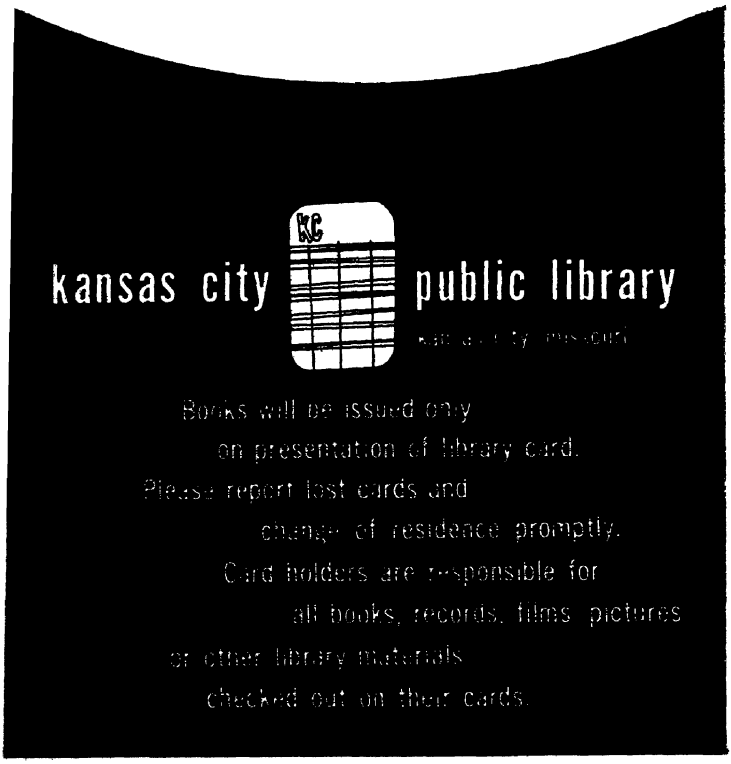

Dear Christy

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MEMORIES OF MY FIFTY YEARS

by

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TO

Christina and Carolyn Nevan

AND TO

Richard Martin Henderson

Foreword

Each of us has secret ambitions which we keep securely hidden even from those most dear to our hearts. They are taken out occasionally in the still of the night when they seem much more logical than in the clearer light of daytime reality. Probably one of the most common of these ambitions is the wish to write a book.

I've gone through different phases and types of secret ambitions, beginning with my childhood dream of being a famous hat designer when I grew up; then, when I was growing up, I wanted to paint beautiful pictures. Still later, I wanted to be a research doctor and find cures for some of the peculiar ailments of mankind. Mixed in all along was my desire to write books.

All at once I come face to face with the fact that, at this "grandma age," having lived almost half a century in this world, these ambitions are all about to pass me by. What can I do? I plainly have neither the talent nor the command of the English language needed for such an undertaking as writing a book; yet it is impossible, or nearly so for me, even to dream of other ambitions. So again I toy with the idea and decide that, though a real book is not mine to write, perhaps my darling grandchildren will some day be interested in knowing some of the things I did when I was a little girl and, still more interesting, the way times have changed in the fifty years separating our ages. Time has unrolled so rapidly from the days when telephones were an oddity in the early 1900's to this atomic age of the 1950's with its untold mysteries. Only these few years lie between.

I did not choose to write about the years of my childhood because I consider them the best of my life—far from it, in fact—but because they were the most simple ones and need no big words to describe. To me life is like a beautiful stairway leading upward to still brighter things, as if there, above us, is a wonderful picture-window and lovely moonbeams streaming through it.

Sometimes shadows pass across and I falter, but I never really wish to descend again to the first steps or even to those just below. Childhood is wonderful in its simple, innocent way; but then we rise to the pleasures of youth, the time when "we wish for the moon." I was lucky beyond words, and have basked these many years in this love-light.

Then along comes motherhood. Those extra words are needed badly if I am to express to you any of the real joy that comes to a mother's heart as she holds her newborn babes in her arms, hears their coos of delight, and breathes the sweetness of a baby's breath. These joys grow as their years pile up; but they are cut by pain keen as a knife's thrust to your heart when things go wrong for them through the years. Gladly would we suffer all these disappointments for our children were it possible, but we know deep down that it is their life to live. We have had our own turn for mistakes and have made many—yet the children that squeeze our hearts in pain also give life its most precious moments of joy.

Soon we have reached another wonderful state—that of being a grandparent—with a big emphasis on the *grand.* Only by gradually coming up the stairs of life to this height are we fully able to appreciate this wonderful light as it floods our hearts with joys untold. We climb always within the orbit of the steady, beckoning light that has guided our faltering steps over the rough spots as well as the easy.

Our Heavenly Father has been so patient in listening to all our selfish pleas and in giving us a loving family. And the friends who encourage and cheer—oh, those wonderful people! How can we be thankful enough for our dear family and our friends! Tears of pure joy come to my eyes as I see them, young and old, in my mind's eye, and I savor the sweetness of their various ways of letting us know they want to help in ways both big and small to spread joy at our feet on these stairs of life.

So to you all I give nothing of much literary worth, but this, my feeble best, with my love, and ask forbearance for all the shortcomings and errors.

Dear Christy

CHAPTER I

January 1, 1952

My darling Little Christy:

Today is New Year's, and you, my little namesake, are the reason for its being my very nicest of all New Years'. It is the first year I've started as a grandmother. My, how proud the word grandmother makes me! I wish the thousand miles and more that separate us could be spanned by some magic word, and, Presto! you would be here beside my chair.

Your mommie writes us that you, now at the age of ten months, are walking and saying a few words, and that all the gaily wrapped packages under your first Christmas tree held lots of fascination for you—especially the pretty ribbons and wrapping which you soon mutilated. Your grandpa and I are watching the mail daily for the movies your daddy made of you so that we may share a little of your first Christmas, and are hoping and praying your next one will be with us.

As I sit in our cozy, warm living room, I am enjoying the sight outside my window as the big, lazy flakes of snow come drifting down to earth, some to be caught up again by a playful breeze and tossed here and there. I find myself moon-dreaming of the time long ago when I was a little girl sitting on the lap of one of my grandmothers, whom I called "Mama Gran."

On a day like this she would say, "Let's watch out the window, my pet; the old woman who lives 'way out in the woods must be plucking her geese, and sending the downy feathers out on the gentle breeze." Then as we sat comfy and warm, she

would tell me dozens of stories of the time when she was a little girl or say little speeches she could recite one after another. One little speech I very dearly loved to hear went something like this:

Come buy my dolls, my pretty dolls.
Come buy my dolls, I pray.
I have a heap, and sell so cheap
I almost give them away.
Some have hair and some are bald,
Some are small and some quite tall,
Some can walk and some can talk.

There were many more lines I have forgotten, and doubt these are quite the way she recited them to me. At any rate, I would sit by the hour all snuggled up on her comfortable lap, content and happy. Then there were many songs she sang in an untrained voice, but so wonderful to me. One was of a "Mr. Frog who a-courting went."

All these things I'd love to do, little granddaughter, with you snuggled in my arms; but that is impossible right now, so I'll content myself by writing you this letter telling you some of the things I did when I was a little girl—things as I remember them and some of the stories told me by my grandmothers.

I was born many years ago, a long time, for you too will reckon time as very long until you are much older, and then time will seem much shorter. At any rate, it was a November day in the early 1900's.

I was born at home on our farm with only a country doctor, two grandmothers and a great aunt to assist and welcome me as the first child for my mama and papa. In those days few small towns had hospitals, and there were none near our farm home. The house was just across the pasture from the home of my paternal grandparents and a couple of miles or so from the small village of Clifton Hill.

Grandparents, and especially grandmothers, seem to think they have full privileges and a perfect right to spoil their grandchildren. Of course, they wouldn't think of spoiling them in bad

ways—just *good* spoiling. Another thing I've noticed is how much finer grandchildren are than other children.

This reminds me of a little story I heard not long ago. A little boy, after his first day at Sunday school, was telling his mommie all about things that happened and said, "The teacher talked about her grandson all the time." His mother said, "How was that, son?" He replied, "Well, his name was Jesus and that's all she talked about, so I know he must be her grandchild."

My grandparents were much like other grandparents, I suppose, but to me they seemed the very nicest ones in all the world. I had two grandmothers, two grandfathers and two great-grandmothers. You, my little granddaughter, now have the same number of each, with a great-grandfather to add to the roster, but there is this one big difference—all of my grandparents lived within seven miles of our home, while yours are scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts, and I find myself about midway, betwixt and between.

Not only did all my grandparents and the great-grandmothers live within seven miles of one another, they now all lie sleeping in the same family burial ground together with other family members dating back to some of my great-great-great-grandparents—all in this one little cemetery guarded by stately cedar trees and peacefully enclosed by an old iron fence. The dates reach back. Some were born in the 1700's and some died early in the 1800's.

These are all a part of us, both of you and of me, little Christy—our heritage.

Now in reading this letter, you must understand that most of those happenings and doings of mine until I was almost three years of age were related to me by some one or another of my grandparents or parents. My recollections under three years of age are slightly hazy, but, according to my grandparents, I was a very smart grandchild, you see.

When I was a tiny, newborn baby I was placed in a little walnut cradle, an heirloom of the family. This little cradle was placed beside my parents' big double bed.

Papa had bought a part of his parents' farm and erected a

two-story house on this land the year before I was born. This farm was the same one on which both Papa and his father were born.

The grandparents' house stood on a sizeable ridge, or hill, with the land dropping rather steeply to the east where the house faced, while our house stood several hundred feet to the south on the same ridge and across a pretty bluegrass pasture. Both houses were white, trimmed in green, with plain wooden-shingle roofs and open front porches.

In my grandparents' home there lived—now listen carefully, my pet—my papa's mother and father, whom I called "Ma" and "Pa"; then there was Ma's mother, whom I called "Little Grandma"; Pa's mother, called "Big Grandma"; one single uncle and three single aunts. The youngest of these aunts claimed a special interest in me, as I was born on her ninth birthday, November 15th. A cousin, Mary (several times removed), also shared this home, and over the years there were many other relatives who lived there when, for various reasons, they found themselves homeless. The old sampler hanging on the wall, embroidered with a motto by loving hands at some early date, read simply: "Home Sweet Home." It had a deep and true meaning in this real home to many loving hearts.

Then, besides the family, there was "Ebee," the big shepherd dog who was kept busy driving the cows from the pasture to the barn at milking time and herding the sheep from one pasture into another. He also chased roosters or hens from the main yard back to the poultry yard whenever they ventured from their own domain by flying over the fence, or by digging a wallowing place in the dust near the fence and then slipping under, or simply by walking up the wooden brace near the big corner post and jumping over into the main yard. It mattered not to Ebee how they arrived; but unless their departure was sure and fast they were likely to find themselves minus some tail feathers. He was a gentle dog with children and would romp with us and protect us jealously from all harm.

"Spotty" was the mama cat, and was very prolific in the number and frequency of her families of kittens. Spotty was a firm

and staunch advocate of large families. It was nothing unusual to see Spotty being followed about by kittens of her different families in colors as varied as colors could be. Some would be spotted like their mama in yellow, black and white; while others were maltese, or almost solid black, white or yellow. Most of the time Spotty kept her family around the barn and the old corn crib, where they made life for the mice and rats a dangerous affair. But near mealtime, Spotty and her families would be seen crossing the barnyard to the side gate. They would slip under it and come mewing up to the back door ready for some of the table scraps. These table scraps had previously been divided in the house, and one bowl full of gravy, a few fat meat leavings and the like was saved for Spotty, while the bones and more substantial leavings were saved for Ebee. In this large family, where every meal was both plentiful and hearty, there were always plenty of table scraps.

"Dickie" was the pretty yellow canary who sang in shrill, but sweet notes. He would sing sweetest and loudest of all while the old parlor organ was being played.

Of course, on Ma's and Pa's farm there were many other animals, such as horses, mules, cows, pigs, sheep, chickens, geese, turkeys and guineas, and while you couldn't quite class bees as animals, still they did keep colonies of bees.

Almost as soon as I learned to walk, I would toddle along the path across the pasture to Ma's and Pa's house. As their very first grandchild I pretty much had full sway with all, and by no means least with both Little Grandma and Big Grandma.

I'm finding out these days that the first grandbaby is something very special. But I also know that if I should someday be fortunate enough to have other little grandbabies, then they, too, will find warm, proud places in my heart and life, just as I soon had others to share my wonderful grandparents. In fact, when I was past two years of age, my little brother arrived on the scene, and the first little cousin about a year after that.

As I said, my day wasn't complete unless I could cross the pasture to Ma's and Pa's house, and I enjoyed following Ma as she went about the farm chores. One day she was setting hens. I

was full of "Whys"—"Why are you putting eggs in the nest?" "Why are you fastening the old hen on the nest?" "Why this? Why that?"—so she carefully explained to me that the eggs were put in the nest for the old hen to set on to keep them warm, and that by and by, after lots of days and nights, three whole weeks of them, had passed, little chickens would come out of the eggs and the hen would then be a mama to some nice little baby chickens. Well! That was just what a little three-year-old girl would consider wonderful.

One day soon after that, I caught a gentle old biddy hen and, by pulling and dragging her, took her down the pasture path and shoved her under half of an empty beehive. I went back to the henhouse for two or three eggs, pushed them under the beehive too, then was going to let nature take its course. Just one important thing Ma had forgotten to mention—mama hens need food and water during these waiting days and nights. One day, a week or so later, Mama was walking along the path and happened to push the old beehive over. There was the poor old biddy hen starved to death! So ended my first venture in chicken raising.

Are you wondering: "What is a beehive?" I'll try to explain: It is the honeybees' house where they live and make honey. It is a box-like affair divided into lower and upper compartments. In the lower half the bees really live, and in the compartment above are lots of little open frames about six inches square and two inches deep where they store their honey. Without these little frames the empty beehive is much like an empty box, and it was this upper part I had turned over the biddy hen.

Bees take the sweet nectar from clover blossoms and from other flowers for their honey. They make enough for themselves to feed upon in the cold wintertime when there are no flowers to be found. While it remains cold they stay snug in their hives with their food supply. They not only make a sufficient supply of honey for themselves, but plenty to divide with their keepers.

A colony of bees consists of a queen bee, workers and drones. The queen bee is a worker bee that has been fed a special diet to make her larger and stronger than the other workers. The queen becomes the mother of thousands of new bees in her short

lifetime of about three years. Should two queens find themselves in the same hive, one takes her followers and leaves for a new home. This is called "swarming." Often on a hot still summer day a big humming noise could be heard, and looking up in the air you could see a mass movement of bees circling in a rather close circle. If there was an empty beehive near by, the queen would often go into it with all the workers and drones following, but sometimes the queen would settle down on a tree limb with all the other bees clustering around her.

I remember one time when the bees settled down on a limb of the old pear tree in Pa's yard. They looked like one solid mass as big as the water bucket in the old well. Instead of spreading out, they just piled up on top of one another round and round the tree limb, with a few strays flying very near. Pa went in the smoke house and put his bee net on over his big straw hat, made a wood fire in some old bellows, and began blowing smoke on this mass of bees while Ma and Little Grandma beat upon old tin pans with spoons to make lots of noise. Soon the bees began moving, and he guided them safely into an empty hive he had placed under the trees for that purpose. Pa could work with the bees at swarming time, or whenever he wished to take honey from the hives, and was seldom stung; while I could be standing back at quite some distance, just watching, and a bee would come over to pop a stinger into me for no reason at all.

On nice Sundays, or maybe on a Saturday morning, Papa would hitch the horse to a buggy and drive up to the front-yard gate. He would help Mama with baby brother in her arms into the buggy. Papa would swing me up on the seat, then climb into the buggy and take me onto his lap to let me help drive. We would be on our way to see Mama's folks, my dear Mama Gran and Papa Gran. Their farm home was about seven miles from our house. Here, too, I was the first grandchild and Mama Gran and Papa Gran were very happy to have us come to see them. Built under the back stairway, they had a little closet with a little door not over three feet tall that opened into their sitting room. In this little closet were shelves, and when I would get to their house I'd run to this little closet because Mama Gran kept my toys there. Besides a doll house that had been Mama's when she was a little

girl, there was one old-fashioned doll dressed in a dark, printed calico dress and hand-knit shawl. Mama Gran had played with this doll when she too was a little girl during the Civil War in the 1860's. There were lots of empty spools and a big box of buttons Mama Gran taught me to string. Then, tucked away on a shelf, I was sure to find a special treat—a sack of candy, big fat bananas and oranges. She called this my "secret place," a place which was later shared by the other little "C's."

When I had played awhile and eaten my fill of the goodies, I would crawl upon Mama Gran's lap to hear stories and songs. She taught me my first little speech. It went like this:

I want a piece of calico,
To make my doll a dress.
It won't take a very big piece—
A yard will do I guess.
I want to go to Grannie's house;
You promised me I might.
I know they want to see me,
And I want to go tonight.

Then, as my bedtime approached, I would say, "Now, Mama Gran, please say the one about Little Fred."

From memory I will try to quote her words:

When Little Fred was called to bed
He always acted right;
He kissed his ma and then his pa,
And wished them both good night.
He made no noise like naughty boys
But quietly up the stairs
Directly went
As he was sent
And always said his prayers.
Then Little Fred, all snug in bed,
Did gently go to sleep,
Nor did he wake 'til bright daybreak
When the birds began to peep.

After these wonderful visits with Mama Gran and Papa Gran, back home we would go in the buggy. A buggy was a one-seated vehicle with four wheels, each one about thirty-six inches in diameter. The buggy was much higher off the ground than the cars of today, and on the front of the buggy was a thing called a dashboard. On the right-hand side of the dashboard was a pocket in which a long whip was kept. Seldom was it necessary to use the whip, but by taking it out of the pocket and shaking it to one side of the horses' heads where they could see it, one could make them start trotting a little faster. Occasionally, a horse was given a light tap with the whip if it was exceptionally sluggish.

When I was three years old, one of my aunts was married. I recall very little of the actual wedding but plainly remember the new uncle's horse, "Cap," with his fancy-net fly-blanket. This blanket was of heavy cord and had lots of little red-and-yellow tassels that swayed in the breeze to help scare the flies away, and was by far the fanciest thing of its kind I'd ever seen. So I stayed near the gate leading to the hitch rack watching Cap, and remember yet how fine Cap looked as he trotted down the hill pulling the sparkling new buggy carrying my aunt and the new uncle who owned all this finery away on their honeymoon.

Weddings have a way of being contagious, it would seem, so soon Cousin Mary was also married. Of this wedding, the new husband was the main attraction to me. Ma and Pa gave a wedding supper honoring the bride and groom at which I asked for permission to sit beside the groom.

The first course at supper was oyster soup. The groom held his spoon very daintily with the small finger curled out and away from his spoon and the rest of his hand held in a very grand manner. I was watching his every move, so I tried to imitate exactly his elegant ways, but my other fingers kept getting in the way and I'd spill my soup. I'd watch some more and try again, until my family were all very embarrassed. Finally, the soup course was replaced by the main course, and now I was trying to hold my cup of milk in the same way he held his cup of coffee, with the little finger curved away so stylishly. (Oh, yes, my milk had to be in a coffee cup on this special night because *he* was having coffee from a cup.)

CHAPTER II

Soon after these weddings we moved from the farm. The town we moved to was very small and was probably thirty miles distant. I remember one of the aunts, the older single one, rode in the buggy with Mama, brother and me, and we followed behind the wagons piled high with our furniture and bedding. Behind one of the wagons was tied an old milk cow. It took most of the day to make the trip of thirty miles.

One day, soon after we moved to town, Mama dressed brother and me to go calling, put him in his high chair, and told me to "watch after brother." He was probably a little over a year of age. We were in the kitchen when, all at once, I recalled having seen Mama put a bottle of something the "Baker's man" brought that morning up on the top shelf of the safe. (You would call it a cabinet.) So I pushed a chair up to the safe, and then, by putting a wooden box on top of the chair and standing on tiptoe, reached the bottle. In some way I got the cork from the bottle, and turned it up to my mouth. *Eeowee!*—how it burned! Brother was sitting in his chair "um-uming" as he reached for the bottle so I turned it up to his mouth and he began screaming and strangling. Mama rushed in and, between grabbing the bottle of lemon extract, getting brother unchoked, and spatting me a lick or so on my "setter-down," we had a loud old time.

I doubt whether you will know what I meant by the "Baker's man." There was a company called the Baker Company which sold their wares by having them peddled from house to house by a man riding in a wagon, or in a "spring wagon"—which was a lighter-weight wagon. In this wagon he usually carried anything from pots and pans and extracts to patent medicines guar-

anteed to be good for anything from stomach ache to hurting feet. He had shoelaces, threads, buttons and salves. He also carried all the latest news and gossip, and his visit was almost a social event. If he happened by a farmhouse at mealtime, he was invited to have a bite with the family; and at night he put his team in the barn to be fed and watered whenever he stayed with a family. I doubt that it was by accident he often found himself at suppertime at Pa's and Ma's house where anyone, stranger or friend, was made welcome to have supper and spend the night.

The year we moved to town, Callao, as it was called, I was almost four years of age, and I soon learned where I wanted Mama to go for our groceries. This store was owned by a Mr. Taylor and a Mr. Buster, and all that Mr. Taylor required from me in payment for any candy, gum or fruit was a big hug and kiss. Just as soon as I stepped into the store he reached out his arms and into them I would fly, twine my arms around his neck, and be carried behind the counter to make my selections. He would completely ignore brother, but soon Mr. Buster started picking brother up and giving him a piece of candy or other treat. Mama could hardly drag me past this store even when she didn't have groceries to buy. She would sometimes take me by Papa's livery stable to stay with him while she did her shopping, because no matter how much she insisted on paying for some of the things given us, they refused all money. She was afraid they'd think she brought me in solely for this free treat if I went in too often. So sometimes I was left at the livery stable.

Something else little girls and boys of today have no reason to know about, are livery stables. Here horses were kept for hire, along with buggies and carriages. Just as most people now have cars, in those days most people owned teams of horses or rode into town on horseback to do their shopping and banking. If the owners were to be in town all day, or if the weather was bad, the horses were often put in the livery stable to be cared for. Here the stableboys fed, watered and rubbed down the horses, then rehitched them or resaddled them, as the case might be, for their owner's return home. Their service was similar to that of the garage to care for people's cars your grandpa now owns.

