HELEN CORKE'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, PART II:
1913-1952, THE LIGHT OF COMMON DAY, OR
NOT IN ENTIRE FORGETFULNESS

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In 1975, when Helen Corke was 93 years old, Cambridge University Press published In Our Infancy, the first volume of a two-part autobiography which she began “in 1939, dropped during the war, and subsequently finished in 1961”, at the age of 79.1 Part I covered her life from 1882 to 1912; Part II stretched from 1913 to 1952, when she was 70.

On 30 September 1975, Helen Corke wrote to Michael Black (a letter he has given to me to pass on to the Lawrence archive in Nottingham):

Dear Michael Black,

“In Our Infancy”

On the eve of my book’s publication I would thank you again for the interest and faith you have shown in my work. I hope the response of the public may be such that neither you nor Warren Roberts shall regret that you have sponsored the book.

Personally I am more than satisfied that under the imprint of the C.U.P. my work over many past years will see the light and be tested by the standards of today.

If ever you wish to see the revised Part II of the memoir, it will come to you under another title. This is because the one it carries now was used, I find, by Diana Duff Cooper for her own autobiography … But I still stick to Wordsworth, and may presently approve “Not in Entire Forgetfulness”.

With all good wishes

Yours most sincerely

Helen Corke.2
Hitherto the only part of her autobiography that had been published was an extract entitled ‘Portrait of D. H. Lawrence 1909-1910’, which appeared in *The Texas Quarterly* in 1965, and was then reprinted in *D. H. Lawrence: The Croydon Years* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1965), when Helen Corke was 83. This compilation, organised by Warren Roberts, contained, in addition, Helen Corke’s three essays: ‘D. H. Lawrence’s “Princess”: a Memoir of Jessie Chambers’, written in spring 1951; ‘Concerning *The White Peacock*’, written c.1930 (and published in *The Texas Quarterly* in 1959); and ‘Lawrence and Apocalypse’, written in autumn 1932.

In July 1995, Warren Roberts wrote a letter to Carl and me saying that he had in the past spent some time taking a close interest in the unpublished writings of “that dear old lady”, and added:

I am enclosing for your personal collection of Lawrence memorabilia a photograph taken by me of Helen Corke and the then current headmaster of the Davidson Road Boys’ School. Characteristically I don’t remember the date of this visit. He wasn’t exactly rude when we came in, but he was very busy with important matters, but when he learned the elderly lady with me was Helen Corke, he couldn’t do enough for us. He even showed us the record of DHL’s absences from work.

In a brief note, earlier, in June 1995, Warren Roberts had told us that the headmaster had “wanted to effect a reunion with Helen and another of the teachers she knew. I think it was Agnes Holt, but Helen couldn’t wait to get out of there. She told me on the way home that she didn’t like Agnes Holt then, and she didn’t like her now”.

Indeed, Helen Corke dedicated *D. H. Lawrence: The Croydon Years* to Agnes Mason with the words, “To the memory of Agnes Mason of Davidson Road School, Croydon, kindest friend and helper of H.C. and D.H.L.” Lawrence’s friendship with fellow
teacher, Agnes Mason, had been interrupted by his involvement with Agnes Holt.

The photo that Warren Roberts has bequeathed to Lawrence scholars (reproduced above) is not a great deal of help in establishing the date of the visit to Davidson Road School. It is likely that it took place around the time that Professor Roberts was offering to publish material written by Helen Corke. She was born in 1882. So, if it was taken during the nineteen-fifties or sixties, when she was in her seventies or eighties, it shows that she was indeed a well-preserved “dear old lady”.

Michael Black has also recorded his meeting with Helen Corke in ‘Some Postscripts’, added to his paper entitled ‘Getting the Lawrence Edition Started’.

Warren Roberts gave me the tip that Helen Corke was still alive and had written a memoir. I got in touch with her, and duly got into the car again and drove down to Kelvedon in Essex, where I met her […]

So there she was, a little old woman with a sticking plaster on a recent wound, scruffily dressed, living in a council house, and looking rather grubby. She was tiny. But she was very full of herself, as the saying goes, had always wanted to be a writer and now saw her other moment coming […]

She was of my father’s generation as well as Lawrence’s. I enjoyed talking to her about the books people read then, and she presented me with her copy of Maurice Hewlett’s *The Forest Lovers*, which my father loved. (Lawrence wrote an early short story in the Hewlett manner). The copy is inscribed, in copybook writing:

“Nell” with love from Agnes, Jan 26th 1905.

