Life With Mother

1937

Clarence Day

NOTE

Most of the chapters of this book were published before Clarence's death, but some were still in manuscript. These had to be sorted carefully because he had a habit of writing on whatever scrap of paper was handy--backs of envelopes, tax memoranda, or small pads of paper which he could hold in his hands on days when they were too lame for the big ones.

We talked daily about his father and mother and I knew perfectly the material he had in mind to use. Then I found, as I read and sorted the manuscripts, not only had he told it to me, but that he had written it down. Clarence had done all but the last chores involved in preparing a manuscript for a typist. All that remained to be done was the mechanical job of piecing together the incidents so

that they could be copied. His work on his father and mother was finished.

There was one exception: Mother's last home was so characteristic of her and meant so much to her that, following notes, and copying from Clarence's diary, I inserted a description of her last days.

When he was alive Clarence used to speak of what the interest of his friends, his brother George Parmly Day and his wife, and Mr. Knopf and his staff had meant to him. It would not be fair to publish this book without thanking them for their continuing kindness; and also thanking two of his friends especially: Mrs. Alice Duer Miller and Mrs. Katharine S. White, for their ever-ready and helpful criticism.

Katherine B. Day

June 1937

The most authentic witnesses of any man's character are those who know him in his own family, and see him without any restraint or rule but such as he voluntarily prescribes to himself.

DR. JOHNSON

With acknowledgments to the editors of *The New Yorker, The Ladies' Home Journal, The Saturday Review of Literature,* and the *Literary Review* of the *New York Evening Post,* in which periodicals these chapters first appeared.

CONTENTS

MOTHER READS MY ARTICLE TO FATHER

There has been some discussion in the Day family, among its members and friends, of the things that I say about Father and Mother. One of their objections is that in several places I haven't been accurate. I have tried to be, but memories are sometimes inexact, and mine is no exception.

However, these pieces have been subjected to a great deal of scrutiny, helpful and otherwise, from members of the family who have sometimes remembered things differently. Cousin Julia for instance insists that Mother's musicales occurred in the evening, whereas I have described one as taking place in the late afternoon. I feel sure that in this case I am right, for we used to write each other long letters about family doings and these have given me

contemporary accounts of the scenes I've described. Other scenes have come down through the years as family anecdotes. Since I was an actor in most of them they have remained dramatically printed on my mind. Besides, any memories of two such persons as Father and Mother are bound to be vivid.

The other family objection is that in printing these stories I have not been decently reticent. My feeling was that these two persons were so utterly themselves, so completely natural and true, that the only good way to tell about them was to paint them just as they were.

The first article I printed about them was written one night when I needed an extra paragraph for a column which I was occasionally writing, that year, for the literary supplement of the New York *Evening Post.*

On a visit to Father and Mother one summer I found that they had a new dog He was leading a happy and interesting life with them, but a somewhat bewildered one too. I had made a note in my diary of the following instance:

My father is fond of dogs. Likes to train them. His method is this: He says to the new dog, "Good Jackie," or whatever the name is. The dog wags his tail. "Come here," says my father; "come here, boy." The dog looks at him doubtfully. My father, who hasn't a great deal of patience, raises his voice: "Come! Come here, sir!"

The dog grows alarmed and tries to get out.

My father advances upon him, repeating, "Come here!" with increasing annoyance and sternness.

"I wish you'd let Jackie alone," says my mother. "He doesn't know what you want of him."

"Pooh! Of course he does," declares my father. "He knows damn well. Come *here,* sir!" And he drags the new dog from under the sofa.

"Sit up," he instructs him. The dog is utterly limp. "Sit up. Come! Sit up." He shakes his finger at him. "Sit up, sir!"

"Oh, please don't," says my mother. "How *can* you expect the poor thing to sit up when he doesn't know a word that you're saying!"

"Will you let me alone?" shouts my father. "Sit *up,* sir! Sit *up!"*

My mother goes to the door. "I'll not stay here and see that dog frightened to death."

"Frighten!" my father says, testily. "What nonsense! I know dogs. They all like me."

The dog sees the door being opened and suddenly bolts.

My father grabs fiercely at him. In vain. "Confound it!" he says, in a passion. "Now see what you've done! You've spoiled my whole plan." He stamps.

"You could never--" my mother begins.

"I COULD!" roars my father. "But I can't do a thing if I'm interfered with. Where's that dog gone? JACKIE! Here, Jackie! Come here, sir!"

I copied this fragment out of my diary, tucked it in as a filler, and when it appeared I showed it to Mother.

"I remember that day," she said. "That's just the way he always treats dogs." She hurried off with the clipping to where Father was, in the library. "Here, Clare," she said triumphantly, "read this!"

Father read it in his usual slow, careful, methodical way, taking note of each word. He looked up at Mother with a smile of satisfaction and sympathy. "I hope you'll behave yourself after this," he chuckled, "that's just how you kept interfering with my training that dog."

This emboldened me to try my hand at describing a few other incidents of our family life, scenes which I felt were too good to remain buried for ever. They came out in *Harper's.* Every time one appeared it became a subject of debate between Father and Mother. For some reason or other, perhaps because they were without self-consciousness, the publicity seemed to be of small or no concern to them, so long as each felt I had been strictly accurate and presented his or her side so clearly that the other should blush. Neither of them ever did blush, however. They got so provoked at each other once or twice, because of this,

that they went back and re-fought the whole battle.

These sketches were read by other persons, friends of theirs--including some who had felt rather buffeted, when they had been our guests, by the sudden indoor squalls or tornadoes that characterised our family life. They told me that these stray fragments had made them understand Father better.

Strangers wrote to me that this or that member of their own families was very much like Father. The effect upon most of these readers was to enroll them as Father's friends.

So a few years after Father and Mother died I began again describing old scenes.

These characters may or may not be Father and Mother. All I can say is that they are Father and Mother as I saw them.

MOTHER AND FATHER MEET

Father, although spirited and jolly, was a clear-eyed and careful young man. He was methodical about arranging his life, step by step. He did things one at a time.

Until he got married he continued to live with his parents. He ate out a good deal, but he didn't approve of living in lodgings--it would have made him feel lonely--and he saw no reason to set up a home of his own until he had a wife to put in it.

He was a self-reliant young man however. He had made his own way from the start. It wasn't until he was twenty-one and had had nearly seven years' business experience that he asked any favours of Grandpa, and all he then asked for was a loan of three thousand dollars (at six per cent.) to buy a seat on the Stock Exchange. This was in 1866. He and another young man, Fisher

Johnson, formed a firm of their own, and by the time Father was twenty-five he was becoming well seasoned. He had gone through the panic of '69 and Black Friday, and had begun to make money. He then started in to arrange the other sides of his life.

One of the first things he did was to throw out the furniture that his parents had put in his bedroom, and buy and install a set to his liking--a solid brown walnut bed and bureau, chiffonier, chairs and table that he used for the next forty years. This set also included a carved upright desk with places for his files and account books.

His next step was to buy a little clavier keyboard and learn finger-exercises. When he had exercised his fingers enough to warrant it, he bought a piano and hired an old German musician to teach him how to play.

What with Father's intolerance of the old family furniture, and his criticisms of old family ways, and his pounding determinedly night after night on his piano, Grandpa began to get restive. But Grandma, to whom Grandpa was silently but deeply devoted, interceded for Father every time things came to a head and managed from one day to another to smooth Grandpa down.

Grandpa tried to be patient, on the theory that his son would soon marry. Father seemed to be planning to propose to a cousin of his who lived in West Springfield. They must have had some understanding between them for he gave her a ring and a watch. But they soon had a quarrel. They decided they had made a mistake, and the ring was returned.

Disappointing as this was to Grandpa it did not interrupt Father's programme; it merely changed a little the order of the

steps he was planning. He joined a club and went there regularly to see other men and play billiards. He disliked to visit ordinary billiard parlours. He had made up his mind they were low. As to drinking, he took wine with his dinner, and beer or ale with his lunch, but he didn't drink at bars or between meals because that was a poor way to do it.

In 1869 he found that he could get away for a few months from business and he thereupon treated himself to a vacation abroad. He had several things to attend to, in Europe. He went to the best watchmaker in Switzerland and selected a watch so much to his taste that he wore it for the rest of his life. It was a solid, good-looking gold watch with a cover that Father had to snap open, and it had to be wound with a key. When I was a young man it seemed out of date, but it kept perfect time.

After getting just the right watch, he went to London to get proper clothes. The one place that you could rely on to know all about clothes was Poole's. Father ordered only enough clothes at Poole's for his immediate needs, but he left them his measurements, and thus felt this whole matter satisfactorily settled and off his mind, like his watch and his furniture.

From that time on, Poole sent him samples of cloths every year, and Father ordered a suit or an overcoat or whatever he needed. He took good care of his clothes, and he never had many at once, but they had to be right. The only trouble was that in later years, when he put on more weight and when he went to England less frequently, Poole's clothes didn't fit. A sturdy well-made box would arrive, through the Customs, and underneath all the layers of tissue paper would be a handsome dress suit. Upon trying to force himself into it, Father

didn't feel comfortable--the damn thing wouldn't button. He would thereupon get into a cab with this suit and go to his Fifth Avenue tailor, a most supercilious man, to whom Father never gave any business except repairs or refittings. He would unwillingly alter Poole's things, as directed, at the same time pointing out to Father--without any effect--that he would do much better to buy his clothes in New York in the first place. In reply, Father would admonish the tailor to make a better job of the alterations than he had last time, and he would add that he would be glad to buy his things in New York as soon as he could find any tailor here who knew how to make clothes.

Each time he went abroad, he would revisit Poole and adjure him to get his measurements right; and after that, at least for a year or two, there would be a season of peace, when everything that arrived fitted him perfectly, and when

the Fifth Avenue tailor was given no work to do except to clean and repair Poole's new masterpieces. But after a while Father would gain a few pounds again. This was always an unwelcome surprise and he disliked to admit to himself it was true. Although he never skimped himself on his food, he thought that he ate very little. So whenever new difficulties came upon him, trying to button Poole's clothes, he would never send Poole any new measurements--he didn't see how he could have changed. At the most he would mention, when he wrote, that the clothes shouldn't be so damned tight. This worried Poole, who hated to guess as to where and how to make changes.

Father came back from his first trip to Europe with his watch and his good clothes from Poole, like a Columbus who had discovered a pleasant and useful new world. He had taken his ease in its cities, he had enjoyed the orderly loveliness of The Hague and the solid

richness of London, and everywhere he had seen what taste and time could do for homes in the country. He had no wish to live among Europeans for he looked down on them, somehow, but he respected them too for the contributions they had made to his comfort. He was especially charmed with their cookery, their wines and their manners.

The next year, 1870, when he was twenty-five, he went over again. He wanted to see more of Europe. He also wanted some shirts.

Sailings in those days were early. Father arrived at the dock at seven in the morning, and looked over the ship. It was the *St. Laurent* of the French Line, an iron vessel of three thousand tons, painted a soft grey and green, and equipped with eight lifeboats. A liner of nine or ten thousand tons is considered tiny to-day, and most of them are from twenty up, but the *St. Laurent* seemed

stately to Father, with her tall masts and white sails. She was rigged as a bark but she had engines too of course. They were of over nine hundred horsepower. Also, *"grand innovation pour l'époque,"* she was one of the new type of ships equipped with a little iron propeller instead of side paddle-wheels.

There was a great crowd on the dock, or what seemed like one in 1870, for this splendid ship had accommodation for two hundred first-cabin passengers. As Father made his way on board, past the bulky flounces and skirts of the ladies, he saw a man he had met on the Stock Exchange, Alden B. Stockwell. Red moustache, bushy flowing red whiskers, ten years older than Father--a dignified and powerful man who had come to New York from Ohio. Alden Stockwell was saying goodbye to his brother, Levi, and to their little sister, who was seventeen but who still wore her hair in a red braid down her back. Girls were younger at

seventeen then than now. They were kept in school until the very last minute, when they suddenly "came out" as young ladies. Father was introduced to Levi Stockwell and this schoolgirl, his future wife, and the *St. Laurent* sailed.

Levi got seats for the three of them together at table, so that his little sister wouldn't have to sit next to some stranger. This was an exceedingly agreeable arrangement for a sociable young man like Father, who liked company but who was too formal to pick up acquaintances.

Everybody was formal. "Even upon a ship, men preserve the habits of society," a Frenchman of the seventies wrote. "They are careful of their dress, their manners, their conversation, the effect they may produce upon others; each strives to assume his most *distingué* air. The ladies, who, thanks to the privileges which custom readily grants them, are

always inpenetrable even to those who are their acquaintances, become even more impenetrable on a voyage, among the wraps, the shawls, the thick veils which transform them into travelling sphynxes."

There were a number of South American passengers on board the *St. Laurent,* dark and talkative men who couldn't speak English. They chattered on deck day and night, volubly and rapidly, and sometimes they woke Father up. It annoyed him. He told Levi Stockwell, he told everybody he met, what an infernal nuisance these Spaniards were getting to be.

Levi said nothing, but the next morning he got up very early. The decks were deserted. He took up his stand just outside the open porthole of Father's cabin, and putting his mouth as close to it as he dared he rapidly repeated all the Spanish words that he could think of.

There were less than a dozen but he muttered them over and over. The effect was one of a bevy of Spaniards engaged in an endless dispute.

Levi, who was keeping his ear cocked, soon heard sounds inside Father's cabin, where a sleepy young man was loudly saying "Damn" to himself, in his berth. Levi's Spanish instantly became low and soothing. Father's mutterings stopped. But after he had had time to go back to sleep, the Spanish voices again grew excited, and they soon became so noisy and urgent that Father sprang out of bed

"I swear those fellows gabble all night," he said to little Miss Stockwell at breakfast.

Strange to say, this Mr. Day had a letter of introduction to Dr. George Parmly of Paris, who was one of the Stockwell family's own cousins and the one Mother later loved best. But as to whether she liked this Mr. Day, she seemed far from

sure. One day he called to the waiter: "Here, bring that back, I want some more--that is *good."* Mother told him, "There are other people here besides you!" "He makes me so mad," she wrote her mother.

Young Mr. Day didn't mind that in the least. He found this schoolgirl great fun. He promenaded the deck with her on breezy days, with her veils flying and her skirts billowing out, and on foggy days he placed her chair where the cordage and yards wouldn't drip on her. He brought her hot cups of tea. And when the weather grew rough and she was too ill to stir, he and Levi took turns carrying her up on deck for a breath of fresh air.

The air wasn't good down below. Even that Frenchman, when he wrote of his travels, spoke about the closed portholes At night, he said, "the atmosphere below is warm and heavy, and silence reigns,

only broken by the regular breathing of the sleepers."

The *St. Laurent* made eleven or twelve knots in good weather but only about six in storms, and by the time she reached port Father had definitely attached himself to the two Stockwells. Flowers and trees were in bloom when they landed. They went to spend May in Paris. And in between seeing sights with his new friends Father did what he'd come for, he went to Jourdain et Brown's shop in the Rue Halévy and had himself measured for shirts. He got his shirts, socks and handkerchiefs from them most of the rest of his life. The handkerchiefs were always plain white with white monograms on them, but the French socks were sometimes very gay and lively in colour for Father, who was in all other respects most conservative in his manner of dressing. I think he permitted himself to wear them because he thought they were hidden.

As with his clothes, Father had trouble with his shirts in later life, for he began to get thick in the neck, and he had to stretch his throat violently, to get his French shirts to button. They were stiff white shirts, made open-front, and with stiff standing collars attached, and he got very red in the face getting into them, dressing for dinner at night. They were made in such a way, as was then the custom, that he had to pull them on over his head; he would thrust his arms out through the sleeves and come bursting out at the top. The cuffs were stiff of course, and had rounded corners. At times when the fashion changed, cuffs would be made with square corners for years, but not Father's. His cuffs had originally been rounded, and rounded they stayed. Also, on every one of his shirts, all his life, there was a little starched tab with a buttonhole in it, in front, at the waistline. The original purpose of these was to hold up a man's

drawers, but Father never used them for that, or for anything else. Yet, late in his life, when he was finally driven to order some shirts in New York, and when Kaskel objected to putting tabs on, asking what they were for, Father said roundly that he didn't happen to remember, but he wanted them put on just the same.

In his old age his sons used to urge him to wear soft shirts and be comfortable, at least in the country in summer. He finally consented to try one. But before putting it on he examined this outlandish thing with a frown, and went down to breakfast very slowly in it, feeling (he said) indecent. By lunch-time he had gone back upstairs again, and put on a stiff one.

On the night that Father came back from his first trip to Jourdain et Brown's, when he went in to dinner, Levi refused to shake hands with him. Levi was

carefully holding on to his right hand as though it were some precious object. He would allow no one to touch it. He could never use it to shake hands with common people again, he declared, or with anyone else except monarchs, because that hand had been shaken that very afternoon by the Emperor. Some fellow-officer had introduced Levi to the court at the races.

Two months later war had suddenly broken out, the Battle of Sedan had been fought, and the Emperor was being led away as a prisoner in the hands of the Germans. By the following January the Parisians were eating cats, eating horses, and hungrily paying a franc apiece even for rats.

But nobody dreamed of these terrible things in Paris that spring. Levi Stockwell hurried around attending to the matters of business in which his brother Alden was interested, and their little red-

headed sister went out walking with young Mr. Day. He and she visited the galleries and cathedrals together, they drove together to pay their respects to good Dr. George Parmly, and just as those new shirts were ready and he was preparing to leave, young Mr. Day began to discover that he had fallen in love.

FATHER VISITS THE WAR

Mother was only eight years old in April 1861, when the Civil War started, but all her four brothers were older, and two of them went to the front. Brutus Stockwell, the youngest, was away at school, in France. Alden, the eldest, was tied up in business in Cleveland, where the first shiploads of ore had begun to arrive from the Great Lakes. But Levi got a commission in the navy and served under Farragut, and Norris was one of the youngest captains of infantry to march with Sherman through Georgia. All four brothers were lively by nature--athletic, red-headed men.

The Stockwells lived in Ohio, the Days in New York, and in the sixties the two families never had heard of each other. Physically they were rather alike. Father was athletic and lively, and he had red hair too, but he was only sixteen when

the war began and Grandpa didn't want him to go. Grandpa, though he had voted for Lincoln, had hoped that war wouldn't come, and when it did come he was disgusted--but Grandpa was fifty. Father wasn't disgusted, he was interested and pleased. He was working downtown in New York, in Gwynne & Day's office, the firm in which his elder brother was the junior partner. In the evenings when he came home from business he sat by the lamp in his bedroom and made elaborate drawings of soldiers in one of his schoolboy notebooks. I found it among his papers years afterward--a thick, square, well-made old blank-book, full of sums in arithmetic, and clippings from Civil War newspapers, and drawings by Father of cannon and bearded Zouaves.

Father's patriotism however was tempered with humour, and he seems to have been extraordinarily tickled by the fun Grandpa made of "top-lofty" patriots. At any rate he cut out many of the most

biting articles that Grandpa kept publishing, and pasted them in that fat blank-book, alongside his own warlike drawings.

When Father was seventeen he decided to join the old Seventh Regiment. It was characteristic of him to look over the ground before he did anything and then do it in what he considered the very best way, and the Seventh was generally regarded as the best in the country. Its ranks were full, he found at the armoury, but vacancies occurred now and then, because, as there was a shortage of officers in the new armies, the older members of the Seventh, even the privates, were in demand for these jobs. It was about the nearest thing that they had, in the sixties, to an officers' training corps. Father put his name down on the waiting list and went back to his office.

Half the best young men in New York wanted to get into the Seventh. Even the

newspapers in London had spoken admiringly of the "world-renowned Seventh Regiment." And when President Buchanan made a speech to them, before the election of Lincoln, he had felt so moved that he said: "The stout, hardy, noble and defiant look which you exhibit shows that in the day and hour of battle you would be at the very front."

The Seventh had tried to get to the very front when the war started. It had sprung to arms and gone to the defence of Washington as soon as Sumter was fired on. A week later, however, when all real danger to the city was over and plenty of other troops had arrived, the Seventh felt that its object had been accomplished and that it might as well go back home.

At this point the government asked it to enlist for three months in the army. This didn't seem fair to the Seventh. They had been distinctly assured, when they

started, that they would only be away for two weeks. They at once held a meeting, however, and voted on this. They decided to enlist as a body, and to serve thirty days.

When this thirty-day period was over, the men entrained and came home. "The lower classes" made unpleasant remarks about their return, but the regiment was welcomed all the more warmly by all the best citizens.

In 1862 when Stonewall Jackson burst into the Shenandoah Valley, and it looked as though he might capture Washington, the government requested the Seventh to help out again. By this time Father had been elected a member. He got a leave of absence from Gwynne & Day and went off, as a private in Company D.

Unfortunately, at least from Father's point of view, Stonewall Jackson subsided, and instead of seeing action in

the field the Seventh was put into barracks near Baltimore. And as though this wasn't bad enough the Secretary of War then requested the regiment, instead of enlisting for thirty days this time, to stay for three months.

Nobody liked the prospect of sitting there for three months in barracks. Father wrote to his mother that his company had been sent to Mt. Clare Station where they slept in the open, and as it was damp and cold he added, "I wish you would send me a coloured nightcap and some segars."

It wasn't certain whether the regiment would be willing to stay on or not. "I don't think I could stay," Father wrote, "on account of my business, for I don't think Gwynne and Day could very well spare me for as long as that."

(He was seventeen, going on eighteen, and here he was already talking this way and smoking "segars.")

In his next letter he sounds somewhat younger.

"I hope it will be over with soon," he wrote, "as I shall not stay more than a month, but that is not saying I'm homesick for I can get along very well.

"I received your box of things yesterday The cake, etc. was very much appreciated in 'our mess' and also the lemons, with which I made some lemonade last night and it tasted first rate as I was very thirsty and the water is not very good, being limey, which is not grammatically correct but still will express what I wish to say. About 12 o'clock night before last it commenced raining and rained all day yesterday in perfect torrents, and most of last night. My tent got pretty well water-soaked and commenced leaking, and in an hour or so the floor was as wet as thunder and we had to huddle all together to keep dry, and even in that manner we got very

damp. I tell you, Mother, boards are a perfect luxury, at least I thought so when we got our board floor up last Sunday, after sleeping two or three nights in wet straw.

"We have our tent fitted up very nicely; at the end opposite the door is a musket rack with a shelf on top, then there are two bunks on each side and one directly in front, in which I sleep. The bunks by the by consist of a knapsack for a pillow and a blanket spread out on the floor. From the top of the tent we have suspended two shelves one under the other on which we put our dishes, and in the centre we have a table, all of which we made ourselves so we think a great deal of them on that account.

"I wish you would send some lemons, oranges, ginger snaps, cake, and if possible a nice pie, which last luxury I have not seen since leaving N. Y., also some segars as I have but two left, and

some sugar. The sugar I would prefer to be ordinary brown sugar rather than the kind you sent before. Those shoes are sple ndid bein g large and easy.

"Hoping to hear from home soon

"I am

"Your Afft Son."

On June 19th he wrote from Mt. Clare Station, "We are to be sworn in this afternoon." And lower down he added:

"Four hours later.

"We are Sworn in and I am now nothing but a 'volunteer' and a 'mudsill.' Our company being on detached duty was sworn in by itself, the regt being sworn in at the fort.

"There was but one man in our company who backed out and that was Brundage.

"Those members who remained at home will be referred to the Adjutant General of the State of N. Y. and will be dealt with according to the law."

As they had agreed to enlist for three months, Father added: "I suppose I have lost my situation at G & D's. Well, it is my sacrifice in this war; but I don't think they are very patriotic because most all the other houses who have clerks in this regt are saving their places for them and continuing their salaries. In regard to my washing I get that done by women who come to the Fort for it. I get down to the city once in a while and take a good bath and eat a good dinner and all together I manage to get along very well. Our rations are very short sometimes and occasionally we have only bread and tea for supper.

"Today I was down to the house of Winans the Secesh with a member of our company who is intimately acquainted with them. His family (Winan's) are Union but he is Secesh. While there I had some very nice cherries--invited to come again. Hoping to hear from you very soon as letters from home no matter how short are a very great source of gratification,

"I am, Your Afft Son."

Three days later his company got back to its barracks, and he found that box of things waiting. But: "I was very much disappointed on opening the box to find the pies all mouldy," he wrote, "and after eating one or two of them on top and coming to the third or fourth I couldn't go them and even the very niggers would not eat them and I had to throw them away.

"In regard to the segars Father sent they were very acceptable indeed. I guess I shan't sell any of them as I have plenty of room in my knapsack." (Apparently cigars were not shared as freely as cigarettes are to-day.)

"I have great trouble in keeping my dishes. I have none of them left except my plate that I brought away from N. Y. I have lost two or three sets of knives, forks and spoons and one cup; at present I am using a knife without a handle, and a fork with the tines broken half off.

"The pail which you sent the pies in comes very useful indeed, but I wish you had sent a whole saucer instead of that broken one."

"Fort Federal Hill,
"Baltimore, July 15/62.

"Dear Mother,

"It is very hot indeed to-day and was yesterday.

"Yesterday we had a long battalion Drill and the Lt.-Col. only stopped when one of the 8th Co. was sun struck and several in the different companies dropped from the heat. I did not go on drill and would not on such a hot day and I expected to be put on guard to-day as a punishment but was not however as there were too many of my opinion. Colonel Lefferts is absent and Lt.-Col. Price is in command and I think over uses his power which I infer from the drill of yesterday because if the Col. had been here he would not have had any drill at all on such a scorching day.

"Those pickles you sent were very good indeed and came very nice with dinner.

"Someone stole most all my cakes and those crullers and cookies you sent and I did not get more than twenty of the

whole lot and that had to go among four of us."

