

Marie Skłodowska-Curie

FROM
THE SERIES



Edited by
Tomasz Pospieszny
and Ewelina Wajs-Baryła

THE STORY OF PIERRE CURIE

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

 **SOPHIA**
PUBLISHING HOUSE

Marie Skłodowska-Curie

THE LIFE STORY OF
PIERRE CURIE

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES



Scientific edited and critical commentary
by Tomasz Pospieszny
and Ewelina Wajs-Baryła

Sophia Publishing House
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	8
INTRODUCTION	13
PREFACE	17

THE LIFE STORY OF PIERRE CURIE

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION IN 1923	26
I. THE CURIE FAMILY. INFANCY AND FIRST STUDIES OF PIERRE CURIE	48
II. DREAMS OR YOUTH. FIRST SCIENTIFIC WORK. DISCOVERY OF PIEZOELECTRICITY	60
III. LIFE AS THE DIRECTOR OR LABORATORY WORK IN THE SCHOOL OF PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY. GENERALIZATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF SYMMETRY. INVESTIGATIONS OF MAGNETISM	68
IV. MARRIAGE AND ORGANIZATION OF FAMILY LIFE. PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER	90
V. THE DREAM BECOME A REALITY. THE DISCOVERY OF RADIUM	114
VI. THE STRUGGLE FOR MEANS TO WORK. THE BURDEN OF CELEBRITY. THE FIRST ASSISTANCE FROM THE STATE. IT COMES TOO LATE	132
VII. THE NATION'S SORROW. THE LABORATORIES: "SACRED PLACES"	165
A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF PIERRE CURIE	181



AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES BY MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE

I. CHAPTER	188
II. CHAPTER	218
III. CHAPTER	254
IV. A VISIT TO AMERICA IN 1921	282
A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE LIFE	
AND WORK OF MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE	303



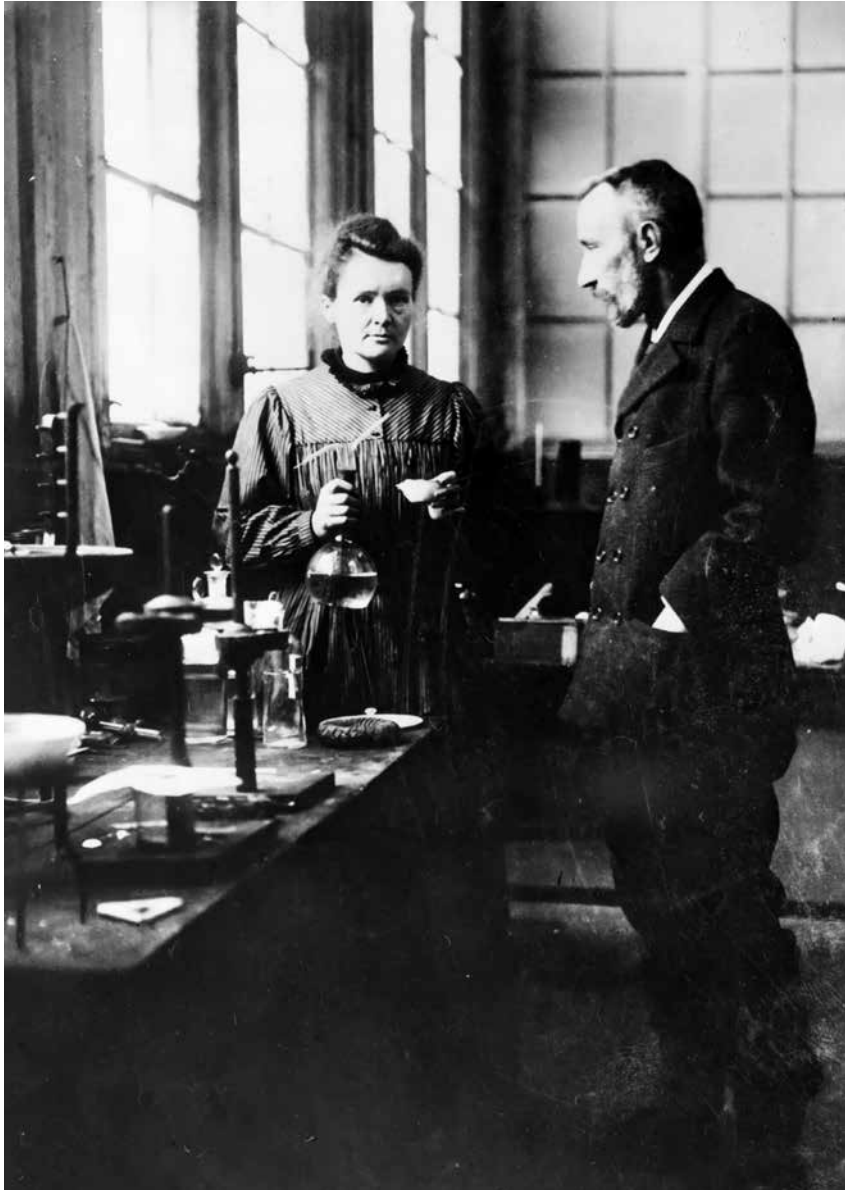
EDITOR'S NOTE	313
FOOTNOTES	318
BIBLIOGRAPHY	342

FOREWORD

IN 1921, AFTER A TRIUMPHANT TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES, Marie Curie was at the height of her fame and her research laboratory at the Radium Institute in Paris was booming. In 1923, she published the two texts presented here, after having given her assessment of the First World War in 1921 in “La radiologie et la guerre.”¹

The book on Pierre Curie and her Autobiographical notes are rare texts, because Marie Curie did not leave many other personal testimonies, in which she reveals a little of her private life, her family. The first French edition of “Pierre Curie” was published in 1924. In this book, she pays tribute to her husband and retraces his story, from his youth to his tragic death in 1906. Pierre Curie’s personality shines through the lines of this book, as does the love that his wife has for him. The author also retraces their joint work, with precision and simplicity, always choosing the right words.

