As editor of the twenty-first-century edition of *Comstocks of Cornell*, I have minimized my personal imprint on Mrs. Comstock’s autobiography. My goal has been to preserve as much of her voice and personality as possible in her finished typescript since she wrote it ninety years ago. My edits, items I did not touch, and Mrs. Comstock’s writing style are explained as follows:

- The paragraphing style of this book is Mrs. Comstock’s, and she wrote in the present-tense, first-person point-of-view. The 1953 edition grouped her paragraphs and changed her tense to the second- and third-person points of view.
- Mrs. Comstock’s language in her manuscript connects the timeline of her life, whereas the omissions and alterations of her language in the 1953 book chopped the connections. The alterations to phraseology were so prolific that context, tense, and voice of the manuscript were changed from Mrs. Comstock’s to that of Glenn Herrick. The omission of emotional adjectives and substance minimized the impact of the storytelling capacity of Mrs. Comstock’s memoir. She wrote as if she were sitting next to you and telling her story. Yet the sense of this intimacy was lost in the Herrick edits.
- Mrs. Comstock referred to her diaries as the template for her book. She wrote of her and her husband’s day-to-day life and habits. In her publications, their lives were recorded and remembered with an emotional pleasure that is palpable through her writing and reminiscences. Unfortunately, these original diaries have not been recovered and are presumed to have been destroyed.
- The language of the 1953 edition differs from Mrs. Comstock’s own verbiage. For example, we read on manuscript page 7–26: “He told us plain truths about our inefficiency and lack of skill, but told them so sweetly and so tactfully that we felt honored rather than disgraced.” Compare this same sentence to the 1953 edition, page 153: “He
criticized our work so kindly and tactfully that we felt honored rather than disgraced.”

• I have corrected little of Mrs. Comstock’s language. I did correct blatant typographical errors (for example, she routinely misspelled the word “magnificent”).

• I did not correct spelling if the word or phrase was colloquial to the time period, such as “Cryptogamic Botany,” “non-plussed,” “cosily,” and “lustre.”

• Nor did I correct Mrs. Comstock’s writing pattern. For example, Mrs. Comstock would split words in ways we might not today: “Chicken-pox,” “far-away,” “high-strung,” “room-mate.”

• Mrs. Comstock did not regularly call her husband by his first name, as was written in the 1953 edition. The original editors substituted “Harry” for “Mr. Comstock” more often than not. In her manuscript, Mrs. Comstock refers to her husband, in the formal, almost eight hundred times, compared to the informal first name at forty-two times. This name replacement by Herrick and colleagues removed the formality of Mrs. Comstock’s language and the respect she held for her husband in his academic position.

• Square brackets [ ] are placed around words that I or a previous editor clarified, primarily to explain state abbreviations, academic organizations, nicknames Mrs. Comstock used, or to reinstate initials in names that had been removed.

• Scripted brackets {} appear for sections of the manuscript that were initially omitted from the 1953 publication and that now have been returned to their place in this book. Through discussions with the publisher and myself, we came to an agreement that such a demarcation of the omitted text would interfere minimally with the reading experience of the reinstated material and would allow the reader to compare and contrast what are essentially two different books from one copy of the original manuscript.

• Parentheses () are Mrs. Comstock’s comments to herself as she typed her manuscript.

• Many of the sentences are transposed in the 1953 edition from the manuscript. The information relayed is unchanged and the essence of the meaning is comparable. The transposed sentences created some confusion for me as I compared the manuscript to the printed book.

—KSt.
I had been invited to an afternoon tea at the home of Mrs. Prestiss.

The Prestisses had been married that summer and built a

home on the campus. I had worked hard all the morning

and thought I had my house in order when I went out. Mrs. Prestiss,

a woman older than myself and of much experience, was an exquisite

housekeeper; she had furnished her house tastefully and with the

aid of two maids kept it in beautiful order. I admired vastly the

daintiness of the appointments in her home; when I came back to our

house and opened the front door, I discovered that I had forgotten to

dust the stairs before I went, and the sight of them was too much for

me. I sat down on the lower step and wept from sheer discouragement.

I took the lesson to heart; that’s a housekeeper may try her best and

yet fail to do everything just as it should be done, and during the

caused me through the entire year to treat my maids with considerably

rest of my life my work was dotted with considerable inexperience.

Fortunately

That year of housekeeping taught me how to deal with the human

hazard in housework and to recognize the fact that people who

have worked for me have always cheerfully done their best.

Although our house was isolated from town, a

grocer’s wagon came twice a day, a meat wagon once, and the milk

wagon morning and night. Of course we were very economical and we

for our

first ambition was to pay the mortgage on our house.

Professor Russell came to call and rapped on our front door with his

dentist knuckleduster; he got a response, we opened the door, he