Father's next letter was about Lieutenant-Colonel Price, who, according to a contemporary record, was an obstinate little man with a shrill voice. He had been born in London, he was precise in his habits and quick and erect in his movements, he wore a chin beard with no moustache, and he was in the real-estate business.

"The boys are down on him," Father wrote. "He either mistakes the men he has to deal with or else wishes to show his power; but he will have to be pretty sharp to get ahead of the boys. To-night he sent out some prisoners that were detained in the guard house, for some petty offences, to haul down the flag at retreat; they hauled down flag, rope, and everything, the consequence is that it will take about half a day to fix it up

again and unless the boys have a mind to they won't put it up as they can't force any man to climb up such a high pole as that and endanger his life." (Not in wartime!)

"PS.," Father added. "Last night, the boys collected around the Colonel's quarters and sung sonnets on Lieut.-Col. Price which were not very complimentary to him. I just received Father's letter. Ask him to send me *Pickwick Abroad* or some good novel in paper covers."

"Aug. 16/62.

"Dear Father,

"I received your letter to-day enclosing $4 Baltimore money.

"Yesterday I was on guard and I hope it will be the last time. Another steamboat load of wounded soldiers came up from Ft. Munroe. If the Irish attempt any riot in N. Y. after a fair and impartial draft I

think they had better send the whole crowd of those concerned in the riot off to the war, whether they have been drafted or not.

"PS. Instead of the *Waverly* send the *Sunday Times* and please send it Monday."

A week or two later the regiment's three months were over, and it came back to New York, and again it was welcomed with cheers, although not quite so warmly.

In later years, when Mother came across these old letters of Father's, she spoke in quite a critical tone about them, much to his surprise. "Was that all you did, Clare?" she asked him, at dinner one evening. "Didn't they call out the Seventh again?"

Father said yes, the Seventh went South for about a month in 1863, but he and a

lot of others had known better that time than to start, until they saw whether the regiment was going to barracks or battle. Wouldn't be worth their while to go, their idea was, unless there was a chance to see action, and when it turned out to be those same old Baltimore barracks, all these members stayed home.

Mother said that her brothers hadn't been home except when they got a furlough, and that even after Levi was captured he had got out of prison and gone back to his ship.

Father replied that as for Levi and Norris, there was no reason why they shouldn't serve--they had had nothing else to do, probably. As for himself, not only had he been busy at the office but he had used common sense, and he had formed a poor opinion while in barracks of the way in which wars were run. He said that Mother was only a woman and knew nothing about it, and furthermore that

nothing would have induced him to serve for four years unless they had let him take charge of things and run the damned war himself.

Mother said she still couldn't understand what the Seventh kept coming home for. "Why didn't they stay down there and fight?"

As there didn't seem to be any answer to this that would satisfy her, Father closed the discussion by saying that so far as he was concerned he was not a French peasant. He said that he was an American, and he didn't intend to serve as a pawn to be moved around a chess-board by anybody. He admired the farmers of Lexington and Concord, he said, who had swarmed out like a nestful of hornets, done their work and gone home, and he had done exactly the same at the first opportunity. He seemed to feel satisfied that he had made a very good hornet.

FATHER'S METHODS OF COURTSHIP

It took Father three years to propose, Mother once told me. In the first place he needed time to feel sure that he was in love. He had made one mistake before he ever met Mother, and one was enough. Secondly, Mother was still a pupil at Miss Haines' School in Gramercy Park. He couldn't marry a schoolgirl. The other difficulty was that she was rich, or at least she was the sister of one of the richest men he knew down on Wall Street Alden Stockwell had a yacht and drove a four-in-hand. He engaged a private car when he travelled. He had a house on Murray Hill in New York and another in Mayfair in London. Father called him a nabob.

Father was a prudent young man and his objection to marrying the sister of a nabob was due to his belief that she would expect him to provide for her more

luxuriously than he possibly could, or, in fact, than he had any intention whatever of doing.

Meanwhile Mother was being courted by other beaux, even before she left school. She had had six proposals of marriage by the time she was twenty. One was from an elderly man who had known her as a child in Painesville, Ohio. Another was from her Sunday School teacher at a church in New York. Others still were from polite young New Yorkers who were fascinating but who frightened her by getting drunk, and one was from a wise and handsome foreigner, a Turco-Italian, whom she felt attached to and trusted, but with whom, as he saw for himself, she really wasn't in love.

She wasn't in love with Father either, she thought. He didn't behave right at all As a little girl she had sat on the step by Grandma's white picket gate and stared down the road and wished that a carriage

would come dashing up for her and whisk her away. That wasn't at all the kind of thing, she thought, that a young man like Father would do.

All her beaux except Father had offered her beautiful presents--so beautiful that they were sometimes returned, they were too much to accept. They had all sent her flowers. It had never occurred to Father, apparently, to offer her anything.

She didn't know what to make of the man. He was too independent. Another provoking thing about him was that he didn't even pay her nice compliments. Yet somehow he had a kind of realness for her that those other men lacked.

Early in 1873, something terrible happened. Her brother Alden had got into a financial contest with Mr. Jay Gould, and all of a sudden Alden had found himself outflanked and defeated. His losses ran into millions. He still had

his home and his yacht but his whole position was dangerous.

He had been making elaborate plans for Mother's coming-out party. She was his only sister and he was a widower. In spite of his losses he generously went ahead with his programme.

It was a bitter cold night when the guests came, and Alden was a desperate man. But he was also a proud one. His beautiful home was festooned with roses till it was one mass of flowers, two orchestras played, the conservatory was filled with bright lanterns and trays of jewelled favours were provided as souvenirs for the dancers. Not so very long afterward a sheriff sat smoking in the hall where the orchestra had played the Blue Danube Waltz, the servants were hurrying to leave, joking over the bundles of things they had pilfered, and tradesmen were attaching the paintings and the chests of silver and plate. When

that day came Mother sat at the window upstairs and saw her own little ponies with their silver-mounted harness led away with her phaeton.

But Alden although he had been mortally wounded, financially, was too strongly entrenched to topple over at once. His affairs and his assets were ramified. His ruin took time. Meanwhile when the spring came, Mother was put on the train to Ohio, leaving behind her a brother who no longer smiled and who hardly spoke but who would not acknowledge defeat.

It was at this stage of affairs that Father asked Mother to marry him.

When Great-Aunt Lavinia heard the news she wrote to Grandma at once strongly advising that she make Mother marry. "The Days are not rich," she said, but "they have always lived very comfortably." But Mother wasn't sure

whether she was in love or not. She didn't know what to do.

There was one thing she could do however, she could tell Father to come out to Painesville. This was a test she had imposed on each of her suitors before taking them seriously, and it had been quite a help to her, and perhaps to them too. She felt that before she made up her mind to spend her life with a man, he and she had better see each other in her old family home.

Mother had grown up in Painesville. It had been settled by Vermonters and other New Englanders who had travelled in covered wagons to get there, late in the seventeen-hundreds. Its quiet, broad, shady streets, its brick sidewalks, its white Colonial houses surrounded by trees, each with its own front lawn and garden inside of a white picket fence, made it one of the loveliest towns in the Western Reserve. But lovely as it was, in

its own way, its standards of comfort were simple.

The last previous suitor before Father who had come out to Painesville was a fashionable young man from New York who was wholly unused to small towns. He was dismayed by the service, the customs, and the limited fare of the town's one hotel. He was unprepared to have people stop and stare at him as he walked down the street. Being a mercurial youth he had become so depressed by all this that he had got drunk, very drunk, in an effort to cheer himself up. This became known, like everything else in Painesville, and it had created a scandal.

When he was sober again and realized what a sensation he'd caused he apologised to Grandma and Mother for having "disgraced" them. Grandma said he had better apologise to himself for he hadn't disgraced her and couldn't. He

took the next train back to New York and immediately got drunk again.

Mother didn't quite dare to marry a victim of drink but she always kept a tender spot in her heart for this bewildered young man. She followed his later career half-maternally, and she even kept track of his children. His weakness for drink turned out to be permanent, but it was more or less harmless too. He was so gay and sociable by nature that everyone liked him. His only trouble was that he was easily discouraged, and that he had no head for liquor.

When Father arrived in Painesville he behaved very differently from any of his predecessors. Whatever their private opinions of Painesville had been they had been much too guarded to express them. Father expressed his at once. He told Mother and he told Grandpa and

Grandma Stockwell just what he thought of it. He said it was "a damned hole."

The decent people of Painesville regarded it as needlessly profane to say damn, but in other respects they had no great objection to Father's frankness. In fact, it amused them. He seemed to be a clean, energetic, likeable-looking young fellow, and all the time that he was in Painesville he did not "touch a drop." He told Mother that this was merely because there was nothing in the place fit to drink, but the rest of the town didn't know this, and his sobriety and vigour impressed them. It even impressed Grandma a little She and Father didn't get on well--then or later--but she had nothing against him, she said.

He said he wouldn't leave until Mother had promised to marry him, and he urged her to hurry. In his next sentence she found that although part of this was ardour, the rest was impatience--he

wanted to get out of Painesville. He said he should think that she'd want to get out of there too.

They were married in New York in June. It was a small quiet wedding--only about a dozen of the family were present. It was held in Alden's big house. Alden was grave. He hadn't taken to Father. Immediately after the ceremony the young bride and groom sailed for France.

It had all been so sudden, just at the last, that Mother felt shaken up. The weather was rough. She took to her berth and she stayed there; and when Father offered to bring her anything to eat she begged him not to, and moaned.

Father could not understand this. He had an excellent appetite himself and he found the weather exhilarating. He urged Mother to get up on deck. She'd be all right in an hour or two, he assured her, if she'd "make an effort." When this had no effect he went off and filled his lungs

with sea air and ate three hearty meals a day and felt very sorry for Mother. He kept trying to think of something that he could do for her to make her well again. One afternoon, ruddy and glowing, he opened their cabin door.

"Vinnie?" he said. "Aren't you feeling better yet? I wish you'd been with me at lunch."

No answer.

"I had two helpings of salmon," he added, to tempt her, "and the sauce Tartare was delicious."

A vivid but most unwelcome picture sprang up in Mother's mind of that thick, too thick and greenish sauce oozing over a plate. She pulled herself together and begged him faintly, "Don't talk to me, darling, just now."

He returned to the upper deck, mystified, and smoked a cigar.

It was nearly a year, Mother once told me, before she could bear to eat salmon, with or without sauce Tartare.

Neither of them had been in Paris since the German armies had come and gone again. They found it was crowded. The Shah of Persia and his glittering court were the guests of the government, a whole hotel had been reserved for their use and the city was being given over to illuminations and fêtes. (That hotel had to be specially fumigated afterward, Father used to observe, when Mother was describing the splendour of Paris that season.) Every now and then, as they were walking along, there was the sound of galloping horses and the Shah's outriders dashed down the street, followed by the Shah himself in his great open carriage and the music of trumpets. Mother was thrilled. But Father said it would take more than a Shah to thrill him. He said the Shah was a nuisance.

One night when there was to be a grand display of fireworks in the Bois, Mother insisted on going, so after dinner they drove out there in their evening clothes, and both of them enjoyed it immensely until it came time to go back and they found that they could not get a carriage. Even then it was all right at first, walking along the Champs Elysées, but Mother's evening slippers were so thin, and their hotel, the Grand Hotel de l'Athénée, was so far away, that Father had to keep stopping to let Mother rest, and at last when the slippers had given out completely and he found that she was trying to keep up with him in her stocking feet he had to carry her. Mother was so tired by this time that she willingly let him hoping he would feel that bearing his young bride in his arms was romantic, and possibly he might have thought so if the distance had only been less. But as he went on and on she didn't get any lighter and Father began

to remember that he hadn't wanted to come. He felt sorry for Mother and he loved her, but he could not keep wholly still, and as he staggered on, stray passers-by heard him denouncing the Shah.

It was to be over twenty years before they ever went to Europe again. When they got back late in the summer and Mother went on for a visit to Newport, where Alden, who was braving things out to the last, had taken a house for the season, a telegram from Father suddenly summoned Mother back to New York. The great panic of 1873 had started, the postwar prosperity of America was crashing in ruins, nobody knew or could guess what was coming, and he wanted her there at his side.

GRANDPA ASSISTS AT A SÉANCE

It was a frosty Sunday in November, and Father and Mother were taking me to Grandpa Day's for a one o'clock dinner. As we sat in the horse-car, Mother was talking about Grandma's interest in spirit messages. She said it seemed to crop up again every few years. Father pished violently and said that Grandpa ought not to allow it.

At dinner, Grandma managed to feed me so much that Father said I would burst. Even Grandpa, who seldom bothered to interfere in such matters, laid down his knife and fork and told us about his Aunt Martin, whose idea of bringing up a boy was to watch him at table and "pop a doughnut in his mouth every time the boy gaped." I asked him earnestly where Aunt Martin lived. They all laughed except Grandma, who whispered to me, "There isn't any such

person, dear," and gave me some more pumpkin pie.

After dinner, we sat around the coal fire. It took the chill off the high-ceilinged room, and its red, steady glow felt delicious to me as I curled up on the carpet. The wind slapped the vines against the tall windows. Grandma and Father talked quietly together, and Father patted her shoulder affectionately and told her about all his plans.

When he had finished, Grandma started to talk about spiritualism. Mother caught her eye and pointed at me and shook her head, but Grandma went mildly on. She wouldn't speak of any experiences, she told Mother reassuringly. She just wanted to say how happy it had made Mrs. Perkins.

In a moment or two, Father stood up. The good-byes began, and we soon were on our way home, walking up the long Madison Avenue hill.

There was a good deal of excited arguing in those years about whether spirits could talk to us. Grandma, of course, didn't argue, but she felt quite sure it was true. Her only daughter, little Mary Day, had died very young, and when spiritualistic mediums said that the dead were not only alive but eager to speak to the living, it made Grandma feel life was beautiful.

Naturally, she sometimes desired to share this belief. She knew enough not to try to share it with Grandpa or with her grown-up sons, but one time when two of Uncle Hal's children were staying with her, Grandma told Will, the elder, about how the spirits watched over us. She felt that it was a sweet and comfortable thought to put in his mind. Will didn't take it that way. He was not romantic about things, he was a matter-of-fact, careful boy, six years old, and when he

was told that spirits were floating around him, even when he was in bed at night, he felt very uneasy. One evening in particular, Grandma took Will into her shadowy bedroom, where her friend old Mrs. Caister was sitting sewing, under the dim little gas-jet, and read aloud many strange happenings from a spiritualistic magazine, the *Banner of Light.* This upset Will so much that when he went to bed he made Mrs. Caister stay with him and sit on the stairs just outside his door until he was asleep.

Grandma was so serene and quiet minded herself that she sometimes forgot others weren't. She didn't tell Will's sister, Ella about the spirits--Ella was only three--but she told her about Jack the Giant Killer so vividly that Ella began having nightmares.

With all her serenity Grandma was shy in some ways, or reserved, and in spite of her interest in spiritualism she didn't

quite like to go to a medium. She was so trusting, too, that it seemed needless. She felt that if a few of her old friends and herself sat around a table in silence, and after a while began asking questions, some friendly spirit would probably come in the room and get under that table, and rap a few replies on it for them. One rap for yes, two for no.

She decided that the best time and place were in the afternoon in the dining-room, where she had just the right table. The only trouble was that that was where Grandpa took his afternoon naps, on a small leather sofa. When she spoke to him about it, however, and told him her plans, he was quite accommodating for once. He didn't offer to move out--he liked that special sofa--but he said it was a large room and if they didn't talk too loud she and her friends wouldn't disturb him. So a day was set for their séance.

The ladies arrived one by one in their long capes or India shawls, and their ribbony bonnets, and stood talking with Grandma and Mrs. Caister in the hall a few minutes. Then they came softly into the dining-room. Grandpa's sofa was over in the far corner, and there he lay, with his handkerchief over his face, gently snoring.

The ladies sat down at the table. The pleasant old room was quiet. Outside the tall windows were the shady green leaves of the ivy. Esther was singing in the back yard as she hung up the wash.

After a while, when the ladies had got used to sitting there, and felt reassured by Mr. Day's peaceful snores on the sofa, one of them whispered a question to the spirits. She waited and waited for an answer, but the table was silent. Another lady tried, and then another. They had no success.

Then, while they were whispering to each other about it, they all heard a faint rap. Mrs. Adams was so frightened she wanted to run from the room. Some of the others were hungrily curious. They all were excited. Mrs. Perkins said "Sh-h-h," and asked the table whether her sister had been sorry to die. The table was still. They looked disappointedly at each other Mrs. Perkins frowned and asked the same thing again. After a long minute of silence, they heard two feeble raps.

From this on, they could hardly contain themselves. Questions were fired at the table helter-skelter, the raps got louder and louder, and more imperious. The only disturbing feature was that they couldn't quite understand some of the tidings they got.

Old Miss Dykeman had a question to put to her Uncle Jack. He had been a hearty old reprobate who had led his wife quite a life, and after they both died Miss

Dykeman used to wonder about his probable fate. "Uncle Jack, are you happy?" she sadly whispered.

The table rapped a loud "Yes."

The ladies made little murmurs of surprise. Miss Dykeman looked incredulous.

"Try his wife," said Mrs. Perkins.

Miss Dykeman got out her smelling salts "Are you in heaven, Aunt Minna?" she asked.

According to the table, Aunt Minna was in heaven, yes, and was very happy indeed, but in reply to another chance question she said Uncle Jack wasn't there

"But he said he was happy," Mrs. Perkins snorted. "Ask him again."

Uncle Jack again announced with a bang that he was perfectly happy. Mrs. Perkins asked him point-blank if he was in hell. He said yes to that too. This led to so

much discussion among the ladies that that particular séance broke up.

At the next, they got no answers at all. The conditions had seemed better that day, because they had come early, and when Grandpa appeared he found they had moved his sofa into the next room. But though they kept their hands a long time on the table, there wasn't even one rap.

The following week, however, more than made up for this failure. Mrs. Adams and Miss Dykeman had given up, and Mrs. Beecher was invited instead. Grandma had asked Grandpa in advance to move into the parlour once more, for his nap, and he had said that he would be glad to if that Mrs. Beecher was coming. She was a hard-eyed old lady who was very proud of her family. When she at last condescended to ask the table about them on this occasion, however, after listening for a long time to the happy

raps about other persons, she found to her horror that practically all her own departed dear ones had gone to the wrong place.

Then, one Sunday, Uncle Hal brought Will and Ella to dinner, and Grandma told him he needn't disbelieve any longer that people "on the other side" sent us messages, because she and her friends had received some on that very table. Uncle Hal looked at the table, but said he still didn't believe it.

Grandma offered to show him how simple and easy it was. They drew up their chairs, Will and Ella and all, and sat down. Uncle Hal looked under the table first. He couldn't see anything, but he kept peering around underneath, breathing heavily because he was stout. He didn't suspect Grandma, of course, but he knew what Grandpa was like.

Grandma waited patiently. Uncle Hal had to give up. He frowned in silence, perplexed and still suspicious. The others put their hands on the table. He put his there too. Then his eye caught sight of a thread on the carpet. He got down on his hands and knees again and discovered that this thread ran up behind one of the legs and then along the under side of the table to the centre, where a finger of a kid glove was hanging. There was a small leaden weight inside this finger, and any pull on the thread made it rap.

Uncle Hal chuckled and pursued the other end of the thread. It led under the sliding doors into the parlour. He opened them and went in, thread in hand. Grandpa looked up at him disgustedly. "That's it, Hal," he growled. "Now you've done it. Spoiled the whole thing."

He stopped speaking, abruptly. He saw Grandma coming in through the doorway

Grandma didn't say anything. She took spiritualism very seriously, but her kind of serenity was founded on great goodwill to everyone. She turned to where Grandpa lay on his sofa, chagrined and a little bit sheepish, and surveyed him a moment. He raised his eyes to hers, and they presently exchanged an affectionate smile. Then he slowly heaved himself up and threw his thread in the fire.

MOTHER SHOWS US OFF

Mother was sure that her four boys were the best little boys in New York. Other people didn't always agree with her, but usually she didn't know it. Little May Lewis who lived around the corner in Forty-eighth Street, for instance, had a nurse who used to warn her to keep away from those red-headed Day boys. If Mother had ever heard of this she wouldn't have waited a second, she'd have pinned a big hat on her own wavy red hair right away, and grabbed up her muff and her gloves, and gone racing around to the Lewises to tell them that their nurse was quite wrong, and that her boys never did anything they shouldn't, or gave her a moment's uneasiness. And she'd have burst in upon them so impetuously, in her haste to defend us, and spoken so fast and so vehemently, that it would have been

impossible for any of them to calm her down. In fact, when polite persons attempted to do this, so as to smooth over an awkward situation, it added to Mother's annoyance. She felt that they were trying to get away from the point she was making. She said they were "just talking nonsense." But nobody ever had time enough anyhow to calm Mother down. She would rush to our defence, stun the enemy, and hurry straight out.

Not that May Lewis's nurse was our enemy, she was merely more realistic than Mother, and she probably had seen enough of the way that we played on the streets to know that a little girl had better go and play somewhere else. Mother's firm belief, however, was that we never really meant to be rough, and that anyway we were privileged characters because we were boys. All males, Mother instinctively felt, were a special kind of creation. They owed

certain duties to women and girls, but they also had certain rights.

I used to feel that it was kind of inconvenient to have her be so very proud of us. Somehow it seemed to make it obligatory on us not to disappoint Mother--or at least not to fail her any oftener than we could help. But it also implanted in us such a high opinion of ourselves, as good boys, that when we did get into trouble it appeared to us to be accidental. Accidental and therefore excusable. We were ready to be sincerely repentant but we didn't expect to be punished.

Father's attitude was different from Mother's. He often remarked, "I know boys." His standards of behaviour for children were as high as hers were, or higher, and he was only too ready to believe that we hadn't lived up to them. At such times it did us very little good to explain that we had got into this or that

scrape "by accident." "Of course it was 'by accident,'" he would impatiently roar, as though it was unthinkable that any boy could mean to defy him, "but it's your business to see to it that accidents of this sort don't happen. And a spanking will probably assist you to bear that in mind."

"Oh, not this time, Clare," Mother begged him one Saturday, when he was saying this to me. "Clarence didn't really mean to knock off the cabman's hat with his little snowball." I fully agreed with her I had hoped to do it, but when I succeeded I had been immensely surprised--so surprised that I hadn't been quick enough to make good my retreat. Also I hadn't known that Father was inside the cab. I didn't feel more than half guilty. But Father said again, "I know boys," and proceeded to give me a spanking.

When he had finished he went down to the club for an afternoon game of billiards, and as the snow had now turned to rain I went up to the nursery. It was Delia's afternoon out--she was Harold's nurse--so Mother told us three older boys to let Harold play with us, and see that he didn't get hurt.

There was always some unfinished game going on in the nursery. We kept our wooden blocks and marbles and our lead soldiers there, and the wars they were in never stopped. In a very few minutes we were so busy that I had forgotten my spanking. Harold, being too small to fight, had been put up on the bed. He held a piece of an old curtain rod up to his eye, as a spy-glass, and with this he swept the horizon and chanted to himself "Ship ahoy!" We others were laying in a supply of ammunition for a battle at sea.

We had invented a man called Captain Sinkem, a lean privateer, and he had been ravaging the wooden-block coasts of the nursery for days. He had originally belonged to a lead soldier regiment of Turkish Zouaves. His face had been battered in long ago, giving him a sinister look, and his baggy red trousers added to his piratical air. His ships had been made by ourselves out of old *Youth's Companions,* on the model of the famous Civil War ironclad *Merrimac.* There was a picture of her in our story-books, looking evil and strong, with sloping bulwarks, a thick covered top, and a ram at her bow. Her simple triangular shape made her easy to copy, at least in our hasty style. We could build an ironclad in ten minutes. Some numbers of the *Youth's Companion* were thicker than others, but even the thin ones, when folded up, made pretty good warships, and ships that had hulls of many layers were almost impregnable. It

was no wonder that Captain Sinkem had done a lot of ravaging in them. He had ravaged one coast so hard that he had bumped it all out of shape.

We always played fair in our games between good men and bad, though it really was much more exciting when the wicked man won. Of course he had to be conquered in the end and die a horrible death, but somehow a game began to get dull as soon as the good man had triumphed.

In this particular game, after vigorously acting for Sinkem, we had manned the forts and fired all our marbles at his ships. But in vain. They had merely bounced off the thick paper bulwarks. At each bounce Captain Sinkem and his pirates had cheered wildly inside.

Now however a new character, Admiral Harry Broadside, had built some ironclads too, and with these he had fended off Sinkem's ships. This was all

very well as far as it went but it didn't content Admiral Harry. He was an officer of our little lead Life Guards, and he was dressed in jack-boots and white pants and a tall bearskin hat, and his martial ambitions were correspondingly haughty and fierce. His one idea was how to destroy Sinkem's fleet altogether.

What he needed for this was new ammunition of a more deadly type. We suddenly remembered a box of old rocks, which we had been told not to play with. Mother loved to have us have a good time, and she never interfered with our fun, but she had warned us that if we threw those awful rocks at our soldiers we'd hurt ourselves with them. And Father had said indignantly that they were his old geology specimens, and that they weren't meant to be thrown around at all. He said that we ought to study them. He had collected them one at a time, in his boyhood, he told us, some of them from way up in Harlem, and some

in the hills where the City afterward built Central Park, and he described how he had scrambled down gullies and dug in the slopes, and where he had found the purplish chunk of pudding stone and the silvery mica, and the commonplace-looking lumps of feldspar and hornstone and quartz.

If we had listened to him we might have learned something about the earth after all, to add to our school education, which was concerned almost solely with the history and the tongues of mankind. And as the history of mankind, in our school books, consisted chiefly of wars, all we wanted to use Father's specimens for was ammunition.