Michael has also donated this book to the Lawrence archive. Under Agnes Mason’s dedication, Helen Corke wrote a dedication to Michael Black and in an accompanying letter she explained to him:
You may remember that with reference to the future disposal of my books, you expressed a special wish to have the copy of Maurice Hewlett’s “Forest Lovers”, as the story was associated with your boyhood memories … But executors don’t always carry out precisely the wishes of testators, so I am sending the book to you now, with my warm thanks for your kindness to that untidy MSS, “In Our Infancy”.

The letter, written on 30 November 1975, when Helen Corke was 93, shows a clear, neat and very firm handwriting which slightly indents the paper. In respect for her writing achievements beyond the collections of diaries and memoirs relating to The Trespasser, C.U.P. listed on the fly-leaf of In Our Infancy Helen Corke’s other publications:

*Lawrence and ‘Apocalypse’*, Heinemann, 1933.
*Neutral Ground* (novel), Arthur Baker, 1933.
*Songs of Autumn* (poems), Texas University Press, 1960.

Thus, it would appear that two books contain the majority of Helen Corke’s memoirs of, and essays on, Lawrence: *D. H. Lawrence: The Croydon Years* (1965) and *In Our Infancy* (1975). However, in her edition of *The Trespasser*, Elizabeth Mansfield lists also: ‘D. H. Lawrence As I Saw Him’, *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, iv
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(1960), 5-13; ‘D. H. Lawrence: The Early Stage’, DHLR, iv (Summer 1971); and ‘The Writing of The Trespasser’, DHLR, vii (Fall 1974), 227-39 (T 3 n. 3).

Volume II of her autobiography, listed as “(in preparation)”, was never published. It survives in three-hundred pages of typescript, recognisable as typed on one of the old, heavy, sit-up-and-beg typewriters, and revised in places in Helen Corke’s hand. Somehow, a photocopy of this typescript, which I understand from Michael Black belongs to C.U.P., ended up among Carl’s files. I decided to try to write a portrait of it for the new JDHLS. However, I was filled with foreboding, on the grounds that Helen Corke’s publications from 1933 onwards seem to contain a good deal of repetition, even a determined exploitation of her brief, barely three-year friendship with Lawrence, as a claim to fame far exceeding her importance in Lawrence’s life.

I was wrong. She led an energetic and interesting life. Her writing is clear, humorous, earnest and based mostly on her daily diaries with only occasional passages of reminiscence. She was a determinedly independent woman, struggling with poverty all her life, struggling with the conditions of schoolteaching – enormous classes, ill-equipped buildings – struggling to survive during both world wars, determined always to have a book-writing project in hand, making friendships with all sorts of interesting women and travelling with them to Europe and America. She also met a considerable number of famous men, particularly H. G. Wells, whom she knew sufficiently well to be included in a lunch at the Dorchester, “chaired” by Rose Macaulay, to celebrate Wells’s seventy-fifth birthday. She was a member of PEN and went to conferences in Europe in the years immediately following World War Two, as well as attending the League of Nations Final Assembly in Geneva. She was involved with many progressive associations: the Fabians, the National Union of Women Teachers, the Historical Association, Economic Reform Club, the National Social Credit Association; she was president of her local Labour Party and on the local WEA committee; she was co-opted onto the
committee of the Social Credit Co-ordination Centre and ended up editing their quarterly journal.

She was incredibly energetic: on 30 October 1940 she cycled from her home in the village of Kelvedon near Chelmsford to visit a friend in Bury St. Edmunds, 34 miles away – she was 58! She also rode a motorbike with sidecar for her girlfriend.

Volume II opens with Helen Corke aged thirty. Each chapter is devoted to a decade of her life, culminating in a visit from Harry T. Moore in autumn 1950, followed by her receipt of his *The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence* in 1951, when she was 69.

Chapter One, therefore, finds her in 1913 still teaching at Dering Place Mixed School, South Croydon, stultified by the fact that she still lives with her parents, but encouraged by the hope that “Muriel” (i.e. Jessie Chambers) will come south to take up a teaching position. She even visits the Clerk of the Education Office, whom she knew as a trainee teacher, to ask for a post for Jessie, but without success.