Who else but Marie Curie could describe the enthusiasm of the discovery of a new scientific discipline, the science of radioactivity? I have read and reread Pierre Curie several times, in its different editions, and I am very happy with this new edition at Sophia Publishing House, abundantly illustrated and commented by Professor Tomasz Pospieszny and Ewelina Wajs-Baryła.



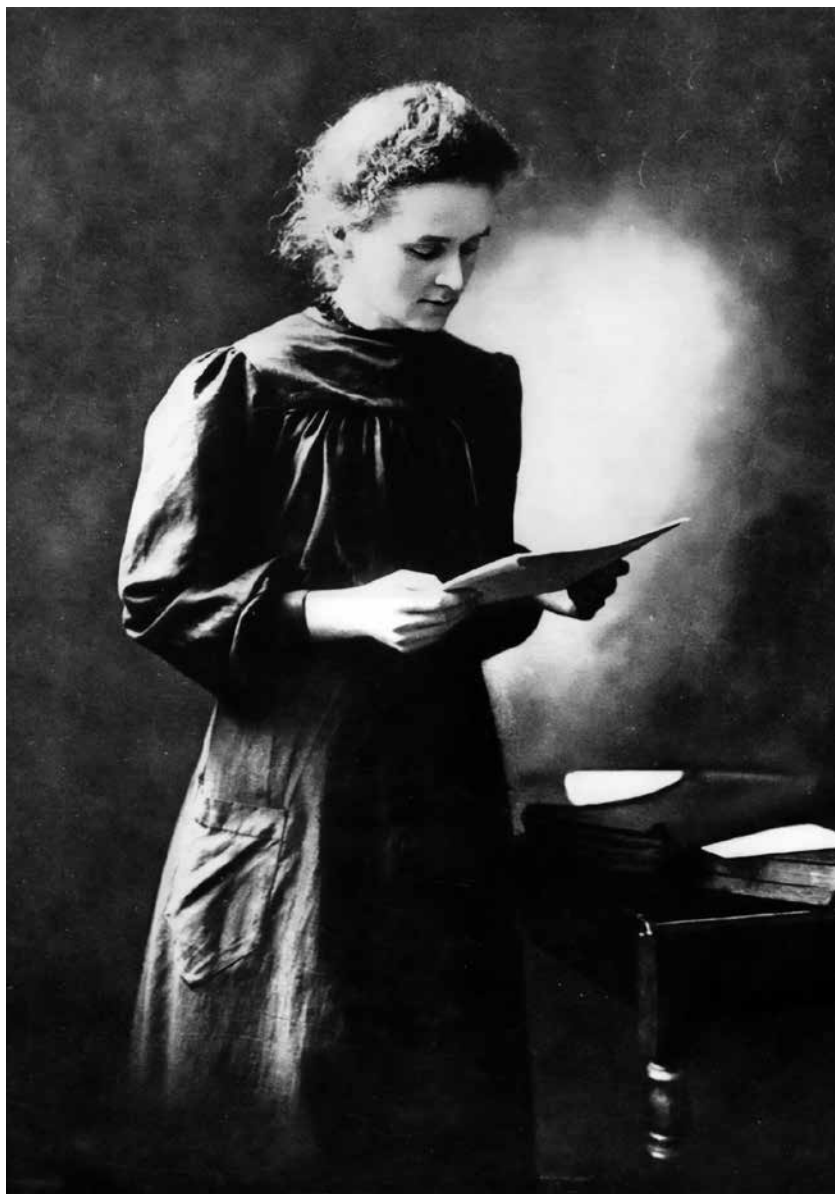
Marie and Pierre Curie in a laboratory in a shed at 42, rue Lhomond.
Late 1903 or early 1904. Photo: Albert Harlingue.
Musée Curie (Col. ACJC)



Marie Skłodowska-Curie on the terrace of the Curie Laboratory
at the Radium Institute in Paris, 1930s.
Musée Curie (Col. ACJC)

I am delighted with this new publication, which enriches an already extensive collection of magnificent books and works dedicated to the dissemination of scientific culture, edited by my friends Tomasz Pospieszny and Ewelina Wajs-Baryła. These works take us into the history of science, with stories that we rediscover from an ever-renewed perspective.

Renaud Huynh
Director of Musée Curie in Paris
Paris, 4th November 2024



Marie Skłodowska-Curie, 1911.
Public domain

INTRODUCTION

THE BOOK THAT SOPHIA PUBLISHING HOUSE PRESENTS IS UNUSUAL. Those interested in Marie Skłodowska-Curie and her life, will recognise her own memories as especially valuable. This is the sole publication presenting Marie's stories about herself and her relations with other people. Although she describes here only a part of her history, these are her own opinions and views reflecting her attitude to the system of values and her own role in the family, society and science. Her autobiographical notes and her reminiscences of Pierre Curie became later the background material providing the basis for Marie's daughter, Ève, on which to write the famous biography entitled "Marie Curie" published in 1937 and translated into most languages. Pierre Curie's biography was published in Poland in 1925. It was translated by my great-grandfather, Joseph Skłodowski, Marie's brother, and his niece Hanna Szyller. They were both known in the family for their excellent command of English. Knowing as I do the relations among the Skłodowski siblings, their friendship and willingness to help one another, I am certain that the final version of the translation was reviewed also by Marie's sisters, Bronislava Dluska and Helen Szalay. The autobiographical notes were translated by Hanna Szyller, but they were not published in Poland until 1935 (according to the author's wish).