We got the box down from the closet and divided the rocks into piles. Now we could have a fine battle. The only crews we had to man our vessels were our lead soldiers of course, and they certainly made peculiar-looking sailors, but they

were better than nothing. We marched them aboard in their helmets and plumes and red jackets. Harold tried to get off the bed to help us but we forcibly put him back on it, and gave him a trumpet to console him and made him Ship's Bugler. He tooted a shrill croaky blast and the fleets put to sea--that is to say Admiral Broadside's vessels sailed away from the fireplace and Captain Sinkem's came out from under the bed and dashed around the floor rapidly, each fleet blowing sirens and loud warning blasts at the enemy, and the two opposing commanders shouting sneers and taunts and threats at each other. Then amid cheers and roars from the crews, and yells of "Boom!" with each shot we stood off and threw Father's rocks as hard as we could at the ironclads.

They did far more damage than our marbles. Two ships were knocked over. The thin ones soon began to look battered. Harry Broadside's big flagship,

the *Disdain,* had only a few rips and dents, but Sinkem's was covered with scars. It looked as though he was now faced with death and destruction at last. I called upon him to surrender--I was acting for Admiral Harry--and George, who was acting for the Captain, began to look worried. He picked up the pudding stone rock, which was especially jagged, and hurled it despairingly at my flagship. It struck square on a gap in a crease which had been loosened already, and the next moment the *Disdain* opened up and spilled her crew into the sea.

In the midst of the terrific excitement that this bull's eye created, while George was dancing around and shouting, "Surrender! Surrender yourself!" and while poor Admiral Harry was trying to swim to some other vessel, we became aware that Bridget the waitress was there in the room.

"Your mother wants you," she said.

"Oh Bridget! Not *now?* She doesn't want us this very minute!"

"Yes, this very minute, and ten minutes before this by rights," Bridget said. "Haven't I been standing here telling you so at the top of me voice, and you boys racketty-banging around on the floor with them rocks, and screeching as if you'd have yourselves killed without the police in to quiet you!"

We knew we had done wrong to take Father's rocks out of the closet. Now we'd got into trouble. We pulled Harold off the bed in silence and started downstairs.

"Alanna machree! Would ye look at ye's!" Bridget expostulated. "Wash them dirty hands first. You can't go in the parlour like that. Come ye here, Har'l, till I run the comb through your hair before you go down to the quality."

"The parlour?" we shouted. "Then it's callers!"

"Sairtainly it's callers," said Bridget. "A lady with a grand, shiny bird in her hat, you'd think it was a duck by the size of it, and her old uncle with her."

We were immensely relieved. If it had been an order to stop throwing the rocks, that would have been a calamity; but callers, though of course they were a nuisance, would only take a few minutes.

It must be a terrible thing for modern children when a caller arrives, and when they have to sit down in the sitting-room and be introduced, and the visitor tries to make conversation and they are supposed to be social. There was never anything as artificial as that in the eighties. Not in our home at least. Children were children, and grown-ups were grown-ups, and the two weren't expected to mix. We boys liked our uncles and aunts and a few old family friends, but we looked upon other grown-

ups as foreigners. And they felt that same way toward us.

There was nothing to regret about this that I can see. Quite the contrary. The Victorians had too much common sense to converse with children as though they were human beings. If Mother had had a little daughter she might have wished her to be social, but she didn't really expect that of us. She understood little boys.

On the other hand she did want her friends to have a look at us sometimes. She wanted to show us off to them and let them see what we were like. So when we were sent for, we generally had to speak pieces.

Mother had had to speak pieces herself in her childhood. It was the conventional thing to do in a parlour. It was like shaking hands. What the feelings of the visitors were about it I do not know, but it somehow solved the problem of how to get children in and then out again.

Mother had recited so well at her school that she had been given a book as a prize, *Legends of the Madonna,* by Mrs. Jameson. (It had been presented to her "for perfect recitations in poetry, with the affectionate wishes of H. B. Haines, 10 Gramercy Park, 1870.") It was a nice-looking little volume, published by Ticknor and Fields, but when I looked it over it seemed rather soulful and dull, and judging by its very new appearance Mother never had read it.

George didn't like speaking pieces. He looked worried as we started downstairs. I didn't mind because it never took long and we were always allowed to go afterward. We slid down the banisters and landed in a bunch in the hall.

The parlour was a long narrow room. It was full of plush chairs and ottomans and vases and roomy glass cabinets--a good room for boys to keep out of. We opened the sliding doors and shoved and pushed

each other against the dark curtains, struggling to see which of us could achieve safety by going in last. Any boy who wasn't last usually got tweaked from behind as he entered. This made him fairly spring into the room, which was apt to flatter the callers.

This afternoon one of us must have pinched Harold a trifle too hard. He not only leapt convulsively through the curtains but went in with a shriek. "Hush darling," said Mother, "this is Miss Wilkinson. Say how-do-you-do to her." We lined up in a row and were all introduced one by one, and--prompted by Mother--we told Miss Wilkinson our names and our ages.

Remembering what Bridget had said I stared at the bird in Miss Wilkinson's hat. There were no birds around in the streets except sparrows in winter, but ladies' hats more than made up for it. I had never seen a blue jay in the open, or a

bob-white or a swallow, but I saw plenty of them on ladies. Miss Wilkinson's specimen was even more interesting. He was a large bird with prominent eyes, and a ruby red breast like a robin's. His long wings stood stiffly out and his attitude was that of flight--he looked as though he was about to swoop at the carpet and snatch up a fish--yet in spite of all this he was reposing in a pink curlicue nest, made of some light filmy stuff, such as chiffon. I wondered if there were eggs in it. It would have been hard to find out, for the nest constituted the crown of Miss Wilkinson's hat, and the heads of several gold hat-pins projected from each side and in front. Sticking out in the air, opposite to the heads, were the pins' sharp, gleaming points, one of them so long that I thought it might skewer George in the eye. He was nearest.

"Clarence will speak his piece first," Mother said. She looked at me

encouragingly and I saw her lips form the first words. I took a long breath and plunged in.

"On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly."

In retrospect this selection of mine seems gruesome, but I never thought of it that way. I had chosen it because there was a picture in the book of bearded soldiers in helmets, with black, flowing plumes, marching at night through the snow, waving their sabres, blowing trumpets, and lighting their way with flaming torches, very splendid and ominous.

"Then shook the hills with thunder riven;

Then rushed the steeds to battle driven,
And, louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flashed the red artillery."

All up and down Madison Avenue and in the sidestreets, other little boys of the eighties were either reciting poems about battles or playing with their toy soldiers--even Willie Smith who lived on the corner and who was much the fattest and most phlegmatic boy whom we knew. Wars seemed to be done with in those days, except small ones in faraway places which didn't half count, and we thought of them only as romantic affairs, like Ivanhoe's tournaments.

The nearer I came to the doleful end of Hohenlinden the more cheerful I got. Mother was forming each word for me too. I recited the final stanza contentedly

"Few, few shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding sheet;
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre."

Miss Wilkinson's uncle stroked his moustache and said "Excellent, excellent," but Mother shook her head at him saying "Sh--sh," and motioning for George to speak next. His favourite was the Charge of the Light Brigade. Unfortunately, however, he couldn't pronounce the letter L properly. When it came at the beginning of a word he always said J instead. This rather changed Tennyson's opening and amazed Miss Wilkinson's uncle, for George looked earnestly at him with his honest blue eyes and began:

"Half a jig, half a jig,
Half a jig, onward,
All in the valley of death
Rode the Six Hundred."

I forget what came next. It was Blenheim I think. At any rate all of our pieces were about death and battles. Miss Wilkinson smiled in a vacant way and preened herself busily. Her hands fluttered about, as she smoothed her flowing velvet skirt of rich purple, and adjusted her veil, and poked at the bird in her hat, and felt a leaf on our rubber tree.

Everybody brightened up a little when Harold's turn came. He was last, he was chubby, and, as Mother explained, he was too small yet to say a whole poem. Mother smiled lovingly at him as he knitted his brows and began:

**"Forever float zat standard sheet
Where bweezy fo-bit--"**

"'Where breathes the foe but falls,' darling," Mother said softly.

Harold reddened with embarrassment at being called "darling" in public, and set his fat little jaws with an obstinate look. "Where bweezy," he repeated:

**"Where bweezy fo-git falls afore us,
Wif fweedom's soil beneath our feet,
An' fweedom's banner stweaming o'er us."**

He bowed with a jerk. The performance was over. "Such good boys," Mother said to Miss Wilkinson proudly, as we started out. We tried not to run as we left, but we went through the door in a second, and in the hall there was such a rush for

the stairs that Harold fell down with a bang, and was kicked in the head.

Whenever Harold got hurt, which was perhaps rather often, the important thing to do was to choke him. If we had tried to comfort him first, his wails would have brought Mother up on the run. We also had found by experience that it was a great mistake to choke him in silence, because that silence itself would make Mother suspect that something dreadful had happened. Consequently, while choking our indignant little brother, we had to make joyful sounds. This must often have given us the appearance of peculiarly hard-hearted fiends.

On this occasion, Harold was instantly jerked to his feet with our hands over his mouth. The other two boys began whistling and cheering, in a loud nervous manner, and while Harold was struggling for breath I shook my fist at him fiercely.

"But you knocked me down," he managed to whisper.

"All right," I said, "I'll let you hit me back. I'll let you knock me down, honest, no fooling. You can do it the minute we get to the top of the stairs."

"But I'm hurt in two places," Harold sobbed, rubbing his head, with the tears running down his round cheeks.

"Well, if you'll shut up about it," I said, "you can knock George down too."

"What *are* you doing, boys?" Mother called from the parlour in horror. "You aren't knocking each other down, are you!" We heard her start for the door.

"We were just fooling, Mamma," George explained reassuringly, as she came through the curtains. Harold was on his way upstairs by that time. He was in a hurry to get to the landing where he was to have his revenge.

Mother stood there a moment, but there didn't seem to be anything wrong. She said that we mustn't disappoint her like this and make a bad impression on everybody by being so noisy and rough when we were leaving the parlour.

"No'm," we said. "We didn't mean to."

"And if any boy hits one of his brothers," she said, "I'll have to have Papa spank him."

Dead silence.

She went back in to those tiresome callers. It was all their fault, really, we felt. The second she disappeared through the curtains, we dashed up the stairs.

At the landing we stopped. Harold was waiting for us, eagerly shouting, "You promised, you promised!" I let him knock me down, as agreed. His eyes shone as he punched away at me with his soft little fists.

"Now it's your turn, George," I ordered.

George wasn't at all in the mood to be knocked down however. He said that the last time he had allowed Harold to do it, Harold had given him a kick on the shins. We were wrangling about this, when Mother again came to the door.

"Why, boys," she said to us reproachfully.

We rushed off to the nursery.

As we slammed the door shut, we forgot all about the callers and Mother and everything else, Harold even forgot about hitting George, in our haste to get back to our battle. There was Admiral Harry, in his jack-boots, bobbing around in the waves, and Captain Sinkem's ships were more than ready to go on with their fire. Harold sprang up on the bed and sounded a bugle call, George shouted "Surrender!" and the cannonade began again at the exact point where it had left off.

Our battles with toy soldiers and paper ships were more real to us and much more exciting than the warlike poems we recited. Those didn't seem gory or horrible to us. They seemed almost tame by contrast. Besides the former were ancient history while the latter were of To-day.

NOBLE BOYS

Like most children I was taught to admire high ideals in my boyhood. These teachings were well-meant of course, and I took them all in good part. I didn't really admire some of the ideals much, and I made no attempt to live up to them, but at least I regarded such things with a wary respect. Though they sounded to me like standards meant for much better boys than myself, I saw that I too would have to adopt them if I ever became really good, and consequently it interested me to hear about them and filled me with awe--much the same kind of awe I felt at ghost stories, only more far-off and solemn. Meantime they brought home to me the acute disadvantage of goodness, and kept me content with not having any very great moral ambitions.

These doses of high ideals came in various ways, each one unexpected. Sometimes they were administered to me in the form of little talks by my teachers. Sometimes they appeared in a book. On my seventh birthday, for instance, old Mrs. Caister gave me *The Christmas Child* by Mrs. Molesworth. This child's name was Ted, and his history was given at great length from his babyhood to the day he was twelve. I read it all the way through, because a book was a book, but although this one had bright red covers and pictures it was kind of depressing.

It began with a lot of Ted's cunning baby talk. I had to skip some of that. I went on as fast as I could till Ted was seven, like me. But at this point I ran into a long account of his unselfish acts, and about how he joined in "the merry games" of the sons of his father's employees, all of whom respectfully addressed him as "Master Ted" in their

play; and then about his going away to school and becoming "a first-rate croquet-player."

According to Mrs. Molesworth, Ted was always "a boy of nice feelings. Not rough and knockabout in his ways like many schoolboys," she added, in what I felt was a reproving tone, directed at me. He did have a fight with another boy named Rex in one chapter, but he felt it was "so horrid" to hit Rex that he ended by kissing him.

Ted worried about this kissing business afterward and went to his mother. "Was that unmanly, Mother?" he asked.

"His mother drew him toward her and looked lovingly into his anxious face. 'Unmanly, my boy? No, indeed,' she said. 'Kindness and goodness can never be unmanly.' And Ted went off to bed."

I was disturbed by this incident. It made goodness seem more unnatural to me than ever. But it deeply moved Mrs.

Molesworth. She admired Ted so much that she kept saying so, in little asides to her readers. "I think he had a sweet and brave spirit, don't you, children?" she said in this chapter; and she went on to describe how considerate and patient he was, and how "he was *never* guilty of any rudeness." It was plain that Ted had all the virtues.

Ted died at the end of the book, just before his twelfth birthday. Very good children often did die on the last page, I had noticed. They never had anything violent or awful the matter with them, they just took sick and expired very gently of some vague and unnamed disease.

"I would have liked to tell how Ted grew up into such a man as his boyhood promised," Mrs. Molesworth explained. "But, dears, I *cannot* tell you this, for it was not to be so."

I didn't like books with unhappy endings, but I didn't mind this one. It seemed sad, in a way, and yet suitable. I regarded it with much the same feelings that I later regarded Greek tragedies. The Olympian deities in their hate stacked the cards against Œdipus, and Jehovah and Mrs. Molesworth did the same thing to Ted, out of love. It was a comfort to feel that Heaven neither loved nor hated me yet, and I earnestly hoped that it never would I felt pretty sure that I could get along all right by myself, if Heaven would ignore my existence and let me alone.

There were very few books of this pious sort on our nursery shelves. Piety of an extreme type was becoming old-fashioned. It was all right but it really didn't seem modern. People talked more about true nobility and noble deeds in the eighties. The atmosphere that my generation grew up in was thick with nobility. Not the atmosphere of our

homes or the streets of course, but that of our books.

When I was eight or nine I was given a book called *Noble Boys.* It was by the editor of Peter Parley's Annual, a gentleman named William Martin. Mr. Martin, looking around him in the eighties at the Victorian era, felt a distressing lack of something in the air. He was too up to date to go back to piety, but he had so much heart that even that era seemed sometimes to give him a chill "It is too much the custom in this cool, matter-of-fact age," he said, "to ignore the sympathies and affections." He felt that most books for boys were not elevated enough, and his purpose in compiling his volume was to remedy this.

He started off well, I thought. The first noble boy whose history he brought forward for my emulation was Cyrus of Persia, the great warrior, son of Cambyses. Among the others were

Alexander of Macedon, the Chevalier Bayard, Sir Philip Sidney, the Iron Duke of Wellington, and Garibaldi. All Mr. Martin's selections, he said, were chosen as examples of "the spirit of bold and hazardous enterprise." He was very English about it, however. He detested some of the Scots. I sat down to read his book right after breakfast on Christmas, and by New Year's I had finished Garibaldi and reached the last of his bold heroes, the late respected Prince Consort

"It is a bright summer's morning," Mr. Martin's story of Albert began, "and the sunlight gilds the rich foliage of the stately trees which encircle the residence of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg. . . . Since the castle clock has struck three there have been anxious watchers within the Schloss, and grooms with horses ready saddled stand in the courtyard. Voices speak in a whisper, but all is hopeful. . . . The clock strikes six, and the firing of guns announces the birth of a Prince."

After thus recording Prince Albert's impressive arrival on earth, Mr. Martin went on to say that "ere he had reached his second year, his grandmother wrote to her daughter, the mother of our beloved Queen: 'Little Alberinchen, with his large blue eyes and dimpled cheeks, is bewitching, forward, and quick as a weasel.'" On and on through this noble youth's infancy I ploughed step by step. Mr. Martin remarked that the Prince was in some ways very like Sir Philip Sidney. Sidney was a poet, and Prince Albert, he said, was quite fond of music.

Up to this point, although the Prince had done well in his studies, he hadn't performed any heroic deed like the other boys in his book. But now that came too. Early one morning in the young Prince's apartment at Coburg he was awakened by an unpleasant smell. There was smoke in the room. He got out of bed and discovered that one of his rooms was on fire. There was no plumbing of course,

and he had nothing to put out the fire with except "two pitchers of water and a jug of camomile tea," but he and his brother and their valet threw these on the fire and then summoned help. The sentry rang the fire bell, help arrived from all sides, and the smouldering flames were extinguished.

In order to make sure that his readers had not missed the point, or failed in some way to appreciate this as a companion piece to Wellington's Waterloo, Mr. Martin told the story all over again, ending by saying that it was thus that the Prince saved "the noble edifice from destruction, with but two pitchers of water from the washstands and a jug of camomile tea." I don't know just why, but I felt that he did right to repeat it. On the next page the Prince married Victoria, and at the bottom of that page he died.

The effect of Mr. Martin and Mrs. Molesworth was to create in the back of my mind a Valhalla, peopled by lofty but shadowy figures, Wellington, Prince Albert and Sidney, Garibaldi and Ted. I never dreamed of taking a critical attitude toward these figures. The only thing was that no matter how much I read about them I felt empty inside. They were as resplendent and as striking as the waxworks in the Eden Musée, and I looked at their effigies one by one, with solemn respect, but they had been dead a long time. I never thought of Gulliver or Robinson Crusoe as dead.

I had heard a good deal about a writer named Horatio Alger who wrote books for boys. One day a cousin of mine, Parmly Clapp, offered to lend me a few. They were easy to read and they came into my life at just the right moment. I had become convinced that splendour and holiness were out of my line. Alger opened my eyes to a brand new

attraction--the ways in which boys could earn money.

I was fascinated by that idea. If I could only earn steady wages I could buy lots of new things. I already had all the food that I wanted--except chocolate caramels--and as to better clothes I was indifferent, but I needed more lead soldiers and some rare stamps and a printing press badly.

"A long train was running at moderate speed over a Wisconsin railroad. Among the passengers was a stout, gentlemanly-looking boy, who looked much more than sixteen, although he had not yet reached that age. On the seat beside him was a large carpet bag." That is the way that *Strive and Succeed* by Horatio Alger began, and the stout, gentlemanly, fifteen-year-old boy had already done some work as a book agent and a clerk in a store. According to the preface this book was "reprinted from the

pages of *Young Israel,* a New York juvenile magazine." It wasn't only the young Israelites who liked Alger however, it was young Yankees too. I suppose that a youth with a soul above business wouldn't have cared much for a story like *Cash Boy* with its honest and hard-working hero, but my soul wasn't that kind. I also read *Bound to Rise, Slow and Sure,* and *Paul the Peddler.* The boys Alger introduced me to were level-headed youngsters, not dreamers, and they seemed to be right on my level, or not too much above it. They were manly, but in a sensible way; they were brave but they also were practical; and they didn't make me uncomfortable by devoting themselves to honour and glory I didn't re-read them as I did Gulliver, their interests were a little too narrow, but they were more my own kind than Alexander of Macedon. They were business-like heroes.

MOTHER GIVES FATHER A SURPRISE

I must have been a chronically suspicious small boy, for I remember thinking to myself that Father needed a great deal of watching. When he was in an expansive and jolly mood, a boy could trust him, but not when he felt thoughtful At such times the danger was that he would think of some brand new ambition. Not for himself, but for me.

One such ambition, which I blindly felt was harsh and unnatural, was that in addition to French I should learn German He seemed to have all sorts of hopeful pictures in his mind of my future, and one of these was of my travelling widely in Europe, conversing in an affable and condescending way with all nations. When I earnestly protested that I didn't want to converse with them, he laughed at my spluttering and told me that I would, later on. He added: "I decline to

have any son of mine grow up to be a damn blockhead, and blunder around the Continent in a helpless and ridiculous manner." He said that was no way to travel. All self-respecting young men should learn enough languages to feel at ease while in Europe.

This made even the very thought of Europe objectionable to me. If a boy had to go through all that, just to travel, I felt I'd rather stay home. I was having quite enough trouble with French without studying German. But I couldn't get Father to sympathize with this point of view. His own travels abroad as a young bachelor and later as a young bridegroom had left him with such pleasant memories that he had become, from my point of view, kind of romantic. I was impatient with this. I felt like a young but clear-headed critic arguing with some hopeless dreamer.

I felt more exasperated than ever when, on questioning Father, I learned that he hadn't travelled in Germany or had to learn German. He had picked up a smattering of it somehow, but the only tongue he knew well was French. When I said resentfully that it was not fair to make me learn something he hadn't, he said that that was the very reason he wanted me to, so that I wouldn't miss it, as he had. All his life, he said, he had regretted not knowing that language. I told him I'd bet I'd never miss it, but he assured me I would.

At odd moments he tried to teach me the rudiments of German himself. For some reason he began with the word Ich which I could never pronounce. I could not or would not lend myself to saying such a word right. I was willing to call it either Ick or Itch, but that was as far as I'd go. We had I don't know how many heated and long-drawn-out sessions

before he resigned me to what he called my "barbarous fate."

One winter some friends of Mother's, the Garrisons, introduced her to an elderly German lady who was in want. Her name was Fräulein von Pilch, and she was a majestically heavy and slow-speaking person. She had a meditative expression, voluminous skirts, and calm eyes. When the Garrisons brought her to the house and introduced her, she clasped and held Mother's hand, and said to her affectionately, "But you are eggsackly der teep." Mrs. Garrison explained this meant that Mother was just the type to learn German, and that Fräulein von Pilch would be only too happy to teach her.

Mother was always sorry for anyone who was old and hard up. She didn't really want to learn German, but she suddenly saw that, if she did, she would be giving a wonderful surprise to Father the next time they went abroad. As this

idea enchanted her, and as this really seemed to be the right moment, and as Fräulein was in such very sad circumstances, Mother agreed to take lessons. Then Fräulein explained that the price of each lesson to Mother would be very much less if she signed a little written agreement to take a full course of them; and Mother, who besides having a soft heart had a sense of thrift too, simply couldn't resist taking advantage of such a bargain, and signed.

The German language and Mother then began to make each other's acquaintance The beginning was pleasant enough, but yet somehow not promising. Fräulein shook her head several times thoughtfully at certain developments. Mother's head was so full of other things that Fräulein didn't seem to feel sure there was going to be room enough in it for a language like German. Also, Mother seemed to expect the German language to behave like a gentleman and not be

too hard on a busy woman who had several small boys to take care of, and who was studying it out of pure kindness, merely to help poor old Fräulein. This feeling of Mother's was concealed out of politeness at first, but it was burstingly strong; and when neither the German language nor Fräulein seemed to feel grateful, and when on the contrary they became too demanding and difficult, they were vehemently told that they really would have to change for the better.

Fräulein went off to think this over until the next lesson. She loved the German language just as it was; and even if she hadn't she didn't see how she could change it. That had never been done. She had no wish to change herself either. She was a good German. On the other hand, she wasn't a mere teacher, she was more like a missionary. When she came across unfortunate foreigners, who were living in darkness, and held up the light of German before them, she wished

them to bow reverently before it and take it into their hearts.

She came back determined to get it into Mother's heart somehow, even if she had to go very slow and pretend to yield here and there. She yielded on some irregular verbs and the prepositions before the dative for instance. The one thing she wouldn't give way on was the general structure of sentences, with the ingredients properly arranged in an orderly row, and the verb where it belonged, at the end. That was the essence of German. That however was the very thing about German that antagonized Mother. She said it was impossible for her to talk that way. She couldn't keep the verb back. She had a quick darting mind and her way of thinking and talking was lively, and every time Fräulein with her stately tread entered the house Mother pounced on her and tried to make her and the German language become lively too.

A worried look gradually appeared on Fräulein's once-peaceful brow, and her slow, quiet eyes grew distressed. She could be patient, she could be affectionate and steadfast, but she could not become lively. She was probably secretly troubled by the concessions she had already made--they had not been exactly disloyal to the Fatherland but they were on the borderline--and she neither knew how nor dared to keep on making more. She at last put her foot down. Mother was brought face to face with all the undisguised rigors of German and Fräulein flatly informed her that she would have to accept them.

Mother was appalled to have a worm turn in this way and threaten her--an ungrateful worm whom she had befriended. She tried to break off the agreement. This stirred up still deeper depths of "Germanness," as Mother called it in Fräulein. She stubbornly held to her rights and insisted on going ahead

When she left the house at the end of that lesson she was in a hard mood, and Mother was in a depressed one. She had me come down to her room and we had a long talk about it. I was too young to be any real help to her but Mother felt desperate. We read over the agreement together. "The mean old thing," Mother wailed. She burst into tears of vexation. It couldn't be broken. The idea of paying Fräulein the money for nothing was not even considered. We neither of us knew what to do.

The next time Fräulein came to the house Mother again summoned me, and I found to my horror that she was now turning to me in earnest. The only way out that she could see, she said, was for me to learn German.