One of the main reasons horses were kept for hire in this little town was that the trains brought many drummers (salesmen) who would hire a team and conveyance to take their trunks and cases of show merchandise to inland towns and country stores to be displayed. These stores would make their orders and selections from the samples carried by the drummers. A driver could be hired to drive the team, similar to a taxi today, or in some cases the drummer did his own driving, like the drive-it-yourself car service found in our cities today. All the merchandise samples and catalogues were brought to the merchants in those days, rather than having the merchant go to the city to make his selections, as is quite generally the case today.

Others used the livery-stable service too. People coming into town on the train to visit friends and relatives would hire a team and vehicle, much as a taxi is hired today; or a young swain calling on his best girl often hired a high-stepping horse and a buggy to take his girl for a drive out in the country—of course, without the hired driver. Instead of a high-stepping horse, often the gentlest horse the stable owned was preferred; then the lines could be tied together and thrown over the dashboard, allowing the horse to take its own time and path, or even come to a dead stop. I most enjoyed any time allowed me to watch the pretty horses at the livery stable, unless I knew I was thereby missing a trip to Mr. Taylor's grocery store.

One day during this year in town, brother and I were out in the yard playing. We lived in a house on a corner of the street, and just across the street on one side was an overhead railroad bridge. We were watching a team pulling a big wagon going up to this bridge. Just as the team started across the bridge, a train down the track gave a long, loud whistle, scaring the horses badly. They began shying and backing off the bridge, and in some way the wagon was turned sideways and the back wheels went over the side of the big embankment leading down to the tracks. The man was frightened and started yelling at the horses; but the horses were scared and were neighing and plunging this way and that. Though they were still on top of the embankment, the heavy wagon was pulling them backwards. Brother and I

were crying and screaming because we were frightened, too. Soon a crowd was assembling and rushing madly about, not knowing how to help. The man driving the team at last leaped to safety, and the engineer, seeing the accident, succeeding in stopping his train just before the wagon and team finally fell down backwards upon the track.

Mama says I never missed an occasion to display anything new, or sometimes things not so new, to any visitor in our home. On one of these occasions I even brought in the bedroom pot to show it to some ladies who were making their first call on Mama. On another occasion my uncle had brought his best girl and another couple to our house. I was so busy digging out this and that to show them that I finally brought in my new velvet hat that had lots of little ribbon loops hanging down its back. I marched in and said, "Do you have any tails? See, I have more than just one tail," as I flipped around to display my ribbon tails. Mama was rather easily embarrassed, so she usually held her breath for fear of what my next move might be.

Children do not forget older people who are kind and loving. Such a person was a crippled lady who lived a few houses down the street from our house. Mrs. Richmond seemed to enjoy having me bring my doll family in their little carriage for a visit. One day she made a little crazy quilt for my doll's carriage. This little quilt was called a crazy quilt because it was pieced from bright scraps of velvet and satin materials in all kinds of odd sizes and colors, and the seams were covered with different embroidered stitches called briar stitch, feather stitch, crow's foot, and others I've forgotten. In my mind's eye, even after all these years, I can almost see this little quilt and the dear, little old lady who made it for me.

One day I was invited to a little girl's birthday party. This little girl was named Ruth, and was several years older than I. She had many pretty toys and dolls, but she had received one very special doll for this birthday. Mama had put my prettiest doll with its long curls and go-to-sleep eyes in my doll carriage, with the good advice to play with my own doll because I might

break one of Ruth's. Soon after I got there Ruth asked to push my doll and carriage and told me to hold her doll. The walks were made of planks and slightly warped, and as I walked dazedly along, looking at the pretty doll in my arms, I stumped my toe and down we went. The pretty doll's china head broke into a dozen pieces and so did my little-girl heart.

A photograph studio was just across the street from our house, and the photographer loved little children. He seemed especially to enjoy getting me over to his studio, where he spent hours posing me before his camera. Sometimes he would sit me on a high stool, adjust my long curls just so, turn my head this way and that, cross my legs with one foot hooked behind the other ankle, have my fingers spread out the way he wished them to be, then tell me to "sit real still and watch for a little birdie to fly out." He would adjust his camera and tripod, place his head under the big square of black cloth that was over part of the camera, and squeeze a little rubber bulb that tripped the shutter. Though I watched closely each time, as the pictures prove, never did I see the little bird he told me to watch for.

CHAPTER III

After one year in town we moved back to a farm—this time to Mama Gran's house because my dear Papa Gran had gone to heaven and Mama Gran needed Mama and Papa to help in the management of her farm. Here again we only lived one year, and during this year our first little sister arrived, to make us a carriage-size family. I suppose I was proud of the new baby sister, although being only five years old I was only allowed to hold her while seated on the little split-bottom chair that belonged to Papa Gran when he was a little boy, and which I still have for you to sit on when you come to see us. This little chair is now almost one hundred years old.

I remember how proud I felt of our new, shiny carriage with its polished, black wood sides and its black leather seats with little strips of red leather across the top of the seat backs. On the spokes of the wheels were other traces of red color. There were side curtains and a front curtain that could be fastened on to make the carriage fairly warm and rainproof. In each curtain there were little windows of mica; and through the front curtain there was a slot below its mica window to run the driving reins. The dashboard was gracefully curved, and the whip pocket on it held a pretty black-and-red whip that had a fancy red-silk tassel at its tip. On the front of the carriage, iron braces held a lamp on either side. These lamps burned coal oil. Their fronts and sides were of clear glass, and their backs were of red glass that threw beautiful reflections, especially when the lamps were lighted on rainy nights.

Most of the time now, Mama with baby sister rode on the back seat while brother and I shared the front seat with Papa. We were sometimes allowed to take the lines to drive our pretty

horses, a matched bay-color team named Dick and Dan. No child of today could be more proud of a brand-new automobile than brother and I were of our new carriage and team of horses with their silver-trimmed harness.

One day when we were driving this team between Mama Gran's house and Ma's and Pa's house, we had to cross railroad tracks on one of the narrow roads. The right of way was very overgrown with tall weeds and sumac bushes that almost completely hid the view of the tracks, which were on a raised dump. Just as we pulled up this incline and the horses were almost on the tracks, Papa saw and heard a passenger train bearing down on us. He neither had time to pull across the tracks or back the team and carriage, so he gave the horses a quick pull to the right parallel to the tracks, and the train rushed past just inches away, it seemed. The horses were trembling in fright, and so were we.

There was a young hired hand who lived at Mama Gran's house and helped Papa with the farming and farm chores. I was very fond of this young man, and he was very good to brother and me. On Saturday nights the young people of the neighborhood usually had parties at first one home, then another, where they square danced, and this young man with his girl friend usually attended. One Saturday he said to me, "Well, my girl is mad at me and I don't have anyone to go to the party with me. How about you being my girl, Christine, and going to the party with me tonight?" It sounded good to me, so unbeknownst to Mama or anyone else I got out my very best dress and other clothing. Soon I was completely dressed except for my ribbon sash and the matching ribbon bows for my curls, which I took to Mama to get her to tie them for me. There followed one of the biggest disappointments in my entire five years! Mama naturally couldn't allow me to attend a party just meant for grown-up girls and boys.

It was about this time I ran a nail all the way through my foot when I jumped from a big iron kettle that was overturned out in the back yard and landed on a nail sticking upright from a board. You would never guess the home remedy used.

First, my foot was thoroughly washed; then a thick coating of brown sugar and turpentine was securely bound on with a strip of cloth torn from an old discarded sheet, and before many days my foot was well enough for me to run and play again.

Are you wondering why anyone would own a kettle large enough for children to climb upon? These kettles were standard farm equipment and had many uses. The one at Mama Gran's was probably three feet across its top, and about twenty-seven inches deep at its deepest point in the middle. The sides were rounded, and if you can visualize a huge hollow ball cut in half then you know how this kettle looked. Over the top of it there was a carrying bail. The kettle was heavy and, when carried about, usually an old fence rail would be run through the raised bail. With a man at each end of the rail, they would half run as they hurried along, with their free arms extended far from their sides for balance, to the place where the kettle was being taken. There was a stand on legs on which the kettle could be placed to hold it over the outdoor fire.

It was in this kettle that the homemade lye soap was made and cooked. Mama Gran even made her own lye used in making soap. Back of the old meathouse was the lye hopper. This hopper had been made by Papa Gran. It was a box-like affair that slanted toward the front, where an opening led into a wooden trough that drained the liquid into an old earthenware jar. To make the lye, the ashes from the wood-burning stoves were emptied into the hopper. These ashes were soft, gray and dust-like, and it took many stove cleanings to fill the hopper. In the spring of the year water from the cistern well near the south porch, or water from the old rain barrel near the north porch, would be slowly poured over the ashes to steep through, or, as it was called in those days, to leach-the-ashes. The resulting liquid that drained down the trough into the big jar was pure lye for soap making. It was also used to make homemade hominy. Lye water was poured over field corn to remove the hard outer shell from the corn grains and swell the fluffy meat inside to big white flakes of hominy. Before being cooked it was soaked in salt water to remove the lye.

Going back to the soap. Most all farm families made their own laundry soap. Every housewife had a jar, or jars, handy next to the kitchen stove, where all grease from the middling (or side) meat was poured from the skillet after the meat was fried. I remember that both Ma and Mama Gran always rendered any grease left in meat trimmings, such as from the thick skin trimmed off from shoulders and hams. They would place these trimmings in big iron skillets and put the skillets inside the big oven of the kitchen range, where they were melted down into pure grease. This was then poured into grease jars to keep for making soap.

Any lard from the year before which had become too strong and rancid for cooking purposes, was religiously saved to make the prettiest white soap. When these greases were measured out to the correct proportions with the homemade lye, and cooked by their own special recipes in the big iron kettle, the grandmothers were very proud of the resulting concoction. This fancy white grease made the best soap. Cooked just right and stirred constantly by the long wooden soap paddle, the product merited the praise it received. When done, the soap was ladled out into big, round-bottom crocks, or into flat wooden boxes, where it was allowed to harden a few days before being cut into various sizes. The chunks were used for laundry and dish washing, and they also made as fine a shampoo as you could wish for when used with the soft rain water from the old rain barrel.

The darker and slightly burned greases made soap just as useful. But this soap did not have the same pretty white look. It was yellow and dark-looking, and sometimes the grandmothers didn't cook it quite so long. They would pour it into earthenware jars and used it as a soft soap for laundry and for scrubbing the floors.

Another use for the big black kettle was on summer wash-days. The kettle on its stand would be filled with water from the cistern well, then a big wood fire built under it. As soon as the water was boiling hot, some was dipped out for the tubs; then a big cake of lye soap was shaved into soap-sliver curls to melt into billowy soapsuds; and into this the white linens and the

unfadable clothes were put on to boil. As the boiling water pushed the clothing up out of the water, someone would be standing near with the stick from the old broom, or the wooden soap paddle, to poke them back inside the boiling soapy water. This was called "boiling the clothes." When they were sufficiently boiled, they were dipped from the kettle with the broomstick or the paddle and quickly dumped into the tubs of water placed near by on the old washbench. This washbench was used at other times to hold the tin washpans and the old oaken water bucket with its tin dipper, though sometimes the dipper was made from a gourd. The bucket was kept out in the shade of a tree where the men coming to the house hot and sweaty from the fields could dip water into the washpan, then splash cold water onto their hot faces and necks by the handfuls before coming into the house for their meals.

The old iron kettle also found use in winter at butchering time. Butchering was only done on the coldest winter days. This was because meat needed cold days to cool it quickly, and without refrigeration this fresh meat would soon spoil before the scraps (as the backbones, ribs, liver and heart were called) could be used up. The sausage, too, when not fried down would soon become strong and untasty; so until the temperature dropped to twenty degrees or lower, hog killing was put off.

Just as soon as real Missouri winter weather started, the farmers got things lined up for the neighborhood's round of butchering. The colder the day, the better hog-killing day it was. On this day the kettle was carried down to the barn, filled with water, and placed over a roaring fire to heat gallon after gallon of boiling water. This was then poured into a big barrel. Then the freshly-killed hogs that had been fattening up on corn for several weeks were dipped into this barrel of boiling hot water by several men using a scaffold with rope and pulley in order to scald them. The men had earlier made big tables by placing clean planks on wooden carpenter's horses, and there the hogs were scraped clean. They were then hung up by their hind feet, where they were dressed and cut up for the family's winter supply of meat. Usually four or five big fat hogs would be killed

for each family's use, and they provided most of the lard and meat needed until fried-chicken time rolled around about the middle of June.

When the men had finished the scalding and cleaning of the hogs, the big kettle was carried back to the house and placed over another big fire out in the back yard. It was now ready for the women's part of this butchering day. As I said, these were planned neighborhood affairs, each family taking turns. The women prepared a big dinner at noon for the twenty-five or more people usually present. Only the younger children, those under school age, would be brought along; the older children were told to come after school to whatever farm was doing the hog killing. After the women finished fixing dinner, some of them were left to do the dishes. Others, wrapped warmly, went outside to cut the huge slabs of fat into little cubes, from one to three inches in size, and then dropped big pans full of these cubed fats into the kettle. The fat rendered from them would make snowy white lard. This had to be stirred constantly, and cooked just right, or else the finished product would be dark and have a strong taste. So there was definitely a knack to making lard, and some were considered more adept at this job than others. These selected ones stood near the kettle, continuously stirring with the long-handled wooden paddle, and no matter which side of the fire they moved to, it seemed the wind would whip the pungent wood smoke into their eyes. When the lard was cooked just right, it was dipped out of the kettle to be strained through clean white tea towels, or flour sacks tied over five- and ten-gallon tin cans and big earthenware jars in order to strain out any cracklings. The cracklings were the unmelted part of these fats. Then all the fat left in the crackling was squeezed out by hand presses. The hand press I remember at Mama Gran's house looked like two big wooden paddles hinged together; and by placing cracklings between these paddles and pressing the long handles together, the cracklings were squeezed nearly dry and free of grease. These left-over cracklings were good to eat hot from the kettle, and some would be saved to be put in a corn-bread batter before baking it to make crackling bread.

While some were finishing up the lard making, other women would be busy cutting into strips the meat that went into the sausage. The sausage grinder on its long board frame was placed on two straight chairs, with a tub between the chairs and under the sausage grinder to catch this ground-up meat. One of the men usually came up to the house to turn the grinder and to feed into it the strips of both lean and fat meat the women had already cut and made ready in big pans near by. As the handle on the sausage grinder was turned 'round and 'round, the ground-up sausage soon nearly filled the big tub. Then the seasoning began—salt from the old barrel in the smokehouse was dumped in by the cupful, freshly ground black-and-red peppers, and sage, all home-grown in the garden, were added to the meat and worked in well by women who had rolled up their sleeves and were up to their elbows in the sausage. They worked and kneaded this great mass of sausage until all the seasoning was well-mixed in.

Now it was time for the cooking and tasting to see if there was enough of this-and-that to suit the family to whom it belonged. Some families wanted their sausage more highly seasoned than others. The cooking and tasting continued until approval was reached, and everyone, including the children home from school by this time and half-starved, had all had generous servings of the hot sausage cakes. They were served on big hot biscuits freshly baked in black breadpans in the oven of the old wood range in the kitchen.

By this time all the meat had been cut up into hams, shoulders, side or middling meat, jowl, and the like, and had been carried to the smokehouse ready to be put down in salt. There, after taking sufficient salt, it would be hung from the rafters of the smokehouse to be smoked for a week or longer by green hickory-wood smoke. This wood was kept smoldering in a slow fire in an old un-vented stove, usually one discarded from the main kitchen whenever a new one was bought.

Butchering, though done on the coldest winter days when the snow often lay deep on the ground, was a happy time in spite of everything. No one seemed to mind the cold, because they all

dressed warmly. Long underwear, often homemade from outin flannel, was worn by the men under their other warm clothin and on these days the men usually had their pants legs shove down inside the tops of their high felt-lined boots buckled snugl around their legs. On their heads they wore warm caps with ea muffs, and around their necks wool mufflers. They stompe about and joked as they worked. The women dressed equall warm, and, tied around their waists over the various thicknesse of clothing and their heavy winter cloaks, were big checkec gingham waist aprons to protect their clothing during the larc and-sausage making. Frying down the sausage in order to ca it for future use, the making of hog-head sauce and pudding, a well as the pickling of the pigs' feet, would often be left fo another day.

By dusk the main butchering was over and it was time fo the neighbors to get home to their chores. The women gathere up their belongings, to which some of the fresh meat from th day's killing had been added, picked up their babies from pallet on the floor near the stove where they had been playing wit strings of empty spools, wrapped them snug and warm in bi bed-size blankets and home-pieced quilts, called the older chil dren, red nosed and cold, from play, and all climbed into thei big wagons for the trip home. Calling out their "Goodbye, com see us soon," they drove home in the gathering dusk to get th work done. This was often done by the light of a lantern, a darkness comes early on winter evenings.

The men then attended to the feeding and milking, broke th ice on the watering trough, and bedded down the animals i fresh straw inside the barn with its mangers piled high wit clover and alfalfa hay. The feed troughs held corn or oats, an the stall doors were closed so that the horses would not get int a fight and kick one another. This done, the farmer took dow the buckets of fresh, foamy milk from the pegs where they ha been hung out of the reach of any stray cat or dog, and went t the house for supper. The wife had been equally busy gettin supper, running out to the henhouse to gather up the eggs-

some of which had frozen and burst in the nest on this cold day. She fed the chickens and carried hot water to them from the teakettle, which had been kept humming and simmering on the back of the range. The older children changed into their everyday clothes, and filled the coal buckets. The big box behind the wood stove was piled high with sticks of wood from the woodpile. Next, they brought in several buckets full of water to refill the reservoir of the kitchen range, drew a fresh bucket of drinking water and placed it on the corner of the cook table. Finally, the coal-oil lamps were lighted, and all the family was ready for a hearty, big supper.

As soon as supper was over, the table cleared and the dishes washed, lessons were prepared for next day's school. The dining table was a favorite place of study, though some of the children preferred to lie belly-down on the floor while they read. All reading and studying was done as close as possible to the big stove, but even then cold chills would chase up and down the sides of those children farthest from the fire. No doubt these stoves played a big role in the close family circles credited to the era of the early 1900's.

At Mama Gran's house there were two stairways—one went up from the front hall and the other was enclosed and went up through a door in Mama Gran's sitting room. It was under these stairs that my little secret hiding place was located. It was great fun for brother and me to go up one stairway and come down the other. The back stairs were built in a winding manner, and part of the steps at the bend ran back to a narrow ledge.

Mama told us that when she was a little girl she saw a mouse one day in one of these little corners and screamed for someone to come quick. A little cousin of hers, who was visiting there at the time, said she wasn't afraid of the mouse. So she walked up to it and picked it up by its tail with her bare hand. The poor little mouse was frightened, too, no doubt, so it bit her with its sharp little teeth. While the cousin jumped and squealed for help, Mama stood laughing. The cousin went home in high out-

rage. I don't recall ever meeting a mouse on the stairs, but we would imagine we were being chased by all sorts of wild animals as we raced up one stairway and down the other.

One summer day Papa, Mama, brother and I were down in the old orchard looking for the delicious June apples that were ripe at the time, and also gathering strawberries from some wild strawberry vines that grew in the deep shade of some of the trees. Darting here and there, I ran into a hornets' nest hanging from the limb of an old pear tree. They came at me from all directions and, before Papa could fight them off and get me away, we both received several very painful stings.

It was about this time that brother, who was three years old, had his curls cut off for the first time. Papa, having been outtalked for as long as he could stand, took brother to town one day; when they returned, the pretty golden curls were gone, and brother had a real boy's haircut. Both Mama and Mama Gran cried, but brother was pleased as punch with his mannish haircut.

After this one year at Mama Gran's we moved back to our own farm, just across the pasture from Pa's and Ma's house, where now the family only consisted of Ma, Pa, Little Grandma, Big Grandma and two aunts. The uncle, one aunt and cousin Mary had all been married and had established homes of their own. But there were little new cousins who were brought a-visiting Ma's and Pa's house these days, and there was plenty of loving for all of us.

CHAPTER IV

My youngest aunt, who was nine years old the November day I was born, and had claimed me as her birthday present, had always allowed me 'most any liberty with her dolls; but now that I was five years old, she began really playing with me. We had hundreds of paper dolls cut from the fashion magazines of the day and from the Sears and Roebuck catalogues. These we divided into families—Mamas and Papas and big families of boys and girls. We gave these families names, and knew them so well that we could tell immediately if a Smith child was mixed with the Jones family, or vice versa. Their modes of transportation were trains made from empty shoe boxes divided by little strips of pasteboard to make the dolls sit up. Three or four boxes would be joined together by strings, and we pulled them along an imaginary track to towns far and near. Aunt Nell had all the patience in the world as she played at paper dolls with me.

One of our favorite rooms to play in was the boys' room, as it was still called, although both boys (my papa and uncle) had not used the room for several years. This room was reached by enclosed, narrow steps which went straight up from the kitchen. The boys' room was over the older part of the house, and there were no connecting doors between it and the rooms the girls called their room, which was reached by steps from the front part of the house. Adjoining the boys' room, and entered through a little door, was a slanting-roofed attic room with trunks full of old clothing which we could use for our dress-up clothes.

On a rainy day this little room under the roof was especially cozy. We could hear the rain pattering down on the low roof in

a sing-song, friendly sort of way, and we were filled with a wonderful feeling of contentment, as if we were in a private little world all our own. Old books and other treasure trove kept us occupied for many happy hours. No doubt, many household duties and chores were shirked by the aunt's excuse of playing with the little "C."

Our bedrooms in those days had no modern bathrooms adjoining, but every well-furnished bedroom had its accessories of matching washbowl, pitcher, waste jar and the bedroom pot, or chamber pot, as it was often called. All these were of heavy china usually decorated in an ornate hand-painted design of big red roses, yellow daisies, or maybe with only a gold band for the more conservative housewife. The washbowl and pitcher were kept on a washstand in one corner. The pitcher, filled with water for an early morning sponge bath, would often be coated with a layer of ice on winter mornings. This happened whenever the fire in the little wood-burning stove went out during the night, or was allowed to fade so that no heat could be coaxed from it until fresh kindling wood had been put on and the faint sparks blown to life again.