She comes across “a thin volume in blue cloth covers” which must be *Love Poems and Others*, and finds that it contains poems she recognises from Lawrence’s “red-edged college notebook”. She is glad the school poems are included as she feels that “what they express has never been written by any earlier poet”. And she puts on record the first lines of one of them, in the early version which Lawrence “scribbled in pencil” in her verse book:

All the long school hours, round the irregular hum of the class
Have crowded the immeasurable, ensanguined spaces
That roar unborn, that hold the unborn me
Travelling, resolving in immensity. All the faces
Of the boys have troubled me, and all the snowflakes that pass
Unheard down the window have lit each a white spark of disquiet.
Snow stands on the window sills like tufted grass,
And soiled snow muffles and hushes the streets.
There are several differences here from the three versions of ‘A Snowy Day in School’ to be found in Complete Poems (pp. 75, 914, 917).

Helen Corke also notices that the collection includes ‘Coldness in Love’, which she claims is a rendering of her own “inadequate” poem, ‘Fantasy’; and it reminds her of Lawrence saying to her, “You know, whenever you have an idea, I feel how much better than you I could express it”. She re-reads ‘Bei Hennef’, “many times”, and is so fascinated that she writes to Lawrence. She receives a reply (IL 553-4) and finally concludes that the happiness which he has evidently found somehow absolves her from her “debt to him in respect of the writing of the Saga” (i.e. The Trespasser); “it has been cancelled by another woman”.

In 1914, when war is declared, Helen Corke is on holiday in Keswick, in the Lake District. Her father sends her “newspaper cuttings – Mr. Asquith’s speech of Aug. 5th. in the House, Kipling’s Times poem”. She sees no need to curtail her holiday and is ambivalent about the pros and cons of the war. However, Jessie Chambers writes to her on 9 August, a long tirade about the barbarity and futility of war between Europeans, and expresses the wish that she could give her life to “help on the belief that war is necessarily wrong”. In September, back at school, Helen Corke watches with a sort of numb horror as the male members of staff are shoved off to the Front: “the frank, energetic senior assistant master [...] is sent to France and is killed before he has seen a month’s active service”. A vigorous pianist who has been accompanying “with fire and delicacy” her “mechanical” violin playing, “takes his ferocious scowl, dwarfish body and delicate hands to the front, and is shot immediately. One member of the staff hangs on until pushed off by the pressure of his friends’ disapproval”.

She bitterly concludes that the only war work that “Authority” permits women is to maintain school discipline in the absence of the men. However, her pupils’ broken shoes and patched clothing are gradually replaced as their families receive soldiers’ wives’ allowances and earn money in the munitions factories. Later she
notes that Lawrence’s former school is requisitioned as a hospital. References to him gradually become less frequent, except for a brief mention of The Signature, to which Helen Corke subscribed. She found Lawrence’s essays “difficult to grasp”, recognised Katherine Mansfield from her stories in The Nation, and came across Middleton Murry’s name for the first time.

Throughout this part of her biography, Helen Corke was determined to be actively engaged on a writing project. Her efforts to write a play about “Caractacos” begin to fade because she cannot find enough time alone and she berates herself, remembering “D. H. Lawrence’s fine concentration – how he would write with his landlady's two-year-old child sitting on his knee”.

In the autumn of 1914, she is introduced, through her evenings of chamber music, to a talented young violinist of twenty-two, just embarking on her teaching career. They become lifelong friends. Corke is thirty-two, and only refers to her friend as “K”, short for “Kindchen”, an inexperienced, unconfident but energetic “child”, whose mother died at her birth. They find lodgings with a young woman whose husband is at the Front. The house is near parkland, and being passionate about the countryside and the birds, fruit and flowers of the changing seasons, they rise at five o’clock on Sundays to cycle in rural Surrey.

At a chamber concert they are introduced to Fabians and decide to attend the Fabian Summer School at Prior’s Field, a superior girls’ boarding school in Godalming, for a week in August 1916. They cycle the forty miles there from their holiday cottage in Wittering, with their violins strapped to their handlebars. They feel socially inferior to the assembled company and the extreme luxury of the school buildings and grounds compared to those in which they work, but they are relieved to find the debate and play of wit stimulating. Beatrice Webb’s contribution is to denounce “the political and social system which permits and upholds a luxury education for children of the wealthy while herding the children of Labour into mass-production centres”. In addition to the Webbs, the people in attendance include George Bernard Shaw, Emil Davies,
students from India and Africa, a Russian princess, and some Russian communists whose command of the English language consists of the phrase “Get rid of your bourgeoisie!”