Marie is regarded as a Pole in Poland and a Frenchwoman in France, thus linking these two friendly countries. In many places across the world she is known as Marie Curie. At the very beginning of her autobiography she wrote: “I was born in Poland and my family name is Skłodowska. My parents come from Poland’s petty nobility.” Describing her childhood and school times, Marie depicts the difficult situation on the Polish lands in the period of the Partitions. It is worth reminding that the Skłodowski family were intensely patriotic. Marie’s grandfather, Joseph, served as an artilleryman in the November Uprising. Her father, Władysław, stored and revered his father’s mementos from the uprising. In her autobiography, Marie describes her enjoyment when her dream of independent Poland finally came true and she could visit her family in liberated Warsaw.

In the introduction to the biography of Pierre Curie, Marie wrote that “she wishes that everybody who knew him would be able to find the reasons for which he was so much beloved.” While reading the text it is worth paying attention to the particularly close bond linking these two people. When they met, Pierre was 35 and Marie merely 27. At that time, Pierre had already had impressive achievements and a long scientific path behind him, whereas Marie had just graduated from the university. Upon meeting, Marie enchanted Pierre with her energy, honesty, intellect and beauty. Pierre in turn made a deep impression on Marie with his cordiality, straightforwardness and smile, which – Marie reminisced – was serious and youthful at the same time. Pierre was the ideal partner for the wife just beginning her scientific career. Curie, despite his achievements in science, never pursued honours, and always emphasised others’ achievements – even in the field where his own ones were outstanding. He greeted others’ successes with enjoyment, always offering advice and guidance to those who

approached him. He did not compete with Marie, but supported, appreciated and encouraged her. He was not only her husband, but also her mentor and friend. For 11 years, the Curies co-operated excellently both in everyday life and in scientific work. What joined them was the equal admiration for science, love for nature, care of social justice, feeling of material selflessness and freedom. They shunned politics and never manifested their political views. Together they made up an exceptional team of a chemist and a physicist, both top-notch scientists. Pierre had a tendency for daydreaming and contemplation, but he was also a brilliant designer of scientific instruments. Marie was more consistent, persistent and better-organised in her actions. When Pierre, discouraged by unusually difficult work conditions, wanted to stop and postpone it until they became better, it was Marie who did not give up the fight, and her fortitude and enthusiasm infected her husband. Working together, they made a discovery that brought them the Nobel Prize in 1903.

Marie's daughter Ève wrote about her mother: "Marie always suffered in silence because the world wanted to see her different than she really was. At the same time, she always tried to hide her problems and her sensitivity from people that were outside her closest circle."

In "Pierre Curie" and "Autobiographical Notes", the Scientist uncovers part of her secrets and allows the reader a glimpse into her world. This, combined with extensive footnotes and a large number of excellent photos, constitutes the outstanding value of the book.

Piotr Chrzastowski, BEng, PhD
Joseph Skłodowski's great-grandson
Cracow, 8th May, 2024



Marie 'Missy' Meloney and Marie Skłodowska-Curie,
New York, 5th November 1929, photo by Blanche de Lorraine.

Marie Mattingly Meloney Collection on Marie Curie,
Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York

PREFACE

THE YEAR 1920 CHANGED MARIE SKŁODOWSKA CURIE'S LIFE in a very particular way. The Scholar's laboratory was paid a visit by the editor-in-chief of "The Delineator" women's magazine. Marie Mattingly Meloney², called Missy by her friends, came from the United States and was famous for her professionalism. She had a good reputation in the journalistic world. In the 1920s, she interviewed – among others – Herbert George Wells, James M. Barry, and Bertrand Russell. A few years later, she published her interviews with Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. She dreamed of interviewing Marie Curie, but it was not easy. The Scholar did not trust journalists and made every effort to avoid interviews. Finally, thanks to the intercession of Henry-Pierre Roché, a French writer and good friend of both ladies, Marie agreed to meet the journalist. During the conversation Mr Meloney learnt that Madame Curie's biggest dream was owning one gram of radium. This begot the idea which influenced the development of the Radium Institute in Paris, and then the Institute in Warsaw. One year later, Mrs Meloney wrote to Marie Curie that she had gathered funds for her visit to the United States and one gram of radium that Marie dreamed of. It was the first great journey for Maria, who – together with her daughters – spent six and a half weeks in the USA, from the 11th of May

to the 25th of June 1921. Madame Curie, extremely modest and reserved as usual, on the day of the handover of the casket with radium was wearing the same dress she had donned to collect her second Nobel Prize in 1911 in Stockholm. At the age of 54, she made the impression of an impecunious student rather than an eminent scientist. However, the Scientist's granddaughter, Hélène Langevin-Joliot, claims that Marie "was not the same person when she returned from America... This journey had changed her forever."³

Marie, in addition to the much-desired radium (worth \$100,000), received \$22,000 worth of laboratory equipment and mesothorium (radium-228 isotope). She was also paid lecture fees amounting to \$7,000. Moreover, she received \$60,000 as a trust fund, and an advance of \$50,000 for writing a biography of Pierre Curie.⁴ From the moment the idea of the Scholar's trip to America emerged, Missy wondered whether Madame Curie would consider writing an autobiography as well⁵. The journalist was convinced that such a book, if properly promoted, could fetch significant funds to Marie's laboratory. Naturally, Missy's magazine would have the first rights to publish this story.⁶ Once again, Marie yielded to Mrs Meloney's request, and the book was written. In a foreword to the book, the journalist wrote:

During her American travels, I repeatedly requested Madame Curie to write the story of her life. I urged its importance to history and its influence among students preparing to consecrate their lives to science. Finally, she consented.⁷

Thanks to the intensive efforts and extraordinary entrepreneurship of Mrs Meloney, four of the largest publishing houses — Macmillan, Scribner's, Dutton, and Houghton — took interest in publishing Madame Curie's book. Meloney advised Marie to "demand royalties of 20% — twice the going rate which," she said, "Theodore Roosevelt

had recently received.”⁸ Furthermore, she ensured that the New York publishing house Macmillan Company published Marie’s biography of Pierre Curie without significant changes to its content⁹. In March 1922, Missy was able to recommend it to the Scholar with full satisfaction, as offering the best terms and high-quality publication¹⁰. According to Barbara Goldsmith, Marie Curie, on Missy’s advice, requested that the book be published only in English and that its distribution be limited to the United States and Canada. Then, instead of writing the expected biography, she created a peculiar and propagandistic document. Although this slim book is entitled “Pierre Curie”, the long Introduction by Missy Meloney is entirely devoted to Marie Curie. She is portrayed as “a simple woman working in an inadequate laboratory, living in a modest apartment, and subsisting on the meagre salary of a French professor.”¹¹

The autobiographical notes were written in French (Marie dictated the text to her elder daughter, Irène), and the corrections were made by the Scholar herself on the already translated English typescript. In March 1922, she wrote to Missy: “As soon as it is ready, I will send you the manuscript of my husband’s biography. The average reader will probably find it more interesting than my biography. However, there is also a scientific part, which could not be avoided.”¹² The book was translated into English by Mrs Meloney’s friends, Charlotte and Vernon Kellogg. The Kelloggs accompanied Marie and her daughters on their return journey from the U.S. to France in 1921. They were not only meant to care for the Scholar but also to help her prepare biographical materials intended for publication in “The Delineator.”¹³ These are the only autobiographical notes Marie ever wrote. She included only what she wanted to reveal to the readers about her life. Finally, ‘Autobiography’ was published in book form in 1923.

It is worth emphasising that Madame Curie's autobiographical notes had been appearing in serialized form in "The Delineator" since January 1922, under the title *The Story of My Life*¹⁴. Announcing the publication, Miss Meloney wrote:

MADAME CURIE'S OWN STORY

In the January number "The Delineator" will begin one of the most important life stories of this generation—the autobiography of Madame Curie, the discoverer of radium. It is the inspiring and hitherto unwritten record of the struggle and never-failing faith of a poor student whose ultimate triumph classes her with the immortals.

Now she will give to "The Delineator" readers her own story of her life, told with the simplicity that is one of her chief characteristics – the story of a mother who, after the tragic death of her husband while their children were still young, made a home for her two little girls, educated them, and all the time continued that work which was to prove so priceless a gift to humanity.

Madame Curie's autobiography will be a distinguished contribution to the record of women's achievements.¹⁵

One of Marie Skłodowska Curie's biographers wrote:

The United States will not forget her, and she will not forget the United States. She will return there in 1929, this time on her own initiative, although once again accompanied by Missy, to obtain another gram of radium, which she will donate to the University of Warsaw¹⁶. Both of these trips earned her much sympathy, but also a few determined enemies among American scientists, who, while not denying her talent, condemned her methods of raising money to fund scientific research. The conclusions from this American experience are reflected in the translation of Pierre Curie's biography penned by her, and especially in the "Autobiographical Notes" that she added to the American edition at Missy's request, but for which she did not consent to be translated or published in any other language. This small part of herself, this timid confession, was also her gift to the Americans, who, after her triumphant tour, enabled her to purchase the valuable gram of radium.

The first Polish edition of the biography of Pierre Curie was published in 1925 by the National Gift Committee for Marie Skłodowska-Curie¹⁷. There was a rush to prepare the book in time for the Scholar's visit to Poland in June 1925, as the text could help in raising funds for the construction of the Radium Institute. The Nobel laureate participated in the cornerstone-laying ceremony in Warsaw at that time. Bronislava Dluska, the initiator of the Polish edition of the book, wrote to Marie in May of that year: "I don't want to waste the [potential] of your valuable book about Pierre..."¹⁸ It is worth adding that the Scholar stipulated that the autobiographical notes should only be published in Poland after her death. "I feel that in Europe it wouldn't seem as natural as it does in America,"¹⁹ she explained. This wish was respected, and the notes were published in 1935 (a year after Marie Skłodowska-Curie's death) by the Radium Institute Society Publishing House, together with the biography of Pierre Curie, translated by Marie's niece and brother, Hanna Szyllerowa and Joseph Skłodowski.²⁰

Marie Skłodowska-Curie was very reserved when it came to describing her life. She believed that "in science, we should not be interested in people, but only in facts."²¹ A student of her, Alicja Dorabialska, wrote about her Mentor's autobiographical notes:

Here writes a woman who, throughout her entire life, avoided any form of self-revelation; a person who fled from the noise of fame; a scholar who considered the great work of her life as nothing more than a simple duty of labour...

Madame Curie never wanted to write about herself. However, during her stay in America in 1921, she gave in (as she herself writes) to the persuasion of her American friends and briefly outlined the "main current of her life."