For the weekly bath in the big washday tubs, water was carried in from the cistern well on the side porch. It was heated in the big water reservoir on the kitchen range and in big tea kettles atop the stove. If it was summertime, the tubs could be partially filled and set out in the sun where the water was heated by the sun's rays; then the tubs were carried into the old summer kitchen where the baths could be taken. But in winter we took most of our baths in the warm kitchen near the range, where the water was heating. The tubs would be filled almost full with warm, sudsy water and placed on an old rag-carpet strip so as not to wet the big carpet on the floor. Linoleums were few in those days, but often the homemade rag carpets were painted with linseed-oil paint to make a fairly good substitute for linoleum in the kitchens. The soft rag-carpet strips served as a bath mat as we jumped out of these tubs of sudsy water after our bath for a quick rubdown with an old crash towel. We quickly put on our clean heavy underwear, which we slept in as well as

used for daytime wear; and over these we put on our long-sleeved flannelette nightgowns that reached past our ankles and tied flannelette night caps on our heads. Then we raced across the cold floors and up the drafty stairs to plunge head first into big, fluffy feather beds, so deep we were nearly lost from sight, often finding a hot iron to place our feet against near the foot of the bed. This iron, of course, was well-wrapped up in a big wool cloth, such as a piece of an old worn-out coverlet made by one of the great-grandmothers years before. Often by morning the old wool rag covering the iron had been pushed off, and the iron felt cold as ice to our warm feet.

The geese that provided the feathers for the downy feather-beds were raised on the farm, and every spring were plucked. By this I mean all the geese—the old ganders would be put up one night in the henhouse where they couldn't get out. Next morning two or more of the adult members of the family would go to the henhouse, prepared to pick the geese. They would have large cloth bags with them, and the women would have old rags tied over their heads to keep the down out of their long hair. The men wore their oldest work clothes made of cotton, as the down "stuck tight as ticks on a dog's back" to any woolen material it touched. Then, one by one, the geese were caught and plucked. By this I mean great handfuls of the down feathers growing thick on the goose's breast were pulled out and put in the sacks before the goose was turned loose to waddle away, squawking and flapping its big, stout wings in indignation. This process sounds rather cruel, but in one way it was a kindness to rid them of some of those heat-producing feathers before our hot Missouri summer started.

Unless the flock was large, more than one picking would be needed before enough feathers would be obtained for one of these featherbeds. The feathers were washed and sunned in their flour-sack containers before being put into feather ticks made to the correct measurements. The feather ticks (mattresses, you would call them) were then placed on top of straw ticks, bags filled with straw gathered from the stack out in the wheat stubble field. These straw ticks were placed directly on the slats of the

big wooden bedstead. No springs or store-bought mattresses were found in the average farm home of those days.

Family prayers were observed both morning and evening at Pa's house. These are among my earliest and sweetest memories. First, a chapter would be read from the much-used Bible, usually by Pa, but sometimes he called on one of the other members of the family to read this scripture. At its conclusion each one of us knelt in front of our chair with our head bowed while Pa either made this prayer of thanks for all the many blessings bestowed upon us or called upon Ma, Little Grandma or Big Grandma for a prayer.

Many years later I chanced to hear someone say of Pa's prayers that, "when he prayed you really knew he was talking to God." There was no feeling of his prayers being mere rituals to be said and forgotten.

I said all knelt; I should have said all except Big Grandma who was very lame and walked only with the aid of crutches. She sat in her chair. Little Grandma and Big Grandma had walnut rocking chairs with cane seats and backs woven into them. These chairs were just alike, even down to the feather pillows covered in blue-and-white check gingham and with ruffles around them. These two great-grandmothers shared a downstairs bedroom. Little Grandma's bed, bureau and trunk were on the left side of the room, Big Grandma's bed, bureau and trunk were on the right-hand side.

Little Grandma kept her Sunday bonnets in the tray of her quaint little trunk. This little old trunk had a graciously curved lid, and under this lid the tray itself was divided into three compartments. The two outside ones had little flat lids to close them securely, and they were lifted by means of little black-leather straps. It was in these two compartments that her little jet-beaded Sunday bonnets nestled among sprigs of lavender. The middle uncovered compartment held white-bone knitting needles, a ball of cream-white wool yarn for the stockings she knit for herself regularly, and little handkerchiefs with a fine hand-knit lace edge around them. Some of these handkerchiefs were

yellowed from age, kept as keepsakes, no doubt, to bring back many memories to this little grandmother. The tray of the trunk could be lifted out by finger-holds, revealing neatly-stacked white chemises and other intimate wearing apparel. I loved to stand near by to watch curiously whenever Little Grandma opened her trunk. The inside of the trunk was lined all over with a brown-and-yellow wallpaper in a quaint design.

I think I've already told you why I called my great-grandmothers "Little Grandma" and "Big Grandma." Little Grandma was very petite and dainty; therefore, she was *Little* Grandma. Pa's mother was an Irish woman, almost masculine in appearance, with whiskers on her upper lip and chin. She wasn't very fat, just rawboned and large looking, though I doubt whether she was more than five feet five inches tall or weighed more than one hundred and fifty pounds or so. Anyway, she looked big to me so she was called *Big* Grandma. Knowing feminine pride better now, I trust and pray she didn't feel too badly when she heard herself called "Big Grandma."

CHAPTER V

My first year of schooling was at a little one-room country school named "Milan." This little schoolhouse was up a lane about a quarter mile from the more traveled road. The lane was narrow and overgrown with brush. The little schoolhouse itself had once been painted white, but was badly in need of a fresh coat. There were dark woods and brush to the south and east right up to the schoolyard. The schoolhouse faced west, and only on the north and south walls were there any windows. We were cautioned by our teacher not to go beyond the schoolhouse yard, which itself was fairly small in spite of the fact that the land on three sides was unused. There were little outhouses in the corner of the yard, and a well near the front door of the schoolhouse. On top of this little schoolhouse was a belfry where the old iron school bell hung; and when the rope hanging from the bell near the front door was vigorously pulled by one of the husky farm lads, this bell could be heard for several miles on a clear day.

All nine grades were taught by one teacher in this one-room school, and the children ranged in age from five to seventeen or eighteen. The school terms were short so that the boys could be out early in spring to help put in the crops on the farms.

This little school was more than a mile from our farm home, but Aunt Nell and I sometimes walked to and from school. On our way home on warm days, we often pulled off our shoes and long stockings to wade in the ankle-deep, soft, warm dust. On rainy days the dust turned quickly to equally deep mud, so then we walked as near the road fence as we could.

In my first-grade class in this little school, there were two

other little girls and one little boy. Because we were only first graders, the older children sometimes refused to allow us to play games with them, so we four children went down to one side of the schoolyard near an old split-rail fence and made ourselves a playhouse. This rail fence was made from handmade split rails in a zigzag shape, like spread-out, overlapping X's. We outlined the rooms in our playhouse with the old rails. Our prized possession was a wooden box some of the older children had nailed to the hickory nut tree. This box was our kitchen safe, and in it we kept bits of broken china and odd jar-tops to serve as dishes and cooking pans for our mud pies.

At recess and noontime play periods, we sometimes took big oak leaves, joined them with small sticks, decorated them with elderberry blossoms or Queen Anne's lace, and were proud of the fancy hat creations we thus made. Even Joe Elmer, the boy in our class, sometimes wore these fancy hats.

Of course, all the children took lunch to school with them in tin buckets, a paper bag or an old shoebox, but a few had regular store-bought cardboard lunch boxes.

We had homemade book satchels, often made from oilcloth, in which we carried our books, slate, pencils and tablet. The book satchels usually had a shallow outside pocket where extra gloves, neck scarf or handkerchief could be carried. Some of the fancier ones had little places of just the right size to hold our pencils. The boys preferred more masculine-looking book satchels made from old blue-denim overalls which they had either outgrown or worn out at the knees and seats. As they grew up and felt too old for a book satchel, they would merely strap their books together with an old leather strap which had once been part of some worn-out lines from the horses' harness, or maybe with a strap from an old valise.

We had double seats, and desks with a little shelf in them for our books. At the back of our desks were little inkwells with small iron covers that flipped open and shut on their tiny hinges. These inkwells were for the ink in which we dipped our pens. The pen was composed of a penpoint and a staff, and we could have several penpoints to insert into the staff at our pleasure.

These penpoints were usually a penny each, and a good cork-tipped staff cost not more than a dime. No one in our school had a fountain pen. All children took pride in their penmanship, following the examples in their copy books as neatly as possible. There were many exercises we were supposed to do with the movement of the wrist rather than fingers.

When one class was reciting, the students were called to the front of the room. They sat on benches in front of the teacher's desk, which was on a raised platform. The blackboards were on the wall in back of the teacher's desk. Teacher faced the room and had to keep the eight grades not reciting in order as well as listen to the class in session.

Every child had a slate and a slate pencil, in order to avoid using our paper tablets except for hand-in work. It was nothing unusual to see a child spit on his slate and double up his fist to erase the writing or figures on the slate. I hope I was never guilty of that, and I do remember keeping a little rag for that purpose in my book-satchel pocket.

We studied the three "R's," and Miss Gussie, the teacher, took an interest in every child in a very personal way. She boarded at a farm home near the school, and we children were all a little envious of the children in that home. Sometimes on weekends she went home with some one or other of us. Then we were slightly awed in her presence, but so very proud to be thus favored.

On the Monday after one of these weekends our lunch would be put up with Miss Gussie's, and then it contained many extra goodies our mamas had prepared, carefuly wrapped in a large white-linen napkin to be used for a tablecloth. The smell of pickles, deviled eggs, cake, chicken and fried sausage all blending together was noted when the lunchbucket or box was opened. Wrapped separately would be a half-dozen or so toothpicks, put down in a corner of the lunchbox. Toothpicks were considered quite proper, and were used publicly. Even the tables were set with the toothpick holder just as much in evidence as the salt and pepper or the cruet set.

Most people, by the way, left their tables partially set, and

covered over with a table cover between meals. This table cover was quite often one of the older muslin sheets, bleached snowy white from many washings and worn thin. The tall, covered preserve stands poked up here and there and kept the cover raised over some of the left-over food on the table. As soon as we came in from school, we raised a corner of the table cover and poked our heads under it, looking for any left-overs that might please our hungry stomachs. It displeased Mama very much when we carelessly allowed the clean table cover to touch some greasy food, such as the soft butter, or to settle over the molasses pitcher. But with three or four hungry children poking their heads under the cover all at once, to grab this and that, these accidents happened quite often, I'm afraid.

One day in the summer following my first year at school, brother and I decided in the middle of the afternoon that our little kittens were hungry. We got two tin cups and headed for the cow pasture to get milk for them. Brother spotted one of the milk cows, walked up to her, and began trying to milk her. There were lots of flies bothering the cow, and she was switching her tail and stomping her hind feet. On one stomp down she landed square on brother's big toe—and he was barefoot, at that. He screamed for me to push the old cow off his foot. I ran up behind her and shoved as hard as I could, but she just wouldn't budge. Finally, I got a stick and began hitting her rump, and she slowly moved forward taking brother's entire toenail off as she did so.

On another occasion during this same summer, brother and I went across the pasture to the road to watch for the rural mail carrier. While we waited we saw some cows in a neighbor's pasture across the road, and began throwing sticks and clods of dirt at them. One came charging up to the fence, pawing and snorting. We thought that was funny, and still funnier that this cow didn't have any teats to milk, so we threw even more clods of dirt. The cow became so excited that we got scared and decided we had better go to the house before the mail carrier came along.

When we got home we both very excitedly began telling Mama, "We saw the funniest cow over in Mr. Stogell's pasture,

and it didn't have any teats to be milked by! When we threw the clods at it it put its big head down near the ground and just snorted and pawed."

Mama explained to us that the cow we had seen was a papa cow instead of one of the mama cows we were used to seeing on the farm, and that we had done a very naughty and dangerous thing in teasing the animal. (The name "bull" would never have been said by Mama.) She told us that the animal could have broken down the fence and torn us to pieces with his sharp horns if we had continued to tease him.

Would you like to hear how little girls and boys dressed 'way back in the early 1900's when I was a little girl?

My pinafores were made much as are those worn today, except that we called them aprons and usually wore them over our regular dresses in the winter. In summer we wore them over a guimpe, or a blouse, as it would be called today. To wear our aprons without this guimpe would have made us feel positively naked. The sun dresses worn today would have seemed vulgar in those early 1900's when most of the human body was well-concealed under many layers of clothing. For, besides our apron and guimpe, we wore straight-legged drawers that buttoned onto an underwaist, which also held the supporters pinned to them in order to hold up our long stockings. Over these garments we usualy had on two white-muslin petticoats betrimmed with rows of tucks and wide all-over-embroidered ruffles, and the same kinds of ruffles and tucking edged the legs of our drawers. The ruffles on our drawers reached to our knees, while the petticoats and dresses were two or three inches below them. All these ruffles were kept stiffly starched; in fact, our Sunday petticoats were starched until they could easily stand up alone.

In wintertime we added long underwear, called union suits, to our garb, and elastic-bottomed knee-length bloomers of black sateen, instead of drawers. These union suits, of course, went on first under all the other clothing, and had high necks, long sleeves and legs. Mama put little muslin straps on the bottoms of the legs of my underwear in order to prevent the legs of the union

suit from wadding up so badly whenever I put on my long stockings over them. Black stockings were for everyday wear, and white ones for Sunday. Even with the little straps to hold down our union-suit legs, they often would show through our stockings in big lumps and creases. The seams up the back of the legs of the union suit left another unsightly ridge. Then, too, as we grew in height, we would outgrow the legs of our underwear. Then we would have to pull up the little straps under our feet; and this made us feel so uncomfortable that we would sometimes have to slip them from under our feet, and so they added to our unsightly appearance. How I detested my heavy winter underwear!

For good measure, Mama usually made me wear an underskirt of white-wool flannel under my muslin petticoats. This flannel underskirt hung straight from my shoulders, and was to help protect my chest from colds, as I had had pneumonia at one time. Was it any wonder, wearing all these garments, I often had colds or even pneumonia?

Our shoes were high-top, buttoned-up-the-side ones. Black ones were usually for everyday and school wear during the wintertime. I remember a very snazzy pair I owned and kept for Sunday wear. They had shining black patent-leather lowers with white canvas tops, and from the top of each shoe there was a little black-silk tassel fastened at the center front. Black buttons with little metal centers went up the white tops along the outer side. In summer our high shoes were more often made of white canvas; and we also had slippers of black patent leather or white buck. These were strap shoes, with one, two, or even three straps buttoning over our insteps.

In winter when we went outside to play, and if the day was cold and snowy, we put on leggings made of heavy black jersey and fleece-lined. These had little elastic straps to slip under the soles of our shoes. The leggings buttoned all the way up the side and came just above our knees. Over these we put on black overshoes that buckled with three or four buckles around our ankles. These overshoes had rubber soles and lowers and black-cloth uppers. Then we put on our heavy winter cloaks, pulled a knit

stocking cap over our heads, wrapping the tail of it snugly around our necks, pulled on a pair of heavy wool mittens, and were ready for play—that is, if we were able to navigate under all this load of clothing.

Little boys dressed equally warm with their heavy union suits and plain overdrawers. They also had to wear a waist for their supporters because they, too, wore long stockings, but of a coarser and heavier grade than the girls. They wore high-button shoes, knee-length trousers, an overcoat, a cap with earmuffs and warm gloves. Boys sometimes wore overalls made with a bib top, but their Sunday suits had short trousers (buckling just below their knees and sort of blousing over), until they got their first long trousers, usually in their early 'teens.

I had a distant cousin, a boy of sixteen, who died when I was still quite young; and I remember thinking his death was so sad because he had just gotten his first long pants and wore them for the first time as he lay a corpse. Really, the boys considered their first long-pants suit as a real milestone in their lives.

I don't know if our Missouri winters were actually colder and had more snows when I was a child, or whether the snows just seemed heavier and deeper, but, anyway, thinking back, it seems that there was ofttimes snow piled so deep we made tunnels and snowmen by the score. I even remember one snow that drifted in so deeply, followed by a light freezing rain crusting these drifts so hard, that we could walk on them right over the tops of fences. What fun it was to break through one of these big snow-drifts! We would flounder out all snowy from head to foot, feeling then, at least, that the heavy clothing we wore was a blessing.

For Sunday dress-up, I had a white angora-fur muff with a small coin purse in its top, and a matching fur neckpiece. I really strutted around whenever I wore them, and now, once again, the same furs are in style.

We were happy for spring to come, in spite of the fact that we loved to play in the snow, for then we could begin to shed our long underwear. "Begin" is just what I mean, for Mama never would allow us suddenly to come out of them. First, we

changed into some old, slightly outgrown ones, thin and partially worn-out from much wearing and many launderings. In a few days we could lop the sleeves off to elbow length and the legs up to our knees. If we showed no signs of catching cold, then, after a few more days we were allowed to peel them off completely. Though we wore just as many clothes, with our union suits discarded we felt free as a breeze. To be the first girl in school to get these union suits off was enough to turn the other girls green with envy. If some girl came to school early in the spring with a short-sleeve dress on, we went about pinching up hunks of her sleeves to feel if she really had her union suit off or had merely folded it up above the elbows. As soon as we had our union suits off, we went around saying to the other girls, "Feel my arm, I've got 'em off!" Sometimes we talked our mamas into allowing us to wear our short-sleeve dreeses with the underwear only turned up. Then we were afraid the underwear sleeves would come unfolded and show below the sleeves of our spring dresses. Of course, I'll admit, we sometimes pushed our underwear legs up above our knees at school; then, before going home, we pulled them back down into our stockings, without our mamas knowing we were exposing ourselves. These deceptions came later, when we were in the higher grades.

In summertime little girls were never supposed to get tanned or freckled by the sun. Oh! goodness, no—for it was considered a sign of beauty to have our arms and faces as white as possible, with the faintest blush of pink upon our cheeks. When we went outside to play on a summer or spring day, we wore our bonnets tied under our chins to shade our faces and necks. On our hands and arms we wore long homemade gloves. These gloves were made of oilcloth, or some cotton material, and had the ends of the fingers out. These gloves were made to reach to our elbows, and were often pinned to our dress sleeves with safety pins. In case our gloves were misplaced, old stocking legs with the feet cut off and a hole cut in them to run our thumb through made satisfactory substitutes to keep the sun off our arms. How very different from the way sun-tanning is encouraged today!

On Sundays going to Sunday school and church, we wore our

white eyelet dresses made with elbow-length sleeves and square-cut low necks to show off our pretty white skin. For fear the sun should tan us on the way to and from church, we not only wore fancy wide-brimmed flower-trimmed hats but we also carried little cotton umbrellas. One of my favorite umbrellas was of pink cotton with ruffles, each edged in white lace.

On these hot summer Sundays our feet and legs would nearly burn up, for on the weekdays we had been running around barefoot. The only place our mamas didn't object to a little sun tan was on our feet and legs, because they knew, come Sunday, this part of our body would be well-covered up with our long stockings and shoes. We didn't know anything about ankle-sox those days, and to have gone to Sunday school and church bare-legged was never even dreamed of.

Most all of our clothing, except the union suits, stockings and outer clothing, such as cloaks and hats, were made by Mama. She spent much time fixing my sun bonnets and dresses, which often were matched. My petticoats and other underclothing were among the prettiest of any of my little girl friends. They had row after row of tucks and yards of set-in insertion or beading. The beading would have blue or pink ribbon through it. Most of my dresses were in some shade of blue to match my blue eyes, because blue was considered *my* color.

CHAPTER VI

Our kittens and the old mama cat, "Spotty," would follow Papa to the barn at milking time. Of course, brother and I were usually there, too. We would get Papa to fill our tin cups full of warm, foamy milk to feed the kittens. The mama cat would sit up on her haunches, her front paws up in the air, and catch the milk in her mouth as Papa turned the stream of milk her way straight from the cow.

Milking was done on the farm both morning and night. There would be big buckets full of milk to be taken to the house and strained through a mesh strainer before being poured into stone jars and crocks. Thick layers of cream would come to the top of the milk. This was skimmed off, to be saved for churning.

As soon as enough cream was ready, the churn would be filled. The churn, I recall, was a tall stone jar with a wooden lid fitted into its top. In the middle of this lid was a round hole for the dasher-handle. When this handle was raised and lowered over and over against the dasher, a round disc with lots of holes in it, churned the cream into rich yellow butter. We children were sometimes put to churning, an endless job, it seemed, when there was playing we wished to do. As soon as the cream turned to butter, the butter paddle was used to lift it from the milk. The milk remaining after the butterfat was removed was called buttermilk.

The butter and milk were kept cool and sweet in the outside caves or cellars, or sometimes in a deep, cool well. At Pa's and Ma's house they sometimes carried buckets filled with milk or butter up to the old spring well, tied an end of rope to the bail,

and then lowered the bucket just far enough to touch the cold water.

To get to this well we took the garden path, worn hard as rock from the many trips over it year after year. Near this well were the remains of the old log house Big Grandma had lived in as a young wife and mother, and where she had reared her family of five children. This house was built in the 1840's, a time when there were few white settlers in central Missouri. The land was then covered with timber which had to be cleared before crops and gardens could be raised. The trees were cut down and hewn into logs and slabs, and their house had been built in the clearing.

The walls were almost windowless, as glass panes were very scarce and extremely expensive. The only way glass could be brought to the wilderness of Missouri in those early days was by covered-wagon trains or by stagecoach. The windows were small, maybe eighteen inches square, and in most cases could be used for light and air only in the summertime. The usual coverings for the windows were tanned animal skins or wooden squares that could be slid back and forth.

Big Grandma told me that there had been two big rooms downstairs with a fireplace in each. These fireplaces furnished all the heat they had in winter; and almost all their food was cooked, both winter and summer, over these open fireplaces. She hung big iron pots on hooks over the burning logs, and in these most of the food was cooked. Potatoes were roasted in the hot ashes, then pulled out with tongs. Sometimes food was cooked over an outdoor fire, and crude ovens were occasionally built in a clay bank; but most of the time the fireplaces inside the house were used.

Over these two rooms was a loft where the boys slept. There was no heat in this loft except for the little that went up through the opening in the ceiling of the big room. Cracks between the logs allowed the cold wind and snow to come through, and Pa said that when he was a little boy he often awoke in the morning to find drifts of snow on his bedcovers.

Big Grandma's family originally came from Virginia, but

they had lived in Illinois for awhile before finally moving to Missouri to homestead. Just before her mother had left her home to come to the wilds of the West in a covered wagon, following trails and fording creeks and rivers, she was given a going-away present of a pair of thick white stockings. These stockings were made from wool, home-carded and spun, then hand-knit by two of her first cousins. These cousins, by the way, were sisters of the ninth president of the United States, President William Henry Harrison. Big Grandma's mother prized these stockings so much that she kept them with her always, and requested that she be buried in them at her death.