This life-informing introduction to Socialism is stimulating, but:

Outside the lecture periods I don’t find that the Fabians maintain any high degree of impersonality. Some of them are arrant gossips. Classic stories of Shaw and Wells go round. D.H.L’s name is mentioned; I hear chat about the personnel of *Sons and Lovers*, about the recently censored later novel *The Rainbow*. David is apparently in England. Since his letter of May 1913 I have heard nothing of him directly, and seen his name only in a few reviews.

Resigned to the grind of school teaching, Helen Corke decides to vary her experience, and is appointed to a newer school in a poorer area of Croydon, where she teaches Class IV.C., the dumping ground for forty boys and girls aged between ten and thirteen who cannot read but are experts in “teacher-baiting”. She initiates Saturday morning “organised play” for those most obviously disturbed by air-raids. On one September morning the children spend their playtime digging shrapnel out of the soft tar of the playground.

A change in educational pension-scheme policy by the Government brings her a rebate of forty pounds, which she uses to take six months off teaching to write a book.

In May 1919, by great good fortune, Helen Corke is appointed to the Headship of the village school in Kelvedon, Essex, which had been requisitioned as a canteen during the war and was now to be resuscitated. She has thirty boys and girls, soon rising to seventy, aged between nine and thirteen, and an assistant to look after the tiny children. Here, as in her previous schools, “discipline” has been so emphasised that, she believes, the children have concluded that “inaction is synonymous with virtue and activity with vice”. She reverses the policy, prevails on the parents and children, and to
the delight of her assistant, “we lay the foundation of a tradition based upon child initiative, activity, and individual responsibility” (she believes this new “tradition” to have been established by the end of 1921).

Kelvedon was so rural that the schoolchildren were given a month off from mid-June to work in the pea-harvest: early green peas for the London market. Helen Corke and “K” moved their furniture into the old schoolhouse, and “K” then commuted from her teaching job in Croydon at weekends, when, in their strict domestic economy, they spend time learning how to garden.

In June 1922, Helen Corke went to Somerset, alone, and took with her a copy of *Women in Love*. “In leisure isolation one’s book must needs be admitted to intimacy, and if it is the expression of a powerful mind, it will impose its own atmosphere”. She found it “peculiarly depressing” because “The people are isolated volcanoes, each pouring forth the desolating passions of a sexual egotism, uncomprehending, incomprehensible one to another”. She describes it as “a madman’s garden” and judges that “The two chief men characters he portrays are not real men, but facets of himself”. The experience is clearly traumatic for her. She carries the book, and its “miasma”, around as she wanders on the Exmoor hills, recalling lines from the last stanza of Lawrence’s ‘Repulsed’:

I in the fur of the world, and you a pale fleck from the sky,
How we hate one another tonight—hate, you and I,
As the earth hates the dreaming moon that goes on high,
As the man hates the woman he loves, and who will not reply.

Again, these lines are different from the text in *Love Poems and Others*:

As the world of activity hates the dream that goes on on high.
As the man hates the dreaming woman he loves, but who will not reply.
She protests that they did not hate each other and goes on to reflect that they had now, in 1922, reversed their former positions: he was positive then and depressed now, and she who was so depressed when they met was now full of positive thought and action. She concluded: “D.H.L. is still seeking the Platonic whole – the completely complementary human relationship, the ideal that lured me in adolescence, the great illusion”.

In June 1922 Helen Corke attends the Fabian summer school for rural teachers, organised by H. G. Wells and the Countess of Warwick at Easton in Essex. Another person present was Lancelot A. Cranmer Byng, an Essex County Alderman, who had translated into English a volume of Chinese poetry entitled *The Lute of Jade*, which was one of the books of verse Lawrence gave to Helen Corke in 1910.

Soon after the summer school, H. G. Wells sent Helen Corke some prize money for a Fellowship Essay, and she was emboldened to send him the book which she had taken time off to write in her sixth months of leisure paid for her with pension rebate, Easter to September 1918. At that time she felt that it was “a book that it now seems my real unique work to write”. It is so intense for her that it “is a secret even from my diary. It must needs be personal – it must tell my truth as D.H.L. told his truth in *The Trespasser*”. It was her novel, *Neutral Ground*. She had already sent it to Martin Secker and received a “contemptuous” rejection, which prompted her, in the summer of 1919, to ask for Edward Garnett’s opinion. He suggested pruning:

I’m not surprised that the publishers are shy of a study of the ‘intermediate type’. Militarism rules out any but the ‘virile’ ultra-masculine – or thoroughly feminine types. My criticism of your method is that there’s too much detail, from the standpoint of art […] But anyway it’s a very complete and candid study of people and circumstances – with a temperamental quality that seems derived from, or woven up with, D.H.L.’s as we knew him seven years ago.
H. G. Wells “found it vividly interesting”. He went on to bare his chest in an amazing way:

I don’t know much about this sort of thing, but my impression is that it is very well done indeed … It seems to me in the best sense of the word true, really life. In a way it opens or reopens an unfamiliar world to me, which I lived in once and left many years ago … It is almost startling to be reminded of a whole world of men and women who are working out their lives – I won’t say in a state of primitive innocence, but in a state of secondary and persistent ignorance that sets absolutely different values upon love, jealousy, birth, marriage and the like.

Wells asks if he can show the manuscript to his wife and to a “very well known woman critic”. Unfortunately the critic (in a letter that Wells encloses to Corke) accuses her of plagiarism. She has detected the similarity between Neutral Ground and The Trespasser. Wells comments, “I don’t think there is any great harm in your lifting a man character from a man’s book, but it isn’t done to this extent”. Reluctantly Helen Corke sends evidence to Wells to defend herself, which he passes on to his “well known critic”, and she responds by commiserating with Corke that it is “Maddening to have one’s fire stolen in this way”.

I explain that there was no theft of any kind. Lawrence found my fire in ashes. His breath revived them; the newly kindled flame was not more mine than his, the restorer.

Years later, in April 1933, the publisher Arthur Barker asks to see Neutral Ground and accepts it for publication in June 1933. In May of the same year, A. S. Frere Reeves, chairman of Heinemann, had accepted her book Lawrence and ‘Apocalypse’, and on one of their meetings, she had a surprise: “When I am announced he comes
down from his room to greet me with:— ‘Would you like to meet Frieda?’:

A large, ample, friendly woman, characteristically German, motherly, spontaneous, and without inhibitions. In her presence I feel as a small, hybrid tea rose might if placed with a Caroline Testout. She tells me she knows how I “fed Lawrence’s flame”. She invites me to her nearby hotel, and in her bedroom shows me photographs of her family, herself and Lawrence. When I imagine them together a malicious pointer in my mind swings back to a memory of the silkworm moths I watched in childhood – the large active female and the small, quiescent male with shrivelled wings. This is pure malice, and the comparison is quite unjustifiable; Frieda’s physical energy, spontaneity and loyal support sustained her “Lorenzo” throughout their joint experience; without her stimulus and nourishment the overstrung, self-tortured frame would have collapsed in the grip of his disease at an earlier stage.

To return to the chronology, during the late 1920s her ardour to be a writer and an enlightening teacher led her to plan a series of Class Books of World History for infants. She is passionate to advocate world history rather than the nationalistic, patriotic propaganda that she thinks leads to wars. She achieves an agreement from Oxford University Press to publish, but then, apparently, Churchill’s economic policy requires a reduction in State expenditure on schools, so that O.U.P. reject her new textbook. But privately she reflects that her biographical exploration of documentary evidence, which led her to give her “impression of the childhood of ‘Joshua of Nazareth’” – preferring to use the actual Hebrew form of the name of Christ – may have worried her editor, “as certain to embroil the O.U.P. in controversy”.

By Christmas 1929, Helen Corke realises that she cannot make a living by writing. She is worse off than she has been for twenty years. She returns to teaching and continues to write history books

She is extremely active in the PEN Club and travels around Europe to their meetings, especially in the aftermath of the Second World War, where she notes the contrast between the wealth of Sweden and the impoverishment of Germany. Her literary and political loyalties were ambivalently attached to H. G. Wells and on his death in August 1946 she wrote several pages of reflections:

Yesterday died H. G. Wells, the most dynamic writer of my day. During his middle period there was no surer way of nerving one’s self for action than to read of his fearless, experimental novels or studies in social analysis […] In the *Outline of History* his genius illumined for us the forgotten road from our remote origin, and showed us the implications of our journey, and showed us the high possibilities of its extension […]

The personal Wells was a disappointment to me, as very likely to most of those who approached him with a degree of awe, too much aware of his literary eminence and the skill of his merciless cartooning. He was a lonely man, the lonelier for the company within which he moved […] While Lawrence the man and Lawrence the writer were a single entity, Wells the man and Wells the writer showed a duality so marked that the two personalities might be considered separately.