This outline has an immense value. It provides a faithful account of the discovery of radioactivity and, with captivating simplicity, portrays a life whose essence was the ecstasy of work. For a Pole, it is particularly precious

that Maria Curie, in front of an American audience, emphatically underscored her Polish identity. If anyone were to doubt the Polishness of our great scholar, it would suffice to know the period of her life during the First World War.²²

Madame Curie's account does not include all the facts from her and Pierre Curie's lives. Much more can be found in archives or biographies. However, Maria's personal recollections are extremely valuable, as they provide an insight into her thoughts and observations regarding the events in which she was directly involved. Many years later, Marie Skłodowska-Curie would reflect on events that were important to her. She described her youth, studies, marriage, and the all-out heroic work, as well as her belief in the social and selfless mission of science. At times, all of this may seem quite idealized. We must remember, however, that these recollections were written over a hundred years ago. It is worth noting that in 2012 Marie's granddaughter, H el ene Langevin-Joliot, in an interview with Shelly Emling, said: "I wouldn't be surprised if at least a bit of the autobiography was written by Mrs Meloney... I certainly think some of the words and passages were thought of by Mrs Meloney."²³ There may be a lot of truth in this. While researching the life of the Scientist, I came across a letter from Marie to Bronislava Dluska (better known as Bronya), her beloved sister. On February 21th, 1921, Marie wrote from Paris:

Besides, I need to communicate with you regarding my biography, which they are asking for in America. A straightforward biography needs to be written for them, telling about my childhood, youth, and the period of my scientific work. Your help would be vital for me in this respect. I even wonder if this biography could be written by you rather than by me. We should create it together and then decide whose name will appear on it.²⁴

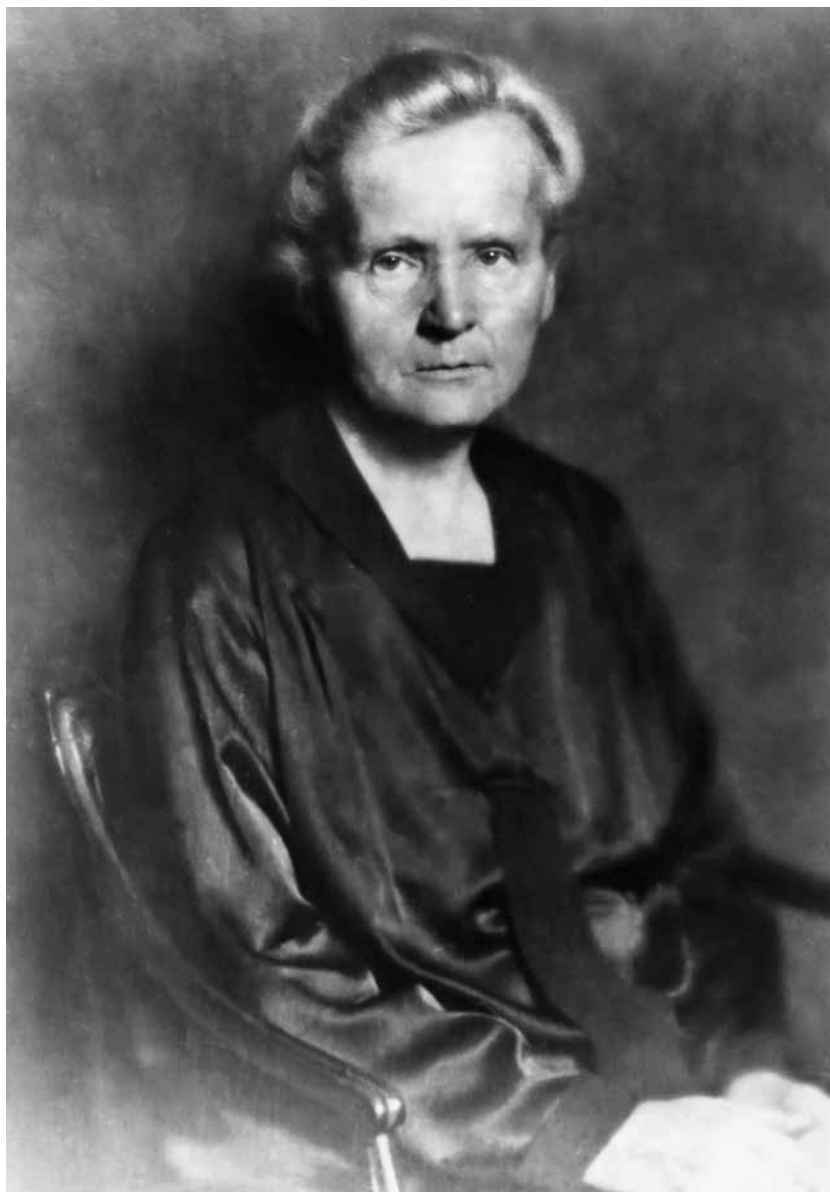
We are not able to determine today what the real state of affairs was. Nevertheless, in the autobiographical notes, one can come across a rather strange, yet very obvious error. Describing her mother's death, Marie wrote: "I was only nine years old at the time, and my eldest brother was merely thirteen."²⁵ Bronislava Skłodowska died in 1878, so Marie was actually eleven years old then, and Joseph fifteen. The age provided by the Scholar indicates the year 1876, when her oldest sibling, Sophie, died. Perhaps this mistake was made by someone who wrote Marie's memoirs on her behalf...

The idea of publishing a critical edition of the biography of Pierre Curie and the autobiographical notes of Marie Skłodowska-Curie was born during my conversation with Ewelina Wajs-Baryła on a Thursday morning. We quickly decided that this book should be prepared for publication by Sophia Publishing House. The current edition is based on the first English editions. To capture the atmosphere of the era in which the book was written, we decided to preserve the original language. Footnotes were added to help Readers understand issues that the Scientist sometimes described too generally. It is the tradition of Sophia Publishing House to include rich iconographic material in the published texts. This is also the case here. I am convinced that some of the photographs will pleasantly surprise attentive Readers.