I often coaxed Little Grandma into telling me things that had happened when she was a little girl. I want to tell you a few of these stories so that, years from now, you may tell them in turn to other little girls and boys.

Little Grandma was born in Howard County, Missouri, in 1825, when this country was really new and wild. There were all kinds of wild animals, buffaloes, deer and wolves in the woods. Wild fowl, such as turkeys, geese, ducks and quail, were very plentiful and provided a great portion of the food for these early settlers. Unlike the present time, fowl and other game could be killed at any time of the year. The hogs ran wild in those days, roaming through the forests foraging for acorns, vegetation and roots. Instead of the short, stocky build of the hogs of today, those in the early 1800's had longer legs and their bodies were rangy. They merited the name "razorbacks" given them. Among the many wild animals native to this sparsely-settled country that was central Missouri in the early and middle 1800's, were wolves; and these settlers really knew the double meaning of the saying, "The wolf was on the doorstep."

Little Grandma's mother had come to Missouri from Kentucky as a young bride. She rode horseback the entire distance with her husband, who had come out to Missouri first in 1821 to build a log house and clear the land he had homesteaded from the government before returning to Kentucky for his bride.

Many Indians roamed the hills, and oxen were used for till-

ing of the fields. Little Grandma could remember how the Indians, friendly but curious, would come up to their house in the woods and peep into the windows, or walk into the kitchen and squat down to watch her mother prepare a meal over the fire in the fireplace. Her mother would offer them food, which they took. Then they would quietly slip away into the woods. Sometimes unfriendly Indians appeared, too, but no real harm ever befell this family at the Indians' hands, though some of their neighbors did not fare so well. Of course, a neighbor didn't mean then what it does now. Anyone within ten miles might be called a neighbor, even if they never saw one another for months.

In those days Negro people were slaves, bought and sold and owned by their masters. They were brought down the Missouri River to small settlements and then auctioned off to the highest bidder. This practice is something we cannot understand now at all, but it was common in those days. Little Grandma's folks had several families of these slaves who lived in little log houses along one side of the big yard where the main house stood.

One night, when Little Grandma was about eight years old, she was awakened by her mother and told to dress quickly. The world seemed to be coming to an end. Outside it was light as day, the cows had come up to be milked, the chickens had left their roosts, the colored folk were all dressed and standing outside praying and shouting that "The good Lord is coming—the world is on fire!" Many of the men were on top of wagons, shouting and praying, while the women hugged the frightened, crying children in their arms. Flashes of light crossed and recrossed the sky with an eerie, unearthly glow. After several hours it gradually went away, but at the time it looked as though all the stars were tumbling from the sky. Little Grandma always referred to "the time the stars fell"; but much later, in a history book on Howard County, I saw it referred to as the "Meteor Shower of 1833."

Little Grandma also told this story of her own husband's family. Her husband was one of a family of nineteen children, thirteen boys and six girls. One day his father took all thirteen of his boys to Glasgow to watch a barge come down the Missouri

River. While the boys were on the bank watching for the boat, the father walked up to the store and asked the merchant for thirteen straw hats.

"What do you want with so many straw hats?" the merchant asked.

"For my thirteen sons," replied the father. "Well, if you have thirteen sons and bring them in here to prove it, I'll just give them the hats free," said the merchant.

So down to the river went the father and marched them all in for the thirteen free hats.

At roasting-ear time, it was said, anyone approaching the house where this family lived, especially at noon, had to watch out, for corncobs would be flying through the open doors thick and fast. This big family of children all liked fresh roasting ears, and their mother would cook great kettles of it over an outside fire. The houses in those days had no screen doors and the boys simply pitched the cobs out the door.

Little Grandma told me many stories about the latter period of the Civil War between the North and the South over the slavery question—when brother often fought against brother, cousins against cousins. These Civil War stories Mama Gran told me are still vivid in my memory today.

She was a very small girl during the war; in fact, she was born the year the Civil War started. But she remembered well when a regiment of Northern enemy soldiers, called "bushwhackers," came riding up to her mother's and father's home. They brought their horses right into the pretty front yard, instead of leaving them out in the barn. The commanding officer sent men to the barn for hay and corn to feed the horses, and then just piled this feed all over the pretty grass. Their guns were racked around the big shade trees, with some men standing guard near by.

Mama Gran's mother was told to prepare dinner for all the men. She cooked everything she had on hand—all the flour and meal was made into bread, hams and shoulders were cut into slices and fried, the home-cured bacon (or "middling meat," as

it was called in those days) was also cooked, until every man had his fill of food and the larder was bare. Mama Gran, who was four years of age at the time, remembers that the officer in charge called her over. He picked her up, held her on his lap, and told her he had a little girl about her size at home. He even let her hold his fob watch.

While this was going on, her mother was scared half out of her wits for fear Mama Gran would tell them her daddy was hiding out in the woods. They had already questioned her mother; and the older children had been sworn to secrecy before the bushwhackers came not to tell the soldiers their father had been home that day. Mama Gran was such a little girl that her mother was afraid she would not realize the importance of this secrecy. Earlier in the day the family had been warned by one of the neighbor's slaves to be on the watchout as bushwhackers were in the neighborhood burning houses and barns, taking horses and even killing some people.

Mama Gran's father wasn't in very good health and, therefore, had not gone away to war. Instead he went every few months to the county seat, Huntsville, where he paid a certain amount of money toward the cost of the war. Any time he heard about enemy soldiers coming near, he hid out. This hideout had been fixed for him by his slaves, and was merely a big hole in the ground, not unlike a grave—only slightly wider. Over its top was a wooden cover on which thick layers of leaves had been tacked so that the wind could not easily blow them away and reveal the hide-out to a chance passer-by. Sometimes he had to remain hidden in the darkness for two or three days at a time.

At these times some of his kind, loving slaves carried food and water to him; and if snow happened to be on the ground, they were careful to make as few extra steps as possible near the hideout. Then, after handing him his supplies, they would continue through the woods for a distance before returning to the house.

Some masters were very mean to their slaves, but many others were kind and good, never beating and whipping them or breaking up families by selling a member. Such a kind master

was Mama Gran's father. After the war was over, and the slaves declared free, most of them asked to be allowed to remain on his farm; and their children, years later, continued to visit Mama Gran in her home even after the older people were dead and Mama Gran had grown up, married and had even become a grandmother. I remember well the visits of one or two of these to Mama Gran when I was a little girl. They still seemed 'most like part of the family.

To get back to the story, the soldiers did not learn the secret of Mama Gran's father's hideout, and went away peaceably. They did no harm to any member of the household, but they ruined the pretty yard by stabling their horses on it. Mama Gran's mother said afterwards that, had she known all the meanness being done in the neighborhood at the time she was preparing the food, she could not have cooked for them as she had. They had burned the houses and barns on three farms that morning, including that of her own parents; and at the last one, belonging to a Mr. Slagle, they had ordered this old man, his wife and two daughters out of their house before setting fire to it. They had warned Mr. Slagle's family not to go back into the house to try to save anything. But after Mr. Slagle thought the soldiers had all gone, he started toward the house anyway and was shot down by some of the bushwhackers hidden in the nearby woods. Mama Gran's parents' home was the only one left unharmed in the entire neighborhood, but at Mama Gran's grandparents' home, not only had their house and barn been burned, but the soldiers had forced her grandfather to sit on the old woodpile and watch them burn. Every few minutes the soldiers would fire their muskets over his head.

While I'm thinking about the things Mama Gran told me, perhaps you would like to hear a story about her own mother coming to Missouri from North Carolina as a little girl. There were several families making the long journey together in covered wagons, bringing all their household goods, oxen, horses, cows, chickens and even fruit trees and choice rosebushes to their newly homesteaded land. In this caravan were two little girls from other families, of the same age as Mama Gran's

mother. Sometimes these little girls rode in the wagon with one family, sometimes with another. Camp was always made at night, but only a brief stop was made at noon.

At one of these overnight camp sites, one morning, these three little girls wandered off to a little stream where there were lots of pretty shells and rocks. They became so interested in playing they did not see or hear the wagons leave. Each mother supposed her own little girl was in another wagon, so it was only at the noon stop that the little girls were missed. Then the entire camp was really worried, because there were many wild animals and some unfriendly Indians known to be in this vicinity. Horses were quickly saddled and the three fathers made all haste back to the camping spot. The little girls were found there safe, but quite frightened. Had they wandered away from this camping place to try to follow the wagon, this story might not have had the happy ending it did.

CHAPTER VII

My! I've left my own childhood and have been rambling back and forth over a hundred years of tales and folklore. So, dear, let me return.

About 1910, after my first year of school in the country, we moved to the town of Prairie Hill. Do I dare tell you of the very naughty thing I did on this moving day?

All day brother had been teasing me by pulling my long curls, untying my apron strings, and pretending he was going to break my dolls. The screen doors had been left open for a long time that day, as furniture was being carried out, and the house was full of flies. One fly fell into a bowl of honey. Mama was busy, so she just set the bowl on a table in order to empty it later. I thought of a way to get even with brother, so I said, "Come here, I have something good for you."

He was suspicious of this turn of events, but said, "What is it?"

I said, "Open your mouth and close your eyes."

He cautiously stuck out his tongue, tasted the honey, and swallowed it down at the moment I told him the fly was in it.

The year we moved to town our second little sister was born, so now we were a family of four children. This little sister was a dear, and I loved to hold her or take her for a ride in her leather-covered buggy.

The little town we lived in would seem, to a little city girl like you, like wide-open country, but brother and I thought it quite a town. There were probably fewer than one hundred people. The business section was made up of a drugstore (which

also served as the post office), and a restaurant, a barber shop, a blacksmith shop, an undertaking parlor and a general store. The latter two businesses Papa and my uncle bought in partnership. This general store sold groceries, shoes, yard goods, notions, hardware and china, besides buying the farmers' produce, such as cream, butter and eggs.

There were also three churches and a three-room schoolhouse in town. One room was for the first eight grades, another room was for the four years of high school, and the last was used for the agriculture class and for the junior and senior Latin classes. The building was built in a "T" shape, with the high-school classroom at the back end of the T. There was also a long central hall with rows of hooks along each side where the wraps and coats were hung, boys' along one side, girls' along the other.

These schoolrooms were heated by big, potbellied stoves of cast iron. The stoves were usually fired by some of the older boys, with the teacher's help. On cold winter days the boys would throw in so much coal that the stoves would become red hot. The unfortunate children close to these stoves would nearly roast. All parents dressed their children so warmly that they would have been more comfortable sitting in a snowdrift.

On Friday afternoons we were usually allowed to cut each class five or ten minutes short for either a spelling bee or an arithmetic match. All ages took part, though, of course, the younger children were soon sent to their seats. The object of these matches was to see who were the best spellers or mathematicians in the room.

Two pupils were chosen by the teacher as leaders of the two sides. The one guessing a lucky number was allowed first choice of pupils for his team, taking turns until all had been lined up on opposite sides of the room. Beginning at the ends of the lines and working toward the head, words or problems were then given out. As soon as a child missed a word or problem, he took his seat. Sometimes one side, with four or five still standing, would spell down all the children on the opposite side. Then everyone in the group felt very proud and considered themselves personally as winners. It was a great honor to be either the

leader chosen by the teacher or one of the very first chosen by the leaders.

In the arithmetic match the same procedure was followed, except that two children would be sent to the blackboard at the same time. They could choose addition, subtraction, division or multiplication problems. The one finishing the problem first was declared the winner, and stayed at the board. Then another opponent was sent up to challenge him. The new opponent always had the choice of the kind of problem to be worked. My favorite was subtraction—at least I could win more often with this.

When we did addition, the teacher would give out long rows of figures. The older and more advanced in school you were, the longer became the lines of figures to be added. Most of us used the "pecking system." How we made the chalk talk as we pecked out dots on the blackboard and hurried to out-peck our opponent! We must have sounded like very hungry and greedy old hens pecking up corn from a tin floor.

We children sometimes had to wear asafetida in little bags around our necks to ward off colds and other illnesses. It was a very silly superstition; probably the only good accomplished was keeping everyone at arm's length from the wearers. Mama wasn't very sold on the idea, so I only remember wearing one of these little asafetida bags for one period of time—maybe a couple of weeks. However, many children wore them all winter long.

We learned the hard way at school why we should wear our own caps. There was quite a group of little girls within the age range of eight to twelve, and it was our habit to exchange stocking caps at recess time. That "I'll-wear-your-cap-and-you-wear-mine" routine got us in trouble.

In our school was a cute little girl whose parents were itinerant coal miners and kept neither themselves nor their home very clean. We first knew something was wrong when the teacher announced that every one of us was to go home and have our mothers examine our heads. The mother of one little girl had found lice in her hair that morning, and had immediately notified the teacher. Oh, yes, I was found to be infected;

but as luck had it, no other member of our big family had gotten any of my supply. Mama Gran was visiting with us at the time, and between her and Mama matters were soon under control. All I had left was the memory and a very firm determination that never again would I wear anyone's cap or let them wear mine.

Of course, bathrooms were then unheard of—we had little outhouses, called "privies." The boys' privy was in a back corner of the schoolyard; and the girls' was in an opposite corner where the horses were stabled, as many children came from the country and rode horseback to school. School buses hadn't even been thought about in these days. To one side of the schoolhouse was a well with a pump handle. Two or three tin cups, slightly rusted, were tied by twine strings to the pump. At recess we would all make a dash for the well for a drink of water, yelling, "Divees on being first!" as we scrambled for a rusty drinking cup. Someone, of course, had to keep pumping the water, and we more or less took turns at the pump handle. Whoever was drinking had to keep a watchful eye over the cup's brim, or else some jokester might hit the bottom of your cup, splashing water over you and maybe strangling you in the bargain. Wasps would be thick around the well in the fall of the year, drinking from the puddles always there from the emptied cups, and sometimes they would sting some child with a wicked stinger.

After our drink and a hurried visit to the little house in the corner of the yard, we were ready for fifteen minutes of hard play. Sometimes it would be "Andy-Over," played over the back room of the schoolhouse. For this we quickly chose sides—half on one side of the building, half on the opposite side. Our homemade twine ball, its core made from a piece of rubber cut from the heel of an old worn-out overshoe, would be pitched as high as possible over the building. More often it rolled gently down the roof on the opposite side, and, when caught without first touching the ground, the team that caught it was ready to change sides with the other. If any child from one side could be tagged with the ball, he or she had to become a member of the other side. We never knew whether to watch for the ball to come over

the schoolhouse roof or the enemy to come around the corner of the schoolhouse. As we ran around the building into one another, the upshot was often some bumped heads.

Another favorite game was "Blackman." For this one child was "it" and was to catch someone as we all ran between two bases. Usually the two bases were a wall of the schoolhouse and the side-yard fence. As soon as a child was caught off base, he or she became "it," and the game continued. "Fox-and-Geese" was fun when there was snow on the ground in which to trample out the big circle. "Drop-the-Handkerchief" was slightly less strenuous, and was often played on warm days.

Teachers didn't seem to mind giving an occasional spanking or some other punishment in those days.

One year brother and I shared the same seat at school. Since it was his first year of school, I thought it my duty, no doubt, to look after him. I had just had my birthday, and on this particular day wore a new locket and chain Mama Gran had given me as a birthday present. I decided to see how it would look on brother, and soon was intent on getting it fastened around his neck. While I giggled I even forgot I was in school, until Miss Sabille walked up beside me and whacked me over the head with a stick from the window shade, breaking the stick into three pieces.

On another occasion, one of my little girl friends and I got into a fight as we started home from school. We were pulling hair, scratching and fighting like two hoodlums, when brother ran back to the schoolhouse and told the teacher that Maud was beating me up. It was probably the other way around, as I was the older of the two. Anyway, teacher called us next day to the platform by her desk. Across it she had a big, long switch.

She said, "Now, if you girls will kiss one another and apologize, I won't whip you."

We both stood stubborn as mules and glared at one another. Teacher opened her desk drawer, took out a black kid glove, and slowly put it on. We had seen this same procedure before when other children got whippings. She always put on her kid glove so as not to hurt her hand. Still we stood. All the time she

was urging us to apologize. Finally, we half-way muttered that we were sorry.

She said, "Well, girls, as this is the very last day of school, I won't whip you, though you do both very definitely need one."

No doubt, the fact that Papa was president of the school board had more to do with our not being punished than our ungracious apologies to one another.

Except for standing in the corner for talking during school, or having to stay in at recess or after school for some other minor disobedience, those were the only times I ever recall being punished at school. One of our favorite sports was to smuggle an apple, a sack of candy, or even a biscuit sandwich into our desks and eat it, a bite at a time, as we bent down under our desks while teacher was supposed to be busy with a class at the front of the room. More than once I've seen teacher slip quietly down the aisle to stand beside the culprit sneak-eater, who would receive quite a shock when he raised his head to see teacher right beside him. On these occasions, the one caught was sometimes sent to the front of the room to finish eating the apple or candy. The other pupils always laughed, and so all the fun in this stolen snack was gone for the one caught.

When the day of school was over, the teacher would say, "Now, put away your books, boys and girls. Girls, ready, rise and pass." We filed out to the hall to get our coats, caps, leggings and overshoes.Then the boys would be dismissed, often shoving and pushing one another. If some became too rough, they were apt to be called back by teacher and told to "sit there until you can march out like gentlemen." It was surprising how quickly they learned, and how quickly they forgot the next day.

CHAPTER VIII

Vacation time to me meant a few weeks spent at Pa's and Ma's farm. All summer long I would follow my Aunt Nell about, trying to do anything she did though I was nine years younger. We both liked to ride horseback over the farm, or to some neighbor's house, or over to Aunt Alta's home a few miles distant to play with the little cousins. Sometimes we caught Old Maude, the grey mare, or Kate, the bay one, and hitched them to the buggy for a trip to the little near-by town of Clifton Hill to get groceries for Ma. While there we would have an ice-cream cone or a bottle of strawberry soda pop, my favorite flavor. Other days we would take our fishing poles and, with a tin can filled with worms, go to Munkus Creek, where small catfish and perch were plentiful. We would usually come home with enough fish for supper. Sometimes we went to Aunt Nell's girl friend's home, and all three of us went down in the pasture to wade about in an old pond, the water muddy from hogs wallowing around its edges. I usually tired of this pretty fast. I doubt if there were many times when I wouldn't manage to see a snake, and then my fun was very definitely over for that day's wading.

There were gooseberries, blackberries and dewberries growing wild in the lower pastures and down near the creek. After we gathered them, they would be made into luscious, deep pies or canned for the winter's use. In the late spring we often trailed the turkey hens to find where they were hiding their nests. These old hens were great rovers and very sly. We were careful to follow at a distance, or else they wouldn't go directly to their nests. When we knew the location of the nest, we marked the

spot; then, after she had left, we came back later to take the eggs and leave hen's eggs, or even china eggs, in their place. These nests would sometimes be a half mile or more from the house, hidden in the corner of an old rail fence, beside a fallen tree trunk, or in tall reeds and grass. The big, brown speckled turkey eggs, much larger than ordinary hen's eggs, were carefully carried to the house to be saved. It takes four weeks for these eggs to hatch. Ma usually kept about eight to ten turkey hens, so to find all their nests required much time and patience.

The old turkey gobbler (papa turkey) was the king of the poultry yard. We called him "Big Tom." When Big Tom fluffed his feathers out, dropped his big widespread wings until they dragged the ground, spread his tail feathers like a big fan, then went strutting about as though he was walking on hot marbles, swaying his head this way and that high in the air, his bright-red wattles swinging from side to side on his head, he certainly looked as though he enjoyed the wide berth given him. Big Tom enjoyed chasing anyone who came near him, unless he saw a stick in his hands. At such times he just gobble-gobble-gobbled and let him alone.

An old broom handle was kept near the gate for just that purpose. But sometimes I would run through the gate in a hurry to a certain little house and forget to pick up the stick. When that would happen, I would first open the door just a crack to peep out, and quite often Big Tom would be strutting to and fro, gobbling away, just as much as to say, "Gobble, gobble, I dare you to come out; gobble, gobble, I just dare you." If I couldn't make anyone hear me yelling for help, I'd watch until he was a little way down the poultry yard, open the old, creaky door as quietly as possible, then grab my bonnet strings in both hands and nearly fly as I ran for the gate and swung it shut before Big Tom could catch up with me.

One day the gate blew open and Big Tom came into the main yard behind Mama as she was carrying a bucket filled with water from the well. He flopped up against her, knocking her half down and spilling the water. She grabbed the old broom handle and threw it at Old Tom, knocking him out cold.

A gander is a "papa goose." The papa goose at my uncle's house was as bad about chasing people out of his domain as the papa turkey was in chasing people who entered *his* poultry yard.

Here is one of the funniest sights I ever witnessed. One day, while visiting at my uncle's house, we children were out in the yard playing. The little cousin, a boy about eighteen months of age, opened the gate and went into the poultry yard. He still wore diapers and little-boy dresses, as all little boys did in those days. Just as he went through the gate, this old gander came waddling up as fast as his short legs would carry him, his old neck snaking back and forth, hissing as he came. Little cousin turned around and came running back toward the house, leaving the gate open behind him. About halfway to the house, the old gander caught up with little cousin, grabbed the seat of his diaper in his broad bill and pulled it down around his feet while howls of bloody murder issued from little cousin's throat. He was soon rescued by his mother, quite unharmed, but a scared and indignant little boy.

One summer day while I was vacationing at Pa's house, he said to me: "I'm going over to Green McFarland's this morning. Don't you want to walk over with me?"

We walked across some fields and pastures, climbing fences and stopping to eat a few berries on the way. Soon we arrived at this old bachelor's home and, at his "Come in," walked right on in, as was the neighborly habit. I don't know if he was having a late breakfast or an early lunch. At any rate, he was enjoying a meal, and sitting at the table with him were three dogs and two big cats. These cats and dogs were sitting on stools and benches, eating from individual dishes on the table with the nicest manners one could imagine.