I was very much agitated. My devotion to Mother was pulling me one way and my loathing of German the other. Fortunately Fräulein, upon being

consulted, looked at me with disfavour. I couldn't even pronounce her name right, she said, and she had never taught children.

I said to Mother that the one who seemed fondest of German was Father.

That night after dinner Mother explained to Father about the surprise for him that she had planned but told him that she didn't feel well enough just then to do very much studying, and that as she thought she was going to have a baby she would have to take a short rest. She said that Father had better take her lessons for her until she felt better.

It took quite a little explaining to make this plan at all clear to Father. When he had at last got it straight and had looked at the contract, he said that of course he had no time for German, it was out of the question, but he felt that a few lessons from Fräulein wouldn't hurt me a

bit. He looked at me and laughed as he added that he wished the old woman luck

Mother then had to make him understand that Fräulein never taught children. She said also that she didn't know what was the matter with me but I couldn't even say Ich, and the money would really be wasted if Fräulein and I spent the winter on it. Father got out of his chair and walked up and down when he had to admit this. He said that Mother was everlastingly throwing herself into hasty and ill-advised projects and then turning to him to be extricated, and that he was tired of it. He said that he was overburdened with heavy responsibilities and problems and cares, and that although he wished very much he had learned German when young he now had no leisure to study it. After all of which he said that since there was no other way out of the mess, he would take a lesson or two, while Mother rested, but

that then she must take her own medicine.

This step proved to be fatal. Although Father felt indignant and put upon, he made good progress in German. After two or three lessons, which he had to take at night, when he had finished his dinner, he insisted that Mother must stop shirking and go back to work, but although she seemed to be always about to do this, somehow she never did. He could never quite pin her down. He grumbled, he protested, but every time Fräulein arrived, either the hairdresser was there, or the dressmaker, or maybe Aunt Emma, or else some sudden household emergency kept Mother from taking the lesson. Or if she did try to, after the first fifteen minutes Mother felt very faint, and Fräulein would come downstairs, beaming, to give Father the rest of the hour. She was delighted with Father because he was thorough. No matter how cross he got at her she

smiled tenderly at him, while he faithfully though unwillingly filled her copy books with a fine German script.

FATHER BUYS US A BOAT

We boys wanted a boat. Spending our summers at the Pequot, a colony of cottages near New London, where the Thames flows into the Sound, we wanted to be out on the water. Charlie Ogden had a row-boat, but that wasn't enough to go round. There were nearly a dozen boys from New York at the Pequot in the eighties. There were four of us Day boys alone. And though Charlie was hospitable, he insisted on having at least as much use of his own boat as we did. He also had a sister who liked to use it, and take out other girls with her. A boat full of girls seemed to us a ridiculous sight, but they brazened it out, rowing up and down near the shore, in their starched white frocks and stiff little petticoats, while we boys commented loudly and mockingly on their performance.

One summer after we had all learned to swim, we four brothers at last got Father to promise that he would buy a boat for the family. Mother said he was to make very sure that he selected a safe one. Although she went in bathing and splashed around, close to the shore, she regarded swimming as an unnatural and mysterious feat, and she deeply distrusted the water.

In the circumstances, a sailboat was out of the question. Sailboats were always tipping over, Mother said, or else being blown out to sea, or striking holes in themselves by dashing against rocks, and then sinking straight out of sight. A canoe, or even a light skiff or rowboat, seemed almost as dangerous. She didn't want to keep her boys from enjoying themselves on the water, but couldn't Father get something solid for us to go out in?

Father at last found an immensely broad rowboat, long enough for three sets of oars, with a great, roomy, square-cut stern and a tiller, and a rather fat bow. She was so stalwart and solid that we could leap in or out of her without disturbing her balance, and it took a great deal of muscular effort to compel her to rock. Other rowboats could be upset by main force if we wanted to do it, as we now and then did when in swimming, but not this boat of ours. In dignity, weight, and durability she resembled a barge.

This boat seemed especially designed to promote family life. If one of us went out by himself in her, he seldom went far. He came back breathing hard and exhausted, and tried to find reinforcements. George and I, who were the oldest, could get along by spelling each other, but if our younger brothers wanted to come we liked to have them, and Cousin Julie besides. When Julie came, she usually

began by sitting in the stern like a lady and trying to steer so as to satisfy the various oarsmen, each of whom had different ideas; but we often got caught in such a strong tide that we had hard work getting home, and Julie would then find that in mere self-preservation she would have to turn to and row.

As Julie was beginning to go to teas and other young-ladyish parties, she didn't have a great deal of appetite for boating, at least of this kind, so when Harold, my youngest brother, was six, he was promoted to be coxswain instead. We then began having races with Charlie's boat. This was a stern business. It was particularly hard on our knuckles and the backs of our heads. Each boy rowed with a pair of oars instead of one, to better our speed, and when he crossed the handle ends over, in his excitement, he knocked all the skin off his knuckles. And in rough water anybody who missed a stroke fell over backward and banged his

head good and hard. After going through all this it was kind of exasperating never to beat Charlie's boat.

When a yacht or a man-of-war visited the Pequot, what we boys most admired about it was the crew of its gig. There were no gasoline launches in those days. A gig with six sailors and a coxswain would put off from some splendid yacht and bound swiftly over the water. Four fascinated red-headed Day boys would stand staring in awe at the perfect rhythm and timing of the oarsmen, with their short, snappy strokes. Best of all, as they rounded the dock, at a word from the coxswain the oars would spring out of the rowlocks and stiffly point to the sky, while the boat glided easily in and laid itself alongside the float.

Having a boat ourselves now, and a fairly large family to man it, we of course tried to imitate this performance and make a smart landing ourselves,

especially if there was anyone watching. One day when we had the tide with us, George and I for once got a magnificent momentum on our sleepy old craft. On that particular day, too, Harold, our coxswain, had been hungry for hours and was in a hurry to land. In order to be sure to avoid any delay, he held back his order to up oars till the very last moment, and then steered too full at the float besides, so as to be sure not to miss it. Our boat flew through the water. It rammed the float, head on, with such violence that George and I and our four shaky oars were instantly spilled off our thwarts, and as we clattered to the bottom of the boat the bow man and his boathook fell over backward on top of us. Mother, who was waiting on the dock, started screaming for help. This, naturally, drew everybody's attention to us, to our great annoyance. And while we were scrambling to our feet, Harold leapt out and fled.

Below the Pequot House, sticking out into the river, stood the dock, broad and spacious. Once or twice a day the little river steamer passed by. If signalled, she stopped and made fast to the easterly end to take on a passenger, tooting her whistle in triumph. Or sometimes the dinghy of a visiting yacht would wait at the float, while its owner sat in a rocking-chair drinking lemonade on a cottage piazza. At other times the dock was deserted by grown people, except Cap'n Finch.

Cap'n Finch was a lean, sharp-eyed man of possibly thirty or forty, who owned a beautiful white sloop, the *Hattie,* which was to let, by the hour. As an investment, the *Hattie* paid slow and irregular dividends. She lay, spick and span, at her moorings, day in and day out, and Cap'n Finch sat under a shed on the dock, watching her and chewing tobacco. He looked discontented. He had a restless

way of shifting about, and a tart and abrupt way of speaking.

Once in a while, though, his bronze face would relax a little and he would become less forbidding. This was when visitors at the hotel would stroll down to the dock, and after protracted negotiations go for a sail on the Sound.

It seemed to me, as a boy, that the most glorious thing on earth was a sloop. I often ran down to the dock to look at the *Hattie,* rocking gently in the waves at her moorings. And on the rare occasions when Cap'n Finch avariciously took a party on board, made sail, and winged his way down the river, I felt enthralled by the sight. Because, I suppose, of the sum that such an outing required, I never got a chance to sail in the *Hattie.* Mother didn't like sailing, and Father didn't like Cap'n Finch. The situation was hopeless.

Meanwhile we kept tugging away at the oars of our rowboat. Sometimes we rowed up the river toward the town of New London, to visit an old whaling man we called Amos, and read a valuable book of his about how and where to catch whales. One day Amos, looking over our rowboat, suggested that he could step a mast in her, for'ard, with a leg-of-mutton sail, all complete. With a centreboard, I could then sail her anywhere. This excited me greatly. As neither Amos nor I had any money, however, we did nothing for some weeks but talk. Then Amos found a spar, a rather little one, that would do for a mast, and enough old canvas to patch up a sail out of, and although we couldn't afford blocks or halyards, he and I went to work

Owing to the high cost of lead, we had to give up the idea of a centreboard. Amos shook his head over this. He said a sail would be no use without one. I didn't agree. Though I knew little or nothing

about sailing, I knew a whole lot about rowing, and I was tired of pulling my arms out of their sockets, tugging away at those oars.

Amos yielded at last. He kept making predictions of difficulties, but, as I pointed out, perhaps those very difficulties would open Father's eyes to our needs.

The New York Yacht Club fleet anchored off the Pequot during its cruise every summer. One dark morning the yachts fought their way in against a wet northern wind, while George and I were pulling up the river to get the new sail from Amos. He had all the gear ready. He showed us how to step the mast and how to unship it again when we were through, he screwed in a cleat or two for the sheet, and after a while we were off. We didn't ask Amos any questions about how to handle a sail. We supposed that

we knew. So did Amos. He had never met boys who didn't.

The wind was gusty and strong, and it was blowing almost directly downstream. The tide was running out, and the current of the river was swift. We sped along at a rate that was intoxicating to a pair of weary ex-oarsmen. Sprawled insolently at our ease in the stern we hardly noticed the rain. All went well till we bore down on the crowd of yachts that now lay at anchor.

It was necessary to do some careful steering. George had the sheet, I the tiller. I not only felt thoroughly competent, I felt happy and proud. It seemed to me that even the great yachts ahead of us would admire our boat, and that their crews would perhaps man the sides and give us a cheer as we passed.

To my consternation, I then found that our boat wouldn't do what I wanted. It obediently pointed its nose in any

direction I wished, but this had very little effect on the course it took through the water. I could sail it downstream bow on if I steered due south, straight ahead, or by pulling the tiller I could present one of its fat sides to the wind, but whatever I did we still went due south, with the wind, tide, and current. I began to understand better why Amos had wanted a centreboard.

We didn't hit any of the first yachts that we passed, I hardly know why. Both they and I fully expected it. We had some narrow escapes. As the yachts became thicker, however, naturally some had to suffer. Many more of their crews manned their sides than I had let myself dream, but they didn't stand and cheer us, they cursed. At first they were incredulous, they couldn't believe we'd dare to harm them, but as they saw our boat ram and rebound from some neighbouring craft, they suddenly realized, crew by crew, that they all were in danger.

The yachts were of various sizes. There must have been a hundred, all told. Some had crews of only one or two men, some had dozens. Large or small, all the crews seemed to think it would help to save them from being damaged if they threatened us fiercely enough as we bore down on them. It didn't. Nearly all these yachts were freshly painted, and this was the first leg of their cruise, and one or two red-faced owners whose yachts were bumped into, or scraped, ran along their decks shaking their fists at us and roaring like madmen.

George was groggy by this time. He had nearly fallen overboard at our second or third bad collision, and as for me, I was half-stunned with fright. Then, just a little way down the stream, I saw the *Hattie.* I realize now that she was probably only a rotten old tub, but that was not how I saw her in those days. She was a far more sacred craft in my eyes than any yacht in the harbour, and

on top of that I was scared of Cap'n Finch and of what he might do. I came to my senses, abandoned the tiller, and we lowered the sail. As the sail was nailed fast to the mast, this involved lowering everything.

Disguised now as an innocent rowboat, George and I rowed ashore, and unobtrusively made our way home in the rain. On the dock we had to pass Cap'n Finch. He had probably seen at least a part of our disgraceful adventure, but as we went by he averted his eyes and grimly gazed out to sea.

The next day some of the yachtsmen gave parties on board their yachts, and one very youthful yacht-owner, who was attentive to Julie, invited all the Day family. George and I consulted privately together about what we'd better do, and when the hour came for us to start we were not to be found.

MOTHER ON HORSEBACK

Father liked company. He was a sociable man and he liked to have his family do things with him. And particularly he liked to have Mother do things with him. So, after he had been riding horseback awhile he began to urge Mother to take it up too.

Mother, however, had a deep distrust of horses. Her father, to be sure, had had a stock farm in Ohio where he raised horses, but that had been way out of town, and she hadn't taken to horses. Or they to her.

In the city she seldom even rode in carriages, until she was fifty or over. Before that she trusted her legs. She preferred to. Of course, she used street-cars and buses, which had horses to draw them, and once in a long while she sent to a livery stable and hired a cab. But the horses that drew cabs and

street-cars seemed of some milder breed than those which she saw led out in the ring of the Riding Club where Father wanted her to learn to ride.

However, Father continued to urge her. He assured her confidently that it would take her no time at all to learn. "As to managing a horse," he said, "there's nothing to it. Just make up your mind what you want to do and see to it the horse does it."

This did not make it any clearer to Mother just how she was ever going to manage such a beast; but she went to a great deal of trouble to have a riding habit made and one fine day she went to the Riding Club for the first lesson.

When I saw Mother on horseback I felt a solemn horror. She who had once been so slender and young was now plump. Her tight riding habit accentuated her figure and, to my troubled eyes, she

looked all wrong, even before she mounted.

And to make matters worse, she approached any horse with misgivings; she got aboard without any liking for or confidence in the animal. He never got any clear idea of what she wished him to do, and even if he did he wouldn't have felt any particular desire to comply with her wishes. She wanted a horse to understand everything without being told, or at least to interpret correctly her ejaculations and jerks. He, in his turn, only became more bewildered. Both of them were soon in despair. At brief moments one of them would hope a little for better things, they would start on a trot with some courage perhaps, but no use--hope would die as my mother bounced tightly along on his back and both she and the horse grew more wretched and at odds with each other.

Father, however, was cheery. He was blind to the horse's misery and firmly disregarded hers. Bent on giving her encouragement he followed her around the ring telling her what to do. He could always tell though he couldn't teach. He fully believed that if she kept on she'd learn. He was completely surprised and baffled when, after a few lessons, Mother said:

"That's enough Clare, I am too busy to go there just now."

He did not give up, however, but said that New London, next summer, was just the place to learn. He said that riding in a ring didn't have much purpose to it anyway and that the country was the place. Besides, out there we had not only Father's horse, but also the family standby, a horse named Dick. All of us boys had jogged up and down on old Dick's back while learning, and there

seemed to Father no reason why Mother should not do so too.

Mother agreed readily enough. She wanted to end the talk, and next summer seemed a long way off. For the time being the whole thing was over and done with.

No sooner had we arrived in New London, though, than Father began to make plans for taking Mother out with old Dick. Mother, however, said firmly that she was much too busy getting settled. The truth was that the ring had been bad enough but at least it was enclosed. She shuddered to think of herself on the back of a horse in the open country. With nothing to stop the creature there was no telling where he would run to. She secretly made up her mind that nothing on earth was going to get her on the back of any horse way out here in the country.

While she was thinking of an excuse strong enough to silence Father, old Dick settled the matter for her. Dick was a middle-aged, slow-witted, good-looking horse. He was black all over except two white fetlocks and a star on his forehead. We boys thought he was handsome. So did other people who didn't know horses. His coat was kept so glossy that although the hairs were coarse they looked fine. His eyes were large, liquid and friendly, and they seemed to glow with intelligence or even with fire, although as a matter of fact Dick had neither.

When he stood outside our front door and held his head high and pricked up his ears, hoping for sugar, only a mean person would have noticed that those ears were the longest a horse ever had. His disposition was agreeable and his general appearance somehow was gentlemanly.

Father never rode Dick himself if he could possibly help it. He had bought him because he was a safe horse for us little boys. We felt that it was only when he went into action that he didn't live up to his looks. He had a solid heavy-footed gallop that jolted us hard at each bounce, his legs were thick and he had never learned to raise them at all; he always hung his bony head low as he pounded laboriously on, and he stopped short in the middle of a gallop whenever he wanted to rest. He stopped very often, to indicate that he was done for, and he had to be yelled at and kicked to persuade him to start again.

Having a far more gentlemanly nature than I had, Dick took those kicks in good part. It seemed boisterous to him, I suppose, but he took it for granted I meant well. As soon as he got over his surprise at the exasperation I'd shown, he would cheerfully bestir himself and plunge ahead again, just to be pleasant.

And a moment or two later he would once more suddenly come to a halt.

No matter how rudely I shouted at Dick, his behaviour toward me was invariably urbane and considerate. Every time I fell off, he immediately stopped and began eating grass. While I was picking myself up and climbing on again he continued to eat. After I had got on his back and hauled his head up and begun thumping his sides with my heels, he would look around in a friendly way at me, until it became finally clear to him that I wanted to go on with our ride.

A horse of this temperament, conservative, slow and respectable, was the last horse that we ever thought would run away with us some day. Yet one afternoon that's what happened.

George and I had driven Dick in the dogcart along the shore road all the way from our summer cottage at the Pequot up to the town of New London. We had

started early and Dick had taken his time about it. At the place where the road turned off from the shore and passed under the railroad tracks, which ran overhead on a low, stumpy, ironwork bridge, we faithfully stopped, according to promise, to make sure that no train was coming, and then drove on into New London and through its narrow winding streets to meet Father.

We sat waiting a long time near the station in the hot afternoon sunshine. The train was way behind schedule that Saturday. That was bad luck for Father. He could get away only for week-ends. On Sunday night he would have to take the night boat to return to New York. Every hour of his week-ends was precious to him.

Dick hung his long head down, crooked a knee or two, dozed in the shafts.

The very second the train rolled into the station we saw Father spring out. He

walked swiftly over to us and got into the dog-cart. George was sitting in the front seat beside him. I sat behind, facing backward. Father took the reins, touched Dick up with the whip and away we drove toward the Pequot. There still was a chance of our getting there in time for a swim.

Dick was still half-asleep. When he found that he was expected to hurry, he got rather flustered. He snorted, he threw his legs around, and shook his head. George and I laughed. Before Father drove under the low railroad bridge we stopped for a moment, but it was only a moment, and none of us heard the fast train. As we started through it came with a roar, less than ten feet over our heads. Dick's brain was never very clear and it now ceased to work. The noise was so great and so alarming that he leapt wildly forward, and the next I knew he was speeding away with us down the shore road. I was

rather pleased about this at first. The sooner we got home the better. But as the heavy dog-cart lurched and I saw Father sawing away at Dick's leathery mouth, I realized that the big animal was out of control. I held on tight to the side-rails. At one place where there was a thank-you-ma'am in the road, I was bounced so high up in the air, holding on to the side-rails, that the cushioned seat rose from its frame underneath me and pitched out of the dogcart. I came down on the frame with a bang, and stared back at my seat as it sailed through the air and fell plop on the road far behind us

I was astonished at Dick. He had always trusted the family before. But he'd been more than frightened, he'd been shocked by the noise under the bridge. He behaved as though we had tried to lead him into a loud and terrible death. No matter how hard Father pulled, Dick galloped ahead. He wasn't going to trust anybody but himself from now on. He

had to get away from that bridge and he had to keep going.

Dick ran in all for nearly two miles. He was puffing and coughing most of the time and making a great deal of noise. So was Father. Father was calling upon Dick to stop, and calling on us to hold tight, and on the world in general to look out and keep out of the way. After a little, George tried to help Father pull on the reins, but Dick had the bit in his teeth and he was still in a panic.

The one good thing about the situation was that our speed was not great. Dick was going much faster than usual, but that was not very fast. It was a kind of slow-motion runaway.

The worst of it was when we got to the Pequot. We roared helplessly by in full view of the cottage piazzas and the crowded hotel, at an unseemly yet ponderous gallop, and swung on toward the hill.

Even on the hill Dick didn't stop, which astonished George and me greatly. He went up and over the crest and plunged on past the Haven place and down the road toward the lighthouse. It wasn't until the road got so sandy that the going was bad that Dick solemnly slowed down and made up his mind he was safe.

Father got out when he stopped. He said that the damned horse had pulled his arms out of their sockets, and demanded to know where the cushion was and why I had lost it. When I told him, he said it was very peculiar and he'd have to send the coachman to get the cushion. Then he looked at his watch and brightened up and said he'd have time for a swim. He turned Dick around and we drove sedately back to our cottage.

After Father had his swim he came out on the porch, refreshed and at peace with the world. The runaway was comfortably a thing of the past. Mother

however had no intention of letting this opportunity slip by her. She began right away to say firmly that she had always known horses were dangerous, and she could not see why he had ever urged her to ride.

"An accident can happen to anyone," Father said easily.

"That's just why I shall never ride, Clare," Mother returned.

"But this did not mean anything, I tell you," said Father. "That damn train just rushed out of nowhere and that crazy horse took the bit in his teeth."

"Well, I should think that you would have looked first," Mother said as she gathered up her sewing before going in to make ready for dinner.

"I tell you I did look but the--" Father started to explain again.

"If you looked I don't see why you went under the bridge with the train right

there," said Mother severely as she went through the door.

Father, who had been so genial, was now red-faced and angry. He puffed violently at his cigar for a moment, then strode up the road to the cottage where his friend Mr. Ogden lived.

As we came along to the Pequot House for dinner a few moments later, we saw Father quietly exhaling his cigar, and his voice, always full-bodied, came to us distinct on the early evening air.

"And where that train came from I'm damned if I know."

MOTHER AND BESSIE SKINNER'S RING

The women whom Mother knew in the eighties didn't discuss women's rights. When Mrs. Belva Lockwood ran for President, they knew it was ridiculous. When votes for women were advocated, later on, they disapproved of that programme. They sometimes are pictured, accordingly, as meek, supine creatures. This is a mistake. In their marital relations they were particularly firm and demanding.

Their underlying feeling was that a woman had certain "prerogatives," which God and Nature had given her. They often talked to each other about these and the best ways to get them. When Mother was in her thirties she listened to such talks intently. She had no very clear idea as to what a woman's prerogatives were, but whatever they were she

thought she might need them, and her feelings about them were vigorous.

This attitude was partly an outgrowth of the way Father talked. He didn't seem to think that a woman had any prerogatives He never put it that way exactly, but whenever one was claimed it surprised him. He professed never to have heard of the most ordinary feminine privileges.

One grievance of Mother's, which had seemed a small matter at first but which grew bigger each year, was that Father had never given a ring to her when they got engaged. She had been a little surprised, even at the time, when she didn't get one. She had supposed every girl got an engagement ring as soon as she promised to marry. Father had once had an unpleasant experience, however, which had left a dislike of engagement rings fixed in his mind. He told Mother not to be young and foolish. Engagement rings were all nonsense. He said they

were going to get married so very soon anyway that she didn't need one. She was in no mood to quarrel with him. He was twenty-eight, she was twenty, and his ideas prevailed.

As time went on, and as Mother talked over things with other young married women, she felt more and more injured. Not only that, but she began to fear she had made a dreadful mistake. Her young women friends explained to her the awful consequences of letting a man evade his plain duty. Any man who had successfully evaded one duty, they said, would naturally suppose he could keep right on evading for life.

The next thing Father knew, he found himself being heatedly urged to buy an engagement ring for his wife, several years after they had married and settled down and begun to have children. Not having the slightest idea as to why Mother wanted it, he was immensely

surprised. He was still more surprised to see her cry when he refused her request. He patiently explained to her, as though she were a petulant child, the senselessness of his presenting an engagement ring to the woman he was married to, damn it.

This encounter was only the first of many that they had on the subject. As the combats continued, Father became more and more convinced that women were completely unreasonable, and also that Mother had a mysterious mania for rings; and Mother, whose jewel box didn't have very much in it, felt more and more sure that the women she had talked with were right, and that unless she could get that ring out of Father, she'd never get any of her just dues again.

Meanwhile, having got it into his head that Mother had a strange love of rings, Father bought her a handsome ring every

time she bore him a son. Once in a long while he even brought home a new ring on her birthday, if he had been sufficiently reminded in advance that her birthday was coming. Mother was delighted each time she got one. She had a great love of jewels. But from her point of view none of these gifts could make up to a woman for the lack of ever having had an engagement ring, and she kept right on wanting one.

One afternoon, down at Grandpa Day's, while I was playing on the floor with a wooden engine that Grandpa had made for me, and while Mother was talking with Grandma and old Mrs. Caister, something was said about Bessie Skinner

Mother sniffed.

"That was the one that Clare got engaged to first, Vinnie," said Grandma.

Mother said, "Yes, I know, but what really happened? What broke it off?"

Grandma shook her head and said evenly that she never knew.

Mrs. Caister laughed to herself. "They were cousins," she said. "They were both of 'em Days, Vinnie; that's why. Whenever they had any difference, neither one of 'em would give in to the other. So finally Bessie up and returned the ring that Clare--"

"*What!"* Mother shrieked. I looked up from my engine. "He gave that woman a *ring?* What became of it?"

Mrs. Caister said that she supposed Father had it. She remembered distinctly that he had given Bessie a ring and a watch, and that she had never sent the watch back to him, but she certainly had sent the ring.

The next thing I knew Mother was hurrying with me through East Twenty-

fifth Street over to Fourth Avenue and we were getting on an uptown horse-car. I looked out at the thin, dirty white horses. It was cold and my legs were not quite long enough to reach the floor of the car, where the straw would have kept them a little warmer. I squirmed around and knelt on the seat to look out of the window. There wasn't much to see but long rows of red-brick houses, two or three stories high, with shops on the street floors and furniture or baskets of vegetables out on the broad sidewalks. Every two or three blocks a big wooden Indian with a bunch of wooden cigars in his hand stood offering them to passers-by, at the door of some cigar shop. Presently the conductor struck a match to light the tiny kerosene lamps, one at each end of the car, and we went in the tunnel. When we came out again, in Forty-second Street, the buildings were all twice as tall, and the streets twice as crowded with horses and wagons and

hacks, cutting in and out every which way, with the drivers yelling like mad at each other.