Having already become a renowned Scientist, Marie Skłodowska-Curie summarized her entire life in four sentences:

It is a small, ordinary story devoid of great events. I was born in Warsaw into a professorial family. I married Pierre Curie and had two children. I carried out my scientific work in France.²⁶

If you would like to know the continuation of this thought, I recommend you to read Marie Skłodowska-Curie's autobiographical



Marie Skłodowska-Curie, New York, 5th November 1929. Photo by Blanche de Lorraine.
Maria Skłodowska-Curie Museum in Warsaw

notes and her memoirs concerning Pierre Curie. They are an excellent complement to the memoirs of her two daughters, Irène Joliot-Curie and Ève Curie, and of her father, brother and niece. After reading the memoirs of the Curie and Skłodowski families, one can definitely conclude that the story of Marie Skłodowska-Curie's life was neither small, nor ordinary, nor devoid of great events. On the contrary.

Associate professor Tomasz Pospieszny
Faculty of Chemistry
Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań
Poznań, 12th October 2024

INTRODUCTION

by Mrs. William Brown Meloney

EVERY LITTLE WHILE A MAN OR A WOMAN IS BORN TO SERVE in some big way. Such a one surely is Marie Curie. Her discovery of radium has advanced science, relieved human suffering and enriched the world. The spirit in which she has done her work has challenged the minds and souls of men.

One morning in the spring of 1898, when the United States was going to war with Spain, Madame Curie stepped forth from a crude shack on the outskirts of Paris, with the greatest secret of the century literally in the palm of her hand.

It was one of the silent, unheralded great moments in the world's history.

The discovery which had become a fact that morning was no accident. It was a triumph over hardship and doubting men. It represented years of patient labor. Madame Curie and her husband, Pierre Curie, had wrested from Mother Earth one of her most priceless secrets.

I have been asked to tell why I undertook the Marie Curie Radium Campaign and how I persuaded Madame Curie to write this book.

→ → →

Marie 'Missy' Meloney, 29th November 1932, photo by Nickolas Muray.
University of Louisville Photographic Archives

A facsimile of Missy's signature from a letter to Ida M. Tarbell.
Papers of Ida M. Tarbell, Special Collections, Allegheny College



Mrs. W. B. Meloney

THE LIFE STORY OF
PIERRE CURIE



by **MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE**

Scientific edited and critical commentary
by Tomasz Pospieszny
and Ewelina Wajs-Baryła

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Pierre Curie, 1905.
Maria Skłodowska-Curie Museum in Warsaw



TRANSLATORS' NOTE⁴²

The translators wish to acknowledge their obligations to Dr. R.B. Moore, Chief Chemist, U.S. Bureau of Mines, and an American authority on radium, who kindly read the whole translation in manuscript in order to assure its accuracy as to the technical details referred to by Madame Curie in her account of the work of her husband and herself on radium.





IT IS NOT WITHOUT HESITATION THAT I HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO WRITE the biography of Pierre Curie. I should have preferred confiding this task to some relative or some friend of his infancy who had followed his whole life intimately and possessed as full a knowledge of his earliest years as of those after his marriage. Jacques Curie, Pierre's brother and the companion of his youth, was bound to him by the tenderest affection. But after his appointment to the University of Montpellier, he lived far from Pierre, and he therefore insisted that I should write the biography, believing that no one else better knew and understood the life of his brother. He communicated to me all his personal memories; and to this important contribution, which I have utilized in full, I have added details related by my husband himself and a few of his friends. Thus I have reconstituted as best I could that part of his existence that I did not know directly. I have, in addition, tried faithfully to express the profound impression his personality made upon me during the years of our life together.

This narrative is, to be sure, neither complete nor perfect. I hope, nevertheless, that the picture it gives of Pierre Curie is not deformed, and that it will help to conserve his memory. I wish, too, that it might remind those who knew him of the reasons for which they loved him.

M.C.



Pierre Curie, drawing by Carola Spaeth Hauschka © 1980 by McGraw-Hill.
AIP Emilio Segrè Visual Archives, Weber Collection



“It is possible to conceive that in criminal hands radium might prove very dangerous, and the question therefore arises whether it be to the advantage of humanity to know the secrets of nature, whether we be sufficiently mature to profit by them, or whether that knowledge may not prove harmful. Take, for instance, the discoveries of Nobel—powerful explosives have made it possible for men to achieve admirable things, but they are also a terrible means of destruction in the hands of those great criminals who draw nations into war. I am among those who believe with Nobel that humanity will obtain more good than evil from future discoveries.”

PIERRE CURIE, Nobel Conference, 1903⁴³

CHAPTER I

THE CURIE FAMILY. INFANCY AND FIRST STUDIES OF PIERRE CURIE

PIERRE CURIE'S PARENTS,⁴⁴ WHO WERE EDUCATED AND INTELLIGENT, formed a part of the *petite bourgeoisie* of small means. They did not frequent fashionable society, but confined themselves entirely to the companionship of their relatives and a few intimate friends.

