted from his work as librarian of the Law School. And he came to depend to a considerable extent upon fees and prizes obtained from the acceptance for publication of stories, articles and reviews by a number of contemporary magazines. These include a novel published serially in the *American Review* for 1850. Arthur W. Machen, Jr, elder brother of Gresham, collected and was responsible for the private publication in 1917 of two substantial volumes of these materials and a number of previously unpublished items. He observed that all of this writing was done when his father was not more than 24 years old, and thus before

he was graduated. This fact coupled with the further observation that the stories were published anonymously or under a *nom de plume* stresses the pains which were taken to draw a sharp line between his activity as a writer of fiction and as a lawyer. The stories themselves display ample evidence of the author's imagination and literary power, but the language and style at the present time would be considered more suitable to the essay than fiction.

Evidently the strenuous years at Cambridge had taken their toll, and the youthful graduate was not prepared at once to launch upon a career as a lawyer. For a year he worked at 'Walney' to overcome ocular and dyspeptic disorders, and there was remarkable improvement in both respects. In fact, he never did have to wear glasses and he enjoyed robust health practically to the very last.

### *Career and Character*

He thus prepared to begin his legal career in the year 1853. The choice of Baltimore as the future centre of his life and labours is of special interest. An opportunity of settling in New York City was appealing from the point of view of material success, and New York had been strongly recommended to his father in preference to Baltimore by Wm. H. Seward. But Arthur's preference for the South, for Southern climate and Southern people, and above all his desire to be near his family outweighed any such enticement. His brother James, on the other hand, and other Southerners advised Richmond. But Baltimore won out as preserving both the Southern advantages and the challenge of a rather large city.

Admitted to the bar of the Superior Court on June 13, 1853, Arthur Machen opened an office in association with Richard J. Gittings, an intimate friend and classmate at Harvard. The early years of practice were so unremunerative that, in order to meet his bare living expenses, he depended for a time upon assistance from his father in the amount of fifty dollars per month. After nearly three years characterized more by inactivity than legal work, he was still so poor that he wrote to his father that 'if that remnant of Job's poultry yard which is immortalized in the proverb were poorer than I am, I am sure the most rapacious

Chaldean would never have offered to lay violent hands upon it.' His clothing was so threadbare and worn that it did not permit him to seek the company of the other sex. But these discouragements did not prevent him from studying assiduously, and sometimes he and his friends tried moot cases to keep in trim in lieu of the trial of actual cases. About 1856, however, his prospects brightened, and during the years that followed there appears to have been a rapid acceleration of success. The tide turned as he and his associate gained a reputation for conscientious and thorough devotion to the interests of their clients and skill in the conduct of their profession.

Baltimore in those days was a city of violent conflicts affecting political and civil life, days which Hamilton Owens speaks of as 'the turbulent fifties' when Irish and German groups stood arrayed against each other, Know-Nothingism flourished, and riots of the Plug Ugly and other gangs were common. In the trial of two members of one of these gangs for the murder of a policeman who had testified against another member, Mr Machen was actively associated in the prosecution with Mr Gittings who had become State's Attorney for Baltimore County, though he himself rarely, if ever, undertook any criminal cases. His success in this case helped enhance his reputation. That same year when a vacancy occurred Machen was offered a judgeship in the Superior Court of Baltimore by the Governor of the State. Though he recognized the court as the most considerable one in Maryland below the Court of Appeals, and the honour was unusual for one so inexperienced and still only thirty-two years old, he felt constrained to decline because of his devotion to service at the bar. Even the newspaper representing the opposite party, though criticizing the appointment because he was so young, inexperienced and comparatively unknown, characterized him as a gentleman of unimpeachable character, good capacity and untiring industry. Neither then nor later did he take the interest in political affairs and public life that his father desired.

But there was another matter concerning which his parents were even less happy at this time, namely that of his spiritual state. Disquietude had arisen already while he was in Law School. Though

a regular and interested attendant upon worship services, he had not become a member of the church by profession of faith. Writing to his father in 1850, in answer to his solicitous inquiries, Arthur Machen admitted that he experienced sadness at not qualifying for full communion about the Lord's Table with Christians with whom in a previous hour he had attempted to unite in the worship of a common God. Explaining his hesitation, he asked, 'What is more awfully perilous than to intrude into the wedding feasts without the wedding garment?' Apparently his was not basically an intellectual doubt concerning the truth of Christianity, for he acknowledged that he was ready to receive revealed truth. But he continued to ask whether he believed in that sense which is required by the Searcher of hearts. This was in 1850.