If any one of them made a move as though to take something from his neighbor's dish, Mr. McFarland spoke sternly to that dog or cat, calling it by name, and was instantly obeyed. To me it was the most unbelievable sight I had ever seen. I was used to cats and dogs, but only outside the house, as none of my family went in for house pets. Each one of these cats and dogs was

of the common mongrel-dog and alley-cat varieties. We learned later that he had spent many weeks in training them to these table manners. One yellow-and-black-spotted dog even had a little bib tied around his neck. They all sat on their haunches, with their front paws just lightly resting on the table's edge. It's doubtful if parents could be more proud of their children than this man was of his animal family.

CHAPTER IX

With vacation over, back home I'd go, ready to attend school and be with my family. The summer I was eleven, our third little sister was born, making us a family of five little "C's." By this time we were also owners of one of the two first Ford cars in town—in fact, the only two cars of *any* kind in our town.

Mama said I had told them over the phone that, unless they would name the new baby sister "Louise," I just wasn't coming home. I do not recall this fondness for the name or having given this ultimatum, but, anyway, "Louise" was used as her middle name, though she was never called by it. Even though the novelty of having another baby sister wasn't so great at the time, I got to be very fond of holding the sweet baby sister in my arms, and soon was making little butterfly-sleeve dresses for her, much as though she were another of my dolls.

Having a car was much more of a novelty for me than a new baby sister. We would ask Papa, in the evenings after supper, to please drive us to Edmonston school and back. This schoolhouse was just one mile from town, and at a crossroad, so there was plenty of room to turn the car around on the narrow country roads. All roads were narrow in those horse-and-buggy days. Just as many of the neighborhood kids as the car could hold would pile into this open-top Ford, sometimes with two or three kids standing on the fenders, and we were off for this wonderful trip, chug-chugging along at a fast clip of perhaps fifteen to twenty miles per hour. Mothers would be yelling to their children, "Now, hold on tight and sit still." The crossroad was a popular turning-around point because the ditches along the

narrow roads were usually rather deep, and I wouldn't exactly say Papa was the best driver in the world, either then or now.

This car was called a "touring car." It had a leather top that could be raised or lowered, much as did our carriage top. There were mica-windowed side curtains to be fastened on by means of rivets on the top, bows and doors through metal-rimmed eyelets. To start the car, the switch was turned to *Battery,* which caused a sizzling sound; then the spark and gas levers on the steering wheel column were adjusted just so and the crank hanging from the front of the car was shoved in by a knee for contact; finally, with the left hand the choke wire was pulled out as the right hand began half turns of the crank. If this failed, then the crank was quickly spun over and over until the moment the motor began to start up, sounding like a threshing machine. Then the crank was quickly turned loose before it kicked back. Many were the broken arms when the crank wasn't turned loose quickly enough. The gas and spark were again adjusted for the correct engine purr, and the switch flipped to *Magneto.* With the driver at the wheel, the hand brake would be released, the clutch pedal shoved to the floor along with the low pedal, and, as they were released, we were off to a bouncing, jerking start. After a few yards, the medium, or second, pedals were used; then as we gained speed we went into high.

In wintertime roads often became impassable even for cars with chains. The cars would be put away in the barn or buggy shed for months at a time. Garages slowly began to appear only after cars had become more common. Each owner was his own mechanic, carefully following instructions printed by the manufacturer and given free with the new car. There were no filling stations with gasoline pumps in those days. When gasoline was needed, the car was driven up in front of the general store, and the merchant would go out behind his store where the gasoline barrel and the kerosene (coal oil) barrel stood side by side. The spigot was opened and a can was filled with gasoline from this barrel. With a funnel to insert into the car's ten-gallon tank, the gasoline would be poured in. Sometimes a red can, or one with a red stripe painted around it, would be carried to the store

from the house to obtain gasoline. The first outside pumps had sunken tanks, but these too had to be filled from red cans hauled there on wagons.

There were some steep hills between our house and Pa's house, and on one particularly steep hill Mama would more often than not tell Papa to stop the car so that we could get out and walk. Papa drove up alone. From experience, she knew that quite often when he shifted gears to climb the hill the motor would die, and he would let the car roll back down the hill to a level spot before stopping the car and getting out to crank the engine. Mama would come plodding up the hill carrying the baby while brother and I held the other two little sisters by the hands as we laboriously climbed this rocky, steep hill. Whenever we saw the little Ford car with Papa at the wheel backing down the hill toward us, Mama would give us a shove and say, "Get up on the bank quick—there comes the car toward us," and we all scrambled madly up the high bank along the road.

Other times the little Ford did itself proud and climbed the hill without a snort. Then Papa would be sitting at the top of the hill with a smug look upon his face when we arrived, tired and out of breath from the long, hard climb.

Our driving regalia was of the latest style. We all had our dusters. Mama's was a long straight-line coat that reached nearly to the ground. Mine came well down to the tops of my high shoes. The oldest little sister had a linen duster almost like mine. Mama and I wore thin china-silk veils over our hats and tied under our chins. My favorite was in a cerise color. Of course, these were for summer days. Papa and brother had linen dusters, too, made along mannish lines with vents up the back and reaching well below their knees. On their heads they wore tan linen duster caps, wide-rimmed goggles and driving gloves. These had wide gauntlet tops. Brother's had black patent cuffs with stitching in red. Over our laps we spread lap robes. The summer ones were of light-weight cotton, usually tan in color, and had wide-knotted fringes across two ends. The ones used in winter were big, heavy, scratchy ones made from a hair-like material in dark colors with a gay design near the center.

A few years later Papa bought himself a Ford. One day I was riding down the road with him. It had rained and the roads were muddy, so the car started skidding toward a good-sized ditch. Instead of putting on the brakes, he pulled up on the steering wheel, much as if he were driving a team, and said: "Whoa, there! Whoa, now, I say!"

One Sunday morning at the breakfast table, Papa said to brother and me: "Where would you children like to go today?"

Having heard of the Missouri cities of Kansas City and St. Louis, but never having seen them, I piped up: "To Kansas City!" Brother joined in with, "Oh, yes, to Kansas City! We want to go to Kansas City."

"All right," Papa replied, "if your mama doesn't care."

It was soon decided we would make this long trip of about 125 miles, a good day's driving in our Ford touring car. Our clothes were instantly packed. Nine o'clock of the same morning found us merrily on our way on a lovely fall day. There were no bridges across the Missouri River for anything except trains, so we crossed the river at Glasgow on a ferry boat. Trips were made across once each hour, and we were lucky enough to get there before the ferry left our side of the river. The car was driven onto the ferry, and we children stood near the railing to watch the muddy water as we plowed through the swift current and saw the near-by railroad bridge, the first all-steel bridge in the world, built in the 1870's.

The trip went along fine until about mid-afternoon. A sudden rain came up that turned the roads slick, muddy and almost impassable. The car would slide first on one side and then on the other. I leaned over to see how close we were to the ditch. Suddenly the car slid into the ditch, pitching me out head first. The wheels came to a stop almost against my neck. What a muddy sight I presented! I was covered with mud from my high-top shoes to my new fall hat. My coat, a new winter one with a plush collar, was one thick coating of mud.

Of course, except for my coat, hat and shoes there was other clothing in the valise. At the next little town, Papa stopped at a restaurant and obtained a washpan, soap, water and towels, and

set to work making me presentable. By this time the mud on my coat and hat had dried enough to be brushed and scratched off with his pocket knife. Dozens of cockleburs had to be picked off. One or two of these had also become entangled in the two long braids that hung down my back, leaving my braids with a very unkempt look. My hair was pulled up in wisps, looking as if it hadn't been done up or combed for days.

It was thus we arrived at the hotel in Kansas City. Later in the evening brother and I were left in our room for an hour or so while Papa met an acquaintance in the lobby for a chat. We had never seen a telephone like the one in the room. Merely by picking up the receiver, you heard a voice say, "Number, please?" We took turns at picking up the receiver to see if this would happen each time, until Papa came back to put a stop to it. In our little town the telephones had to have the crank on the side turned to ring the bells for central to answer.

That night Papa pushed the bed against the wall and put me on the inside. We were all sleeping in the same bed. There was a window halfway down; so, next morning, when Papa awakened, I had rolled down and over onto the window's wide ledge and was curled up fast asleep with my back pressed against the screen, directly over a busy street four stories below!

On our way home we did not get as early a start as we should have in order to get across the river before the ferry stopped its trips at 5:30 in the afternoon. We stayed the night in a small-town hotel, thus making it a two-day trip back home.

Horses were very frightened of cars when they met on the road. Usually the car was pulled off the road as far as possible into the tall weeds growing along the roadside, and the driver of the team would get out to lead them by this monster. Even then the horses would shy to one side, snorting and prancing with fright. Sometimes the horses became so frightened they ran away. This was a terrifying sight. Sometimes one horse would fall down, entangled in its own harness, and the other horse would continue running, half-dragging the fallen horse along until the harness snapped or the second horse became tired out.

One time I was playing in our front yard when a team of frightened horses hitched to a wagon broke loose from the hitch-rack. They started running at break-neck speed down the road past our house. Moments before this, a buggy carrying a mother and her three small children had passed by on their way home from town. When the runaway horses overtook the buggy, one horse went to one side, the other on the other side, with the wagon tongue ramming straight into the back of the buggy. The buggy was upset, throwing all of the people into the road and dragging some of them several feet as the horses continued on their mad way. I was one of the first to arrive at this unforgettable scene. The mother and her three little children were carried into near-by homes. Luckily, all survived this terrible wreck.

CHAPTER X

When I was a little girl we would rake great piles of leaves in the fall of the year. All the children in town took part in this leaf-raking, and we made huge piles along the gutters of our Main Street. On a certain evening we would have our bonfire. The older boys attended to the fires, adding big armloads of dry leaves whenever the bonfire grew dim. Over this bonfire we toasted marshmallows on sharp-pointed sticks and placed potatoes and apples in the hot ashes to roast. While the potatoes and apples were roasting, a big game of "Hide-and-Seek" would be in progress. A near-by telephone post would serve as base, and we hid behind houses or big shade-tree trunks or up on someone's porch. Our parents would sometimes watch us at play to keep an eye on the venturesome small ones should they get too near the bonfire.

On one of these nights I was running across a yard where there was a dog. Boys had teased this dog until he was, by now, quite mean. The dog wouldn't bite unless you ran from him. I was playing "Hide-and-Seek," paying no attention to the dog as I ran for a hiding place. The dog caught up with me and grabbed a mouthful of hip. Fortunately, the hip was well-padded with clothing, so all I received was a bruise and quite a scare.

Another time I was playing on a seesaw made from an old plank and placed across an iron support. There were several children on the seesaw, and, as we came down one time, I doubled my foot under the board. A spike in the end of the board on the under side stuck into the back of my heel. I screamed, and all the children jumped off, letting the entire weight come down on my heel, and sending the spike the rest of the way through.

One of the doctors in our town lived quite near, so he soon had me taken care of. It was sometime, however, before I could run and play again.

Another peculiar accident once happened to me when I was about eleven or twelve years of age. Sitting in a rocking chair and crocheting, I dropped the ball of thread. I stuck the sharp end of the hook into my mouth as I leaned over to pick up the ball, thereby hitting the handle of the crochet hook against the chair arm and running the hook through my tongue. Brother was the only one in the room at the time. He tried to pull the needle out, but I stopped him when I saw a little blood. Out the door I went to the doctor's office, saying as I went in, "Ab stuck a needle in my 'ongue"—as useless a statement as could have been made.

Speaking of accidents to tongues, this reminds me of another one. One cold, frosty morning I went to the well for a bucket of water. The pump handle was of iron, and a neighbor boy told me to stick my tongue against it to see how funny it felt. I stuck my warm, moist tongue to the iron handle. There it immediately stuck tight and fast. Oh, my! My tongue was raw for days. So, if some mischievous boy ever tells you to try such a stunt, advise him to go jump in a lake.

It's quite a wonder we didn't bite our tongues off completely during one game we played.

One of the aunts lived on a farm a few miles distant from our house. At their house was a ram, which is a papa sheep. We called him, simply, "the old butting sheep." This papa sheep, like the papa turkey and the papa goose, would chase 'most anyone coming into his pasture and try to knock him down. Often, whenever we visited at this aunt's home on Sundays after church, there would be several other families there, too, making ten or twelve children to play with the "old butting sheep."

Between the yard fence and the barnyard fence there was an open space of probably two hundred feet. Both these fences were made from six-inch-wide boards spaced six or eight inches apart and were some four or five feet tall. It was quite the sport, we thought, to climb atop one of the fences, tease the ram until

he was very ill-tempered, and then take turns at trying to race from one fence to the other before the "old butting sheep" could overtake us and knock us down. He would come charging toward us, his old head down, trying to butt us any place in the rear, which he quite often succeeded in doing. As soon as he had anyone down, he let him alone until he got on his feet and again started running. When one child was knocked down, another jumped down from the fence and started across to attract the "old butting sheep's" attention. Sometimes he came charging toward us so fast we would turn around and head back to the safety of the fence we had just left. He really could give a person quite a jolt, especially when he butted him behind the knees. He was a good sport though, observing the rule of not hitting a fellow when he is down; but sometimes, as fast as we tried to get up, he would come running to knock our props from under us again.

It is often said: "Children must be watched over constantly by their guardian angels." We certainly worked ours overtime!

At family gatherings, we children would nearly starve before it was our turn to eat. The men always ate at the first table. After stuffing themselves with second, and even third, helpings of food, they would push themselves back from the table with toothpicks stuck in their mouths, tilt their chairs, and start a political argument that would go on and on until some brave wife shooed them out of the dining room.

Then the women would eat their dinners, discussing their canning, quilt-making, who was in the family way, and did you know "buzz-buzz-buzz," until we children were so hungry we hardly knew what we were eating when our turn finally came. We usually were able to find apples or a handful of homemade cookies, however, to eat during this long wait—unless, of course, we were so busy teasing the old sheep, coasting down the hill, or swinging in a swing, that we partially forgot about being half-starved.

There was usually a distant cousin present at these gatherings, an older man whom we all loved and whom we called

"Cousin Pete." Cousin Pete was a born comedian, and we loved to get him cornered, then start teasing him to do some of his stunts. He was the best ear-wiggler imaginable, wiggling one at a time or both at the same time. Then Cousin Pete would say, "All right! Cousin Pete knows you children don't love him, and you would probably like to see him stick a knife right through his poor old head!" He would yell "Boo" at some child standing near to surprise him and make him jump, take his knife from his pocket, open the blade, place its point against his head and start grunting and making funny faces while he pretended to stick it right into his head. We watched open-mouthed, but, watch as closely as we would, the knife would be gone, his hands empty. Then he would suddenly reach behind some child, and, when he brought his hand away, there would be the knife. He had dozens of sleight-of-hand tricks, such as swallowing the knife and making things disappear right before our eyes. Sometimes he would get between the old coal-oil lamp and the wall and, by placing his hands together, make various shadows on the wall in the shape like different animals, providing his own sound effects.

As day was settling quietly into twilight, all the families would climb into their vehicles to start the homeward journey, calling, "Goodbye, come see us soon."

Can you realize that in the early 1900's even ice was not readily available in our rural areas? Most farmers had icehouses, which they filled with ice in the winter from the frozen ponds and creeks. The neighbors took turns helping one another until all the icehouses were filled and the ice covered over with sawdust from the near-by sawmill. This ice usually lasted until midsummer. Many were the freezers of homemade ice cream this ice froze. Some of the clearer ice would be used to drop into our tall glasses of milk, water or tea, with a few pieces of sawdust sometimes floating to the top of the glass. Store-bought artificial ice had to be shipped in from the larger cities, naturally. When this ice was shipped more than a hundred miles by train and then hauled in a wagon for a few more miles, its cost was too high for country people. Anyway, most people looked upon arti-

ficial ice as being unhealthy to use. They said manufacturing plants put habit-forming drugs in it. The ice from the pond where the hogs wallowed all summer, or from the creek near the old swimming hole, was considered much more pure. Gradually, as the country people learned the city people weren't developing any mass bad habits, the small towns began erecting their own ice plants. By 1920, most people even in the country were buying artificial ice and had iceboxes and chests in their homes to preserve the perishable foodstuff. Electric refrigerators weren't in common use until several years later by the general public, probably nearer 1930.

I mentioned the freezers of ice cream frozen by ice from the old icehouse, but I might add that these freezers were quite often homemade affairs. Really, a gallon-size tin bucket with a close-fitting lid, perhaps one once filled with Karo syrup bought at the general store, would serve very nicely for the freezer can. The rich yellow cream, sweet and fresh from the old cellar, was mixed with fresh eggs, sugar and other necessary ingredients. All this was poured into the bucket, leaving a few inches of space from the brim, the lid firmly pressed down, and the bucket placed in the center of a tub in which was a thick layer of chipped ice and coarse salt. Then alternate layers of crushed ice and salt were filled in all around the bucket, with a few chunks placed on top.

Turns were taken in spinning the bucket by its wire bail, first right, then left, as far as a person's wrist will move. This went on for probably thirty or forty minutes. When the lid was finally wiped clean of ice and salt and removed, there was the velvety-smooth homemade ice cream within. The cream had been whipped brimful; and a few sample tastes, one for each helper, were passed around. My! how good it was.

On Sunday afternoons in the wintertime, when we had not gone "avisiting," Papa would go up to his store for a big sack of mixed nuts. Then, with one of Mama's aprons across his knees and a flatiron clenched between them, he'd take the big hammer and start cracking nuts. He'd continued until we had all had our fill. My favorite ones were the small, round hazelnuts and

the big butternuts. The little sisters preferred the English walnuts, while brother watched for each almond.

Often we would enjoy eating big pans of hot, buttered popcorn Mama fixed for us. Sometimes she would pop a big dishpanful of these fluffy white grains and pour a cooked molasses syrup over them, forming big, golden popcorn balls. We would start eating them while the molasses syrup was still hot and sticky, but they were best when piled high on the big meat platter and set outside on the screened-in porch to cool and harden. Sometimes Mama made big platters of molasses taffy, and we would suck on a piece as we went about our play.

On other winter evenings Papa would take a big basket and go out to the apple mounds in the garden to bring in big, juicy, red Winesaps, yellowish-green and black-flecked jennetings, and big, yellow Delicious apples for us to bite into. They would be so cold our teeth almost ached, and the rich juice would ooze down our chins as we bit into these lusciously firm apples.

Christmas is fun 'most anywhere for little girls and boys; but the ones we enjoyed when we were small girls and boys were very special, we thought. I hope I can give you a glimpse back through the years of the way we observed ours.

For our tree at home, Brother, little sisters and I all helped. First, Brother and I would select a little tree for Papa to cut down. We did it the hard way, but it was the way we liked best. Instead of choosing a cedar tree, we selected some other bare little forest tree. Then we cut armloads of cedar from the big tree in Mama Gran's yard and tied them on in bunches all over this little tree until every branch was green with spicy-smelling cedar. The tree was then firmly anchored in a wooden box and filled with moist sand.

Now we were ready for the trimmings. Most of these were homemade, and we children had all been busy for days stringing long ropes of bright red cranberries and fluffy white popcorn with the aid of big darning needles and a ball of twine. Tin foil had been begged from the store, taken from between the layers of chewing tobacco and cut into sheets about a foot square. This

tin foil was used to cover the empty spools from Mama's sewing basket. We also covered black walnuts from the tree out in the back yard, the foil twisted around them and tied with strings. The ends were then tied to the tree limbs, where these tin-foil-covered baubles would spin about in the air.

After we had draped our garlands of popcorn, cranberries and ropes of store-bought tinsel on the tree, and all our home-made ornaments were in place, we clipped little tin candle-holders with tiny wax candles onto the tips of the limbs. These candles were seldom lighted, on account of the fire hazard, but no tree with the finest of store-bought ornaments and dozens of electric lights ever looked any prettier than the trees we created and lighted only by the lovelights in our eyes. On Christmas Eve we put out a glass of milk and cookies for Santa Claus, and the gifts he left were eagerly claimed by five little "C's" on Christmas morning.

There was always a community Christmas tree on Christmas Eve at the Methodist Church, because it was a little larger than the other churches in town. This tree was always a big cedar tree the papas had cut down and brought in from the near-by countryside. Christmas trees weren't shipped in those days at all, at least to little towns like ours. The papas would drag the big tree through the big double-doors at the side of the church, firmly anchor it, then tie wire to the tree trunk and fasten these guy wires to supports in different directions to prevent any accidents. They also helped place the pretty angel ornament on the topmost branch, and added tinsel, cranberry and popcorn strings to the high branches before turning over the remainder of the job to the mamas and the older children.

For weeks the Sunday-school teachers had been busy teaching us speeches, songs and pantomimes. In these pantomimes we were usually dressed to represent fairies or angels. Our long white costumes were often our best white, long-sleeved, muslin nightgowns, with maybe an extra square of white muslin with a hole in its middle cut to fit around our necks, and the points in front and back and over each arm edged in shiny tinsel. With these costumes we would have tinsel-edged wings fastened on

our backs. The music would be played softly while some soloist, hidden from view, sang "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing," or "Away in the Manger," or some other song. In our costumes we acted out each line, kneeling and bowing, stretching our arms out or folding them, never saying a word; but with the lights dimmed and white sheets forming a backdrop for our shadows, it was quite impressive. Each girl and boy had some part in the program. Usually someone would start a speech, then suddenly forget every word, until one of the teachers or the child's mother prompted him and got him started again. As soon as the program was finished, we all took our seats in the front rows that had been saved for us.

Oh! how beautiful the big tree looked. There would be pretty dolls hanging on the tree in dresses of rainbow hues, and with go-to-sleep eyes and long curly hair. Brightly painted toy horns and drums, big spinning tops and other toys also could be seen. Every child had at least one present on the tree as well as one of the big sack of treats from the churches ready to be handed out by Santa Claus.

Sleighbells would be heard merrily jingling, getting louder and louder until, at last, a jolly, fat, white-whiskered Santa Claus' helper in a bright red suit trimmed in white fur, a red stocking cap covering his snowy white hair, would come stomping and dancing down the aisle with a big pack upon his back and lots of tiny bells jingling merrily as he laughed and waved to us. Then he got busy calling off names as he took the presents from the tree. Each child would go forward to take the present, saying, "Thank you, Santa!" We girls had been nudging one another excitedly, trying to guess which doll was our own; but, regardless of which one was handed to us, we were very happy little mothers as we hugged our brand-new doll babies in their pretty caps and dresses.