She goes on to record that she met Wells the man only three times in social life. On the third occasion she went to his London flat, “and the interview was complicated by the presence of Charlie Chaplin, pink-faced, with white, curly hair”, lying on the settee. She “did not want to talk to a film actor, however distinguished – I had come to discuss with Wells ways and means of introducing the teaching of world history into teachers’ training colleges. It was too late. Instead, I must play hostess, and listen to a tirade upon women
in general from a host who fidgeted irritably, standing cup in hand on the hearthrug”.

The rest of her autobiography describes her political activities, her campaigns against the debt-led political economies of Europe after the war, publishing Towards Economic Freedom with Methuen in 1936. She hoped it would be used in schools, but as it did not adhere to the syllabus its market life was short. She continued her involvement in local politics.

Her recording of her memories of Lawrence dwindles. She revisits Jessie Chambers from time to time, with increasingly disappointing results. She is fiercely hostile to the way in which she feels that Jessie has “retreated into domesticity”. She had, earlier, tried to urge her to publish her novel, The Rathe Primrose. She had stayed a few days with her during Easter 1916, when Jessie’s husband had been conscripted. Jessie had induced him, against his wish, to enter the Army Service Corps where he would be relatively safe. During the visit, Jessie’s “suppressed anger, her gloom of anxiety” caused Helen Corke to react into an impersonal almost gay mood, which increased the distance between them. In 1933, a Colchester friend of Helen Corke’s was in Blidworth in Notts. Her husband, “Major C”, had been posted to the nearby aerodrome, and the friend, Jean, was given the task of commandeering searchlight sites. Helen Corke spent a week working with her friend, and the proximity to Jessie’s location led to the fateful final meeting between them in the crowded Nottingham café, which Helen Corke had recorded elsewhere and again in this memoir, where it is preceded with the following interesting reminiscence of a meeting in 1926:

It is seven years since I paid a surprise visit to her home in Mapperley and identified her as house-wife – rather as the married Emily of the White Peacock’s final chapter. The talk, shared during the mid-day meal by her husband, was impersonal. Some translations of Russian folk tales, sent me earlier, had indicated her interest in Russia, and now I was told
of a holiday spent recently in one of the Russian satellite
countries. Both she and Jack had returned with more than
favourable impressions of the Communist way of life. I
countered by giving them the Social Credit alternative to
Communism, but on neither side was there any shift of
conviction, or any desire to agree. Still less did I sense any
emotional memory of Muriel’s former self. A disturbing
element in her accepted routine, a revenant from a plane of
being which she had renounced, she bade me goodbye with
relief.

Finally, in a late reference to matters Lawrentian, Helen Corke
records that on one of her many foreign voyages she meets in the
winter of 1947-8 Inez van Dulemen, a young Dutch novelist of
twenty-one, who later comes to stay with her in England, ostensibly
to learn English, but who secretly, while Helen is out of the house,
is busily engaged in writing her first novel. It won awards, and
Helen Corke immediately tried to learn Dutch to follow this
interest. Later, Inez translated some of Lawrence’s short stories,
including ‘The Fox’, into Dutch.

This may look like a “cherry-picking” account of Helen Corke’s
autobiography, Vol. II, for the interest of Lawrentians, but there is
an enormous amount of interest that has been passed over. She was
a very articulate example of the impressively energetic women of
her age, devoted to education and keen to promote social causes.
Her autobiography is worth further study as an eye-opening account
of the life of women in her time.

Michael Black has donated the books and letters referred to in
this article to the Lawrence archive in Nottingham, and he has
suggested that the photocopy of Volume II of Helen Corke’s
autobiography also be lodged there. I hope that these materials will
be found a suitable basis for a PhD thesis, on the grounds of Helen
Corke’s relationship with Lawrence but also as a source of
information about professional women during the first half of the
twentieth century, and as first-hand evidence of ambivalent gender identity and the confident lesbian lifestyle.

2 It appears that ten years before C.U.P. published In Our Infancy, Helen Corke had not settled on titles, for in her preface to D. H. Lawrence: The Croydon Years, she described her autobiography as “in two parts, entitled respectively ‘Not in Entire Forgetfulness’ and ‘The Light of Common Day’”.
3 He first gave a talk to the D. H. Lawrence Society in Eastwood in 1995, which, much revised, was published in October 1996 in the DHLR. In 2003, it was published as a C.U.P. pamphlet entitled ‘Getting the Lawrence Edition Started’. He added ‘Some Postscripts’ which included his memories of Helen Corke.
4 Mansfield also prints, in appendices to her edition, three manuscripts written by Helen Corke.