But now several years had gone by and he continued to remain outside of the full communion, though a pew holder and a regular attendant upon the services of the Central Presbyterian Church and an admirer of the preaching of the pastor, the Rev. Stuart Robinson. Moreover, especially on Sundays, he devoted considerable time to the reading of the Scriptures and other edifying literature, such as the works of Jeremy Taylor, Thomas Fuller, Southey's *Life of Wesley* and Philip's *Memoir of Whitefield*. On one occasion, however, in what seems hardly to have been his characteristic mood even in his early years—this was in 1857—he spoke of his sympathy with the German spirit of free inquiry: 'the release, namely, of our minds from the letters of theological forms and formulae, the inventions of a day far from the brightest in ecclesiastical history, and the consequent free access to the very Scriptures as the sole guide of our lives, and a foundation of truth needing no abutments and props of human device or building.' The subject of Arthur Machen's attitude toward Christianity will be referred to again, but it may be noted at once that, in spite of the constancy of his personal commitment, he remained undecided regarding ecclesiastical affiliation until the time of his marriage in 1873 when he finally became a member in full communion of the Church. Previously, during the early part of the War, he had been a pew-holder in the Christ Protestant Episcopal Church, and, when his mother and

sister became members there in 1863, in the Franklin Street Presbyterian Church. It was the latter body that he joined in 1873 and with which he was to be prominently associated for the rest of his life.

The Civil War was a severe blow to the fortunes of Southerners of that day, and it fell in a peculiarly poignant fashion upon the residents of border states like Maryland. Maryland was occupied territory during the war though the sympathies of the people, at least of those of greatest influence, were largely with the South. The Machens were not extreme secessionists. Lewis H. Machen and his sons, indeed as late as 1860, were alarmed at what James Machen called 'the insane disunion spirit that is so rife in a portion of the South.' Arthur Machen was even appointed United States District Attorney for the District of Maryland in 1861. At first he was inclined to accept, animated as he was, as his son Arthur reported,

by love for the Union, actuated by an innate conservatism, and believing that the election of Lincoln furnished no excuse whatever for secession ... But when Lincoln called for troops, and made evident at least to my father's mind—for many in Maryland, including the Governor, still believed, or affected to believe, that the troops were wanted merely for defence of the national capital—that the Administration was bent upon coercion and civil war, my father reconsidered his acceptance, and declined an office which might have required him to prosecute those who adhered openly to the Southern cause.

While his brother James became a confederate soldier, Arthur made the most of the situation in Baltimore and was thankful that he escaped the draft. His contacts with men of influence were such, however, as to permit him a measure of contact with his father, mother and sister in Virginia, and in November, 1862, he was able to secure their removal to Baltimore. Special gratification followed from the fact that along with certain household effects they were able to save the library which Lewis H. Machen had acquired. The father was by now in ill health and lived only until August 11, 1863.

Following the war the legal practice of Machen and Gittings grew rapidly and they soon acquired a measure of prosperity. Arthur



Machen was to become one of the most distinguished and successful members of the Baltimore Bar. Only one or two lawyers conducted more cases than he, and his were among the most celebrated of the day. When he died in 1915, after having been an active lawyer for more than sixty-two years, his colleagues paid tribute to his excellencies in glowing terms. Among the tributes expressed at a memorial service of the Bar was one by D. K. Este Fisher, which included the following evaluation:

His acumen and thoroughness were remarkable, and any adversary, no matter how high his standing at the Bar, had reason to be apprehensive when Mr Machen was on the other side, for if anything was overlooked, he would be sure to be aware of it, and, if proper, take advantage of it ... Thoroughness was one of his marked characteristics and this, with the natural keenness and power of his mind, had much to do with the height to which he attained in his profession, and made him ever ready to handle any kind of legal proposition or situation, and apparently gave him great confidence in legitimate litigation.

Mr Machen was a student not alone of law; and the terms in which he expressed himself attested his familiarity with general literature and the cultivation of his mind. I remember especially one occasion in this court on which he made a short address which was a luminous model of perfect expression of thought and feeling, such as is attained only by the reading of classical literature. And his style of speaking always, as I remember it, bore the evidences of general cultivation.