The boys were just as happily comparing their knives for their whittling abilities. The smaller children hugged their gay spinning tops, or tooted a few off-key notes on their new horns. After all the toys and the sacks of treats had been handed out, Santa

would grab his now empty pack, give a loud chuckle as his little bells jingled merrily, then call out, "Goodbye! Goodbye! I'll be at all your houses before morning, but now I'm very busy and must be on my merry way. Merry Christmas, everyone!" Then out the door he would run and we would hear larger bells ringing, but the older folks always blocked any inquisitive child's progress before they could get to the door to see where Santa had gone. All the grownups and children would be standing up waving and saying, "Goodbye, Santa, come again." Then all would join in singing, "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," following with a Christmas carol before bowing our heads for the prayer of dismissal.

On Christmas day we usually went to Pa's and Ma's house, and on the Sunday following Christmas to Mama Gran's house. If there was snow on the ground we would oftimes go the seven miles to Pa's house in a horse-drawn sled. Papa would rent a sled from the livery stable, hitch two high-stepping horses to it with lots of tiny bells fastened to their harness to jingle and tinkle on the cold, crisp air. In the bottom of the big sled a thick layer of straw would be placed, and over this big homemade comforters would be spread, with plenty more covers thrown in with which to cover ourselves. On extremely cold days Mama would heat bricks in the oven to be wrapped in rags and put into this straw-filled sled to add warmth. Besides Mama and Papa and us five little "C's" there would be my uncle's family. (The uncle and aunt and their three little "C's.") Such fun we had! By spreading a big quilt across the high sides of the sled, we children would pretend we were in a covered wagon going through wild country. Every friendly dog that ran out from the farmhouses as we went by was a vicious animal which the boys killed with their new toy guns. Even the rabbits that jumped out of the frozen clumps of grass and skimmed across the snow were imaginary wild beasts. We laughed and played as the runners of the sled creaked along over the hard-packed snow. On our homeward trip we would be tired from all the day's activities and, while just as happy, we were inclined to be more quiet. We would

snuggle down in the sled to watch the pretty sunset and maybe join our mamas and papas in singing carols while the twinkling little bells played their merry tune to the snowed-in world about us.

CHAPTER XI

Coal-oil lamps, an everyday necessity to us, were something little girls and boys of the 1950's know little about. I'll try to describe them for you.

Most of these lamps were made of glass, and were placed on any table where the light was needed. At suppertime one was placed in the center of the long dining table, and then was carried over by the old cooking table at dish-washing time when supper was over.

The bowl of the lamp held coal oil (kerosene), and this bowl was fitted onto a pedestal-like piece of glass or metal. On top of the bowl was the wick-holder, with one end of the wick reaching into the oil. Into this wick-holder the lamp-chimney fit and, for beauty, a globe was placed on the outside of the regular lamp-chimney. Each morning the lamp-chimneys were wiped with a soft cloth to remove any smoke or soot. Every time the outside door was opened on a windy night and the breeze sucked down in the lamp-chimney, or whenever the wick was turned too high to coax a little extra light from the lamp, it would smoke. The lamp was lighted with a match or, sometimes, with a piece of tightly-twisted paper stuck into the stove to catch fire, quickly touched to the wick, and then tossed into the stove or the coal bucket.

Some of these old lamps were very decorative, and I have in my possession an old one which used to belong to Mama Gran. Now, of course, they are converted to electricity, are called "antiques," and are much sought after. The shades, or globes, of these old parlor lamps were often hand painted. One I remember

had painted across it a flight of ducks in shades of gold and brown; and the base, or bowl, of the lamp was in matching tones. The lamps were of many materials—milk glass, amber glass, crystal, beautiful hand-painted chinas and others, some combined with gold-tinted metal bases. Of course, the ones used in the kitchen and the ones that were fitted into brackets on the wall were usually of plain glass.

How strange it must sound to you when I tell you that in the beginning of this, your own century, a thing as simple as the electric light was very uncommon in our smaller Missouri towns and farms. In those days there was no electricity to plug into and no gas for heating houses, as we have today. The flatirons used for the weekly ironing were called "sad-irons," a very appropriate name. These "sad-irons" were placed on top of the kitchen range to get hot, a handle was clamped on, and the iron was used until it became cool. It was then put back on the stove, and another hot iron was selected from the three or four others heating on the hot stove. This rotation continued until the family's big ironing was completed.

I was probably twelve or thirteen years old when our little town put in a small Diesel engine to generate direct current for some of the stores and houses. Mama and Papa were among the first subscribers to this luxury—a naked bulb hanging from the ceiling by a twisted wire with a little metal chain to pull it on and off. No beauty—but what a luxury it seemed not to have to fill the lamps with coal oil or clean the sooty chimneys! There were few electric appliances available, no electric washers, toasters, waffle irons, iceboxes, fans, mixers or the other dozens of things common in most homes today. We did get an electric iron for the laundry.

There were few cars through the rural communities before 1914, and telephones were scarce. The older people were even a little distrustful of telephones ever coming into common use, and refused to have them in their homes.

The telephones, at that time, were fastened to the wall at a height convenient for standing up to talk. Anyone having a phone placed low enough for the user to sit while talking would

have been considered "plain lazy." However, a comfortable rocker was kept near the phone for the "listeners." On one country line there would be several phones—in fact, 'most everyone in a community who had a phone would be on the same line; but sometimes one or two families several miles away would be put on, too.

Everyone was assigned a number. Say the line was 2600; then the subscribers started at 2601, 2602, etc., and the last number indicated the number of times it would ring. As soon as the phone rang for anyone on the line, all the other receivers were usually raised so as to know what was going on. The listeners didn't consider that they were eavesdropping—it was just the natural thing to do. Sometimes the ring would be for one of the families outside of the community. Then someone would say, "Oh! that's the McNulty number. Guess I won't listen, as I never know whom they're talking about." Or if it was one of the neighbors' ring, "Run! Listen, that's Will's number—maybe Henry is calling him about putting up ice tomorrow." Or, "That's Maggie's number. See how their sick calf is today." Then the listeners removed the receiver from the hook and relaxed in the big rocking chair to hear all the news. An entire evening of amusement could thus be had, for as one party hung up, the phone would ring again. Most people were wise enough to tie an old shoelace or corset string to the receiver hook, and could thus pull it down for the next ring without ever getting up from the old rocker. Should there be any emergency, such as a fire or accident, then one long ring would be rung. The message would be given over the country line and any help needed would be dispatched at once. Of course, as I said, not in every farm home and especially not in those of the older folks were "these inventions of the devil allowed."

Other things, such as the radio, only became common after I was a grown girl; while the television of today is really an invention of your 1950's, my dear. Our first radios were run by dry-cell batteries; and to listen to those radios of the 1920's, headphones were clasped over each ear by a flexible metal strip. When there were several listeners, one earphone would be held

to each listener's ear when the set was tuned in. There were no loud speakers on these first radios.

I want to laugh every time I think about our washing machine, so I guess I'll tell you a little about it. This machine used power, but not electric; there was a foot pedal, and also a long handle to be pulled by hand—our hands and feet. Mama would get brother and me to help run the washing machine when we were still quite young. In fact, brother probably first learned to count by this machine. I'd say, "You run it twenty-five turns, and then I'll run it twenty-five turns." We would put our right foot on this pedal, grab hold of the handle and, as the foot went toward the machine, the handle came toward us, then the handle went toward the machine, and the foot came back. It really wasn't hard work, but brother, to protect his interests, soon learned to count his own strokes. No doubt I may have skipped backwards in my counting for him at times.

The gramophone we enjoyed when I was a small girl would be very much of an oddity to you. It was a box-like affair, with a big horn curving up over it. The records it played were cylinder ones that revolved over and over under the needle. My favorite records were of John Philip Sousa's band and of the wonderful tenor, Sir Harry Lauder, with his Scottish rolling of his *rrrrrr's*. Oh, dear, I forgot! You don't know what a gramophone is. It would simply be called a phonograph today.

While I am writing you about our olden days of these early 1900's, I believe you'd like to know how some of our carpets were made.

Of course, some were store-bought, but most of the ones in the bedrooms and kitchens were woven at home. 'Most every farm home had a big ragbag hanging conveniently near the place where discarded clothing and linens were put. Then on an evening, by the lamplight, these would be cut into strips an inch-or-so wide and the strips tacked together with needle and thread. After several yards of these carpet-rag strips had been cut, they were rolled into balls. The cutting, tacking and rolling continued until many big balls of carpet rags were made. If the colors of

these old clothes were faded, or if certain colors were desired for the carpet, then they were dyed before any of this cutting started.

All my experience with weaving took place at Ma's house, as neither Mama nor Mama Gran owned looms. They either had their carpets made for them or had store-bought ones. When enough balls of rags were ready for the carpet, the big loom was brought down from the attic and put up in the spare room. This loom probably stood five feet tall, perhaps six feet wide, and was hand-powered. Weaving continued for days and even weeks, the different members of the family taking turns in their spare moments. Even I, as a very small girl, was allowed to help shove the shuttle through and pull the big comb back and forth, but my short legs could not reach the foot treadles, so my job was to assist. It was unimportant to anyone except myself, thinking I was helping to weave the pretty carpets.

When sufficient carpeting strips had been made for a room, these were cut into room-length and securely whipped together to the desired width. The carpets were in a hit-and-miss pattern, according to the colors used. Clean straw was then brought from the straw pile and spread evenly over the entire floor to a depth of about five inches. Over this the carpet was carefully placed, and then the tacking and stretching began.

When the job was finished and the floor covered from wall to wall, the furniture was placed about the room. What fun we children had rolling across this thickly-padded new carpet! Walking on it you had a feeling of sinking into the straw beneath, but very soon the straw would be trampled down by the many feet of people going about their daily affairs. It was customary, though, to put new straw under the carpets at housecleaning time each year.

Ma also had a big incubator in which lots of baby chicks were hatched. This incubator was a tin-covered box-like affair that stood about table height on four legs. Inside were big flat trays that held more than a hundred eggs. To one side was a

little built-in lamp that burned coal oil and was the means of generating the heat necessary to make the eggs hatch. After the trays had been filled with nice, smooth hens' eggs, a thermometer was placed on each tray to be checked every few hours, both day and night. If the eggs chilled they wouldn't hatch, and if they got too hot the chicks would be killed in the unhatched egg. So the little lamp was kept burning, sometimes high, sometimes low, to keep the eggs just so for three whole weeks.

On about the fourteenth day, Ma would get a big pan of lukewarm water, place it on a chair near the incubator, and start testing the eggs to see if they contained live chickens. I always aimed to be right beside her when she tested the eggs. Six or eight eggs would be carefully dropped into this warm water at a time. If they bobbled on the water, the chick inside was alive; but if the egg didn't bobble, it was placed in an old basket to be destroyed later. When all the eggs with live chicks had been replaced in the incubator, I was allowed to take the rotten eggs out in the poultry yard to toss them one at a time against the back of the henhouse. *Phew!* Once in a while an egg would burst before I had thrown it. Then there was such a stinky smell that the fun was all over for the time being. The good eggs continued to stay in the incubator for the three weeks; then little downy chicks would begin peck-peck-pecking on the egg shells until they would fall away.

These little chickens would be lifted from the incubator into baskets lined with a big soft cloth to cover their "cheep-cheep-cheeping" little heads. Very soon they would huddle down for a long nap under their warm cover. They would be kept in these baskets for two or three days, fed crumbled-up cornbread and given water from shallow little containers, such as old cracked saucers or, maybe, a flat sardine tin. Then these little chickens were placed with old mother hens that had been setting on empty nests and clucking around for a family. If there weren't enough mother hens, the little chicks were raised in a brooder in the brooder house.

What is a "brooder"? Well, the one Ma had was a homemade one Pa put together. He took some boards to make a three-foot

flat square surface in which he drilled holes about two inches apart. Through these holes strips of heavy woolen material were run to hang down some six or eight inches, and legs of the same height were placed at each corner of the board. This homemade brooder, placed in the warm brooder-house, made a satisfactory substitute for the mother hen's feathery wings when the little chicks huddled together under them. I used to wonder how anything so cute could grow into anything so dumb as a half-grown chicken!

In the summertime, after these chickens had outgrown their brooder, they would be placed in hovers (small houses) made from a wooden box, or from lumber with an opening on one end for them to go in and out. They never seemed to have any trouble finding their way out, but to find their way back—oh, my!

Often a sudden rain would come up before we had time to drive the chickens back to their hovers. Then Mama would send brother and me out in the yard to look for the little, dumb, half-drowned chickens. They would be huddled together against the outside of the hovers or in some fence corner, their feathers water-soaked, necks limber, mouths gasping, or lying on their sides unable to stand up. We would pick them up and take them into the kitchen, where Mama would be busy getting a fire started in the big range to dry them. Then back out wading around in the tall grass hunting others we would go. It wasn't the wading we minded, because it was real fun to go paddling around barefoot with the big umbrella held over us. But, phew! those smelly wet feathers.

Besides a big kitchen, many families, including Ma's, had a summer kitchen. This room wasn't as well-finished as the other rooms, and was used mostly for the summertime cooking. The stove as well as other furnishings in this room were mostly discards from the main house. By cooking in this old summer kitchen, the heat coming from the coal or wood range was kept out of the house.

It was nothing for the farmwife to have to fix dinner for eight or more men. At noon during threshing time to feed even twenty extras was often the case. These were mostly neighbor men ex-

changing work, and the neighbor women would also help one another as the workers shifted from farm to farm. It was a common everyday custom to cook an entire country ham or shoulder, six or more chickens, besides big bowls of vegetables and the loaves of homemade bread. Two kinds of pie were served, maybe a rich creamy-custard one and a tart gooseberry pie, with each man given a large trianglular slice of each on his plate to top off the meal as he drank his fourth cup of coffee. The coffee was made in a big kettle, the home-ground coffee tied in a cheesecloth bag and dropped into the gallons of boiling water.

CHAPTER XII

We had lots of fun swinging on the swings hung from tall limbs of the big sugar maple tree. One swing was of rope, the two ends tied about a foot apart from one big limb, and a notched board was put in the bottom loop for the seat, about eighteen inches from the ground. The other one was called a "bag swing." It was made by tying one end of the rope securely to a limb high from the ground and the other end to a gunny sack half-filled with tightly-packed old rags about three feet off the ground. We would make a running leap to grab the rope and straddle the bag while some older person gave us a big boost. Sometimes another child would jump onto the swing from the opposite direction astride our laps, and, by a pumping action with our feet, we would gain sufficient momentum to swing us high into the air.

Harvesttime came in July and, as we grew older, we enjoyed going to the wheatfield to watch the wheat being threshed. We watched the threshing machine at work, the golden grains of wheat coming out one big pipe and out of another as the straw was blown out, falling back to earth to become a huge straw-stack. Unmindful of the scratchy straw that went down our sweaty necks and backs, we rolled and slid down the sides of the straw stack or waded ankle-deep in the beds of golden wheat grains, now and then picking up a handful to chew on the sweet, juicy inside kernels, spitting out the outer husks. During haying season we children would carry water to the field for the men in a stone jug. The jug was brown at the bottom and half-way up, the rest being creamy-white with a corncob stuck in its neck for a stopper. As I said, we lived in town, but Papa also had a farm

at the edge of town he helped tend. Being with Pa as he did his farm work during the summertime gave me many happy hours in the fields, too.

Sometimes in the spring of the year we were given motherless lambs, and we would bring these lambs into the house. They wobbled unsteadily about on their big-jointed but spindly legs, following us as we ran and played about the yard. We fed them warm milk from a bottle with a nursing nipple, and as they filled their little tummies, they wagged their little tails so fast that their whole bodies wagged too. As they grew older and stronger, they became as fat as butterballs. Sometimes we would tie on their necks pretty bows of ribbons to which tiny bells were attached. As they pranced and gamboled around the yard, the tiny bells tinkled merrily. On occasion we even dressed the lambs in little dresses; and, as they tried to walk, they would step on the hems and fall comically about. Soon our lambs would grow up, and Papa would return them to the sheep pasture with the other lambs and sheep. We would be very sad without our pet lambs and would continue filling the bottle with the warm milk for a few days. Our lambs would still come up to us bleating "ma-a-a-a" to drink the milk while we held the bottle for them.

When Papa plowed the garden each spring, we children would ride back and forth on the harrow across the newly-plowed ground, standing on a plank and holding tight to Papa's overall straps so as not to fall off. We also liked to ride the old road-drag if we were at Pa's house when he was dragging his part of the road. Each farmer took it as his duty to drag a section of the roads near his home after every hard rain. Do you remember I told you that all the roads were plain dirt ones and that the wheels on the wagons, cars and other vehicles cut deep ruts in the mud after a rain? As soon as the road had dried sufficiently, the old drag would be gotten out to smooth out the ruts by dragging dirt in to fill them up again.

The drag was homemade out of very heavy timber. It looked something like an overturned box about six feet long, eighteen inches deep and about two feet across. Two big horses would be

hitched to the road-drag to pull it, because it had to be heavy in order to smooth out the ruts. To add extra weight, a large rock or heavy pieces of iron would usually be used as ballast. Our added weight probably didn't amount to much. For some strange reason, we liked to ride this bumpy contrivance, and more than once I tumbled off backwards. We were never allowed to stand up, so that, should we fall, it would always be behind the drag.

Pa also used the old road-drag without the ballast, sometimes to bring a big barrel of fresh spring well-water up to the cistern at the house whenever it got low. On those farms and in our small town there were no waterpipes and taps to carry water into the house at a finger's touch. Every farmhouse had its rain barrel to catch extra water as it ran off the house and down the spout after a rain. This water was kept for special uses, such as shampooing and washing the fancy silks and woolens.

It was fun to "holler down" into the rain barrel: "WHO'S THERE?" and hear your echo come back, *"Who's there?"*

Windmills were quite common at that time. When sufficient wind was blowing, the big wheel on top turned 'round and 'round, pumping water from the near-by well. These windmills were used mostly to keep the watering trough near the barns filled for the stock. Of course, windmills are still used, but they are becoming more and more obsolete. Electric and gasoline motors are taking over this chore.

On these windmills there was a ladder from the ground up to a small platform near the top. Often some venturesome small child would climb up these windmill ladders, to the horror of his parents, and would have to be coaxed down or gone up after. Quite often, when the child once looked down from this height, he became frightened and wanted someone to come get him. Climbing a windmill never had any appeal to my otherwise venturesome nature.

Just to have Papa pick me up and swing me high in the air over his head, or set me on top of the tall kitchen safe, would almost petrify me with fright. I'd sit up on top of the old safe where Papa had put me, trying to dig my heels right into the

wood as I'd beg, "Please, Papa, take me down. Oh! please, I want down." He would pretend not to understand as he stood right there beside me, playing as if he were going to leave me there. He would nearly bend double with laughter as my pleas became: "Oh, pretty please, pretty, pretty please, I want down." Then he would swing me down atop his broad shoulders and go gamboling about the house, with me holding on for dear life.

On Saturdays the rural mail carrier would sometimes let two, or even three children ride around the route with him in his car. He had a Ford car, bought the same year Papa bought ours, and when the weather was good he made the route in it. Of course, if there were a rain and the roads were impassable he went on horseback.

On the days we were allowed to go "round the route," our mamas fixed a picnic lunch for us to take along, with some extra for the carrier. We were also given a nickel or dime to spend at a country store where he usually aimed to arrive at noontime. We then bought soda pop at five cents a bottle, or maybe five cents' worth of candy banana sticks, chocolate haystacks or peanut-butter-filled stick candy. Sometimes Mama wouldn't have time to fix a lunch but would give me fifteen cents; and with this I could buy more bologna, cheese and crackers than even a hungry child could eat.

In fact, a pound of cheese only cost fifteen cents, and a stick of bologna about six inches long cost one nickel. The crackers came by the bulk in large wooden boxes and barrels. A good-size loaf of bread could be bought for a nickel. We ate our lunch sitting on the edge of the high porch in front of the country store, swinging our feet back and forth under the edge of this unenclosed porch; or maybe we would sit on one of the five steps leading up to it.

On this porch, which had a roof over it and posts to support the roof, there would be quite a display of wares. There were several horsecollars and their pads, big, open gunny sacks displaying various types of corn (fine, medium and coarse grinds), a big box of chicken grit, gallon buckets stacked up and filled

with country sorghum molasses, and several empty egg cases and cream cans. All these had to be taken inside at night and returned to the open porch during the day.

As we rode along the mail route, we would stuff the mail into the boxes, taking turns for this privilege, maybe leaving a few letters, the country paper (which went to press on Fridays), and the *Missouri Ruralist,* a farm magazine, at the boxes beside the road. Of course, the mail carrier often did little errands for his patrons, such as bringing a box of groceries from the store for some housewife, bringing stamps paid for by money left in the box with a note the day before, and doing other favors and errands, slightly beyond the bounds of his duties.

The bread in those days was brought in baskets from the bakery of a town several miles away, the loaves unwrapped, and, of course, unsliced. They were dropped into brown paper bags when sold to a customer. Sometimes when we went to the store for a loaf of crusty, rich-smelling bread, brother and I would pinch a big hunk out of the soft inside; and no other store-bought bread ever tasted quite so good. But for some reason Mama never seemed to appreciate having hunks of bread pulled from these loaves.

Sliced bread, store-bought, only became common in the 1930's. Most of the bread I ate when I was a girl was made at home.

I recall a funny incident one hot summer day when Ma was taking hot, golden-brown loaves of bread from the old range oven. She had rubbed the loaves with butter, running in little greasy trickles all over its top and sides. Brother stood near by, wistfully watching and, no doubt, thinking how good a thick slab would taste. He must have decided to use some subtle flattery to help his cause because he looked up at Ma, who in spite of her sunbonnet and gloves always had a sun-tanned look, and said, "Ma, your face is so pretty—it looks just like that loaf of bread!"

CHAPTER XIII

One summer when I was about twelve years old, we were spending some weeks at Mama Gran's house and decided to walk across the pasture to a neighbor's pond. The old people who owned the pond were really only cousins to Mama Gran, but I always called them "Aunt Hallie" and "Uncle Bruce."

Aunt Hallie came down to the pond to visit with us while we fished, saying, "Jest thought I'd saunter down to watch a spell."

With that she sat down on the bank, pulled a little clay pipe from the pocket of her full-gathered skirt and, after filling it with tobacco from a small cotton sack, began puffing contentedly. Well, that was the first time in all my twelve years of life I'd seen a woman smoke—and a pipe at that! I've since learned that many of the older women smoked, especially in the pioneer days, but smoking wasn't common in central Missouri in the early 1900's until women began smoking cigarettes a few years later, following World War I.