Eugène Curie, Pierre's father, was a physician and the son of a physician.⁴⁵ He knew very few kinsmen of his name, and very little about the Curie family, which was of Alsatian (Eugène Curie was born at Mulhouse in 1827) and Protestant origin. Even though his father was established in London, Eugène had been brought up in Paris, where he pursued his studies in the natural sciences and medicine, and worked as preparator under [Louis] Gratiollet in the laboratories of the Museum.⁴⁶

Doctor Eugène Curie's remarkable personality impressed all who approached him. He was a tall man, who in youth must have been blonde, with beautiful blue eyes of a clearness and brilliancy that were striking even in an advanced old age. These eyes, which had retained a childlike expression, reflected goodness and intelligence. He had indeed unusual intellectual capacities, a very live aptitude for the natural sciences, and the temperament of a scholar. Although he wished to consecrate his life to scientific work, family responsibilities



Eugène Curie, 1876.
Musée Curie (Collection ACJC)



Marie Curie

To Mrs. Robert S. Mead
with my love,
Marie Curie
November 8, 1929

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

by Marie SkłodowskaCurie

Scientific edited and with critical commentary
by Tomasz Pospieszny
and Ewelina Wajs-Baryła

← ← ←

Marie Skłodowska-Curie, 5th November, 1929.
The photograph was taken by Blanche de Lorraine at the home of Missy Meloney in New York.
The copy on display was dedicated a few days later to Elsie Mead.
Rockefeller Archive Center New York

CHAPTER I

I HAVE BEEN ASKED BY MY AMERICAN FRIENDS TO WRITE THE STORY of my life. At first, the idea seemed alien to me, but I yielded to persuasion. However, I could not conceive my biography as a complete expression of personal feelings or a detailed description of all incidents I would remember. Many of our feelings change with the years, and, when faded away, may seem altogether strange; incidents lose their momentary interest and may be remembered as if they have occurred to some other person. But there may be in a life some general direction, some continuous thread, due to a few dominant ideas and a few strong feelings, that explain the life and are characteristic of a human personality. Of my life, which has not been easy on the whole, I have described the general course and the essential features, and I trust that my story gives an understanding of the state of mind in which I have lived and worked.

My family is of Polish origin, and my name is Marie Sklodowska. My father and my mother both came from among the small Polish landed proprietors. In my country this class is composed of a large number of families, owners of small and medium-sized estates, frequently interrelated. It has been, until recently, chiefly from this group that Poland has drawn her intellectual recruits.

While my paternal grandfather had divided his time between agriculture and directing a provincial college, my father, more strongly drawn to study, followed the course of the University of Petrograd, and later definitely established himself at Warsaw as Professor of Physics and Mathematics in one of the lyceums of that city¹⁶³. He married a young woman whose mode of life was congenial to his; for, although very young, she had, what was, for that time, a very serious education, and was the director of one of the best Warsaw schools for young girls¹⁶⁴.

My father and mother worshiped their profession in the highest degree and have left, all over their country, a lasting remembrance with their pupils. I cannot, even to-day, go into Polish society without meeting persons who have tender memories of my parents.

Although my parents adopted a university career, they continued to keep in close touch with their numerous family in the country. It was with their relatives that I frequently spent my vacation, living in all freedom and finding opportunities to know the field life by which I was deeply attracted. To these conditions, so different from the usual villegiature, I believe, I owe my love for the country and nature.

Born at Warsaw, on the 7th of November, 1867, I was the last of five children, but my oldest sister died at the early age of fourteen¹⁶⁵, and we were left, three sisters¹⁶⁶ and a brother¹⁶⁷. Cruelly struck by the loss of her daughter and worn away by a grave illness, my mother died¹⁶⁸ at forty-two, leaving her husband in the deepest sorrow with his children. I was then only nine years old, and my eldest brother was hardly thirteen¹⁶⁹.

→ → →

The Skłodowski siblings.

From left: Sophie, Helen, Marie, Joseph, and Bronislava. Warsaw, 1872.

Chrzastowski family's archive



THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT THE BEAUTIFUL SIDE OF SCIENCE was created to revive the memory of forgotten heroines – women. All those who stood behind great discoveries in the history of the exact sciences: mathematics, physics, chemistry, and astronomy. Yet, they remain forgotten. For the most part, they stay in the shadows. They are hidden behind the prominent figures of well-known men, often as their wives, assistants, and helpers. They faced enormous challenges in gaining access to education, knowledge, and laboratories. And even when they managed to obtain education and access to laboratories, no one took them seriously. Indeed, men frequently benefited from their research, their work, and their brilliant minds. But the women themselves remained silent.

As part of THE BEAUTIFUL SIDE OF SCIENCE project, in collaboration with museums, cultural institutions, public benefit organisations, libraries, and educational centres, we give lectures, organise author meetings and talks, participate in scientific conferences, share exhibitions we have prepared, and publish reviews of popular science books.

We run a website where we regularly publish essays dedicated to the role of women in the development of the exact sciences. Under the patronage of THE BEAUTIFUL SIDE OF SCIENCE, we have published numerous books focused on women, giving voice to their stories.

For the purposes of THE BEAUTIFUL SIDE OF SCIENCE, we have created hundreds of custom graphics in the form of posters, social media posts, covers for our books, and exhibitions.

You can find us on:

<http://piekniejszastronanauki.pl>

www.facebook.com/piekniejszastronanauki



THE POLISH CHEMICAL SOCIETY began its activities on 29th June 1919. Among the founding members of the Polish Chemical Society was Maria Skłodowska-Curie.

On 17th January 1924, the authorities of the Polish Chemical Society awarded Maria Skłodowska-Curie the dignity of Honorary Member in recognition of her 'merits in the field of chemistry of radioactive elements'. On the centenary of this event, we have launched a new historical series of the Polish Chemical Society, whose mission is to publish a series of biographies of outstanding scientists.

I hope that it will promote readership not only among chemists, but also among readers not connected with this field of science.