And the response of Judge Soper to this and other tributes included the following impressive acknowledgement:

His learning, his exhaustive presentation of legal doctrine in its application to particular facts, and his masterful unfolding of the merits of his cases gave him an influence and sway with the courts, which was so great that at times the courts seemed to desert precedent in order to follow whither the genius of Mr Machen led.

Such a legal career, as has been noted, brought its material rewards, and it was not long after the Civil War when Arthur Machen was able to leave behind him for good the austerity of the early beginnings. Opportunities for vacations and travel at first denied because of sheer poverty now opened up. He took his first trip to Europe in 1867 and a second in 1869.

But it was the journey of another to Europe that was to spell one of the most significant and happy developments of his life. For it was in 1870 that the young lady who was to be his future wife met him in Baltimore where she was stopping over briefly at the home of her aunt, Mrs Edgeworth Bird, before sailing for Europe. Other contacts followed and Arthur Machen and Mary Gresham became engaged in 1872 and married the following year.

### *The Greshams*

Before continuing the narrative of developments following the marriage, we turn back to review the Gresham lineage. Gresham Machen's mother was the daughter of John Jones Gresham and Mary Baxter Gresham who, like the Machens, were descended from families of English origin which had settled in the South. The grandfather after whom he was named was the descendant of a line of Greshams which settled in Virginia about the middle of the eighteenth century, and was born on a farm in Burke County, Georgia, on January 21, 1818. After his academic studies were completed in 1833 at the University of Georgia (then known as Franklin College), he studied law and was admitted to the bar in November, 1834. He began the practice of law in Waynesboro but moved to Macon in February, 1836, where he carried on his profession, though not without interruption, for many years. In May, 1843, he was married to Mary E. Baxter of Athens, Georgia, whose younger sister Sarah (who had become Mrs Edgeworth Bird) will appear prominently in the following pages. A son Thomas Gresham became a confederate soldier and after the war was associated with his father for many years before moving to Baltimore in the late eighties. Except for a son LeRoy who died in young

manhood, the only other child to survive infancy was Mary who was born on June 17, 1849.

Edwin Mims, a biographer of Sidney Lanier who was born in Macon in 1842, describes the Macon of that time as 'the capital of Middle Georgia, the centre of trade for sixty miles around.' He proceeds:

There was among the citizens an aggressive public spirit, which made it a rival in commercial life of the older cities, Savannah and Augusta; before the war it was a more important place than Atlanta. It was one of the first towns to push the building of railroads. The richer planters and merchants lived on the hills above the city—in their costly mansions with luxuriant flower gardens—while the professional men and middle classes lived in the lower part of the city ... Social lines were not, however, so sharply drawn here as in cities like Richmond or Charleston. Middle Georgia was perhaps the most democratic section of the South. It was a democracy, it is true, working within the limitations of slavery and greatly tempered with the feudal ideas of the older States, but it was a life which gave room for the development of well-marked types.<sup>3</sup>

In this community Mr Gresham became one of the most affluent and influential citizens. He was successful in a cotton mill which he organized, apparently giving as much attention to it as to the law, was a director of two railroads, and had other commercial interests. But wealth was not to him an end in itself. As his daughter once said, 'money was with him a means for gratifying the innocent desires of his loved ones, and for the achievement of noble and beneficial purposes.' In contrast to his son-in-law he took an active part in public affairs. He held public office at various times; was mayor of Macon twice, judge of various courts, and member of the state legislature. He was intensely interested in public education as a leading member of the Board of Education in Macon and as president of the trustees of the University of Georgia for many years. He also was trustee

<sup>3</sup> Edwin Mims, *Sidney Lanier* (Houghton Mifflin, 1905), p. 20.

and treasurer of Oglethorpe University, a Presbyterian college, and a member of the board of Columbia Theological Seminary, where he endowed the LeRoy Gresham chair in memory of his deceased son. His interest in the Presbyterian Church naturally came to expression in Macon where he was a ruling elder from 1847 until his death, a period of forty-four years, for forty-one of which he served as clerk of session.