It was nearly six o'clock when we got home. Father was dressing for dinner. He was at his washstand in the passageway, in his trousers and undershirt, with his suspenders hanging down, sponging his face and head and snorting with pleasure

"Clare!" Mother cried, as she ran in his bedroom. "Why did you never give me that ring?"

Father looked up from the wash-bowl, dripping with water. "What are you talking about?" he said. "Go away."

"Where did you put it, Clare?" Mother said urgently. "Don't pretend you don't know!"

Father rubbed his head and hair with his big Turkish towel and stared angrily at her. "Go away, Vinnie!" he roared. "I gave you a ring only last year. I don't

know what on earth is the matter with you. I never saw such a woman!"

"I want that ring you gave Bessie Skinner, Clare!"

Father got red. He laughed. "Where did you hear about that?" he asked.

"Never mind where I heard about it," Mother said. "I want it. Is it in this bureau drawer?"

"Shut that drawer!" Father shouted. "No it's not. Leave my things alone, Vinnie!"

I ran on upstairs to get ready for dinner myself.

A few days later, after Father had taken down from an upper shelf an old box of mementoes, he found the ring he had once given to his cousin and handed it over to Mother. It was a very little ring. Not nearly so handsome as those Mother had. Father had been young and unable to afford a better one when he had bought it. It was only a thin band of gold

with two tiny white diamonds, but Mother clutched it victoriously.

"I don't see what you want that poor old thing for," Father said.

Mother didn't exactly know, either. She only knew that she felt much better, now that she had it. She looked at the two tiny diamonds, wondering what could be done with them. She looked speculatively at Father. Her eye fell on his shirt front.

"What do you wear those pearl studs all the time for?" she asked him.

"I don't," he said. "I haven't worn them for weeks. I just screwed them in to-night for a change."

"Your plain gold ones are handsomer, really," said Mother.

Father went back to his newspaper. Shirt studs didn't interest him. Or at least so he thought. He didn't know that he was wearing his full-dress pearls for the last time.

A few nights later a small box from Tiffany's arrived at the door--a box that Mother had been waiting for eagerly. It contained a new ring--a pretty little ring with three fine pearls in it and two tiny diamonds. Much handsomer than Bessie Skinner's.

"See my new ring, Clare!" she cried.

Father examined it but without recognizing the jewels. "More extravagance," he said, with a frown.

"But isn't it pretty?" said Mother.

"I don't say it's not pretty, Vinnie, but how much did it cost? I've given you enough rings by this time."

Mother gave him a kiss.

"It didn't cost anything, darling, except for the setting. And now that I've got this you needn't give me rings any more."

Father looked at her incredulously.

"What I'd really like now," Mother said, "would be a nice diamond necklace."

FATHER BRIGHTENS THE SICKROOM

Throughout Mother's illness, Father hadn't been very much troubled. But now that she was beginning to get well again, he felt quite alarmed, for he realized at last, as he watched her, how feeble she had become. He kept patting her hand and saying "Dear Vinnie," and telling her he couldn't stand it.

Mother was pleased by his being attentive. When she saw other women being fussed over by their husbands, she often wished she got more of such attentions. But she was not really the kind of woman to linger much over endearments. She liked things of that sort to be electric, and to come in quick flashes, and pass. She hadn't time or patience to give herself up to long interchanges.

So after Father, who wasn't very inventive, had patted her hand twenty

times, she snatched it away in annoyance and said: "Stop it, Clare! That's enough!"

"Get your hat and stick, dear," she added. "It's time you were starting."

Mrs. Nichols was giving a tea which Mother wished to hear all about, and she had coerced Father, much against his will, into saying he'd go. What had made him consent was his desire to do something for her. She said that if he told her about the tea it might brighten her up, and he felt that she probably needed a little amusement.

He looked spruce and handsome in his formal cutaway coat. Mother smiled at him. She felt she was being generous to Mrs. Nichols, and executive, too, to send Father there in her stead--such a distinguished-looking, ruddy, agreeable man would be a help at any tea. It would be pleasant for Father, besides. She only wished she could go, instead of sitting in

bed with nothing more interesting to look forward to than chicken broth. Things tasted so good at a tea.

"Anything I can do for you while I'm out?" Father asked her.

"Yes, Clare," she said suddenly, "there *is* something I'd like. Do bring me some of those little sandwiches Mrs. Nichols has--they'd be nice with the broth."

"Sandwiches and *broth?"* Father said in dismay.

"No! Just sandwiches," Mother said. "Those little thin sandwiches. Bring some in your pocket."

"Oh, some sandwiches, eh?" Father put on his high hat, took his stick and gloves from the table, and left.

He enjoyed himself more than he expected to at the tea. Met some men he knew, and was spoken to by a great

many ladies whom he knew more or less. It made him feel expansive and jovial to be kept busy responding to all of them.

He was on guard, however. There were some women present whom he knew of old and took care to avoid: women who talked every minute, or who had masculine airs, or who dressed like old frumps. But he picked out a good corner to sit in where there were none of these persons, and where he could be gallant in his jolly way to others of a much nicer kind. And their daughters. He had a cup of tea, too, and a plate of sandwiches that one of the attendants had given him

As he munched them appreciatively, he remembered that he was to get some for Mother.

He looked around to see where the sandwiches had come from and observed a long table at the other side of the room piled high with delicacies. But how could he possibly march up to that table

publicly, and amaze everyone by juggling the sticky things into his coat-tail pocket?

One of the young girls was asking him a question. He turned to her to respond. As their conversation went on, his mind went back again, once or twice, to the sandwiches, but he didn't see how he could go over there and put a supply in his pocket. It would be an odd thing to do. He had never done such a thing in his life. It had never even occurred to him to do a thing of that kind. He was sure that Mother would understand how impossible it was when he told her.

He had too good a time to leave early, and he stopped at the club for a moment before walking leisurely home.

Mother's broth had been brought up to her and she was lying there, waiting. She heard him let himself in the front door and put away his hat and things in the coat closet. He seemed to take forever to do it. She heard the closet door shut.

She tasted her broth. It was flat. But Father's step was coming along the hall to her room now, at last.

He beamed cheerfully at her as he entered and started to sit down in a chair

"Don't sit on my sandwiches," she warned him.

He half put his hand to his coat-tails, then remembered, and frowned.

"Oh, Clare!" Mother cried disappointedly "Didn't you bring them? It's been so tiresome sitting here waiting. Didn't you even bring one?"

"Now wait," Father said, "wait a moment and let me explain."

"Weren't there any there?"

"Yes, but--"

"You *forgot* them!"

"No! I didn't forget them!" Father said crossly.

"Why didn't you bring me some, then?"

"Will--you--let--me--ex--plain?"

"Never mind. I'm tired," said Mother, "and I knew you wouldn't anyway."

"I insist on your listening to me," Father shouted. "I intend to be heard."

Mother lay back on her pillows, looking deeply hurt and closing her eyes.

"The table was at one side of the room," Father began. "Over here, say. There were the sandwiches, there. I remembered you wanted some, and I noted where they were, several times. But--they--it was impracticable, Vinnie. In short, there was no way to do it."

"What did you do all the time, then?" Mother sighed. "Who did you see?"

"I saw everybody," Father said. "I had a very nice talk with--er--Mrs. Fisher. No, Folsom? Wait a moment. What is that woman's name? She's a cousin of Mrs.--

well, I can't remember, but I know the name perfectly. Finley. No, not Finley. Anyway, she lives on Park Avenue."

"Oh dear," Mother said. "And who else?"

"Well, let me see. Mrs. Palmer, of course."

"Mrs. Palmer! Why, she's in the South."

"Oh. Well, maybe it was Mrs.--er--what's-her-name, then. The woman whose uncle owns that ugly house on Quaker Ridge."

"I don't know who you're talking about."

"Why, yes you do. You've seen him fifty times, damn it. The man who drives that lopsided pair of flea-bitten greys."

"And you talked to *him?*"

"No! The confounded blatherskite. He wasn't there. I talked with his aunt, I tell you. His niece I mean. The one who looks like an Eskimo."

"Can't you tell me about *anybody* who was there? Anybody at all?"

"I can't remember all their names. No."

"Well, Clare!" Mother said. "I hope you spoke to Mrs. Nichols."

"Yes, I did. We had quite a talk."

"What did she have on?"

"Let me think, now. Something fuzzy, I remember. With chains."

"What colour was it?"

"I think it was some shade of green."

"That's funny. She wore that green dress when she received with her sister, last month."

"Maybe it wasn't green. Perhaps it was purple."

"Oh, Clare!"

"Good God!" Father roared. "Don't be so unreasonable. I can't give you an account of all the little details of every

stitch she had on. I'm not a damned couturier, Vinnie."

"But you aren't telling me a thing about anybody," Mother wailed. "I did hope you'd bring home a little news for me, even if you didn't remember my sandwiches." She looked at him sharply. "Did you eat any yourself?"

"Yes," Father said, recollecting the taste with pleasure. "I had several. They were very nice."

"*Oh, Clare!"*

"Don't begin on that again," Father said. "I *wanted* to bring you some, Vinnie." He searched his mind perplexedly for a way to explain. But he didn't quite understand himself, why he hadn't brought those sandwiches home. He looked helplessly at her.

"You never will do anything that you think isn't 'suitable,'" Mother said irritatedly.

"Why, of course I won't," he said, frowning. "Why should I?"

"Not even for me?"

"Oh, damn! Oh, damnation!" said Father

MOTHER GETS AN ALLOWANCE

Mother came back from a trip to Egypt with a few hundred dollars left in her letter of credit, which, much against Father's will, she kept for her own. This Egyptian hoard lasted for years, though only a few hundred dollars; but as it dwindled Mother grew worried and restless. It shouldn't have dwindled. It should have grown. She said that she should have something coming in every month. What she--and still less Father--didn't clearly realize was that she was half unconsciously groping toward a life of her own, in a random, haphazard, inactive way.

Some of the younger women whom Mother knew had been putting ideas into her head. They had told her that it was childish and undignified for her to have to keep asking Father for money to pay the household expenses; and worse still

to have to struggle with him over each dollar. The right way to fix it was to have an allowance. But although she listened with interest to this tempting idea Mother had reservations. She had heard two kinds of stories about allowances and one friend had given her some solemn warnings against them.

However, the younger women told Mother, "Just estimate how much you need for the house and yourself, and have Mr. Day hand you a monthly cheque with no talk about it."

Mother told them that they didn't know Mr. Day. She really liked the plan they suggested. The only thing was that she couldn't figure how much to ask for. If she asked for too little she'd be in a trap, and she didn't want to get in any trap--especially one of her own making. On the other hand, she knew it would be no use at all to ask Father for any very large sum because he wouldn't give it. Yet she

knew very well that any allowance that wasn't large might sometimes be too little. What would she do then? She didn't want to be always trying to live at some fixed monthly rate, there were too many unexpected emergencies. She felt that the plan wasn't safe.

She talked it over with Father, however, just to see what he'd say. Father said a great deal. He said that of all the damned nonsense he had ever heard this was the damnedest. He told Mother that she was a lovely woman and he was very fond of her, but that neither she nor any of her family knew the first thing about money.

Mother immediately told him she knew as much about money as he did. But she secretly realized that she was not good at figures. She wouldn't have put it that way, even in her own thoughts--she would have merely said that she didn't like figures or that figures were tiresome.

The idea of having some money of her own every month was attractive, but the prospect of having to make careful estimates wasn't.

She played with the notion for years without really pushing it. She liked to poke Father up on the subject. When he made a row about some bill, and when she had no good defence, she counter-attacked him by declaring that it was all his own fault, and that he wouldn't have any such troubles if he gave her a proper allowance. He replied that he would have nothing but trouble if he did anything as crazy as that. And in the excitement of denouncing allowances he would lose sight of the bill.

Father's opinion of the financial ability of women was small, also the custom of the times and of his generation made Mother's talk of an allowance seem preposterous to him.

Even as recently as thirty or forty years ago, in New York, a lady was not supposed to have any occasion for cash. Two or three dollars to keep in her purse for car-fares and candy was plenty. There were very few cabs in the streets, and it wasn't customary for a woman to hail one. A lady usually had an escort anyway, and he, of course, paid all expenses. If she had any shopping to do she made her purchases at places where she had charge accounts. If she lunched out without an escort it wasn't at a restaurant but at the home of some friend.

Ladies were elaborately dressed beings in long, trailing skirts, and whenever they walked in the street, they had to hold up these skirts with one hand. They had to do this gracefully, of course, and at just the right height, so as not to reveal too much of their ankles and yet keep the hem free from dirt. With the

other hand they carried an umbrella or parasol, or on cold days a muff.

In the side seam of their skirts was a pocket which held a tiny purse, a handkerchief, and a silver-topped vial of smelling-salts to use if they felt faint. But this pocket was not easy to get at, and it was embarrassing to feel around for it, so when women got on a street-car they tucked a nickel inside their buttoned gloves. All conductors were supposed to lend a hand to help them get on and off.

When I was a little boy Mother wore bonnets, tied under her chin with gay ribbons. Later on, when bonnets went out, she had a hard time with stiff hats. Ladies' hats were perched up on top of their hair, and although they were pinned on with long jewelled pins they were insecure in a wind, and their hair was skewered with quantities of hairpins, which kept falling out. No matter how thoroughly ladies were buttoned up, they

were always coming apart. Their escorts protected them however, swelling with whiskers and grandeur.

Men knew the world. Women didn't. Women were not fitted to deal with the world. A wife's fortune, if she had one, was usually controlled by her husband. And men's manner in supplying women with money was supposed to be tender but firm. This attitude was so general, and so few of Mother's friends were exempt from it, that in spite of her self-reliant nature she accepted it as inevitable. The idea of her ever becoming independent, even in a small way, in money matters, and having a life of her own seemed a dream.

Nevertheless Father felt they should be business-like and one of the great objections, he said, to giving Mother an allowance was that she would give it all to those parsons. He said the minute he died she'd give all of his money to them

too. Or she'd lend it to one of those incompetent friends of hers.

He had plenty of reasons to think this, for once in a while the Rev. Dr. Garden, the rector of our church, would drop in to see Mother. He usually left a loving message of some kind for Father--at any rate Father always heard that he'd been there. And he didn't like it. If he himself was at home at the time, it was all right, because in that case the rector got nothing more than a cup of tea from his visit and he departed as poor as when he came. But when any clergyman succeeded in seeing Mother alone, he always got something out of her, and not only that but it was invariably something of Father's.

Mother explained again and again that Dr. Garden had to visit all his parishioners, and that he didn't ask them for anything, at least not very often, he merely talked about the needs of the

parish and the opportunities. However, Father remained down on all the clergy. He also remained down on all charities except the Charity Organization Society and its woodyard. This was another trouble, for when appeals came to help a hospital, or a fresh-air fund, or a home for orphans, Mother couldn't bear not to give something. But Father would never give her money for any such purpose. He said charity began at home and if he was going to give money outside he must investigate first. He asked questions. He said he had never heard of whatever hospital had sent the last circular. He looked at the signature to the appeal for coloured orphans suspiciously, and wanted to know "who the devil is this Father O'Brien?"

Mother loathed these inquisitions. So she would tuck a five-dollar bill in the envelope and mail it quickly, and not dare to tell Father.

As years went on however, and as he gradually lost all hope of moulding Mother into his pattern he began to admit that the allowance plan might not be so bad--if it worked. And the more Mother heard how many other women there were who now had them, the more confident she began to feel that she could do it if they could.

What finally brought the thing to a point was a milliner's bill from Mlle. Mimi. Father came to Mother's room holding it out between his thumb and one finger as though it were almost too repulsive to touch.

"I will not send this person a cheque," he said.

Mother flamed up at him. "Why, Clare! It's the only hat I've bought since November, and it was reduced from forty dollars."

"I do not object to your buying a hat if you need one," he answered, "though it

is beyond my comprehension why you require so many, but the person from whom you bought it isn't fit to be in the hat business, or in any other kind either."

"Poor Mimi!" Mother interrupted. "She does sell her things very cheap."

"Her bill gives no evidence of any such habit," said Father. "But that is not what I'm talking about."

"Well, really," Mother cried, "why don't you *say* what you're talking about then? You just stand there going on and on talking about this wretched bill."

"If you will be so kind," Father elaborately and sternly rejoined, "as to cease interrupting me for a moment and allow me to speak, I will tell you. I have made out thousands of cheques in my life, payable to this or that firm or person, but I never have and I never will write a cheque that says 'pay to the order of Mimi.'"

"I never went there before," Mother said, "but it's a very nice place and I don't see why you object to it."

"I object to it because this confounded person doesn't put her name on her bills," Father shouted. "What the devil is her name anyhow?"

"Why you saw it yourself, Clare. It's Mimi!"

"Mimi what? Mimi O'Brien? Mimi Jones? Mimi Weinstein?"

"How do I know! It's just Mimi."

"It isn't just Mimi. She must have some other name, damn it. And you can tell her to print it on her bill if she wants to be paid. I will not make out a cheque payable to Tom, or to Dick, or to Mimi. It's impertinent of her to expect it."

The final outcome of the conversation was that Father agreed to give Mother an allowance although he was still in doubt just what it would cover.

"I hope to God it will work," he said pessimistically.

What happened was that Mother, despite her charitable leaks, began hoarding. She had a nest egg and was determined to add to it. The household expenses she still considered Father's duty. She had got too accustomed to his paying the regular bills for her to change easily and pay for them herself. As this began to dawn on Father his surprise and grief were acute.

"It doesn't cover a single thing," he said to me one evening.

However, the matter was settled in Mother's mind. And Father was never allowed to pass up a single month. It was not an easy allowance to get, it didn't just come. But it was something due her, and before the month was ended she would receive it, exhausted but triumphant.

Father, when at last he had brought it home would be extra glum. On these nights he sat in his room, or on the piazza, if we were in the country, talking to himself a long time. It was impossible to catch the words at first, but gradually as his feelings reached a climax he got up and addressed the universe reproachfully, and always in the same words.

"Just an added expense," he groaned. "Oh damn."

FATHER AND OLD MOTHER EARTH

Father said he was "getting damn tired of being cooped up in the city all summer," while Mother and we boys were enjoying ourselves at New London. He could spend only his week-ends with us there. He wanted some place nearer town. His former partner, Mr. John A. Gwynne, had bought a pleasant country place in Rye, only twenty-odd miles from New York. Not far away, in Harrison, old Mr. Macy had laid out a large private park and had built several cottages in it to rent. Father rented one.

George and I came home from boarding-school to that large private park. We disliked it. Mr. Macy's men were always working at it to make it look trim and neat. It was the kind of park that boys were not allowed to mess up. There was nowhere we could play games of any kind except on one tennis-court.

We not only played tennis on that court, we held a track meet there every day. Each of us four brothers became an athletic club, all by himself, and he entered a complete team of athletes consisting solely of himself in every event of each meet. Harold, the youngest, called himself The Pastime Athletic Club, and, although he was a roly-poly, fat little boy, he often won the standing high jump by means of his handicap, and even the hundred-yard dash.

What with all our jumps and shot-puttings and dashes and heel-and-toe walks, that tennis-court had a hard time, and Mr. Macy's men had about all they could do to repair it. Meanwhile Mr. Macy himself began to have a hard time with Father. Father had taken a deep interest in the park--deeper than we felt it deserved, and much deeper than Mr. Macy seemed to find quite convenient. Mr. Macy liked his tenants to appreciate and admire his park, but he turned out to

be unreceptive to advice about changing it.

He had fenced in all the roads he had built, with fences of neat iron posts, strung with wires. Father said these were ugly. Those roads, he said, should be lined with hedges. Mr. Macy said he didn't want hedges. Father looked up the best kinds and recommended privet as most suitable for Mr. Macy.

The roads were surfaced with coarse bits of bluestone which had sharp, cutting edges.

This bluestone was supposed to get ground down gradually till it made a hard road-bed. As it didn't get ground down as evenly as it should, Mr. Macy was always renewing it, and dumping loads of fresh stone on the bad places--stone with fresh cutting edges. This was hard on shoes, bicycles, horses' feet and the thin rubber tyres we had on one of our carriages.

Father looked up the best kinds of surfacing and recommended trap-rock.

Many years later Mr. Macy became a convert to privet, and planted the borders of all his roads with fresh green hedges--which really was an improvement. But he stuck to his bluestone, and Father and he were still arguing away about trap-rock, pro and con, when the automobile era overtook them and put them both out of date.

Meanwhile, even that very first summer, Father said he liked Harrison, and he found that he liked it better and better the longer he stayed. He began to talk about buying a place there, to settle down in for good. He considered making Mr. Macy an offer for one of his cottages. He liked Mr. Macy, and, in spite of all the advice that Father tendered, Mr. Macy liked him. But somehow there didn't seem to be room for them both in the same park.

Adjoining the park was an old run-down forty-acre farm belonging to a farmer named Smith. Mr. Macy regarded this farm as an eye-sore and he greatly desired to buy it. The difficulty was that he found Mr. Smith hard to deal with. Mr. Smith was one of the oldest inhabitants of that section, and he didn't like it when he heard down at the post office that his farm had been called an eye-sore. Year in and year out he had refused even to listen to offers. His farm was not for sale. For some reason or other however he turned out to be willing to talk the matter over with Father.

Father wanted to buy that piece of land. He climbed over the old stone wall night after night to have a chat with Mr. Smith, and see whether they could come to terms. He always came back from these visits fervently declaring that he didn't like farms. He said that farming might be all right enough if it was carried on properly but the trouble was that it

usually wasn't. He talked disparagingly about the ragged overalls that most farmers wore, and their slouchy way of walking and talking. On our horseback rides in the back country, when we passed by a farm, Father would point out its neglected, unpainted sheds and say, "Pah! What a damned low-class way of living!"

I didn't agree with him. Boys were always kept dressed up in those days, and some of them didn't mind it, but I could never master the secret of feeling at ease in fine clothes. I even had secret leanings toward overalls, and the more ragged the better. I liked to see a long dripping watering trough in a farmyard, and horses pushing their noses into the water, with their traces knotted up at their sides. I liked to watch cows lounging along as they filed into a barn, and hay bursting out of a hay-mow and noisy chickens crowding around a back door to be fed.

There was one farm I especially liked where we sometimes bought cider. I knew old Eben Sedley who ran it, and when I was out on a ride by myself I used to stop there and listen to him. I was a city boy, I knew nothing whatever about how a plough handle felt, and Mr. Sedley's remarks about his corn or his potatoes were meaningless to me, but as he talked on I somehow understood that he was engaged in a long and strange struggle, and that the force he was struggling with, Nature, was too big to control. He reminded me of Amos, the whaler, with whom I had talked in New London. I respected men like farmers and sailors who worked with the soil or at sea. They seemed to me to have a look of long-suffering endurance about them, as though they had learned not to be much surprised by calamities.

Of course I said nothing to Father about any of this. Father seemed to regard all calamities as things that must be

controlled. They were manifestations of a rebellious and unruly spirit in nature. They were a species of intentional perverseness which mankind ought to discipline. He often said that old Eben Sedley was shiftless and slack, and that Mr. Smith wasn't much better, and that if he, Father, ever succeeded in buying Mr. Smith's farm, it wouldn't be long before that piece of land wouldn't know itself.

In spite of Father's objections to farms, he said he was fond of the country. He liked fresh country air. He liked to gallop on horseback along shady lanes and dirt roads. The roads had to smell right, however. They could smell of hay, for example, or flowers, but they must by no means smell of pigs. The trouble was that every once in so often they did smell of pigs. Father would then declare that this was intolerable, and demand to be informed why such a nuisance was allowed to exist.

I never felt sure myself whether Father liked the country or not. When it was on its good behaviour he did, but whenever it wasn't he was rather severe with the country. His attitude toward it wasn't quietly stoical, like Mr. Sedley's; Father was a far more hearty lord of the soil, and a great deal more hectoring.

He especially disapproved of the country wherever it was wild and uncultivated. It ought at least to have trees growing on it or animals grazing. He was not interested in wasteland, he said. He had no objection at all to allowing the sea to be wild. The sea, like the air, was an element, and wildness was suitable to it. Father would not have felt at home with tame elements or enjoyed living among them. Good, roaring, wet, tempestuous winds and rough seas gave him pleasure. But the land was another matter entirely. The land was more female. Its duty was to bring forth its fruits in abundance for Father, not forgetting additional supplies

of hay and oats for our horses. Land should do all this readily too, and give men well-flavoured products. If it didn't, Father despised either the fields or the spineless fellows who tilled them for not being firm with those fields and making them do what they should.

Father's feeling toward old Mother Earth in short was not sentimental. He was prepared to be very fond of her, but only if she did her part.

When he and I got back from our ride together, early one morning, Mr. Smith was waiting to see him. I dismounted and went on indoors to breakfast. In a few minutes Father came in too and said to Mother, "It's settled. I've bought it." The Smiths, I learned a day later, would move away the next month; and after that, even if Nature continued to misbehave elsewhere, it looked as though she'd have to mind her p's and q's on Father's new farm.

FATHER INVESTS IN A LIVERY

Father's first coachman, Morgan, had never been a coachman before. He had worked in the Riding Club's stables and it was there that we got to know him. He seemed to be just the right man for us, but the one objection was that he had no livery. Father blamed him for this. In fact he came near not taking him. The idea seemed to be that a man who had no livery wasn't a genuine coachman. All genuine coachmen had liveries, just as all good dogs had collars. Morgan said, "Where would I be getting a livery, sir? A man like meself hasn't the money, and I never heard tell of any coachman that bought his own anyhow." Mother said that then he should have brought a livery from his previous place. Morgan touched his forelock and respectfully explained to us that this wasn't done, and that

anyway the livery hadn't belonged to him but to the Riding Club.