In 1967, on the centenary of Madame Curie's birth, the Polish Chemical Society opened the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Museum in Warsaw—the only biographical museum in the world dedicated solely to the scientist. Since 1st August 2018, the museum has been a cultural institution run jointly with the City of Warsaw.

Throughout its one hundred and five-year history, the authorities and members of our society have always been faithful to its mission: to popularise chemistry in various areas of life, to integrate the world of science with industry and to nurture the development of the young generation of chemists.

Let this book be for you all a beautiful and sentimental journey into the magical world of chemistry, life and scientific activities of Marie Skłodowska-Curie and Pierre Curie.

Prof. Izabela Nowak
President of the Board of the Polish Chemical Society

For more information about our activities:

www.ptchem.pl

www.facebook.com/polskie.towarzystwo.chemiczne

A DIGITAL COMIC

The Curie method

AN IMMERSION IN THE CURIE LABORATORY

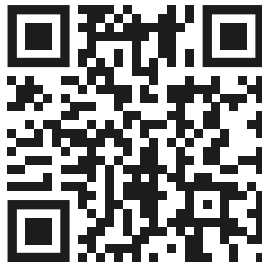
Connection of comic strip, animation, historical novel and science lesson, **THE CURIE METHOD** aims to introduce readers to the scientific instruments the Curies used and to make their research on radioactivity easier to understand.

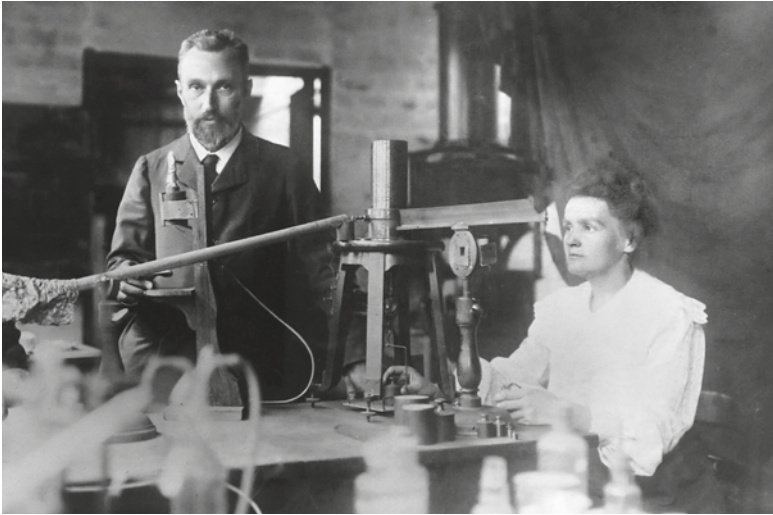
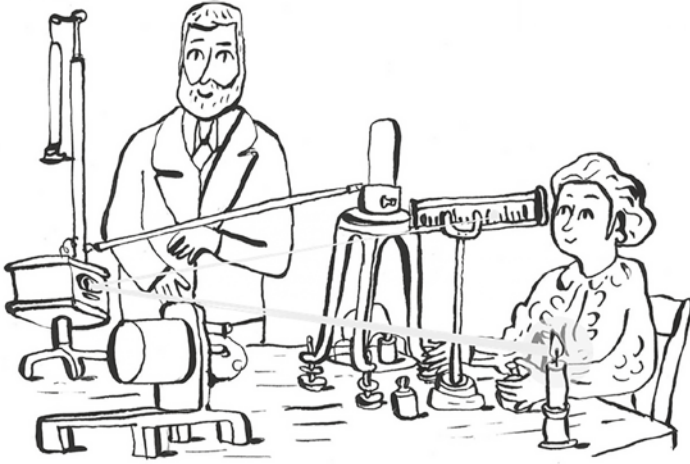
In a clear but entertaining way, it explains how their tools worked and shows the various stages in their discovery of radium and polonium to demonstrate that the two scientists used both their scientific intuition and their mastery of the tools needed to make these discoveries.

This “augmented” comic is designed specifically for teens and young adults. As they read the comic on their tablets or smartphones, they can open up original documents from the Curie Museum archives to learn even more about history and science.

The creators of the comic are Marion Augustin and Dr Camilla Maiani from the Musée Curie, illustrator Guillaume Reynard and Emmanuel Rouillier from Atelier Mosquito.

The comic is available online in English, French and Polish.





Yet it was in this miserable old shed, that we passed the best and happiest years of our life, devoting our entire days to our work. Often I had to prepare our lunch in the shed, so as not to interrupt some particularly important operation. Sometimes I had to spend a whole day mixing a boiling mass with a heavy iron rod nearly as large as myself. I would be broken with fatigue at the day's end. Other days, on the contrary, the work would be a most minute and delicate fractional crystallization, in the effort to concentrate the radium...

One of our joys was to go into our workroom at night; we then perceived on all sides the feebly luminous silhouettes of the bottles or capsules containing our products. It was really a lovely sight and one always new to us. The glowing tubes looked like faint, fairy lights.

Marya Skłodowska-Curie

I am delighted with this new publication, which enriches an already extensive collection of magnificent books and works dedicated to the dissemination of scientific culture, edited by my friends Tomasz Pospieszny and Ewelina Wajs-Baryła. These works take us into the history of science, with stories that we rediscover from an ever-renewed perspective.

RENAUD HUYNH

DIRECTOR OF MUSÉE CURIE IN PARIS



MUSÉE CURIE



Maria Skłodowska-Curie
Museum
in Warsaw



ARCHIWUM NAUKI
PAN I PAU



RADIOACTIVE WASTE
MANAGEMENT PLANT



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