He died on October 16, 1891 while on a visit at the home of his daughter in Baltimore, about two years after the decease of his wife, and was buried in Macon. When the news of his sudden passing reached Macon, the *Telegraph* stated on October 18:

No man ever lived in this community, who has for so long a period enjoyed the full confidence and esteem of his fellow-citizens. His faithfulness to every trust confided to him, his generous support of all the enterprises of the city, his gratuitous services rendered in the various educational institutions of the county and State, fully entitle him to the loving remembrance and gratitude of the people of Macon, and the whole state of Georgia.

And on October 20, the day of the funeral, the same newspaper, mourning the passing of the South's golden age, said:

He was a splendid type of that noble and chivalrous Southern manhood, that has passed into history. He stood as much apart from the ordinary concerns of men of today as if he had been born and reared in another clime. His sympathies, white-winged and clean, never touched the sordid and the low, but went always with unerring aim to the pure and true. Born to be noble, trained in the culture of an old Southern home, as fixed as the stars in an old-fashioned and incorruptible integrity, he lived in the majesty, almost ideal now, of the grand old Southern gentleman who honoured God and feared only to wrong his fellow-men. It is not surprising that there should be such a universal expression of regret at his death.

And on the following day it reported the concluding part of the message of the pastor, Mr Jennings, as follows:

Verily, beloved, 'a prince and a great man is fallen in Israel this day.' This is our deliberate estimate of his character. God's great ones of old were not faultless. Nor was he whom we bury today. Himself would have been the first to blush at the intimation of such a thing. But, like many of the princes of ancient Israel, his faults sprang from this very strength of his character, the intensity of his convictions, the deep abhorrence of all that was unworthy of man as made in the divine image. But with his faults, he was great, great in his sympathies, great in his purposes, great in his deeds, great in his gifts, great in his character; his was the greatness of goodness, the greatness of a life that received its inspiration and aim and strength from the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Other estimates of his character which date from this time are worthy of mention here, not only because they serve to highlight the stock from which Gresham Machen sprang, but also because, as those who knew him well can testify, they so accurately, in almost every detail, depict the personality of the grandson. The Memorial Minute of the Board of Education, for example, dwells upon the strength of his character as follows:

He was emphatically a strong man; strong physically and intellectually,—strong in his convictions upon all subjects, whether political, social, economic, legal, financial, or religious; strong in his prejudices; strong in his affections; strong in his attachment to persons and to places; strong in his adherence to any course of conduct which he may have mapped out for himself, even to the verge of obstinacy, but all those strong points of his very strong individuality, as well as his faults (for he had faults), were so toned down and controlled by his sense of right, and by his graces as a Christian, that he was known to his friends as a very tractable and attractive man.

His own daughter's estimate does not disagree substantially, though she naturally enough gave larger place to the gentler virtues. She spoke of 'strength and gentleness' as being 'beautifully blended in him,' of his 'extreme tenderness toward womankind,' of his 'brooding

pity for the unfortunate.' Defending her father's occasional impatience, she declared:

From the very virtues of my dear father's character, sprang what some have considered faults. The faults and foibles of a truly righteous man are but surface blemishes. To one who has gone behind the veil and looked into the holy sanctuary of that soul, there was no imperfection. The indignation, the strong vehement censure, was the indignation of the good against wrong-doing and the censure by the righteous of all that is false and crooked. The impatience (how often have I marked this!) was the impatience of one who grieved because he could not bring all men to perceive the truth, crystal-clear, as he saw it, or to regulate their lives by the inflexible line which marked out his own pathway.

Above all, that which pervaded and controlled every trait of my father's character was his religion. 'To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God'—that was his life, the outward expression of his simple and earnest faith.

The keynote of his religion was his belief in the Sovereignty of God ...

His belief in Christ as the Saviour of mankind was simple and strong ...

His loftiest ambition was to leave the world better for his having lived ...

So his memory abides with us. Strong in his will, strong in his wisdom, strong in his hatred of wrong and defence of the right, yet stronger than all was his love,—the tender abiding love which hedged us in like a mighty bulwark, the love which trained and nourished all that was good in us and lopped away even the tenderest bud of wrong or falsehood, the love which relieved our necessities before we could ourselves formulate them, the love which made doubly his own our every joy and sorrow, the love which foresaw and if possible averted every calamity from ourselves and our children. Who can understand so well as we this type of the divine love, 'Like as a father pitieth his children.'