None of Father's New England ancestors had ever had a coachman in livery. Father felt it was a great expense. He said he didn't like it. But as it was considered impossible for a coachman to drive our dog-cart, or even sit on the back seat, without wearing a high hat and a white ascot tie and either a bright green or blue suit, with nickel-plated buttons, Father sent Morgan to a medium-priced shop to get his outfit. He saw to it, too, that Morgan's suit was of good strong material, so that he never would have to buy him another livery for a great many years.

Morgan was an alert, hopeful man, and we liked him, but he had done better as a stableman at the Riding Club than he did as a coachman. So long as we had only two horses and a dog-cart he got along pretty well, but when in the course

of time we got a third horse the strain made him nervous. He had always been fond of his liquor, it appeared. Now he got so he depended on it. As a result, coming to New York on the night boat from the country one autumn, feeling weighed down with the duties and responsibilities we had placed on his shoulders by entrusting him with three costly horses and Topsy the cat, he sat up all night trying to keep his eyes open and dismally drowning his worries. When he arrived in New York in the morning and came to report on his journey, he stood in the hall, pale and speechless, staring vacantly at us, then collapsed on the hat-rack, in tears, and confessed that Topsy was lost.

He was immediately discharged, and he stayed discharged for over a week, all of which time he spent--or declared to us that he spent--on the boat, making inquiries and running down clues, but in vain, for Topsy never was found.

One night he surreptitiously came back to our house with a basket. He was let in the basement door without our knowing it. He left the basket and fled. Margaret, the cook, then came upstairs, with her lips tightly pursed and yet with a pleading look on her face, and asked Father and Mother if they would please kindly step down to the kitchen. We all trooped down at once. There, on the floor, in Topsy's old basket, was a new-born lamb.

"What's this miserable thing?" Father demanded.

We boys poked at the strange object, curiously. It shut its eyes and said, "Ba-a."

Margaret said Morgan had told her that he had got this lamb at the butcher's. He had apparently intended it to be a peace offering. It wasn't taken as such. If Morgan had been present, he would have been discharged all over again and for

good, for daring to incommode Father with this attempt at atonement.

The Day family didn't know what on earth to do with that lamb. They couldn't bring themselves to connive at its murder and send it back to the butcher. Yet to bring up a lamb on Madison Avenue seemed quite a problem. We boys were all in favour of keeping it, hoping that it soon would grow up and become a great big ram with curved horns. We planned to chase it up and down stairs, and sic it at other boys, and hide it underneath the piano. At the moment however it was so weak and wobbly that it could hardly stand up. It just lay in its basket beside the kitchen range and plaintively bleated for milk.

Margaret petted it and warmed up saucers of milk for it, and offered to let us feed it too. We boys didn't see any fun in feeding warm milk to a lamb. We wanted to put its basket upside down on

top of it, as we'd done with Topsy, and then poke it up and make it drag the basket around on the floor. When Margaret stood her ground and shooed us off, we had to drop that idea, but we felt that she was depriving the lamb of having any good times at all.

It ended in the lamb's being sent out to Audubon Park, a tract of wooded land between the Hudson River and what is now upper Broadway, where Aunty Jane's country home was. Tall apartment houses and the Hispanic Museum are standing to-day where that lamb used to nibble the grass, alongside my cousins' pet rabbits.

Morgan was taken back as our coachman after a suitable period, during which he was supposed to be sitting in purgatory and cleansing himself of his sins, but still he was never quite forgiven for losing old Topsy. He worried about it; he knew he was under a cloud.

Furthermore we had discharged him so often that it had dampened his spirits. Iron discipline, which strengthens some natures, had completely floored Morgan's He grew worse and worse. Father had kept him years longer than he wanted to, because of that livery. He now at last hardened his heart and told Morgan to go

In choosing a new man Father and Mother tried to be guided by their experience. They decided that there were two fixed requirements that they must now keep in mind, aside from honesty, industry, steadiness and knowing how to take care of horses. One was that the man must be a total abstainer who hated strong drink, and the other was that in order to wear that livery he must be the same size as Morgan.

A series of men, all of wrong sizes came to our house, one by one, and put on Morgan's livery in the basement before coming upstairs to be interviewed. They

one and all insisted that it was a good fit. Tall men whose bare wrists hung down, red and hairy, below Morgan's coat-cuffs, came boldly upstairs like scarecrows, trying in vain to look natty. Little men appeared with only the tips of their fingers showing and the coat flapping around them. All had their fists full of good references that smelled of horses and harness dressing, and if these references were to be believed, not a man of them ever got drunk.

They were all sent away. Whether it was that the marks of drink showed on them, in spite of their references, or whether they made too disreputable an appearance in poor Morgan's livery, none of them quite suited Father. They didn't look right, he said. The only one of them who seemed really eligible was a severe and respectable man who came up from the basement carrying Morgan's coat on his arm. It would fit him, he said, but he would prefer not to wear it. He wanted a

new one. He was sent packing instantly for having high and lofty ideas.

Another man with excellent references came the very next evening. He was a round jolly man with an honest eye. Father said after questioning him that he could see he knew horses. His name was O'Dowd, and in addition to his references he had brought a certificate with him, signed by two parish priests, saying that the bearer had a wonderful character and never touched liquor. The only objection to him was that he was fatter than Morgan. He had managed to squeeze himself into Morgan's coat somehow, however, and although some of the buttons wouldn't button he said "it could be easy let out," and furthermore it would take him no time at all to train down. He chuckled and said all he needed was plenty of work.

As he seemed to have the right attitude about this, O'Dowd was engaged, on the

distinct understanding however that his weight must come down at once. He immediately went into training. He drew in his stomach every time Mother looked at him, and he rubbed his hands with delight when Father bought a new pair of horses, which made five in all, a stanhope and a victoria to add to our dog-cart, and a new set of harness. O'Dowd busily trotted around the stable attending to these, and said that with all that to do surely any man would peel like an onion.

Mother kept declaring that she couldn't see that he got any thinner. She complained that he "bulged." Sitting behind him every day in the victoria while he drove her about, she noticed this much more than Father, who used the stanhope and drove his horses himself. She also said that O'Dowd had the largest ears a man ever had. This was probably true. At any rate, as they stuck out straight, they looked it. They

were red, thick and hairy, and on some afternoons they got redder, when Mother, sitting below looking up at them, couldn't get her mind off them, and made some remark about their unfortunate size to a friend.

Another objection to O'Dowd was that he had too many children. He had three when he came, and although he was warned to stop they kept coming until he had seven. There were more little O'Dowds on the Day place than there were little Day boys.

O'Dowd was instructed to keep them close to the stable, and on no account to let them be seen near the garden or lawn This left them practically no place to play but the manure pit and paddock. One or another of them was always venturing out to trespass on those forbidden acres when no one was watching, and scampering wildly back through the bushes when his crime was discovered.

The eldest boy, Morris, was held to blame, by both O'Dowd and ourselves, for every bit of disgraceful behaviour on the part of his little' brothers. He was a thin, lanky boy, with sad eyes and a querulous voice. As O'Dowd had all he could do, grooming the horses, cleaning the harness, and driving, the responsibilities of fatherhood fell more and more upon Morris. "The melancholy Morris," as Mother sympathetically called him. When the district school opened in the fall, we would sometimes come upon a procession of small O'Dowds on the road, led by their pale eldest brother, walking to or from the dingy, wooden schoolhouse. By that time all youngness had gone out of Morris, and he walked with a round-shouldered stoop.

The district school was not far from our place. It was rickety-looking and old. One summer evening a citizens' meeting was held in it, to vote on building a new little school-house with modern improvements

Father heard of this at the last moment, just in time to walk to the school after dinner and enter a protest. He had paid enough taxes as it was, he told Mother he didn't propose to pay any more.

He found that the meeting was in full swing as he went in the door. A man with a loud bellowing voice was haranguing those present, urging them to vote for this splendid and much-needed improvement. He had seven fine children to send to it himself, he declaimed, and if God was good to him maybe he'd have seven more.

The room was so thick with pipe and cigar smoke that it was hard to make faces out, and Father could scarcely believe at first that it was O'Dowd who was bellowing. None of us had ever heard his voice raised above a respectful low key. But it was he, no mistake. "O'Dowd!" Father called sharply. "What

are you doing here? Stop that damned noise at once."

It was the voice of authority, and this was the nineties. O'Dowd wilted, touched his forelock, said "Yes, sir," and looked for his hat.

"Go outside and wait," Father said.

"That man isn't a citizen of Harrison," Father said to the meeting. "He doesn't pay taxes. I do. What is all this nonsense about? The property owners of this neighbourhood don't want a new school."

"Mr. O'Dowd said he wanted it," somebody got up and said.

Father stared at him, and motioned him with his cane to sit down. "O'Dowd is my coachman," he said. "He doesn't know what he wants. There's no one else in my part of the township who has any children to send. And if a new school is put up in my neighbourhood and I move away, there will be no O'Dowds to go to

it either. I move that this plan be quashed."

A citizen who wanted a new school over on his side of the township, instead of on ours, quickly seconded the motion. There was no more debate. It was carried.

Father walked home angrily and in silence, with O'Dowd in the rear. At our gate Father halted. He had put up, in spite of Mother's objections, with O'Dowd staying fat, he had permitted this ungrateful man to bulge, year after year, on the box, he had striven to overlook his criminal carelessness in having too many children, and now if it hadn't been for Father's promptness, O'Dowd would have raised Father's taxes. "What have you to say for yourself?" Father asked him.

O'Dowd had been thinking things over. "I niver thought of the taxes, sir," he explained. "It won't happen again."

It didn't look at that time as though the O'Dowds would ever pay taxes themselves. The blackest part of their family outlook was the stupidity of poor Morris. O'Dowd shook his head over Morris. "He's not taking to the horses," he said.

Neither Morris nor any of the rest of us knew in those days that the era of coachmen was ending, and the era of automobiles was about to begin. When it came, the melancholy Morris, who had never liked horses, woke up. He had apparently been born with an instinctive love for gasoline engines. If they hadn't been invented, he'd have gone through life as a second-rate coachman or maybe a failure. As it was, he became one of the best of the very first crop of chauffeurs. He not only made better wages than any old coachman, he was regularly taken to Europe, where he drove his employer through countries that no other O'Dowd of his line had seen. One of his brothers

went along as a helper, on the third of these trips--Patrick Gorman O'Dowd, who had been the most impish and wild of the lot, as a boy, but who later became a two-hundred-pound plumber, with a big gold watch and chain. Patrick didn't care much for scenery, and he had a poor opinion of Europe. He inspected it thoroughly, but only from one point of view. "The plumbing in some of them castles there," he told me, years afterwards, "would make any decent American ashamed to be using it." He looked around to make sure that no lady was near who might hear him, cupped his hand to my ear, and wheezed in a shocked, portly whisper, "Just a hole in the wall."

MOTHER AND OUR WICKED MARE

Mother never thought of the horse as the friend and companion of man. She looked at all horses suspiciously. Perhaps they were not wild animals, in the sense in which lions and zebras were wild, but still there was something strange about them. They weren't really tame, like our dogs. She loved dogs. She liked ponies too, they were more our own size, but horses were too large to be trusted, and they had ironshod feet.

Once in a while she grew fond of some special horse after she had watched it for years, but even then she never undertook to drive it herself. Driving was a man's job. That didn't mean that she thought men in general were good drivers, however. Mother hadn't any more confidence in men in general than she had in horses. Men were always assuring her that they knew how to do

this or that, when they didn't at all. If it had been safe to do so, she would have liked to trust herself in their hands, it would have been so convenient, for as she was a woman she felt that she had to have certain things done for her. But men, although stronger, were childish. They greatly over-estimated their ability as drivers, for instance. All of them firmly believed that they understood horses, whereas Mother knew better. When she saw a horse and a man having trouble, she privately bet on the horse.

In the nineties everybody used horses--if in no other way at least in horse-cars and buses. Our family needed several every summer when we lived in the country. One was reserved solely as a saddle-horse for Father to ride. Father rode early every morning before breakfast and then took a train to the city. The other horses were used for all sorts of things. What with catching trains, mornings, and meeting them again,

afternoons, and going for the mail, or taking some of us down to the beach, or trotting along the dusty country roads with Mother when she paid an afternoon call on some friend three or four miles away, or when she went to the village to shop, our horses were kept pretty busy, and when one of them had to be turned out to rest, it was hard on the others.

Mother at last went to Father about it. She said that things had come to a point where we had to have one more horse.

Father said, "The trouble with you, Vinnie, is that you don't use enough forethought. You don't plan these things out. With a little careful management you can get along with what we have now."

Mother replied that there wasn't a woman on earth who could plan every minute, and she'd like to see forethought pull the station-wagon when Brownie went lame, but if we used Father's

saddle-horse in the dog-cart perhaps that would do.

From Father's point of view this was blasphemous. "Any time that I can't have even one horse in condition to ride," he told Mother, "I'll sell the whole lot of them, hide and hair, and the family can walk. Do 'em good."

He got thinking things over after this conversation however, and made up his mind that he'd better do something about it and look around for some decent animal that could be got cheap. He heard of one soon at the club, a dark brown, muscular mare.

The member of the club who owned her had gone abroad and couldn't be reached He had posted the mare for sale with the cryptic phrase, "Warranted sound." The usual guarantee, when there was any, was "Warranted sound, kind and willing," but we thought that perhaps the

omission was inadvertent. The price was low. Father bought her.

This mare's name was Uarda, a strange name, but somehow it fitted her. We heard later that an Egyptian princess named Uarda, of evil repute, had lived a bad life in some dynasty centuries back. Whether Uarda the mare had come from Egypt too, nobody knew. She looked it, however. She looked like the horse of some genie in the *Arabian Nights.* She was slithery, bony and lean, and her coat had a glitter, and her eyes were unnaturally greenish and wild and unfathomable.

There was plenty of work in her. She never went lame or got tired. She seemed made of steel. Sudden sights or sounds that made other horses shy, Uarda ignored. She was wholly without fear, and there wasn't an ounce of love in her either. She was oblivious of the Day

family, and not interested in her surroundings.

O'Dowd the coachman was frankly afraid of her. "She's always brooding, sir," he whispered to Father, as though she could understand what he said and revenge herself on him. She certainly had a remote and contemptuous look.

Uarda's contempt could be seen in her eye. Her hatred she expressed with her tail. All carriage horses were docked in those days, many of them too much, but Uarda from O'Dowd's point of view hadn't been docked enough. She had an extra long bone in her tail, he explained, and it had only been shortened a trifle. And the muscle in her tail, which was strong as steel, hadn't been nicked. The purpose of nicking the under muscle was to weaken it, so that a horse's little bobbed tail would stand cocked up and look stylish, and aside from looks there was a practical advantage to this, because it

prevented a horse from catching a rein under his tail and clamping it down. When that happened, he couldn't be reined in or guided, and now and then that led to a runaway or some bad collision.

Humanitarians were always denouncing men who docked horses' tails. A horse with a docked tail was helpless in fly-time, they argued, and when it was chopped off it hurt. Father pished at these arguments. He said that it wasn't his fault if there were flies in the world, and that nobody wept over him when his teeth were chopped by the dentist.

He wouldn't have a horse docked himself though. He simply bought them that way. When O'Dowd wanted Uarda's tail shortened, Father wouldn't allow it. O'Dowd shook his head over this. He said we'd live to regret it.

We came to see what he meant. As Uarda sullenly trotted along, thinking of

sin, or black magic, she would flail her tail round and round powerfully, like a propeller. Sooner or later, no matter how careful O'Dowd was, she'd catch a rein under it, and hold that rein tight as a vice. With some horses you could watch till the muscle relaxed for a moment and then vigorously yank the rein out, but no one could do this with Uarda. The only thing to do was to reach over the dashboard and yank at her tail, and yank hard with all your strength too, and yank over and over, hoping that she wouldn't lash out and kick you before you got the rein loose. This was an undignified performance to go through, and O'Dowd felt it shamed him in public.

What mortified him still more was the way Mother behaved at such moments. At the very first sign of trouble Mother's one idea was to get out of the carriage just as quick as she could. She couldn't jump, her skirts were too long and voluminous and there were too many

petticoats under them, but she could and did shout to O'Dowd to stop, at the top of her voice, and then gather up her dress in one hand and clutch at the arm of the seat and feel around with her foot for the inadequate little round metal steps, which always seemed so high from the ground when she hadn't any horseblock to step out on to, and then while the springy surrey was shaking, and giving a bit on one side, she would precariously descend in a hurry, getting dust or mud on her skirts from the wheel, and more on her high buttoned shoes in the old-fashioned dirt road.

Standing there in safety she would stare at O'Dowd while he yanked. She would also make comments. When this happened way off on some deserted road it wasn't so bad, but sometimes it happened on Purchase Street in Rye, where other coachmen were watching, or outside old Mr. Raser's store opposite the station in Harrison. "Mercy on us, what

takes you so *long,* O'Dowd?" Mother would cry. "If you can't drive any better than that, why don't you say so?"

O'Dowd was a good-natured soul, but he knew he could drive as well as most coachmen, and he used to get silently exasperated on these occasions. It was useless for him, though, to attempt to lay the blame upon Uarda, or to say he had never seen such a horse in all his born days. "Never mind about all your born days, O'Dowd," Mother would tell him impatiently. "That horse knows more than you do, this minute, and I should think that you'd be ashamed to sit there and admit it."

As O'Dowd had never even dreamt of admitting it, this kind of attack used to stagger him. "I know as much as any horse in the stable, Mum," he would begin, in confusion.

"But you ought to know *more* than an animal!" Mother would interrupt swiftly.

"That's what we pay you your wages for, O'Dowd. You're a *man,* not a horse. If you don't know any more than our horses you ought not to be driving them. It really isn't safe for me to go out with you."

"Not an accident have I ever had on my soul, Mrs. Day, in all the twenty years that--"

"You'll have one this very minute if you can't get that rein out," Mother would interrupt sharply.

As O'Dowd knew that this was highly probable he would concentrate upon Uarda, and when he had got her under control again Mother would climb back into the carriage, still talking, and off they would go.

Somehow O'Dowd never seemed to feel any resentment toward Mother, after a scene of this sort. He understood Mother. His hostility was all toward that mare. On Uarda's bad days he got into such a

bitter state, as he drove her about, that he used to carry on a one-sided conversation with her, in a low growling mutter. "Oho! That's the way of it, is it? Trying it on me again! Ye blackhearted Eye-gyptian! Bad scran to ye, ye limb of the Divil, ye!"

After a while he invented an arrangement of buckles and straps, which moored Uarda's tail to the shafts. This contraption left her tail just leeway enough for her to arch it but kept her from flailing it around or getting it over the reins. She was in a cold fury about it. O'Dowd wore a broad grin.

These moorings were so elaborate that they were unsightly, however. They looked very odd. Mother complained that everyone stared at them, which was perfectly true. People even asked questions. Mr. Read, who was a judge at the horse show, and who had supposed himself to be familiar with every kind of

harness there was, couldn't get his eyes off them when Mother went to call on his wife and when he came forward to help her get out at his door. "Ah," he said, staring fixedly at the bright silver buckle in the middle of Uarda's slick tail, and the leather shrouds and stays that led down from it to either shaft, "Ah! May I ask what this--er--? Why this--?"

"Oh, don't pay any attention to that, Mr. Read," Mother answered. "Our coachman seems to feel he can't drive without it. It's just some idea of O'Dowd's." And she hurried up the piazza steps, leaving O'Dowd red and speechless, and taking Mr. Read with her, so mystified by what he had seen and so baffled for the moment by Mother that he became speechless too.

As for Father, he said it was a disgusting arrangement, the first time he saw it, and he ordered O'Dowd to "remove that infernal rigging at once." But the fact

remained that when we used them, those straps were effective, and every time we went out without them, we got into trouble. Uarda never actually ran away when she got a rein under her tail, but she never would quite admit that she wasn't going to bolt, and she had such a wicked look about her that we knew things were dangerous. We all gradually came to tolerate letting O'Dowd strap her up, even Father. There was really only one safe alternative, when he left O'Dowd home and drove us around in the low surrey himself, and that was to hold the reins up very high, at the level almost of his nose. Father couldn't and wouldn't do that.

One day Father and Mother and George and I were out in the surrey. Father was driving of course, and I was sitting beside him on the front seat. Uarda was in a vile mood. Her tail strained at O'Dowd's straps and buckles. It writhed like a snake. Two or three miles from

home she triumphantly tore it loose. "Oh, Oh!" Mother wailed.

"Be quiet, confound it," said Father. "Clarence, can you strap it down again?"

I got out and tried but I couldn't strap it securely enough. Only O'Dowd knew the secret. No matter how I adjusted the buckles and hauled on the straps, Uarda contemptuously flicked her tail out. "Take it off altogether," Father ordered. "We'll never get home at this rate."

"I want to get out then," said Mother. "I'd much rather walk."

Father gritted his teeth. "Sit still," he said sharply. "I've driven horses since I was a boy."

Back-seat driving was invented long before motors, and when Mother was nervous she had a really deadly gift for this art. She tried to control herself that afternoon, at Father's repeated requests,

but she couldn't. Uarda's tail was too much for her.

"I only bought this horse to please your mother," Father said in a loud, oratorical tone, as though he were making a speech, addressing his sons and the landscape in general as Uarda trotted along, "and if I ever saw any animal that came straight from hell--"

"She's swishing it, Clare," Mother called to him.

"She can swish and be hanged," Father said, feeling that he had his hands full, fore and aft, with these two unmanageable females who were spoiling his drive.

"Look out! Look out, Clare dear!"

"Vinnie, will you keep still!"

"I'm trying to, darling," screamed Mother, "but that awful horse--Oh! Oh! Look *out!"*

Father cut at Uarda's flanks with the whip.

"Clare! *Do* please be careful!"

"I *am* being careful. Be quiet."

"There she goes again! Oh Clare, let me out!"

"See here," Father said to her sternly, turning half-around in his seat, "if you cannot control yourself--"

Swish! Uarda's tail caught the rein.

Father swore and leaned forward and pulled on it. Uarda came to a stop. We were on our way up a long hill at the moment, and Father had just begun walking her. Luckily for us, she now decided it was a good place to rest.

Father jerked at the rein twice more--once cautiously, and once with more force. Uarda held it clamped tight to her rump. Her ears went back. She snorted.

"Oh mercy! Let me get out of this!" Mother shrieked, and climbed down on to the road. "Come on, Georgie!"

George jumped out beside her. It was a narrow road with a ditch on each side. She scrambled across the ditch to safety, and stood on the steep grassy bank.

Father felt deeply insulted at this lack of confidence in him. His blood surged to his face, his eyes popped with passion. He stood up, facing a little sidewise, took the rein in both hands, set his jaws, and gave one mighty yank. At that very instant Uarda, with the skill of a demon, let go. Father fell over backward out of the surrey and crashed into the ditch.

Mother screamed.

I leaned over the dashboard and got the reins. George ran to help Father. Uarda tossed her head and stood still.

Father rose from the ditch, muddy yet somehow majestic, and said to us, "It was your mother."

"Why, *Clare!"* Mother shouted indignantly from the opposite bank.

FATHER'S TROUBLESOME NEIGHBOUR

The house next to ours on the north, No 422 Madison Avenue, belonged to the Robinsons. No. 418 on our other side was occupied by the Higginses. These three little houses were squeezed so tightly together that they had a combined frontage of only about sixty feet. The three families in them, not having been introduced, never spoke. They could have, of course, if they had wanted to, but none of them did. Instead, they merely bowed to each other, in a blank, distant way, and neither the Higginses nor the Robinsons ever entered our doors during the twenty-five years that we lived there, nor did we enter theirs. The Robinsons looked down on us and we looked down on the Higginses.

Mr. Douglas Robinson wasn't an ordinary Robinson. He had an estate in

West Virginia which he had inherited from the Monroes, and he also had a large house called The Mansion, in the Mohawk Valley, near Herkimer. He was in the real-estate business, and when he formed a partnership with his friend, Mr. Brown, later on, he couldn't bring himself to let the firm be called Robinson, Brown & Co., so their names were printed in full, "Douglas Robinson, Charles S. Brown & Co.," on every one of their signs. They were such an active firm and they had so many signs that this name became famous. It was this Mr. Brown, by the way, who afterward founded Brown, Wheelock & Co.

Mr. Robinson's wife was a dignified but lively young lady who had been Miss Corinne Roosevelt. She knew how to write poetry, turn cartwheels and stand on her head. Not that we ever saw her do any of these, though I longed to. She was the sister of a youth named Theodore Roosevelt who was getting to

be active in politics, and who talked too much, Father said. Later, he became President. Distinguished visitors often went up and down the steps of 422.

There was nothing distinguished about Mr. Higgins, who lived in 418. He was an undersized, depressed-looking man with lanky side-whiskers who was in the insurance business. His house had a mortgage on it, and Father said that he looked it.

Father said that all solid, substantial men owned their own homes. "There must be something the matter with Higgins," he said. "I don't wish to have anything whatever to do with the fellow."

Nevertheless we had a good deal to do with him, although he never knew it. Our house and his, instead of each having a wall of its own, had only one thin wall between them. After we moved into 420 Father began saying that the Higginses made too much noise. What the

Higginses thought of all our noises I never knew. They had no piano, no children, no quarrels, and it seemed to me they kept very quiet, except that now and then we heard a faint sound resembling a sneeze.

Father disliked this intensely. He had always lived in solider houses, and he wasn't used to hearing sounds of any sort come through a wall. It interfered with the feeling of privacy that a house ought to have. No matter how meekly and politely Mr. Higgins might sneeze, Father said that it was simply intolerable, and that it must be the dust in his whiskers.