Later, after we had had good luck pulling out little catfish and perch, ranging in sizes from six to twelve inches long, we decided to quit fishing. Taking our poles with their cord lines, corks and sinkers, we rolled the lines along the length of the poles, stuck the sharp fishhooks into the old corks, and leaned the poles up against the fence. Then we emptied the remainder of the fat fishing worms from the old tin can out into the pond.

Aunt Hallie said, "I jest took a fresh baking of bread out of the oven before I sauntered down, so iffen you'll come up to the house I'll give you a fresh loaf to take home with you to eat with your fish for supper."

When we got to the house Aunt Hallie cut a thick slice of still

warm bread from the big loaf; then, placing a covered glass butterdish of homemade butter along with a black bone-handled knife near me, she said, "Now, eat your fill."

In the meantime, Mama Gran had decided to buy a pound of freshly-churned country butter from Aunt Hallie. The butter was twenty cents for a big pound-mold of butter. This mold was round and had the imprint of a flower on the top, with leaves and fancy designs around the edges. The butter was made from rich sweet cream, beyond description in its goodness. Mama Gran handed Aunt Hallie a fifty-cent piece, so Aunt Hallie went over to the old flour chest, raised the lid, rolled up her sleeve and shoved her arm, shoulder-deep, into the flour, bringing up a little drawstring money pouch from which she produced the correct change. This was something novel in the way of a hiding place for money, to say the least.

Aunt Hallie and Uncle Bruce were the quaintest and dearest little old couple imaginable. They were a childless couple who loved all children. She dressed in an old-fashioned style, even for those days of the early 1900's. Her dresses were of the old Mother Hubbard style, hanging full and straight from the yokes of the long-sleeved waists. Over this Mother Hubbard, Aunt Hallie wore a checked gingham apron tied around her waist, the apron strings ending in a big bow at the back. On her head she usually wore an old split bonnet. Her gloves were half-handers (gloves with open finger ends), made of a black mesh-like material which was hand-knit. She carried with her a fancy little woven basket with a double handle which she could slip over her arm. She held this on her lap whenever she rode to town in the buggy.

In the basket would be a few pounds of fresh-churned, molded butter "pats" to exchange at the grocery store in turn for the few things they needed, such as salt, sugar and coffee. The farm yielded almost everything else, in one form or another. The corn for corn meal, the wheat for flour, were taken to the mill to be ground and made into these products. Even the coffee was sometimes bought as beans, while still green, then roasted and ground. Aunt Hallie was one of those housewives who clung

to the old ways though they were no longer necessary. Because they had been customary when she was young, she still continued these practices. Salt was more often bought by the big barrelful on these farms.

Aunt Hallie and Uncle Bruce had developed one modern taste—they both liked pineapple; and on the trips I remember, large cans of pineapple were always included on their list of things to get from the store with their butter money and the money from the case of eggs they also carried to town.

Uncle Bruce was just as picturesque as Aunt Hallie. He had white chin whiskers that grew on up the sides of his face; and about all of his face that could be seen were his big kind eyes, his nose, and his lips that were full and rosy-red above the whiskers. He wore homemade blue gingham shirts, and galluses (suspenders) to hold up the old, nondescript black wool trousers that had probably not been pressed for years. These were his "going-to-town pants." For everyday wear he wore black cotton trousers of a washable material, which Aunt Hallie kept "done up." On his head in summer he wore a wide-brimmed, cheap straw hat; and in winter he wore an old black plush cap, turned brownish from age.

Every Saturday it was their custom to go over to town three miles away, driving in their old buggy pulled by one old horse that plodded along the road with its head hanging dejectedly low. Neither they nor the horse ever seemed to get in a hurry, and every Saturday, rain, or shine, they stopped by Mama Gran's house to see if she would like anything from town. Whether Mama Gran had sent for anything or not, they always drove up near the back door when they returned to visit awhile. They just sat with folded arms in their buggy while they talked. On days when I would be visiting at Mama Gran's, there would also be a little paper sack of hoarhound candy they had gotten in town for me.

One of my most terrifying childhood experience happened when I was about nine years old.

One pretty day Papa hitched Dick and Dan to the carriage

and we went to Salisbury to shop. As soon as we reached town, Papa took Dick and Dan to the livery stable, intending to leave them there until we were ready for our trip home. Mama and I went about the shopping, which included a trip to the millinery shop located over a dry-goods store.

All at once we heard the fire bell ringing. Someone looked out the upstairs window and yelled, "Oh, it's the livery stable!"

Everyone in the millinery store at the time rushed to the front windows, and there, directly in front of us and down the side street, we could see great billows of black smoke interlaced with bright red flames coming out of the hay-loft windows and above the wooden-shingle roof. People were screaming as they dashed aimlessly about, horses could be heard neighing and snorting in fright, and the wooden structure that was the livery stable was going up in flames in spite of the fire wagon, itself housed inside the livery stable, and the bucket brigade hard at work.

I was nearly hysterical with fright, screaming, "Oh, our Dick and Dan are burning up," over and over again, until Papa, knowing our concern, found us and let us know most of the horses had been saved. They had been taken out the back door and down an alley, and, except for the bad fright they received, our Dick and Dan were quite unharmed. Even our carriage had been pulled to safety.

This town, like most other small towns of Central Missouri, had no adequate fire-fighting equipment, or even enough water with which to fight fires. The city water system had not been put in, and all the water available had to be hand-pumped from wells. As soon as the old fire bell was heard every man, woman and child grabbed a bucket and ran to the scene. There the men formed a human chain reaching from the nearest deep well to the blaze. While some of the men took turns pumping the water to fill buckets, others quickly handed the filled buckets from one outstretched arm to the next in line. Then they would be carried up the ladders where some men would be stationed on roofs to toss the water onto the flames or to wet down other near-by buildings. Sometimes the wells would go dry; and then, to con-

serve the remaining water supply, gunny sacks would be dipped into the horse trough and these wet sacks used to beat out the flames. Usually, when a building caught fire, all that was left afterwards was the lot.

An exception, though, was the fire at our childhood home. One day Mama, on entering our one-and-only big clothes closet with a lighted match in her hand, must either have touched some clothing with the match flame or dropped a live spark. At any rate, without realizing she had set anything afire, she closed the closet door and went about her household chores.

Some hours later one of the neighbors noticed smoke coming out from under the wooden shingles of our roof and quickly notified Mama who, upon investigation, found the big clothes closet a mass of flames. This fire was extinguished by the bucket brigade, partly because we had two deep wells full of water in our yard. But, oh! what a mess. The neighbors, in their eagerness to help, had smashed windows unnecessarily in order to pitch in buckets of water. Furniture that had been carried outside was scratched and marred and the rugs were soggy.

I was at school at the time; and though we had heard the church bells ringing out the alarm, we didn't know where the fire was until we arrived home to see the yard filled with furniture and some people still stomping about. I said to anyone who would answer, "Oh! Our house, how did it happen?"

Someone replied, "It caught in the big clothes closet. Your mama thinks she must have dropped a lighted match in there."

My first reaction to this was, "Oh! my notes! I just bet my notes burned up."

Now the notes about which I was so concerned were like those all school children secretly passed across the aisles to one another. I had received mine from the current flame of my heart, a little boy down the street. I had hidden these notes from brother and the little sisters, on a ledge over the closet door and on the inside. Needless to say, most of our clothing had been consumed by the fire; and my concern later was for more than my notes.

The mailbox for the notes from the certain little boy was in

the old corner gatepost. This was a big rough post that had been encased by lumber on all sides to make a box-like affair with a peaked top. The whole thing had been painted white. The boards had warped slightly leaving a space just right to hold a folded note. This served nicely, until brother discovered our post office.

Then I had to arrange with him to be out near the front walk, maybe swinging on the front-yard gate, whenever he went past on his way to the store. As this little boy friend went past me, he would give the crumpled-up note a toss toward me, or maybe thrust it quickly into my hand. After I had had time to read the note and write a reply, he would come back past the house. Again I'd be swinging on the front gate and would pitch the crumpled-up note out on the walk near his feet. He would quickly reach down to pick it up, shove it deep into his overall pocket and, at the same time, he would take out his pocketknife, stoop over again to pick up some little stick from the ground, and begin whittling industriously as though that was all he had on his mind.

Brothers are very nice most of the time, but they can be an awful pain in the neck at other times, as you may someday know —especially when sisters are having those first bashful dates with boys.

I'd like to tell you what brother did the night I was having my first parlor date. In the old parlor, of course heated by a stove, there were besides the chairs and a leather-covered divan a standtable where the gramophone (playing the cylinder records) was set. There was a big upright piano in one corner of the room and, in the opposite corner at an angle, was an upright folding bed with a full-length mirrored front. This folding bed, while not resembling a bed in appearance, could be pulled down and made into a bed, thus turning this parlor into a guest bedroom. Near this folding bed was a window.

My beau and I were sitting near the stove looking at some snapshots and carrying on a very self-conscious conversation. Suddenly I heard a strange, scraping noise. I said, "What was that? Did you hear a noise?"

He replied, "Well, yes, I did; and I bet it is Jim or Joe peeping in the window."

So I very nervously slipped over to the window, pulled the shade down and returned to the pictures. Almost immediately the same scraping sound was heard; and again I went over to finish pulling the shade down, as it was still up a very few inches. As I turned from the window, I caught sight of a movement behind the old folding bed.

There was brother, hanging by his fingertips to the back of the bed near the top! He was trying to climb over the top so that he could see to where my beau and I sat. The scraping noise was from his shoes as he tried to climb up and couldn't find a toehold. Not wanting to let loose, drop down and give himself away, he was just clinging by his fingertips several inches off the floor.

Another time, just before my beau came to see me, brother placed a lot of black pepper on the stove so that, as soon as we came in and opened the drafts on the stove, the pepper started burning and caused us to sneeze over and over again.

CHAPTER XIV

For the Fourth of July when I was twelve or so, the Methodist Church gave an ice cream social to help raise money to put electricity into the church. As we already had electric light from the home-owned plant in our town, it was decided to hold the supper in our big yard.

Wires were run from the house and fastened onto trees and posts; and over the naked light bulbs the women placed beautiful Japanese lanterns of paper. A big, brand-new, galvanized stock-watering tank was filled with water, and big fifty-pound chunks of ice were placed inside it. Tin drinking cups were tied on with string for everyone to use. (We hadn't become very germ-conscious in those days.) Big ten-gallon earthenware jars were filled with lemonade, rinds and all, and they, too, were cooled with chunks of ice. This lemonade was sold at the price of two glasses for a nickel.

The ice cream was all donated and, of course, homemade from rich cream and milk and other good things. There were, too, freezers of fruit sherbets—one of my favorites was called "One-two-three sherbet." Each housewife, not only the ones who belonged to the Methodist Church but others as well, gave these delicious creams and sherbets to be sold for the Church's benefit. Huge butter and angel food cakes were lined up on the tables inside the long screened-in back porch, away from the bugs and flies. These were sold with a choice of two slices of two different kinds of cake and a large dish of homemade ice cream for just ten cents; or a slightly smaller dish of cream and one huge slice of cake was sold for a nickel. Ice cream cones were piled high with the homemade ice cream and sold two for

a nickel. Most of the people from all the countryside about were there, and as soon as it was dark the Fourth-of-July fireworks started. For this, the merchants and townsmen had pooled their money and bought a large supply of Roman candles, sky rockets and whirl-a-gig wheels to throw off beautiful sparks. We children darted here and there underfoot, gathering up the empty cases of Roman candles and rockets.

For this special occasion two of my little girl friends and I had dresses made from red, white and blue bunting, like that which was used to decorate our front porch and was garlanded across the front-yard gate. Oh! it was a most enjoyable evening for everyone. The men talked of the weather as it pertained to their crops, too hot, too wet, too dry, as the case might be. The women gossiped as they worked dishing cream and slicing cakes, and we children raced and chased one another in and out of the long tables set up in the yard. These tables were made from wide boards stretched across carpenter's horses. After ten-thirty, the farm people began gathering their families to start home, and an hour later the supper was all over. Bright and early next morning, though, the town children were all back in our yard seeing if they could find any money dropped around the lemonade stand or under the tables the night before.

I've already told you of our Christmas program. We also had another church program quite similar in May or June, called "Children's Day." This day, always Sunday, the church would be decorated with any flowers blooming at the time—roses, mock orange, pink flowering almond, late purple iris, peony blossoms (if any remained after Decoration Day)—and great armloads of the spidery green asparagus would be fastened to wooden arches and bouquets of flowers interspersed with it to make elaborate settings for the program we children had been rehearsing for several weeks.

We were all dressed in our very best clothes, the girls in our new white dresses with wide ribbon sashes tied around our waists and matching bows on our curls or braids. For some of the dialogues we had special costumes to represent fairies, or

ruffled crepe-paper costumes to represent the birds of the forest. There would be a little bluebird in blue, a Jenny wren in brown, a robin redbreast with a bright red breast, and a somber crow all in black—even to an old black stocking pulled over the child's face, from which a yellow paper beak protruded. We put our whole souls into the little verses we recited concerning the special bird we represented.

I guess no letter telling of my childhood happenings would be complete without my snake story. Your Granpa teases me by saying that the very next time I tell the story the snake is going to be fastened to my skirt tail! But, regardless, this is the way I remember it.

One beautiful spring day, Fern, the little girl across the street, and I decided to go violet hunting. We went down the dusty road, past the pasture where the old red haw tree spread its wide branches, to a sunny embankment near a farmhouse. We were darting here and there, hunting the little clumps of purple violets that were shyly poking up their pretty heads amongst the leaves, when I ran right up on a snake.

I must either have stepped upon it or come very close. Just as I did so, it coiled up to its full length and jumped at me. By this time I had started running and screaming and jumped across a small ditch that ran along the roadside, screaming and running as fast as my legs could carry me.

Mr. Farthering was coming down the road from town on horseback, so when he saw and heard me, he got off his horse. As he reached my side, he said, "Whatever has happened to you, Christine?"

I replied, "A big snake jumped at me and is chasing me!"

He assured me there was no snake after me; but he insisted on my showing him where the snake was when I saw it. Finally, after much persuasion, he put me on his horse and led it down the road. I sat on the horse's back, my feet drawn up as high off the ground as I could, until we came to the place where I had seen the snake jump.

There, right beside the little ditch of water, was the snake. Yes, just as Mr. Farthering had thought from my description, it

was a big rattlesnake, very poisonous and fairly scarce in that area. He killed the snake and, later, took the thing to town where the rattles and buttons were preserved in alcohol and kept in the drugstore till the day it burned down some years afterwards.

Where was Fern all this time? Well, at the time she saw the snake strike at me, she was a few feet away. She started running just as fast and screaming just as loud, no doubt, as I, but she ran in the opposite direction away from our homes. Mrs. Thomas on the next farm down the road heard and stopped Fern, got the story from her, and soon they, too, very gingerly came back about the time Mr. Farthering and I arrived.

Another time, a year or so later, Fern and I got on the horse Papa had been training to drive cattle. He was a very favorite horse with me. "Henry," this horse, was a beautiful animal and well-trained, too, being smooth-gaited.

I was used to riding, and had ridden Henry at our county fair on different occasions, even winning blue ribbons for this feat. (Maybe it was because the judges knew my papa was president of the Fair Association.) Anyway, I was used to riding Henry, but usually with the saddle on.

On this particular day, I just threw a summer lap robe across Henry, climbed aboard from the wooden gate, and invited Fern to do likewise. Fern wasn't used to horseback riding so, just to make her feel more secure, we pulled the lap robe around the two of us and tied it by the fringe on its ends. I told her to hold on around my waist and we'd take the cow to pasture, about a half mile away.

I had promised to do this chore because Papa had gone way from home early that morning in the Ford car, taking brother with him, before the cow that furnished our milk had been led to the pasture. The cow was always driven to pasture of mornings, then driven home in the late afternoons where she stayed in the barn in town during the nights. I had performed this chore many other times, but usually after saddling Henry. But, as Mama Gran would have said, "Haste makes waste." I was in a hurry to get through, as we were to go to a county fair in an adjoining county with another little girl and her parents. We

drove the cow as fast as we could without making her actually run and, when we got to the pasture gate, she went on down the road a few yards to graze while we stopped to open the gate. As we were all tied together with the ends of the lap robe, we couldn't dismount very handily, so while I held the reins, Fern reached over to open the gate. As she did so, she tucked her heels back into Henry's flanks.

This was Papa's signal to Henry to head off cattle, so he started in a fast run to head off the old cow. Just as he got in front of her, he whirled around to drive her into the pasture. It was then that Fern and I went sailing through the air and landed in a ditch near the road. Some minutes later I came to my senses, having been knocked out for awhile, and saw Fern bending over me.

With her nose bleeding and face all scratched, she was saying, "Oh, she's dead, I know she's dead!" Well, I certainly wasn't dead, but my head and back were hurting. While we both lay there crying, a wagon carrying two men came along. They loaded us in the big wagon and took us home. No fair that day for us.

About 1916 or 1917, Papa bought a second car, this one a Ford roadster to be used for business. The old Ford touring car was used more as a family car.

In those days state driving laws had not been enacted, and brother was driving by the time he was old enough to sit on the edge of the seat and stretch his feet to the pedals and gas. Papa had first let him take over the wheel while he sat beside him. For some strange reason (the guardian angel, no doubt), he never had any serious accidents. This little roadster had a tin trunk on its rear that could be unbolted, lifted off, and a little truck bed bolted on in its place for hauling feed and the like.

One day when the truck bed was on, seven or eight children, ranging in ages from four to probably thirteen years of age (I was one of the older ones), climbed in. We all sat down flat in the bottom of the truck bed, wedged in like sardines. Brother and two or three more kids were in the seat of the roadster, brother

driving, on our way out to the country home of about four of these children. We were going uphill when, suddenly, we felt the truck bed slipping off the car. We yelled for brother to stop, but he didn't hear or pay any attention. About that moment, the thing slipped completely off and just went spat down onto the road. We didn't turn over or anything, but we had quite a jar, as you can guess. There were some bitten tongues but no real injuries. We picked ourselves and the truck bed up and, this time, made sure it was bolted on tightly before continuing our trip.

Papa hadn't gotten around to showing me how to drive, and Mama didn't drive, but one hot summer's day I decided that driving would surely be much more simple than walking to the dressmaker's where I had an afternoon appointment. Mama and Papa and the little sisters had gone some place in the touring car, but there sat the little roadster.

I cranked the thing up and started out. The car would go fairly well in low, but when I'd shift gears it would die. Then I'd have to crank the engine again with the hand crank, and soon it was dead again. The water in the radiator was chugging and boiling and steam was coming from the radiator top. It was not over a mile and a half around the road to the farm I was bound for, but all the way there and back I had trouble.

When I got back home and wanted to stop, it wouldn't stop. I ran the car over a small maple, bending it over until the strength of the tree brought the car to a stop. Well, the only thing wrong was that I had failed to release the emergency brake and had finally burned the brakes out. After that trip, Papa taught me how to drive and to release the brake when I did so.

CHAPTER XV

One Halloween three of my girl friends—Hazel, Mable and Stevie—and I decided to play a trick on three other girl friends of ours who shared a room in town while they attended school. All three girls lived some miles out in the country, but during the school week they lived in the home of an elderly widow. We knew the lady had gone to one of the neighbors' homes to spend the night as she didn't like to stay in her home alone. The girls had gone to their homes for the weekend.

We decided we would play a prank on them—and what a misplaced sense of humor we had! We climbed through an unlocked window of the girls' room, then proceeded to turn things topsy-turvy. The table was turned upside down and the dishes set as for a meal on the bottom side of the table. We tucked the covers in tightly at the head of the beds, tied knots in the sleeves and tails of the girls' gowns, and then stacked wood from the stove against the door on the inside so the door wouldn't open when they unlocked it. We giggled and had a wonderful time trying to imagine their surprise when the girls came home to find this mess.

Our fun was rather short-lived. The next morning the lady of the house either went into the girls' room through an inside connecting door or peeped in through the window. Before noon everyone in town was all agog because, as the story was told, some "boys" had entered the girls' room and had even handled the unmentionables belonging to the girls. The story, as stories do, got bigger and blacker with every retelling.

We four girls were no longer giggling or in any way amused. We just lay low until the girls returned to their room late Sunday

afternoon. Sheepishly, we followed them through the unlocked window into the house and told them we were the ones who had played the trick, aiming it all in fun, and begged forgiveness.

They quickly made light of the story when asked about it, and kept our dark secret for us. We were so anxious to make amends we even remade the beds, righted the table and carried the wood back to its proper place on the porch. Strange as it may seem, the very funny things we had done no longer seemed funny at all.

The boys' favorite trick on Halloween was to turn the privies over. Imagine their amazement on one such trip when they caught the man of the house enthroned in one of these little houses! They had turned it half over by the time the man began to yell at them. There was some fast re-righting and probably a still faster getaway by some little boys.

Sometimes some adult would hear the pranksters and be ready to surprise them, maybe slipping up behind them dressed in an old white bedsheet, like a supposed ghost's outfit, and yelling "Boo!" Quite often I would be one of the pranksters, and we would fall over wheelbarrows or run into fences and trees trying to make a fast getaway. We were a superstitious bunch, anyway.

One Halloween night we went over a mile out in the country to pull a big manure spreader into town. There were fifteen or twenty of us, and we pushed and tugged this heavy piece of machinery all the way into town and left it in front of one of the stores to block the doorway.

Sometimes some destruction resulted from the pranks, but usually we only had clean fun and caused little or no damage. But in those early 1900's, Halloween was a very special occasion for our fun and devilment. We never thought of wearing any special costumes; we just dressed warmly and ran wild.

We had parties on our birthdays, and sometimes on George Washington's. On one such George Washington party, I recall the cute little hatchets we had as favors. We played games, such as pinning on the donkey's tail while blindfolded; and when we

raised the blindfold to see the tail pinned at the wrong end, we laughed with the others. The child coming nearest to the correct location would receive some small prize. We spun the plate and bobbed for apples in a tub of water, our hands held behind us. By the 'teen age we favored "Post Office" or "Clap-in and Clap-out," both of these kissing games—if such you could count the bashful pecks on our cheeks bestowed by most of the little boys as kisses. We girls squealed, ducked our heads and pretended to be very coy, but, as I recall, we never refused to play these games and probably were the instigators.