So, ever fulfilling his high purpose, so, living in wholesome discharge of daily duty, the few earthly imperfections were thrown off with the beloved body, and his noble spirit passed into the congenial fellowship of apostles and prophets and saints of all ages.<sup>4</sup>

Thus ends the glowing tribute of his daughter, a tribute which illumines her character as well as that of her father. Of Mrs Gresham not as much has been recorded, though she was remembered at the time of her husband's death as 'beautiful, refined and cultivated.' And her daughter recalls that he had said to his wife in her last moments, 'You have been the making of me, you have refined me and polished me and rounded off the sharp corners,' and adds that 'this tribute he often repeated after her death with "a rain of tender tears."'

Of the early life of Mary Gresham, as of the life of her mother, not many details have been published. But we do know that she came universally to be known as Minnie rather than Mary, and virtually abandoned the use of the latter, though in old age she was pleased to recall it and to indicate her desire that the name Minnie should not be perpetuated in a granddaughter named for her. And our understanding of her culture is enhanced by the knowledge of the fact that she had exceptional educational opportunities, being graduated from Wesleyan College in Macon in the class of 1865.

She was fortunate in the friends of her youth and in that the opportunity of friendly association with two of them continued long after she left her Macon home. In Macon she numbered among her dear friends Gertrude Lanier, sister of the poet Sidney, the beloved 'Sissa' of his letters. Mary Day, who married Sidney Lanier in 1867, was another good friend, and was to spend a few happy years in Baltimore, where her husband won fame as a musician, poet and interpreter of literature. Another friend of those early days, and a frequent visitor in the Machen home until her death in 1921, was Clare de Graffenreid. Recommended for a position by Mr Gresham to his warm friend L. Q. C. Lamar, Secretary of the Interior in President Cleveland's

<sup>4</sup> An article from the pen of Mrs Machen on 'The Faculty of 1865' was published in the *Wesleyan Alumnae*, May, 1931, pp. 52ff.

first cabinet, she resided in Washington, D.C., for most of her life, winning distinction in government service. She endeared herself greatly to the Machen household, and was referred to frequently in the correspondence between Gresham Machen and his mother. A feature article entitled, 'Three Notable Georgia Women—Mary Day, Minnie Gresham, Clare de Graffenreid,' appeared in the *Atlanta Journal* after their death.<sup>5</sup> Written by John T. Boufeuillet who had spent his early boyhood in Macon, it recalled them as 'charming and accomplished young women who adorned the social and literary life of that city.'

The writer paid special tribute to Minnie Gresham as his first Sunday School teacher, whose instruction 'had a refreshing influence on my life, and maturing years affect the heart with livelier gratitude to her.' Though these rather meagre details permit only a rather sketchy account of her life before she made Baltimore her home in 1873, enough is known to reflect the rich religious and cultural background of her later years in Baltimore.

### *Life in Baltimore*

After a honeymoon trip to New Orleans Mr and Mrs Arthur W. Machen lived at 62 W. Madison St where Mr Machen had made a home for his mother and sister. There Arthur W. Machen Jr was born in 1876 and Mrs Lewis Machen died in 1878 in her ninetieth year. The following year a home at 97 W. Monument St (later numbered 217) was acquired. There Mr and Mrs Machen lived happily thirty-six years until the year of his death, and there Mrs Machen continued to reside for the nearly sixteen years that she survived her husband. There also John Gresham Machen was born in 1881 and his younger brother Thomas in 1886.

After the war the position of Baltimore at the cross roads of Northern and Southern life, which had caused it to suffer so acutely during the war, turned out to its advantage. It enjoyed considerably greater prosperity than most of the cities below the Mason-Dixon line. And one consequence was that members of many Southern

<sup>5</sup> The *Atlanta Journal* article appeared on January 7, 1932.



families, from Virginia and Georgia and other States, took up residence in Baltimore. The rapid growth of Baltimore from a population of 169,054 in 1850 and 212,418 in 1860 to 267,354 in 1870 and 332,213 in 1880 is indeed not accounted for in this way, for there were immigrations in great numbers from abroad and the influx of people from other parts of the country, not to overlook the considerable increase of negro population after the war. But Baltimore's dominantly Southern social and cultural life was preserved and perhaps even intensified.