Some nights, Mr. Higgins was out. On others, perhaps he succeeded in controlling himself. But every time a sudden, subdued "A-choo" floated into our dining-room, Father would set down his claret glass, turn around in his chair, glare fixedly at the wall, and indignantly

say to us: "There he goes! Sneezing again!"

The only two places where we ever heard Mr. Higgins were the dining-room and the front hall. Our hall had a solemnly dramatic atmosphere about it to all of us boys, because that was where the black hat-rack stood, at the foot of our stairs, and it was usually there that we got spanked.

As this hat-rack was the first thing that visitors saw when they entered, it had to be, and was, most impressive. It consisted of a long, black walnut chest, low enough to sit down on, hidden away in which were all the family's galoshes and rubbers and two or three baseballs. Mounted on this chest was a mirror, seven feet high and five wide, in a fluted black-walnut frame, and this frame had a spreading carved canopy overhanging on top. At each side were some gleaming brass pegs, long and straight, on which

hung Father's hats; and under these were two umbrella racks with deep brass pans underneath.

In the dining-room there was a black walnut sideboard, much broader and fatter than the hat-rack, and with an even loftier top. At the other end of the room, facing this sideboard, was a combination mantel and mirror. The mirror ran up nearly all the way to the high ceiling, and when I climbed up on a chair I could see the black sideboard in it On each end of the mantel was a heavily ornamented bronze urn, about two feet high, to match Uncle Hal's immense bronze clock which stood in between them. And in the centre of the dining-room, between the mantel and the sideboard, was a great round black walnut table.

Dark red curtains hung in the windows. There was a thick red rug on the floor. The lower three or four feet of the walls

was painted a deep chocolate colour. Above that they were a dull bronze, with a Grecian pattern made of flat strips of felt moulded on them in relief. Two gory battle scenes and a crayon portrait hung on these walls. The cheeriest thing in the room was the fireplace. It was a rather small one however, with a little brass grate in it, and the overhang of the mantelpiece dwarfed it.

Every evening from six to seven o'clock, while Father and Mother were having their dinner, this dining-room became as sacred a scene, in my eyes, as a high court or shrine--although owing to the imperfections of the service and Father's temper it was considerably noisier. I sometimes leaned over the banisters in the narrow hall outside, looking down in through the doorway.

After seven, when the table had been cleared away and covered with a Turkish cloth of soft reds and gold, we boys went

trooping in. The dining-room became a sitting-room then. It was the one room in the house where we all met. It wasn't nearly as commodious as the parlour but nobody ever went into the parlour, except of course to play the piano, or when visitors made formal calls.

One November night when I had had a birthday and was seven years old, Father said that I was now old enough to join him and Mother at dinner, and sit at the dining-room table. I strutted around in the nursery beforehand, with my hands thrust into my pants pockets, saying good-bye to my brothers, who, as I condescendingly explained to them, were still little boys. George would have to wait two solid years before *he* was promoted, I told him, and the others of course even longer. I then went down to dinner.

In our dining-room, I found almost at once that the honour I had won was a

hollow one. It was also oppressive. The free and easy interchange which I had been used to at my meals with my brothers, down in the basement, was gone. I had been cock of the roost in the basement but now I had to keep still, and respectfully say Yes sir and No sir, and submit to being taught what seemed to me many superfluous manners. I had to use plain china too instead of the interesting kind we had in the basement, where one of my brothers had a saucer with a picture of a cotton-field on it, and the other had one depicting a train on the Central Pacific, making its way through herds of buffalo to some remote place called "the Coast." My own saucer had been better still. It had no picture on it at all, which of course was unfortunate, but to console me for its barrenness in this respect, it had a flavour of glory. It bore the arms and insignia of the Seventh Regiment, done in dull red and gold; and Margaret, our cook, had told

me (quite erroneously) that it had "gone through the War."

On one of my first stately but saucerless nights in the dining-room, we had turnips for dinner. Father noticed that I didn't take any. "Have some turnip," he said.

I was happily stowing away several flaky boiled potatoes with bits of green parsley on them, and a chunk of hot juicy steak. "No, thank you, Father," I said, and foolishly added, "I never eat turnip."

He laid down his fork and stared at me in amusement. "You will begin now, then," he told me.

"I don't like it, Father."

"I'll tell you what you like and what you don't like," he said. "You're not old enough to know about such things," he added, and although his tone was peremptory his look wasn't unkind. "You've no business not to like turnip. It's good."

I said that I hated it.

"That's enough," he said. "We won't discuss it." He took the dish and deposited on my plate two generous tablespoonfuls of mashed turnip.

I looked longingly at my steak and potatoes. They seemed more delicious than ever. I put a little turnip on my fork and raised it to my mouth, but as the smell got nearer my nose I felt so repelled that I put the fork down again.

Father was watching me. He said: "Eat that turnip. At once."

The sadness of an exile on some foreign shore flooded my heart. I thought of how gay it had been in the basement. "I don't *want* to eat it!" I wailed. "I'd rather go without dinner, Father!" I pushed back my chair and stood up, suddenly ablaze with rebellion.

Father roared at me, "Sit down, sir!" I wouldn't. He was now ablaze too. Mother

gave a frightened cry and begged us to stop.

She couldn't ever bear to have Father and me clash with each other. But Father didn't much care whether she could bear it or not, when his temper was hot, and the next instant he was leading me off by the ear down the hall toward the hat-rack.

When we got there he sat himself down on it, laid me across his knees, lifted my jacket, and gave me a spanking. After he had finished we rose and returned to the dining-room.

I then began eating my turnip.

Mother looked sympathetic but said nothing. The table was still. Father sat back, puffing a little from his recent exertions. I was boiling with rage. This occasion was a turning point, I fear, in my relations with Father. I could see no sense in being made to eat turnip, and Father didn't explain. He never explained

anything, I discovered. It didn't seem to him necessary. I on the other hand, although open to reasoning, no matter how specious, always felt full of combativeness and obstinacy when an order seemed arbitrary. The fact that Father loved me and cherished me and worked and planned for my welfare meant nothing to me, as a boy, when he ordered me around. If I had received only cold justice from him I'd have wanted affection. As it was I undervalued his affection because I thought him unjust. The taste of that turnip choked me; it was sickening. I sobbed as I tried to swallow it.

Then a faint sound came through the wall. Compared to the noise I had made on the hat-rack it was only a faraway whisper, but it came from 418, it was an intrusion, and Father promptly resented it.

"Damn that Higgins!" he said.

He turned half around in his chair and sternly frowned at the wall.

I had been waiting for just such a chance and had my handkerchief ready. I quickly slid the rest of my turnip off into my lap.

MOTHER MAKES A MUSTARD PLASTER

Mother was a curious anomaly in her generation. For one thing, she never learned to cook. Just to go into a kitchen put her in a helpless confusion. It seemed simpler to her to go hungry than to try to do anything with all those hopeless-looking ingredients that sit around on kitchen shelves. Now if it were a matter of sewing on buttons or darning socks, Mother could do that, but she never sewed for the fun of it, or made fine lace covers like Grandma Stockwell, or knitted.

When we children were sick she used to take care of us. But when Father had a cold and wanted to be taken care of, Mother said, "That's enough, Clare. It seems to me you are making a fuss about that cold." Of course Father wanted a great deal of care, and if he

was not getting it every moment he lay on his bed and groaned. After he had groaned long enough, Mother would go in, rather upset and touched, and lean over him for a moment. "There, there, Clare," she would say. "What can I do for you?"

"*Do!*" Father roared. "No one does anything. What I want is something to cure this cold."

Now and again Mother would rub his back, and Father loved it. It was attention, and sometimes it was soothing, even though her method was to make rather quick, short dashes up and down the spine. However, just as Father began to relax and close his eyes, Mother's own back would commence to ache, bending over him and she would then feel that she had been rubbing a good long time. As she straightened up briskly, giving one last rub, she destroyed whatever small rhythm she had achieved before.

"Oh, damn," Father would say.

"Clare!" Mother would cry. "Just after I have been rubbing your back for you."

"But you had only just begun," Father would say.

"Heavens, Clare! Nobody has their back rubbed all day long," Mother would reply as she tucked in the sheet.

It wasn't that Mother took Father's or anyone else's sickness lightly. It was only that she had a quick nature and hated to be handled herself. If she were ill, all she asked was for people to keep out of her room. But if one of her loved ones felt bad, she was instantly worried and concerned.

One afternoon in the late summer, when we were still in the country at Harrison, she was troubled because Father would not go to bed although he was obviously miserable with a cold.

"Clare, do go and take a hot bath. I'll have Matilda make you some hot lemonade."

Father answered stiffly that he was all right if she would only leave him alone.

"But you are not all right," Mother said. "Your eyes are watering, and your nose is red, and you are all stopped up."

"I tell you it's passing," Father said hotly "Let's play a game of bezique." His voice was thick and hoarse.

Mother hesitated. She really ought to send him to bed, but she did love to play bezique. She ended by acquiescing.

He and Mother sat down near me in front of the fire. They had opened the game box and were about to play when the waitress appeared, begging our pardon for disturbing us.

"It's the mare, sir. She's got loose again and all the men have gone and it's Neville's day off."

"Can't you see that Mr. Day has a cold, Annie," Mother said, "and can't go out after horses? Why don't they keep the mare in her stall like the other horses?"

Mother knew as well as any of us did that the mare, Uarda, had a bad way of slipping her halter and stealing out into the rocky pasture across the road, where she would eat grass quietly enough until someone came within about a foot of her, when she would slither off and commence eating again about ten feet away. She was apparently unaware of anyone around, but there was a malicious glint in her eye. She would keep up this teasing for a while, then suddenly permit herself to be caught and be led quietly back to the stable. Although catching her was a nuisance, and needed more than one person, the proceeding was in no way dangerous.

Father and I got up to go out and Mother said she might as well come too.

She tried to make Father put on his coat, but he shook his head impatiently, saying that it only took a moment to catch the horse.

To our right lay the cornfield. Father had liked the corn he had in the garden so much that he had tried a whole field of it. It had not been successful; for one thing, the Italians across the tracks stole a lot, and then it had not grown the way it should. As we came along now the earth looked thin and cold, the corn weary. "You see that corn?" Father said.

"Oh, don't get started about that corn now, Clare," Mother cried. "Let's get that mare out of here first."

Father insisted on crossing the field at right angles to the way it was ploughed, stepping over each furrow. He and I could do it easily, of course, but Mother disliked it, and it was hard on fat Fritz, the dachshund; his legs were so short at each end and his body so low-slung in

the middle. Looking back, I could see him heaving over the furrows, like a ship out at sea, and leap as he would, each furrow scraped his poor, plump little paunch as he plunged up and over.

It took a little longer to catch the mare than Father had thought, but soon we were on the way back with her.

"Corn," Father said on the way back, as we again came through the cornfield, "should be green. Green is, I believe, the customary colour for its leaves and its stalks. Why should all the corn that is planted in my fields be yellow from birth? I know what my corn ought to look like. But it doesn't seem to. Every time that I talk about corn to the farmer, *he* talks about bugs. He has the utmost difficulty in finding me a good healthy stalk, with good healthy ears of corn on it that my family can eat, but it's no trouble at all to him to find the stalks on which he grows bugs. 'I engaged you,' I tell him, 'as a

farmer, and I expect you to farm. When I want an entomologist I'll send for one. What I want now is something to eat!'"

"That's enough, Clare," said Mother. "You're getting hoarse."

Father tightened his lips, looking hurt. "Nobody on this whole place cares a hang about things except me," he said, scowling around at his fields. His eye lit on Fritz. His scowl disappeared. "That's taking a pound or two off him, I'll wager," he chuckled.

The next day Father's cold was so much worse that Mother sent for Dr. Markoe. Dr. Markoe was a famous and very busy surgeon, but Father had been one of his early patients when he was just starting his career and still in general practice. Although Dr. Markoe had announced that he was giving up medicine, Father had seen no need for changing doctors just because his doctor had added what

Father called a side line. So, most unwillingly, and often with a real feeling that a general medical man would be more fitting for the particular case, Dr. Markoe continued to treat not only Father but the rest of us for our measles, typhoid fever, or ordinary colds. When Dr Markoe died we were left stranded, and for years had no regular doctor at all.

That morning Dr. Markoe had an important operation, and as Father's symptoms were not bad enough for him to leave his surgical patient and come out to the country, he gave Mother a list of instructions, among them that she was to make Father a mustard plaster.

If Mother had had a recipe for making a mustard plaster all would have been well. But she had none, and although nowadays anyone can walk into a drugstore and ask for a mustard plaster which will come all prepared and dried on a piece of paper or cloth, in those days

plasters were mixed at home by women who usually grew up knowing that the recipe called for at least as much flour as mustard in the mixture. Mother, however, had never made one. It seemed simple enough to her, so she sent for a spoon, a bowl, some mustard and some water, and mixed a thick paste.

Father, in the meanwhile, was watching the proceedings with interest. As she spread a linen cloth on his chest and began to cover it with her thick paste of pure mustard he was already envisaging prompt relief from the congestion in his chest. In a few seconds the mixture began to soak through. Father's roars were loud and immediate. Mother paid no attention, but continued to spread her mixture, making sure that it was plentiful and even.

"Damn! Vinnie! I say--oh, God! Vinnie, stop!"

"Clare, do be still. You know I have to do this."

"But Vinnie. Take that stuff off--you're burning me up, I say. Stop it!"

But Mother knew what she was meant to do, so despite Father's alarming shrieks she kept right on. A mustard plaster always burns, and Father always roared at any slight discomfort.

Father's anguish was real this time, but he always made so much noise anyway, no one believed him.

Dr. Markoe had told Mother just how many minutes to leave the plaster on Father's chest, and no amount of swearing or roaring stirred Mother into taking it off one minute sooner. At the end of that time, when the plaster was removed, to her horror Father's skin came with it, and Dr. Markoe had to come out after all.

MOTHER AND PUG DOGS AND RUBBER TREES

There were two special things that it was considered chic to have, in good New York homes, in the eighties. One of these was a fat pug dog with a ribbon around his neck, tied in a bow. The other was a rubber tree.

Father's instinct was to do the right thing, and to live in the right way, according to the ideas of his times, but he drew the line at pug dogs. He said he had owned dogs himself as a boy, and he wasn't fussy about their breeds either, but "I must positively decline," he told Mother, "to begin domesticating monstrosities." He said he doubted whether pugs were dogs anyhow. They looked too Chinese. He said that quite possibly in China they filled a niche of their own, though he couldn't guess what, but no pop-eyed pug dog would ever be

permitted to waddle around Father's home.

As to rubber trees, he was still more emphatic. He said he liked to be cheerful himself and to live in cheerful surroundings, and of all the disconsolate plants in the world a rubber tree was the most dismal. A rubber tree wasn't a tree, it was nothing but a stick with three leaves on it, and why or how such an unsightly plant had ever become a craze was a mystery.

The trouble was that Mother felt a longing for these two things, she didn't know why. She saw pug dogs and rubber trees everywhere but in her own home, and gradually her home came to seem bare. When visitors looked around the parlour it embarrassed her. They were too polite to say, "Where's your rubber tree?" but she was sure they were thinking it.

On Christmas morning Father found one of his socks fastened with a bent pin to his mantelpiece. It had a small china dish in it. His one hope and prayer was not be given anything whatever on Christmas, but he recognized this thing. "Why, this is my soap-dish," he said. "What's it doing here, damn it?"

Mother's eyes were sparkling with mischief. "I thought you might need it, Clare dear," she said sweetly, "when you were feeding your nice new pug dog."

She pointed to what looked like a hat box, done up in red ribbons. Father opened it and took out the tissue paper. A life-sized pug dog, made of china, was sitting inside.

"Hah!" Father said in relief. This objet d'art wasn't beautiful by any means, it was in the way and it was awkwardly large, but it wasn't alive. He could stand it.

Mother adored that pug dog. And as it was such a handsome piece of china, she said, and had cost her so much, she had to think carefully where would be the best place to put it. After trying several sites she decided on a place in the parlour, facing the door as you came in. For years and years there it sat on the floor, where it deceived and amazed Mother's visitors. They exclaimed in delight at its lifelike appearance and its big bulging eyes. Mother added to the effect by tying a broad red satin bow round its neck.

A rubber tree followed. A real one. It was hidden in the narrow hall bedroom next to Mother's, at first, and spoken of as "the new plant," and by the time that Father became suspicious enough to investigate, it was practically a member of the family, the way Mother felt, and she couldn't be parted from it. After a battle or two, Father made up his mind that he needn't bother because the lanky

thing would soon die, and until then he might as well ignore it, as he did the imitation pug dog.

That rubber tree seemed to me a most lugubrious object to look at. It had had five dark green leaves when it came, but three of these soon turned a horrible mottled yellow and dried up and died. After that nothing happened to it for weeks. It just stood there, with its thin, twisty stem tied for support to the bookcase, sullenly drinking up all the water Mother poured into its pot, and looking more utterly forlorn and sick of this world every day.

Mother however had plenty of determination and spirit, whether her tree had or not, and her will at last prevailed. The rubber tree still looked to me quite as doleful as ever, but it took up the burden of existence once more and put out a new leaf. A more tedious and deliberate unfolding of a bud I'd

never seen. Mother didn't mind how slow it was. It was responding to her, and that made her happy. As soon as the new leaf had uncurled itself and spread itself out, the rubber tree was borne downstairs in state to the parlour, to stand on an Empire table by the china pug dog.

After dinner, Mother took Father's arm, coaxingly, and led him in there to look at it. He stood, smoking his cigar, and watching her as she cooed over it and patted its little new leaf. "Don't smoke too near it, Clare dear," she said, over her shoulder. Father stroked his moustache, said "Humph," and walked thoughtfully back to the dining-room. He winked at me presently and said, "Your mother has a very warm heart."

A year or two later, when the rubber tree began to get tall, it was replanted in a much larger flower pot, and put in a tray on the floor; and as time passed by and as it kept growing, it was given a

green wooden tub. It went with us to the country every summer and came back in the fall. It was as much trouble and worry, almost, as a baby.

The only possible way to transport it on these two annual trips was to entrust it to Morgan, the coachman, to take in the dogcart. Morgan hated that rubber tree. It had a good many leaves on it now, but if even one fell off Mother missed it. Morgan explained that neither he nor all the angels could keep a dog-cart from joggling, but Mother said she knew that very well, and that was why she had reminded him specially that he must walk the horse, and three large leaves were missing from the bottom this time and two from the top.

I was sorry for Mother because I knew how she watched over that tree and loved every leaf, but I also felt sorry for Morgan. I had heard other coachmen make fun of him. On these trips he had

to drive one horse in the dog-cart and lead two others behind. He had to stow quite a sizable cargo on and under the seats: his livery, his high hat, his bedding, light and heavy blankets for each of the horses, curry-combs, cloths and brushes, buckets, hoof-picks, two saddles, several bridles, a bag full of bits of old harness, and Topsy, the cat. Morgan used to arrive at our front door in town with everything on board except the rubber tree and old Topsy, find room for these too, and unhappily drive off down Madison Avenue, feeling very conspicuous. Topsy, who didn't like Morgan, yowled and wailed in her basket, and the rubber tree, sitting beside him, was now eight feet high.

His destination, and ours, every summer was New London, a hundred and twenty-five miles away. We went on the train of course. Morgan and the horses and Topsy went on the night boat. I never knew, nor could I manage to picture to

myself, what kind of a time Morgan had. A veil was drawn over those dark experiences. All I knew was that Morgan and his caravan arrived a day after we did, the animals dejected and dingy, and Morgan dejected and drunk.

If it hadn't been for the rubber tree, which according to Mother's orders he had to deliver at once, Morgan wouldn't have had to exhibit himself to us in this state. He could have gone direct to the large boarding stables and slept himself sober. As it was, he was faced with a problem that he could never quite solve, the problem of how a man in his cups could get a rubber tree out of a dog-cart and carry it up a tar path and into a cottage, without self-betrayal.

He tried being jaunty about it. He tried being hearty and jolly. But as he was in reality profoundly depressed, by what he had gone through on the boat, his attempts to be pleasant rang hollow.

They sounded slightly insane. When he tried being grave and judicial instead, he alarmed Mother dreadfully by his sweeping gestures and his important-looking nods of the head. "For Heaven's sake, Morgan," she would cry, "do get out of this cottage. Don't stand there by my poor rubber tree wagging your head at me that way."

The next day Morgan always had to go through a long, trying session. It began with his being discharged, and it ended with his taking the pledge. This consisted of his solemn assurance that he would never again touch a drop. He freely invoked on himself the most picturesque dooms if he did. "May the Mother of God tear the gullet out of me, bless her sweet heart, the very next drop I take, Mrs. Day, and I won't take it neither." He would continue in a loud, rising scale with his eyes fixed upon Mother's, until he reached a crescendo of fervour that

convinced her, and that I think convinced him.

"Morgan," she said, at the end of one such interview.

Morgan respectfully touched his hat. "Yes, mum?"

"You don't deserve it, but I'll try to believe you once more."

"Yes mum, thank you, Mrs. Day," Morgan replied, looking brighter.

"But if you should ever *dare,"* Mother vehemently added, "to take another drink of that wicked stuff I hope it will *choke* you!"

Morgan paled. "I hope not, mum," he hastily muttered, again touching his hat.

After we got a place of our own in the country where the tree had more room to grow than ever, it grew far too much. It stood on the piazza, in the one place that wasn't roofed over, and it became so tall

that its upper branches reached to the second-floor window. This window unfortunately was Father's. He began to complain. He said that damned tree was too noisy. He said he had built himself a home in the country, at great expense, so as to have some peace and quiet, instead of which here was an outlandish rubber tree tapping on his window all night.

Mother got prouder and prouder of it, the taller it grew. She began busily cutting slips from it and planting numbers of these in new pots, all the way around the piazza. These slips were tall but weedy and weak. Every one of them had to be tied to one of the piazza's square wooden pillars.

The old original tree was now far too big to go into our city home any more. It had to be left in a greenhouse belonging to Mr. Fremd in the winters, and it lived with us only in summer. It would have

been out of place in town anyhow. The rubber tree craze had ended long since, and all the pug dogs of New York were gone, too. Those once-popular animals had completely disappeared from the city, even our china one, which one of us boys had broken. New fads had sprung up. One was for "favrile glass" which Louis Tiffany made lamps of, and another was for old-fashioned warming-pans. Mother of course had one of each. Her favrile lamp was in the shape of a swollen and adipose lily, glittering with curious hues, far more hues and more glitter than Solomon had in all his glory. Her warming-pan, which she had bought somewhere in New England, had been fixed up to match. Its honest old oaken handle had been stained to look like polished mahogany, and a broad red satin ribbon was tied in a bow-knot around it, like that which the pug dog had worn.

Mother was not one to be fickle however, and she was faithful to her rubber tree still. It was on her mind all the time. When we moved up to the country each spring, that tree was the first thing she greeted.

It was becoming quite a job for her to water it sufficiently, on account of its size, and this was particularly difficult when there was a drought. What made it so hard at such times, at least in Mother's eyes, was Father's bath. Drought or no drought, he said, he had to have his cold bath every morning. Mother said that her tree would die and he wouldn't, and what was his answer to that? His answer was that he had always taken a bath every day of his life.

For years he had tried to get Mother to take an icy plunge too. As he grew older he said less about it, but he took a tubbing himself just the same. Mother said that if he insisted on a daily bath,

even in droughts, he must leave the water standing in his tub so that it could be used for her rubber tree.

Father let her use it but he didn't like it. He said Mother was messy. She tracked water all over his floor, he said, when she walked back and forth, filling her pitcher from his tub and then pouring it out of his bedroom window to splash it on top of that tree. Mother said she didn't splash the water, and had not tracked up his floor, and when Father pointed indignantly to the pools and wet spots by his sofa, she said that those were just a few drops from the outside of the pitcher.

One cold, dark autumn morning, Father was longer than usual taking his bath. The water was icy, and things hadn't been going well with him, and altogether he wasn't feeling as vigorous as usual that morning. When Mother dipped her pitcher into his bathtub she found that it

wasn't cold. He had secretly warmed it a little to take off some of its chill.

"Why, Clare!" she laughed. "I thought you were such a stickler for taking cold baths!"

"Damnation!" said Father. "Get out of my bathroom. Leave my bathtub alone! I swear to God no man ever had so much to bear from a rubber tree."

Mr. Fremd, although he was a professional nursery-man, felt the same way. He was getting tired of the rubber tree too. One winter, without telling Mother, he cut off its top. In May, when his wagon climbed our hill again, bringing back his maimed victim, and when Mother expressed the grief and fury she felt at his conduct, Mr. Fremd was defiant He had simply had to do it, he said. The roof of his greenhouse wasn't high enough for that tree any more. Mother quarrelled with him about this. She warned him that he must never again

behave like that to her plants, and that summer she helped the old tree to regain its full height. Mr. Fremd retaliated, the following winter, by keeping it lying flat on its side for the seven or eight months that he had it. He said, what else could he do. That was the only way he could get it indoors. From that time on the tree spent over half of each year lying down, never standing up except in the summers, and it gradually became rather towzled.

When this strange pet of Mother's had finally completely outgrown her, and when she had vainly appealed for help to all of her friends, she happened one evening to hear my brother George speak of the Marsh Botanical Garden at Yale. The next I knew she had presented the Botanical Garden with her rubber tree. They tried to explain to her that they didn't have any rubber trees, but this did them no good, it only made Mother the prouder to bestow hers upon them. Her one stipulation was that as the

coachman couldn't very well drive it all the way up to New Haven, the Marsh Botanical Garden must come down to Harrison and get it themselves. To my private astonishment they apparently did so. Although years later George told me that he had hired a truck for the purpose, letting Mother believe that the University had done so, as he knew that Mother would never have been willing to let George do it--or to do it herself. And George was unwilling to have the University pay. The last I saw of our tree was its top sticking way out of the rear of a Forestry truck, rounding a turn down the road.