How did we play "Clap-in and Clap-out"? Chairs were placed in a semi-circle around one big room, with a boy standing behind each chair. The girls were sent into another room and the door securely closed between the two rooms. The girls were then summoned one at a time. Each had to sit in the chair in front of the boy she thought had selected her.

In case the girl had made a correct guess, she was given a peck on the cheek, in which she usually pretended to wriggle away from the boy bestowing this kiss. In case she had chosen to sit in the chair of a boy who hadn't chosen her, all the boys clapped their hands and the blushing girl left the room until she was later recalled.

Naturally, as more and more girls found their correct chairs, the field was narrowed down. There was always a boy we didn't want to be chosen by, and we avoided sitting in those chairs as long as possible. Our "Clap-in, Clap-out" partners were supposed to be the ones we were paired with for our supper refreshments.

Children's birthday parties haven't changed much in fifty years. Presents, ice cream and cake, a few games, then it's time to go home. How strange the dress of little girls and boys around 1912 would look to little girls and boys of today! And what a sissy a little boy of that day wearing white ruffled cuffs and collars on the outside of his coat, knee breeches, a sailor cap with gold buttons and braid across the front, high-top shoes and long black stockings, would look to children of today! But again, those little girls and boys of 1912 would have stood gaping in dismay and unbelief if they had seen the sun-suits, shorts, loud sport

shirts and bare legs of today's children. We would really have been very embarrassed and shocked, I have no doubt.

Our yearly county fair was a big and widely-attended event that lasted three full days. There were many interests. Cotton candy was made while you waited beside the little candy wagon that spun this candy syrup into an airy, pink cotton mist twirled around a stick. It melted as soon as it touched our mouths. The one and only Negro family of our community had a food stand there each year where the most delicious barbecued mutton was sold that you could imagine. This mutton was barbecued in a big pit, and their stand was my very favorite of all on the ground. This old Negro man was called "Uncle Rube" by all the community and was liked and respected by everyone. His entire family assisted by cooking, baking or serving, and everything was neat and clean around their stand.

Of course, the band made things much more festive with their stirring marches and other pretty music. The home-arts tent held a wide variety of canned fruits and vegetables, jellies, pickles, the choicest fresh garden truck fixed in fancy boxes and baskets, and the largest watermelons, cantaloupes and gourds imaginable were on display. The women of the community had all kinds of quilts and fancy work to be judged for their beauty and dainty stitches. Long rows of cakes and pies were there, each one looking like a dream.

One year when I was about fourteen a Boy Scout band from a town some thirty-five miles away furnished the music. We girls thought that was the best band of all times. Of course, some of the older people did some loud complaining because a good part of the time the boys were riding the merry-go-round with the girls, and the only music heard was the music of the calliope playing "Pony Boy" and other tunes.

At our county fair one of the big attractions featured was the balloon ascension. A large balloon, complete with its passenger-carrying basket, would be filled with some kind of gas until sufficiently inflated for air travel. Then the ropes holding it down were cut loose and the balloon took off to float around over the

fair ground. Later, the man riding in the basket would parachute out, and the balloon would float down to earth, usually in some big pasture near the fair ground.

I was not allowed to attend any public dances. But my first square dance, in a private home, I had to run off to attend.

Well, really, it wasn't as bad as it sounds. Just to keep from running any chance of not being allowed to go I just failed to mention the word "dance" when I asked permission to spend the night with my girl friend Hattie, who had told me she was sure she could talk her papa into taking us to this dance. I was probably fourteen, so I wanted to look all of my years and then some. I hunted around until I found Mama's corset. To be grown up, girls needed corsets, and I hadn't yet had a real one with stays, so I just borrowed Mama's corset and her best Georgette blouse. I put them with my own new plaid taffeta skirt in a package supposed to contain only one flannelette nightgown and a clean school dress for the next day.

Hattie was an only child, and her parents were much older than most of the other girls' parents. Her mother was considered an old-maid schoolteacher when she married, and the father was even several years older. Hattie had a way of wheedling her parents into doing things the rest of us could never have managed with ours. So, sure enough, her dad hitched the old horse to a buggy and took us a few miles to the home of yet another friend whose folks were giving the dance.

I got all dressed, complete to the tight, stiff corset, the blouse and the plaid taffeta skirt. But I had placed a bottle of ink in my pocket after school, aiming to do a pen-and-ink composition required for next day's work at school, then had completely forgotten it. Almost at the dance, I suddenly felt something cold and wet on my side and discovered that the stopper had come out of my ink bottle! It had even soaked through Mama's corset. I had a wonderful time at the dance even though I was mighty worried about how to explain the ink on the corset and on my new skirt.

The next morning I went home to leave my bundle; but, not

wishing to do my explaining so early in the morning, I merely stuck the entire package behind the piano. It would have to be that day when Mama wanted her best corset and the Georgette blouse to wear to Salisbury. She searched high and low, and, no doubt, began to smell a mouse. Before I even had a chance to try my hand at washing out the tell-tale ink, I had to come clean and tell just what I had been up to.

CHAPTER XVI

A terrible flu epidemic hit the country in 1918. People were dying like flies, and it seemed that the healthiest people were often those that went first. Doctors were at a loss to know how to deal with this terrible epidemic, and were hit just as hard as others.

In our town I was among the very first to get the flu, and helped to spread it just like wildfire. Papa had taken a load of stock to the stockyards in St. Louis, and, while there, was stricken with flu. As soon as he was able, he came home, and in a day or so I was feeling very achey.

One of my girl friends was observing her fifteenth birthday with a square dance in her home, and had invited five girls, including me, for a bunking party afterwards. I ignored all my aches and pains and spent the evening "doo-ce-dosing" as I went from partner to partner. The next day was Sunday, so we all attended Sunday school and church; and by that time I was very feverish and ill.

I did sleep all afternoon and through the night but managed to get up and go to school Monday morning, as I wanted to make the Honor Roll and have a perfect attendance record. About recess time, I hardly knew where I was, but I started out to get my wraps in the hall. Then I simply blacked out.

The teacher sent me home, and there I stayed for quite some weeks. Naturally, I had scattered flu germs all over the countryside. Our two doctors were kept busy day and night until they, too, fell victims. About all they knew to do was to give aspirins, niter (for the high fever) and castor oil. However, one night when I was sicker than usual, Mama sent for Dr. Gray and then

crawled back to her bed, as she and the other children were, by this time, also ill.

Dr. Gray always tasted any medicine he prescribed before giving it to his patients. He had his medicine bag open on a near-by table, and he would take up first one bottle, then another, to take a swig, then pour a little of this and some of that in the little bottle he was preparing for me. All at once it got him. He hurriedly left the room and went outside the house, where he heaved Jonah. When he was able, he returned to my bedside, before leaving, to sit with me until he had me eased down and asleep.

When there was sickness, the coal-oil lamps were used in place of the glaring electric light in the center of the room, to give a softer light. As he left, he must have turned the light down. At any rate, I later awakened, choking on smoke, and called to Mama. When she came in, the entire room was filled with smoke and soot. She said I was as black as any of Rube's children. She was too sick to do anything more than hurriedly carry the lamp out in the yard where it continued to burn all night without exploding, in spite of the fact that the flame had gotten down into the bowl of the lamp.

Next morning a dear old lady we all called "Aunt Jo" came up to help. It was she and one of my girl friends who got me cleaned up once more. Schools, churches and all public gatherings were closed. In spite of the many serious cases of flu, not one person in this little town or near-by countryside died. In all the other little towns around there were deaths, it seems, to help swell the fast-growing death lists for the country.

In the army camps many of our soldiers died. By Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, I had recovered, but brother was still ill. The entire country went wild on that day. Our little town was only one small part of this panorama of excitement. The Christian Church was nearest the center of town, and all day long and far into the night its bell was kept ringing continuously. People jumped and screamed until they were exhausted and had lost their voices. Then they rang cowbells, beat on tin dishpans, washboards or any other thing to make noise. The old anvil from

the blacksmith shop was used to fire black powder. People grabbed one another to shake, hug and kiss, shouting over and over, "It's Armistice! Our boys will be coming home with the Kaiser for a souvenir!" Then they would break into popular songs of that period, as well as many parodies of these. Before many weeks the trains were rolling the boys across the country to their homes and loved ones—that is, many returned, while many others slept in Flanders fields.

I would like to tell you about another November 11th—this one in 1911. The day was a beautiful, unusually warm day. People were going about in shirt sleeves and children were playing without wraps. Others were going to town in big wagons or buggies to attend to shopping and other business. Very suddenly a cloud was seen coming up fast, and in only minutes rain was falling. It quickly turned to sleet, hail, then snow. All the while, of course, the temperature was dropping rapidly, so that in less than an hour's time the summery day turned into a regular winter blizzard. In fact, the mercury dropped 26 degrees in ten minutes—and from 80° to 8° in eighteen hours. This November 11th held *both* high and low records in mid-Missouri until 1949. I've heard many people talk about this day, and many people actually suffered severely trying to get to their homes. Naturally, they had dressed in much lighter clothes than were needed. The snow was so heavy and falling so thick and fast people even had difficulty seeing the roads.

Rouge and powder weren't openly worn, but most women, nevertheless, had little dusting bags. The women gingerly patted these to their pale faces, and quite often a piece of red crepe paper, left from making the homemade flowers popular for home decorations, was lightly rubbed against the cheeks to put color there nature hadn't given them. Sometimes a piece of turkey red calico was slightly dampened to rub on their cheeks. I have to giggle to myself when I look at my brightly-painted red fingernails today and try to imagine how very risqué it would have been about 1917 should anyone have thought of dabbing red stuff on her nails. We did sometimes use colorless wax and then

buff our nails with our buffers until they fairly shone. Nail polish was unheard of, at least by us.

About this time a little "whitening," as Mama Gran called it, was being very brazenly worn by 'most all the girls. We had pale pink tints, and white powder and talcums which suited my fair coloring fine; but I can imagine these delicate tints were a little out of place on the brunettes. We applied our powder with little chamois skins, which we called our "shammies." The shammies were sometimes quite fancy, and one of my first ones had a wide hand-crocheted edge around it made of a varicolored silkaleen thread. We carried our shammies down the necks of our dresses (in our bosoms, as we said), and pulled them out occasionally to dab a little more powder on our faces. Anyone wearing enough "paint" on her face to be really noticeable was considered "fast."

Behind our ears we wore dabs of perfume that we bought at the drugstores by the bulk from big jars of white rose, lilac and lily of the valley on their shelves. For twenty-five cents we got a sizable vial of perfume.

We carried fans as a part of our Sunday summer musts, both young and old persons. Some fans were of silk, or paper in colors, either dainty or gaudy as the person's taste dictated, and most were of the collapsible type. One of my favorite ones, though, was made of little celluloid strips hand painted with dainty blue-and-pink forget-me-nots, and the little strips were laced together with blue satin ribbon. When not in use this little fan folded up, and I carried it on my wrist by its cord.

Beauty parlors were "as scarce as hens' teeth," and permanent waves were an unheard of thing. But women the world over have always had their vanities. Little Grandma said that before curling irons were even heard of she used to heat an old iron poker in the open fireplace and wrap her hair around it to get her curls.

Instead of perfume, she wore dried rose petals and lavender tied up in little bags around her neck, as well as keeping some of these sachets tucked among her folded-away clothing in her trunk and bureau drawers.

Rings were often worn on the index fingers by the older people in those days. I have an old brooch worn by one of my great-great-grandmothers that is made much like a little gold picture frame, oval-shaped and covered with glass. In this a little tin-type picture or a lock of hair was placed. The one I have has a little tin-type picture in it.

Tin-type pictures were family photographs made on tin and sometimes colored, usually just the cheeks and face. This method was outdated before my time, but it was much used before the Civil War. I still have several of these tin-types of our ancestors.

Women's styles changed very drastically after World War I. Silk stockings of a heavy glove silk, mostly black, were glimpsed above their shoe tops whenever the girls stepped up on the high running boards of the latest model cars. The skirts were tight and split up the side. Brightly colored taffeta petticoats that showed through the slits in the skirts were worn, and they made a rustling, swishing sound as the wearers strolled along the wooden sidewalks, balancing gay umbrellas over their heads, or coquettishly twirling them. Sheer Georgette waists were worn; showing through them were fancy camisoles, with laces and ribbons galore.

From these styles we went into the true "flapper" period, with our flattened chests, long-waisted dresses, bobbed hair, spit curls, low shoes and silk stockings. A few girls smoked cigarettes, more or less on the sly, and openly wore rouge in round spots on their cheeks. At school girls were wearing bloomers and middies to play basketball and volleyball. These bloomers were of black sateen or twill, made very full and reaching below our knees, where the elastic in the bottom of the legs allowed the bloomers to blouse over. They really looked more like skirts than pants, but we were considered pretty bold by some of the older people. Our white middy blouses had big sailor collars, V-necks (in which we wore dickies), their bottoms folded up just below waist-length and were pinned over with big safety pins to fit snugly. Under these sailor collars we wore big three-cornered ties of black satin, the point in the back extending below the collar and the ends tied in front in a slip knot.

We still wore our hair in rolls and puffs containing "rats," and when we played basketball, we tied a wide ribbon (usually black or red) around our heads, with huge standing-up loops right in front. On our legs we wore heavy black cotton stockings, and on our feet white-canvas, rubber-soled shoes lacing up above our ankles. We wore these blouses and ties together with pleated-all-around skirts much of the time for school and other activities.

CHAPTER XVII

In the early 1900's there were many bands of gypsies going across the country in covered wagons pulled by skinny old horses. Extra horses were tied to the rear of these wagons which were full of men, women and children and followed by dozens of dogs. These gypsies were dark-skinned people, very carefree and happy-acting, never seeming to work, just traveling about from place to place from late spring to the fall. Then they disappeared, as far as we were concerned, until another year rolled around. It was fun to see a band of gypsies come straggling through town, the bright-eyed gypsy children peeping out of the covered wagons at us as we stared open-mouthed at them. We were probably half-envious of the seemingly carefree way they traveled with old buckets, pots, lanterns and many other things tied to the backs of their wagons or swinging down under them.

The women wore colorful full-gathered skirts and blouses, turbans on their heads and great hoop earrings dangling from their ears. These earrings and costumes would look less strange nowadays than then. They wore many strands of big, bright-colored beads around their necks and many bracelets on their arms. Their coarse black hair hung in big braids down their backs. The men wore wide-brimmed hats with colorful hatbands, and sometimes they, too, wore turbans and earrings. They were usually coatless, with their shirt sleeves torn off at the elbows. The children were dressed in a very slipshod manner, as though they had been given anything to wear that their mamas and papas had discarded.

Some gypsy bands drove on through town without stopping.

Our own dogs usually tried to show their authority and ran after the dogs following the gypsy wagons out of town, sometimes getting up quite a dog fight. Whenever the gypsies did stop, their children ran about begging food and money, the women tried to tell fortunes, and some were very bad about picking up our things and easily concealing them in the big roomy pockets of their full skirts. Merchants would sometimes lock up their stores when they were warned of one of these bands approaching town.

We children, while very curious, always stayed well away from the gypsy wagons, as there were many tales of little white children being carried away by the gypsies. These were generally "old wives' tales." Someone knew someone else who knew about a white child whom the gypsies had kidnapped and whose parents had never recovered their child but had continued to search eagerly for it in every gypsy band long after the child would have grown up. Each of us added something of his own to these stories until they became very blood-curdling. As I think back, the stories indeed seem groundless, as children in those gypsy bands were as numerous as Spotty's kittens and seemed just as carefree. I doubt if any white children were desired.

Between our little town and Pa's house there was a favorite stop where they often made camp for several days. When we went by at such times we would see the women cooking over outside fires. There would be clothes hanging on buck-bushes and blackberry vines to dry. The children would stop their play to watch us as we drove by, but the men always seemed to be just lolling around on the ground smoking their pipes. The horses belonging to the gypsies would be wandering up and down the roadside and grazing.

There were no movie houses in our little Missouri town in those early 1900's, but around 1916 or 1917 a few outdoor movies were shown to us. An exhibitor took these films and projectors from town to town for one-night appearances.

The vacant lot near one of the white-painted store buildings served the purpose nicely. The white wall served as the screen, and, as it was a weather-boarded building, the pictures on this

surface had a wavy look. We sat on crude, backless benches made up of boards placed on nail kegs and wooden boxes. There were no voices speaking the lines—just captions in little box-like spaces near the characters, to be read by the audience. This made the movie of yesterday a little like the comic pages of newspapers today. Of course, there were many people who considered it their privilege to read every line aloud as it appeared on the screen, just for the pleasure of hearing their own voices, but much to the annoyance of others near by. Mamas and papas, of course, had to read them aloud to their small children who could not read. These children would be asking, "What's he saying? Mama? Is she really going to fall off the cliff, eh, Mama? Is she?" What those movies may have lacked in finesse they more than made up in tense drama.

You can well imagine that the dialogues were often long and, for lengthy intervals, no actors or actresses would appear on the screen—just explanations, conversations and the sound of the reading aloud. So, strictly speaking, though we had no amplifiers bringing the voices to us, they were far from silent, these "silent movies."

In the 1950's again we are enjoying outside movies whenever we go to sit in the comfort of our parked cars and watch the scenes on a large, correctly-placed screen with a speaker for each car and every modern convenience near at hand. What a contrast to those silent movies under the stars seen on the crude screen I remember!

The first inside movie I ever saw was in the City Hall at Salisbury, and it was "Birth of a Nation." My first romantic movie was "Daddy Longlegs," starring Mary Pickford.

The Chautauqua came to two of our neighboring towns for a week's run each summer, and we attended some of these performances. I remember seeing "Ben Hur" enacted on the stage, complete to the chariot.

One of my favorite programs had trained canaries and bright-feathered parrots in the act. These birds pushed little baby carriages (scaled to the bird's size) across a big table on the stage,

carried around cute little paper umbrellas sticking up from their wings, and were dressed in little clothes to represent the members of a family.

There was also a trained horse advertised as "able to talk." At first its owner put it through several tricks, then he asked the horse questions, such as, "How old are you?" The horse would nod its head as it pawed out "One, two, three, four." The owner, with a great show of seeming surprise, would say, "That's right, folks, he *is* four years old. Smartest horse in the world today."

For the more serious and adult programs there were great orators, such as William Jennings Bryan, who made these Chautauqua circuits. Name bands and orchestras, too, followed a summer circuit and appeared one day at each town. The Chautauqua was held in a big canvas tent carried by these troops of people and set up on a vacant lot. Most of the seats were long benches, with one board along the back as a back rest, while, up near the front of the tent, there were a few folding wooden chairs sold as reserved seats.

The stock companies were also very popular with young and old alike. These stock companies had nothing to do with animals, as the name might imply, but were stage plays given by traveling companies setting up their tents on vacant lots for a one week's stay. The same troop put on a different play each night.

My favorite stock company was called the "Princess Stock Company," and was owned by Arthur and Iola Ward. He usually played the part of a green country oaf, while his wife played the heroine's part. I thought she looked like a real fairy princess, she seemed so beautiful in her fancy stage clothes and make-up. Popcorn, peanuts and candy kisses (containing prizes) were sold between the acts by hawkers going up and down the aisles while the scenery was being shifted and the next scene gotten ready. On Saturday nights a diamond ring was always given away to the holder of the lucky ticket.

During each performance of the Monday-to-Saturday shows, Arthur (Toby) Ward himself would appear on the stage between acts to tell the audience of the diamond ring to be given away on Saturday night. He would say: "Yes-s-s, Ladies and

Gentlemen, a beautiful diamond ring will be given away absolutely free to the holder of the lucky number. Sometimes I go crazy and give away *two* diamond rings—and I'm feeling crazier every minute! So be sure to attend the show Saturday night to get your diamond ring."

The diamond was, of course, very tiny; but the lucky winner was the envy of all present. Though I attended these shows many times, I never did see Arthur (Toby) Ward go crazy enough to give away more than one of these rings come Saturday night.

CHAPTER XVIII

Speaking of diamonds reminds me that many precious golden moments have slipped quietly past while I've been lost in my memories of those five little "C's" and their doings in those early 1900's. This little "C," as in story books, grew up; and while many "may wish for the moon," as the saying goes, I was a lucky one and got him!

Maybe some day I'll write you another letter, my darling little namesake, to tell you some of the other joys that have been mine. But right now I feel very much as, I imagine, "Old Rip Van Winkle" must have felt when he awakened to the fact of passing time. Yes, I've been lost in this, and now I find that more than three years have passed since I first picked up my pen and paper to write to you. In the meantime, my prayer has been answered, and I've held you in my arms to tell you some of the little stories Mama Gran told me and to sing you some of her same little songs (in just as untrained a voice), but you liked them! Again you are in your eastern city home, and I want to get this finished and in the mail.

Now there are two more darling grandchildren, one a sweet little boy who has been named for your "Grampa" and is your little cousin. He is dimpled-cheeked and dear, and was born on a fine May day. The other is a darling little new sister born in November, my birth-month.

I'm so happy I've even written a little piece of poetry.

GRANDCHILDREN

The first grandchild is such a dear,
You cannot think there'll be another
So fine and dear; but never fear—

The second one, just like the other,
Has found your heart, with plenty room
Still left to share with yet another.
Each one is dear as life itself,
Love sprouts anew with each new bloom,
And each is dear for its own self.

I'm also pleased with the name you call me by, "Nana." "Grampa" smiles broadly each time you call him that; and, I might add, finding a name for my mama to please you gave us all some trouble. For awhile it was even "Mrs. Mama," until you finally settled on "Gran-Mama." So life rolls on.

Darling, as you grow older and wiser you'll see that life never stands still. It is not like a gem already polished, or a beautiful flower already in bloom. It is rather like a tiny, planted seed that will grow into beauty by constant care, in spite of wind, rains and storms, until it gradually comes to blossom. Life is full of crises, but they are needed for strong growth; indeed, without them life might well be a dull affair. We need the rains of life to enjoy our sunshine more fully. In childhood the crises may be a broken doll, a lost pet or an injured toe.

So life goes from one level to the next, each bringing its joys, its sorrows, temptations, victories and loves.

Only two of these loves will I take time to mention now. The greatest thrill a mother's heart knows is the thrill of holding her newborn babe in her arms. Then, as the cycle is completed and this mother becames a grandmother, it is to hold this dear new life, the grandchild, in loving arms. These joys and many more have come my way. So from the fullness of my heart, and the knowledge that all little boys and girls like to have told to them the "things Grandmothers did when they were little girls," I send you this, with my love.

"Nana"