The period following the war was marked by significant cultural developments in the life of Baltimore.<sup>6</sup> Through the munificence of leading citizens a number of splendid institutions were founded. The first of these was the Peabody Institute with its unique library and its conservatory of music. The library was opened in 1867. It was in 1873, the year of the establishment of the Machen household in Baltimore, that the Peabody Orchestra was organized by Asger Hamerik, with Sidney Lanier, just come to Baltimore, as first flutist. In that same year Johns Hopkins died and the provisions of his will which left seven million dollars for the establishment of a university and a hospital became operative.<sup>7</sup> The following year the trustees appointed by Hopkins selected Daniel Gilman as first president of the university, and set him loose to plan and organize. After two years of study and travel Gilman was ready in 1876 to launch the university which at once was recognized as introducing a new era in American university education. Though begun with only a handful of professors, few students and no buildings, it awakened widespread enthusiasm, first of all in Baltimore, but also in the country at large. Something of that

<sup>6</sup> On Baltimore the following are of special interest: *Baltimore: Its History and Its People* (Baltimore, 1912), edited by E. C. Hill; M. Janvier, *Baltimore in the Eighties and Nineties* (Roebuck, 1933); *Maryland. A Guide to the Old Line South* (P.W.A., 1940); Hamilton Owens, *Baltimore on the Chesapeake* (Doubleday, Doran, 1941); C. Hirschfield, *Baltimore, 1870-1900* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1941).

<sup>7</sup> On Johns Hopkins University see especially Daniel Coit Gilman, *The Launching of a University* (Dodd, Mead, 1906); Fabian Franklin, *Life of Daniel Coit Gilman* (Dodd, Mead, 1910); W. Carson Ryan, *Studies in Early Graduate Education* (Carnegie Foundation, 1939); Abraham Flexner, *Daniel Coit Gilman* (Harcourt, Brace, 1946); and many issues of the *Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine*.

original enthusiasm was captured by Lanier's 'Ode to the University,' composed in 1880, which contained the following lines:

So quick she bloomed, she seemed to bloom at birth.  
As Eve from Adam, or as he from earth.  
Superb o'er slow, increase of day on day,  
Complete as Pallas she began her way;  
Yet not from Jove's unwrinkled forehead sprung,  
But long-time dreamed, and out of trouble wrung,  
Foreseen, wise-planned, pure child of thought and pain,  
Leapt our Minerva from a mortal brain.  
And here, finer Pallas, long remain,—  
Sit on these Maryland hills and fix thy reign.  
And frame a fairer Athens than of yore  
In these blest bounds of Baltimore,—  
Here where the climates meet  
That each may make the other's lack complete,—

\* \* \*

Bring old Renown

To walk familiar citizen of the town,—  
Bring Tolerance, that can kiss and disagree,—  
Bring Virtue, Honour, Truth, and Loyalty,—  
Bring Faith that sees with undissembling eyes,—  
Bring all large Loves and heavenly Charities,—  
Till man seem less a riddle unto man  
And fair Utopia less Utopian,  
And many people call from shore to shore,  
*The world has bloomed again, at Baltimore!*<sup>8</sup>

Soon afterward Enoch Pratt gave a large sum for the establishment of a free library, and this institution was opened in 1886.

<sup>8</sup> 'The Ode to the University' and other poems of Lanier are quoted by permission from the *Collected Works of Sidney Lanier* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1945), Vol. I, edited by C. R. Anderson. The poem addressed to Mrs Bird, written on January 14, 1878, appears in a somewhat different text in L. Lorenz, *The Life of Sidney Lanier* (Coward, McCann, 1935): 'love wants' for 'lonely wastes.' The letters of Lanier are also quoted by permission, and appear in *Collected Works*, Vols. VII-X, edited by C. R. Anderson and A. H. Starke.

The Machens had no direct part in the inauguration of these institutional developments, but they numbered President Gilman, Professor Gildersleeve and several other leading professors among their intimate friends from those early days onward. Moreover, their intellectual gifts and interests made their home a centre of culture and brought them into contact with the leading families of the city.

Their place in the social life of the city was no doubt assured by another factor—their connection with the Bird family. As mentioned above, when Minnie Gresham first came to Baltimore it was for a brief stay at the home of her aunt, Mrs Edgeworth Bird. Mrs Bird, whose husband, a confederate major, had died soon after the war, had come to Baltimore with her son Edgeworth and daughter Saida in 1869. In the work *Baltimore: Its History and Its People*, in connection with the biographical sketch of her son who died about a month before her own passing in 1910, we are told that her home on East Mount Vernon Place ‘was for more than a generation the seat of an elegant and cultured hospitality, and among her guests have been many distinguished in literature and music.’ ‘Few women,’ the account states,

have known intimately so many distinguished men of the South. In her youth she was acquainted with the Southern poets, Paul Hamilton Hayne and Henry Temrod, and during her residence in Baltimore James R. Randall and Sidney Lanier were familiar guests in her home. The Southern statesman, Robert Toombs, Alexander H. Stephens and General John C. Breckinridge; the diplomat, Dr J. D. M. Curry; the well-known humorist, Col. Richard Malcolm Johnston; the scientist, Dr Joseph LeConte, afterward of the University of California; that distinguished divine of the old school, the Rev. Benjamin Palmer, of New Orleans—these and many others were her intimate friends ... In her death the society of Baltimore lost a charming presence, one who had been for more than forty years its brightest ornament, and to the South was lost one of the few remaining links in the chain which connects it with the illustrious past.

These references to ‘Aunty’ Bird, as she was affectionately known in the family, are of interest as supplementing our knowledge of

Mrs Machen's family background. Moreover, Mrs Machen herself remained on the most intimate terms with her aunt throughout the nearly forty years from 1873 to 1910 and shared the cultural interests and outlook that gave her aunt her brilliant place in Baltimore society.<sup>9</sup>

### *Contacts with Lanier*

The writings of Sidney Lanier provide extraordinarily interesting confirmation of the truth of the observation with regard to him mentioned above, and add certain vivid details to our knowledge of the early life in Baltimore of the Bird and Machen families. Mention has been made of Mrs Machen's contacts with Gertrude Lanier and Mary Day in Macon, and one may add that Judge Gresham, in his capacity as trustee of Oglethorpe College sought to secure Lanier's continuance as an instructor both before and after the war. The letters of Lanier contain many references to Mrs Bird and a few to Mrs Machen beginning directly after his arrival in Baltimore and his first concert at which Mrs Bird had been present. Mrs Bird extended generous hospitality to him, cared for him in his illness and in general was, as Lanier wrote his wife on December 21, 1873, 'my constant and true friend.' On one occasion, after several years of gracious and hospitable acts, Mrs Bird sent a basket with some hothouse grapes, and the empty basket was returned with the following verse:

Elijah (so in Holy Writ 'tis said)  
Was in the wilderness by ravens fed:  
But my lone wastes a fairer wing supplies  
I'm pampered by a Bird-of-Paradise.

In an early letter (dated December 12, 1873) having just come from Mrs Bird's home, he tells his wife that Mrs Machen 'abideth just across the street, and, I hear, hath expected me to call ere now. I had been waiting for her husband to call on me (for, now that I am quasi a professional musician, I am a little sensitive) but I learn he hath been

<sup>9</sup> An obituary of Mrs Bird, written by Mrs Machen, was published in the *Presbyterian of the South* on March 30, 1910.

out of town ever since I came. So, I will e'en gie her a call anyhow.' There were many such calls after that, one of which (on January 17, 1875) he describes to his wife as follows: 'Yesterday came a note from Minnie Machen inviting me to a state dinner at 5 o'clock: to which I of course duly went. The company was pleasant, the wine was good, the feast gorgeous, and the merriment uproarious, but I went through all in a longing dream of thee.'

The greatest contribution which Mrs Bird made was, however, of a different sort. Lanier had turned from music to literature and was hopeful of securing some connection with the new university. His earliest contacts with Dr Gilman were friendly but not fruitful, and on one occasion (on Oct. 10, 1876) he expressed to his father his sorrow that the latter had spoken to Mr Gresham in Macon in the interest of securing the friendly intercession of his relatives in Baltimore. Such intercession would only hurt his chances, he felt, since the 'poor Trustees have been badgered and button-holed by the "friends" of innumerable candidates, and so persecuted with "letters of recommendation", that they are utterly sickened of such processes. The president told me this ... I would like you to understand the importance of immediately asking Mr Gresham not to mention the matter in any way to his Baltimore kinsmen.' But Mrs Bird, without aiming at the goal, was the means of setting in motion developments which ultimately resulted in Lanier's appointment as a lecturer at the university.

Taking account of Lanier's eagerness for literary work, Mrs Bird conceived of the idea of organizing a class of women to hear him in her home. The lectures were given between March 23 and May 11, 1878, and there was so much interest that the number invited had to be restricted to about thirty. On the basis of what Lanier wrote his wife, she in turn told his father that 'Mrs Bird's loving triumph is as irrepressible as an eager child's.' Years later Mrs Bird recalled that one day 'I asked Dr Gilman ... to be present. He gladly came, and he too was charmed. At the close he said to me, "I never heard a more charming lecture," and with a smile, "I certainly hear a great many."' These eight lectures, which Kemp Malone, the editor, calls

the 'Bird Lectures,' formed the immediate background for the Peabody Lectures made possible through Gilman's cooperation, which were delivered during the winter of 1878-79. These in turn led directly to Lanier's appointment as lecturer at the university which Gilman was happy to announce on the poet's thirty-seventh birthday on February 3, 1879. Thus the personal affection and literary appreciation of Mrs Bird were ultimately responsible for the inauguration of Lanier's career as a man of letters, which was lamentably cut short by his death on September 7, 1881. I possess no definite proof that Mrs Machen was in that small group of women who met in Mrs Bird's home, but there is moral certainty that she was present. Later she was asked by Edwin Mims to record her reminiscences of Lanier for inclusion in his biography.<sup>10</sup>

In this account of the early life of the Machen family in Baltimore mention must also be made of their relations to the Franklin St Presbyterian Church. When Mr Machen's mother and sister took up their residence in Baltimore in 1863, they had their membership transferred to the Franklin St Church, which was known as a church with Southern sympathies, and which after the division in the Presbyterian Church caused by the war became associated with the Southern body. Mr Machen himself, as was observed above, was a pew holder and a regular attendant but not a member for a time, but in 1873, immediately after his marriage, he became a professing member and was to become one of its most influential members. He served as trustee after 1880 and as a ruling elder after 1893. Having twice previously declined election to the office of elder he yielded finally to the entreaty of the pastor Rev. Wm. U. Murkland, who served the church from 1870 to 1899. Mrs Machen's cousin, Edgeworth Bird, son of 'Aunty' Bird, and her brother, Thomas Gresham, were members of that church session for many years. Even before he became elder Mr Machen served the church at large as a member of the Board of Foreign Missions and of a special committee which explored, without success, the possibility of union with the Northern Church. Mrs Machen also found the

<sup>10</sup> Edwin Mims, *op. cit.*, contains an account of Mrs Machen's personal impressions of Lanier.

church congenial, and was for many years President of the Benevolent Society which was especially concerned to assist in the support of the seminary in Richmond. But for the Machens church membership was not primarily a matter of holding office and being active in special assignments. Attendance upon the regular services of worship was the primary and absorbing interest.

During those early years Mr Machen was so devoted to his law practice that he found comparatively little time for relaxation. There had been a trip to Europe with his bride in 1873 and other holidays. However, about 1880 his health threatened to give way as the result of his concentration upon his labours which continued long after his return home from his office, and he was persuaded to spend several months in travelling through Europe. His wife and brother accompanied him. It seems, however, that only when his beloved partner, Richard J. Gittings, suddenly died in 1882 did he substantially modify his program. But he still lived a very strenuous life, judged by ordinary standards, meanwhile enjoying remarkable health and vigour to the very day of his death more than thirty years later.

When J. Gresham Machen was born in 1881 he accordingly entered a home of devout Christian faith, of a high level of culture and social standing, and of a considerable degree of prosperity. Both parents were persons of strong character and extraordinary intellectual and spiritual endowments, and our understanding of J. Gresham Machen is illumined as we observe how various qualities and interests of his ancestors were blended in generous portions in his own personality. The family was a close-knit group, though not lacking in catholic outlook and sympathies, and the intense affection and loyalty that distinguished the Machen home were to prove one of the most influential and fascinating factors in shaping the course of things to come. His contacts and relations with his parents form such a substantial part of his developing life that they will continue to receive prominent attention in the following pages.



Arthur W. Machen,  
at about 75 years of age.



Mrs Arthur W. Machen,  
in her late fifties.



Boyhood portrait.