MOTHER PLAYS HER ROLE

Mother had a strong and instinctive desire to play her role to the full. If she had been the queen of a court, she'd have started right in being regal and gracious, stirring up the lord chamberlain, and making sure the king toed the mark. Anything that it was customary for an energetic queen to attend to, Mother would have at once had a go at. So just as soon as Father had laid out the grounds of his new home in the country, and Mother could see that there was something more to it than a lot of mess and workmen, she christened the place Upland Farm and determined to fill a useful role there.

She was handicapped because she really didn't know anything about farms or farming. As to the proper method of growing crops in a field, that was a mystery to her, and anyhow it was a

man's job. Even our vegetable garden was too large a problem for her to tackle. What she liked to do was to grow flowers in little pots on the piazza. This got to be a department in itself, she had so many pots, and they all had to be watered. On hot summer nights after the gardener had finished his other work, we would hear his unwilling footsteps around the corner of the house as he came to fill the big watering can at the faucet near the steps. However, if there was a drought the gardener said these plants were not important. Mother would then bestir herself to preserve their lives by taking water out to them herself.

Though this was interesting enough as an occupation, it did not give her a role. Of course there was the moving back and forth--and Mother felt no one understood the magnitude of this task--but it was an exceptional thing that only overtook one twice a year. And most of the impending catastrophes were avoided anyway.

When Father discovered that the jar of preserved strawberries had been packed with the tea and his cheese in a wash boiler with many other articles, and remonstrated, Mother knew of so many more dangerous packages than the strawberries that she brushed him aside with the remark that as nothing had happened to anything, why was he making all this talk.

However, almost any situation has a role in it for a wide-awake woman, and Mother finally found hers through prodding up Father and the farmer to make Upland Farm more and more farmlike, so that the name would seem right and fitting to others. Of course the very first year there had been a kitchen garden, but it wasn't enough for her to serve vegetables from our garden at dinner, and tell her guests triumphantly that the peas had come right out of our own pea patch, and promise to march them down after dessert and show them

the beans, too, and the place where the melons were to have been if they hadn't all dried up in infancy. This sort of thing didn't content her, because we didn't have enough guests.

We boys benefited at first from her extension of the production of vegetables because we used to take all that we could lay our hands on and drive off in the farm cart and sell them. This opportunity to earn money so easily made up in part to us for our former summers at New London; but it was not destined to last, for we found before long that there did not seem to be so many vegetables that wouldn't be missed. We also discovered that our market was being spoiled, for we soon noticed that Mother would go out in the victoria, dressed in her fresh, ruffled dresses, and holding her lace parasols so as to shade her face, and make calls on her friends in the afternoon. With her she would carry a basket of vegetables to those who had

no garden of their own, or, to the more fortunate, something not to be found in their garden. The next morning when four red-headed and freckled boys drove up to sell their vegetables, all the houses would be mysteriously stocked.

But it was the cows who gave Mother her first real responsibility in her role of châtelaine. At first there had been only one cow, but there had come a time when she went dry. In order to avoid any such stoppage of our milk supply, the next year a second cow had been added; as the years went on, more cows were about the place. Father bought a fancy one to improve the stock, or kept a heifer until finally there were always five.

When we first settled there, Harrison was out in the country, but little by little it became a suburb. The farms, old and new, disappeared. Even the parklike estates were split up into smaller

holdings or turned into clubs. Almost none of our neighbours had barns or kept cows any more. It was easier to buy milk and butter. Mother didn't like to depend on bottled milk, though, and as she also was proud of our butter, she clung to all our cows.

Father and Mother had no use for five cows, especially when the time came that they were alone on the place; but by that time, each of the cows had become a member of the family, even the two cranky ones and the stupid old white one which none of us liked.

For a while it was a problem to get the milk down daily to the city for the family use during the winter. Express companies, while willing to take on the order, did not feel they had to be at our house at any appointed hour to deliver a can of milk. Mother, who had to deal with the cook, felt strongly they should be. Certainly the time for milk to come to

any house was early in the morning--everybody knew that.

However, right near the Grand Central station was a grocery store the family had used for years, a comfortable, established firm. There they mixed Father's coffee just to his taste, and saw to it that his cigars were right. As the station checking system for parcels was not as well arranged then as now, old customers left their bundles behind the grocery-store counters to be called for later in the day. I can't remember how or why, but we once left a grandfather's clock there for over a year. The name of this long-suffering grocer was Charles.

Since the store was so near the station, Mother felt that it would be no trouble at all to them to have a man run over and get our can of milk off the train from Harrison and send it up to the house with the first delivery. Perhaps it was because the family had traded for a long time

with them, or perhaps because they had been accustomed for an equally long time to Mother's and Father's difficult requests; at any rate, they consented to do this. The arrangement worked very well for us, but if Charles' was so unfortunate as to be only half an hour late in delivering the can, they were called right up and scolded roundly. If the farmer did not put the can on the usual train, or if it was delayed, Charles' found themselves not only apologizing but anxiously meeting each train from Harrison until the milk arrived. They would then send a man straight up to our house on a special trip with the can.

Meanwhile the cows gave milk--more milk than the family knew what to do with. The farmer and the coachman and their children and wives were chock-full of it. So were the chickens and the pigs. Moreover, Mother did not play her part--she lived it, and she insisted that all the milk be set for cream. This meant that in

summer the cream became pretty sour by the time the farmer got around to churning a large part of it into butter. We none of us thought of complaining about the taste of the butter, except one of my brothers, who always loathed it.

When the family got smaller, we not only had too much butter, but the house was drowned in cream. Great bowls and pitcherfuls would come on the table. Mother, knowing about all the cream down in the dairy waiting to be churned, would wearily order any cream that was left after luncheon to be brought out on the porch. There she would sit on a broiling hot day whipping it into butter. Sometimes the butter was obstinate and Mother would have to leave it while she went and changed her dress so as to be ready for callers in the afternoon. On those days, when visitors drove up they would find Mother sitting there in her chair still beating away.

There were two things about our butter that prevented it from being really good. One was that Father had started out with the best of pedigreed Jersey stock. This strain of cow gives delicious rich milk and cream, but the butter has a strong taste. The second was that our farmer never washed the butter sufficiently to take all of the buttermilk out of it. The colour, however, was always beautiful and both Mother and the farmer took great pride in never having to use any artificial colouring matter to give it that rich, golden look.

By the time the family had been reduced to just Mother and Father and they had grown old and had fewer and fewer guests, Mother found that the butter was not only a responsibility but a real problem. Some of it she gave away to friends who were sick or poor. There were one or two families, however, who were rich and who, Mother felt, could well afford to buy themselves nice fresh

country butter. I don't know whether they really intended to do so, but at any rate they did buy our butter. And Mother was very particular that these orders should never fail to be delivered. When she returned to town from her weekly trips to the country, one of the most precious articles she carried with her was a large stone crock which was placed in the car last, because on the way home the chauffeur would have to stop at Mrs. Dickerman's and walk up to the door, bearing in his arms, patiently or disdainfully according to the nature of the chauffeur, this large earthenware crock full of round pats of butter. If these friends did not like the butter, they never said so; therefore Mother continued to be serene about bestowing it as a special privilege.

Once, some especially bankerish and well-tailored people came to dine. They were English friends of my brother who had never liked the butter. They

innocently asked if there was anything they could take back to England, where he was now living, in the country. Mother was equal to any emergency of that variety and instantly took them up on this offer.

The day they sailed home Mother stopped in to see me at my apartment in town and spoke of how kind they were.

"What did you send?" I asked.

"Why," said Mother, "I sent him some of the farm butter."

I had seen these people; tall, slim, elegant. They had no wrinkles in their clothes and their manners were studied and quiet. I had a quick vision of their carrying something rather bulkily wrapped in brown paper, for Mother, although she dearly loved to do up parcels, had never the patience to make them come out just right. I hoped that they would be able to get it from the ship's refrigerator to my brother quickly,

so that no tell-tale grease spots would greet my brother's eye as he put out his hand to receive this gift.

"Don't you think you might have sent something else?" I asked. "They rather specialize in fresh butter over there."

"But not our butter from Harrison," Mother proudly answered.

FATHER'S HOME DISAPPEARS

Father wanted to buy a home that would be permanent. He had been married five years, and he felt that it was high time to settle down once and for all. The little house at 251 Madison Avenue, which had been all right for a young bride and groom, was getting too small, now that there were boys in the family.

Grandpa Day smiled and told Mother that there was no such thing in New York as permanence, and that he had been forced out of four comfortable homes in his day. Father agreed that this had been so in the old days, and he also admitted that of course the town was bound to keep growing, but he thought that a man who picked the right district could now settle down.

Every respectable citizen in the seventies owned his own house. A decent three- or four-storey house,

unencumbered by mortgages, and situated within one or possibly two blocks of Fifth Avenue--and it oughtn't to be above Fifty-ninth Street or below Washington Square. Those were the usual requirements.

Father looked around carefully, he got the most expert advice that he could, and then he used his best judgment. As a result, he selected and bought 420 Madison Avenue. This was a sunny house, just below Forty-ninth Street, it was fairly near Central Park, and it was in a new and eligible district for good private residences. Brokers said that "the permanent residential quality of that whole section" was guaranteed by the fine public edifices which had been built in the neighbourhood. St. Luke's Hospital stood on Fifth Avenue, from Fifty-fourth Street to Fifty-fifth, surrounded by big, shady trees and a broad grassy lawn. St. Patrick's Cathedral, at Fiftieth Street, had been recently dedicated. And Columbia

College and its campus occupied a whole city block from Forty-ninth Street to Fiftieth, and from Madison Avenue over to what is Park Avenue now, but what was then a broad open cut full of locomotives and trains.

In the seventies, there were almost no apartments, and people didn't move nearly so frequently as they do to-day. The old saying was that three moves were as bad as a fire. This move of ours from 251 to 420 bulked as large in my mind as the flight of the Israelites from Egypt, all except the Red Sea, and they didn't have to carry such heavy furniture as a Victorian family.

Mother used to tell us little stories about it for years. As I remember, the hardest thing to handle was Uncle Hal's clock--the wedding present that he and Aunt Addie had given to Mother. At the top of this magnificent structure--which would have been more in place, really, if it had

been erected in Central Park--was seated a robed and amply-built woman; below her was the clock face, and on each side, lower down, was a man, one of whom had a hammer, and both of whom looked kind of cross. I suppose it was an allegory of some sort, but I don't know what about. The woman seemed to be in favour of harmony, but the two men were not. To save this massive bronze statuary from injury Mother actually carried it up in a cab, in her lap, bouncing about on the cobblestones, and then went back for her five-months-old baby.

Our new home was a four-storey brown-stone-front house with a stoop, and it had all the modern conveniences of 1879 It had gaslights in every room, even the cook's. We used kerosene lamps in the parlour, but that was only because the gas chandelier was too high to light without climbing up on a step ladder. There was a convenient little gas jet even

in the cellar, which didn't burn very well to be sure, as it had only a small bluish flame, but which saved us from bothering with candles, which struggled to light up the ghostly pillars and dark silent shadows. Another convenience was that the big kitchen range had a grating in front that slid open, and a mechanical shaker to let the cook stir the coal fire. There was a round little Dutch oven for basting besides. In the long whitewashed cellar there was a coal bin, a wood bin, a wine closet, and barrels and barrels of potatoes and cider and apples. And there was a fine hot-air furnace that roared and rattled and misbehaved itself wildly, which had to be wrestled with by Margaret, the cook, and probed into by Father. Most of the rooms had fireplaces, too, which burned cannel coal or small logs, and gave out a fragrant glow on chilly evenings. The waitress was always lugging a coal scuttle or an armful of logs

up the stairs, and until after we boys were older she had no one to help her.

On every floor except the fourth of the new house we had running water, and there were two shining tin bathtubs--one for Father and Mother and one for the rest of the family (three boys, Cousin Julie, an occasional visitor, and later a nurse and new baby). The cook and waitress didn't have a bathtub, but there was a white china water-pitcher and bowl in their bedroom, the same as in mine, and off at one end of the cellar they had a cold little water closet.

All the plumbing was completely boxed in, of course, except in the cellar. When we opened the great, stately door of Father's bathroom and looked in there, in awe, all we saw was a long dark mahogany case in which his tin bathtub shone, and a forbidding mahogany structure beside it, three feet square and three high, with a solid closed cover on

top. All the woodwork and trim of this room was sombrely polished, not painted A pure white Victorian bathrobe on a hook was the one touch of light. The walls were dark and the one little window was up in the high ceiling, where it opened into a narrow interior airshaft. The whole place had a dim, brooding tone, like a crypt in a church.

There wasn't any washstand in the bathroom--that wasn't the custom--but there was one in a box at each end of the passageway between the two bedrooms.

In nearly every room there was a bell-pull which jerked at one of the eight dangling bells that hung in a row in the kitchen. In each of the three upper hallways was a speaking tube too, and as these also connected with the kitchen, Margaret, our cook, had her hands full. The way to use a tube was to blow into it vigorously, ignoring the dust that flew out, until one of these blowings

succeeded in working the whistle which was affixed to the mouthpiece below. On hearing this whistle Margaret was supposed to spring to the appropriate tube and shout loudly up it. But Margaret was so short that she had to climb up on a chair before she could do this, and then, if it was the wrong tube, get down again, move the chair, haul up all her petticoats once more to make another climb, and when she had done all this howl up the next tube instead. By that time Father or Mother had lost patience and begun pulling a bell, and Margaret would clump upstairs to answer it, muttering to herself, "Such a house!"

On the first floor, a little above the street level, were the dining-room, pantry and parlour. On the second were Father's and Mother's rooms. The furniture in Father's room and in the dining-room was dark and severe. In Mother's room and the parlour it was

dark but ornamental or rich. In all four of these rooms it was massive.

Our quarters up on the third and fourth floors were more simple. Little beds, light walls, plain hard carpets, and three shelves full of toys. Soldiers, building blocks, marbles, a Punch and Judy show, and five red iron cars. As we were all boys there were no dolls of course, and we had no books by women authors.

Our toys were made for hard wear and tear, and they got plenty of it. It was only at Christmas that any additions were made to our stock. We knew every battered lead soldier individually, we knew almost every nicked block, we could tell at a glance just which boy every marble belonged to, except those made of clay which we called migs. And each brother had his own sacred place where his own toys were kept, except when the waitress cleaned the room and mixed everything up.

Our books were few but we read and reread them, *Robinson Crusoe* the most. *Gulliver's Travels, Tanglewood Tales, King Solomon's Mines,* and *Pilgrim's Progress* came next. Christian's adventures were more exciting and real to me than anything in other story-books, and I was especially taken with Appollyon and poor old Giant Despair.

Down below our nursery windows, on the sidewalk, was a little gas lamp-post. A German band of three or four pieces used to come of an evening and stand under its flickering light, reading their music, and tooting away on their horns. We were thirsty for music, there were no phonographs or radios then, and we huddled in the window, squirming ecstatically, and listening to their stirring marches. Sometimes Father would stick his head out of the front door and tell them to go away and be damned, but as soon as we heard him shut it again we'd toss down our pennies, wrapped in

twisted bits of paper, so that they could see them, and they'd play one more tune

Down the murderously dark and steep flight of stairs from the dining-room was the front basement. We boys had our supper there and sometimes we played games on the floor under Father's big billiard table.

The daylight filtered in through an iron-barred window, which looked out into our "area." Sitting on the broad window seat, we could see the legs and feet of passers-by walking along on the sidewalk above. On days when the postman was in a hurry or when nobody answered the bell, he reached in his hand through the bars, pushed this window up, and tossed in the letters.

On the mantel was a clock of black marble, shaped like a tomb from the Nile On one wall was an engraving of Rosa Bonheur's rearing horses being led to a fair. Each of us boys had his favourite

horse in that cavalcade--in fact I had three. On the opposite wall was an engraving of Landseer's "Stag at Bay." We stood and stared at him in awe. Our other heroes, Crusoe and Christian, and still more of course Gulliver, in spite of all the adventures they had, were somehow at heart pretty humdrum. That stag was quite different. He was tragic and male and magnificent.

On the other side of the room from the stag was Father's brown walnut desk, where he made entries in his ledger of investments, or his household accounts. His mood while he did this was cheerful, if he and the country were prosperous. In bad times he flung up his head in defiance, and looked at bay, like the stag

The top of the billiard table was kept covered with a grey rubber cloth. On nights when Father went down there after dinner and lit the four hooded gas-lights and took off and folded up that

cover, the whole room seemed transformed. The engravings on the walls were in darkness, but the broad top and the gleaming rims of the table were flooded with light. A scarlet ivory ball and two white ones rolled on this rich green expanse, and Father stood studying them in his snowy-white shirt-sleeves, with his polished cue, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, in his hand.

Years later when I read about how artistically the Japanese could arrange single flowers, and how it made mandarins happy to stare at Ming yellow, I thought of this scene in our basement. It was my introduction to beauty.

For the first ten or fifteen years that we lived in 420, the neighbourhood got better and better. Father's judgment as to its permanence seemed fully justified. It had become thickly planted with residences in many of which friends of our family were making their homes. We

had grown fond of 420 by that time. Birth and death and endless household events had taken place inside its walls, and it had become a part of ourselves.

Then business began invading upper Fifth Avenue and spreading to Madison. A butcher bought a house near us and turned it into a market. We felt he was an impudent person and bought nothing from him for months, until in an emergency Mother sent in there for a rack of lamb chops. We then discovered that this butcher was not only an upstart, he was extremely expensive, and he was catering to the fashionable Fifth Avenue families and didn't care a rap about ours. More and more of the old houses around us were made into stores. After 1900 some of the best people left, and soon that whole district began steadily sliding downhill.

All these changes didn't at first seem as though they would last. Many owners

resisted them, hoping against hope year by year. But the Indians had to give way when the white men arrived, and when a group of gigantic white buildings sprang up into the air at and around Forty-second Street, most of the old brownstone houses in our neighbourhood finally disappeared too.

Father held on to his as long as he could What drove him away at last was the noise of the new street-cars all night. The old horse-cars had had something human about them--they wouldn't have been much out of place even in ancient Rome. In size and appearance they fitted into the old human scale. The new cars were monsters, and the strident and unnatural din they made wrecked Father's sleep. After tossing actively around in his bed for what seemed to him hours, swearing resentfully at the misery they had brought into his life; he sometimes threw off his blankets and strode to the open window, in his bare

feet and nightshirt, and shook his fist at them and yelled until he woke Mother up.

She slept in the back. She offered to take his front room instead. He would not give it up. She begged him at least then to stuff his ears full of cotton at night. He said he would not go through such indignities. He seemed to feel that adopting her remedies would be giving in to those street-cars. He said he'd rather move and defy them.

It was years after we left, as it happened, before I went back there. Then one day I had an appointment to keep in an office on the twelfth or thirteenth floor of the sky-scraper which had been put up on that site. We still owned the land and I knew there was now a sky-scraper there, but I hadn't seen it, I'd been living out West for some time, and after getting back I'd been ill. On my way down my mind was preoccupied by other things, and it

wasn't until I stepped out of my taxi that I took a look at the street.

My nerves or my brain cells must have been unconsciously full of old memories, for apparently what I expected to find were two rows of short houses, set well back from the sidewalks, with the cheerful rattle of a wagon or two, or a cab, going by. Instead of that, there were what seemed to me immensely high ramparts that I couldn't--from the street--see the tops of. They rose up into the air directly from the inner edge of the sidewalk. I felt them crowding against me. In the street between these ramparts there was a rushing bedlam of sound--hoots, roars, grindings, clashing. And on those once quiet sidewalks where we had spun our tops and slid down the railings, I found myself jostled by masses of hurrying people.

On the corner where the three pretty Lyons girls used to live, in a fat little

house full of windows, there was a gigantic and grimy white tower heaving up to the sky. The sunny, irregular, red brick buildings which Columbia College once occupied, the lamp-post where the band used to play, even the flagstones were gone.

I went into the new and modern 420 and got into an elevator. Up we shot, past the floor where Father's four-poster and bureau had been, past the level of the nursery and my bedroom, on and on, up and up; and there, suspended almost in the clouds, high above our old life, was the office where I had an appointment. I don't know why I felt dizzy. I had been up in hundreds of sky-scrapers higher than this. I tried not to keep thinking of my childhood home, way down below. I pushed the button and in a moment the man inside opened the door, as casually as though everything were perfectly natural and he were living on solid earth.

MOTHER TRAVELS ALONE

When Mother was a girl she lived in a small town and journeys were Great Events. They were not to be undertaken lightly. Although later in life she travelled often she couldn't get over her early feelings. Nevertheless when she was nearly seventy she decided to go and see her grandchildren in Europe. Father was not well enough to take the trip, so after getting him settled in Harrison she started off by herself.

The house in town was all boarded up and watched over by the Holmes patrol. There was a large red seal on the door, and if anyone tried to get in, a bell rang in the main office. Of course if you let them know beforehand the exact time you wanted to get in, a man would come and open the house up; but the thought of all that red tape and arranging made Mother tired even to think of it. So she

always said to everyone: "After the last things that go to the country are taken down the steps, I walk out, and behind me comes the Holmes man; and after that," here her voice sank to a whisper and her eyes opened wide, "no one can get in until fall, not even I."

Since she felt the house in town was impossible, she had to spend the night before sailing in an hotel. Although she rather enjoyed going to hotels in other cities she felt that going to an hotel in New York was forlorn; as though she had no home or family. However a friend of hers said that she could have her apartment at 270 Park Avenue, which would be much more homelike.

Wherever Mother went she had to have a personal contact. When she went to a store, for instance, she did not say she was going to Wanamaker's, Altman's or Lord and Taylor's, she was going to "Miss Smith's, at Lord and Taylor's you know."

Lord and Taylor did not always care so much about this because Mother's favourite saleslady had to sell her everything, gloves, dresses, coats or material by the yard--whatever she had a mind to get in the store. If it took rather long to find the article Mother just put it down to the general slowness of stores and waited with what patience she could muster. It was the same at 270 Park Avenue.

George had arranged to meet Mother at my apartment and from there take her to 270 Park Avenue. When they arrived, although Mother had been there only long enough to leave her bags, and was to spend but one night, he found everyone smiling and jumping around, acting much more human than most New York apartment-house employees.

Mother was in high good humour as she introduced him to the doorman, the bell boys, the clerk and the elevator man.

They could now see that she wasn't alone although she was to be alone there for the night. George said that they had evidently all been told about "My son, Mr. George Day."

As she shepherded him in to see the apartment and have "a bit of a talk," she was just like a child with a new toy. She had to show George both baths, the beds and chairs, the view and all the closets--everything.

It was something to see and enjoy however, not really to use, for a little later she moved a chair to sit down and telephone me. She talked happily for a few minutes but as she got up she found she had forgotten where the chair had come from. "Oh my soul!" she wailed, "it would never do to disarrange things!"

George left about eleven with the understanding that Philip, Mother's chauffeur, would call for him at the Yale Club at quarter to nine the next morning.

George, knowing Mother, however, was at the door at eight-thirty, where sure enough he found Philip waiting. They hurried around to 270 Park Avenue where they were just in time for Mother as she appeared at the front door with all her luggage.

The drive down to the pier was comfortable. As the boat did not sail until noon even Mother felt that there was enough time to get there if the traffic did not stop too much.

But at the dock a public porter took all the precious luggage, paying no attention to Mother's cries that Philip would attend to that. Worse still, this rough-looking man did not keep it with him but stolidly dumped it on an escalator which shot it up and out of sight. With no knowledge of whether or not she would ever see her beloved things again, Mother was told to go with George up an elevator. What wore Mother out most was that she felt

the public porter did not hurry but slowly marched up the stairs taking no pains at all to be at the top of the escalator by the time her bags were there. Anybody might walk off with them, leaving her an odd assortment of unfamiliar things she did not want in the least.

Mother looked as though she were undecided whether to go on the escalator herself with the bags, which she had planned to have constantly in sight, or to run up the stairs after the public porter. George saved the situation by having the presence of mind to seize hold of Mother's famous old black Gladstone bag and take this into the passenger elevator The bag acted as a magnet to draw Mother in after him.

When they arrived on the main floor the public porter was standing there waiting for them with the other five bags, and was at once taken into high favour. All became peaceful as they marched down

to the gangway, but there new alarms arose. For the public porter was by now a private family retainer as it were, highly trusted and indispensable. But under regulations he had to leave the five bags to be carried on board by stewards of the ship, who, while said to be numerous, were not visible. Furthermore, Mother as a passenger had to go up one gangway, while George, as a visitor, had to go up another.

George pointed out that they both came out close together on the deck above, so after she had had a conference with the ticket inspectors and other officials which ended in their all laughing together, she proceeded up her gangplank and George up his. He commandeered two stewards for the luggage, so that Mother and all the bags and the stewards and George met at once in her stateroom and promptly overflowed in the hallway.

Mother at once wailed that she was never going to be able to get in the stateroom and what should she do, and counted the bags and patted each one. However, in a few minutes the bags were in and the stewards out and Mother exclaiming over how nice her stateroom was--not a bit stuffy and *very* comfortable.

Just then the stewardess came in. She was a pretty, fresh-faced woman to whom Mother immediately took a great fancy. When George left they were joking together and the stewardess telling Mother she must be Irish or at least have kissed the Blarney Stone.

Beside this to take a train from Harrison to come to town on a summer's afternoon might seem less trying. Not to Mother. Trains were great implacable, roaring monsters. They had a frightful ascendancy over her.

She used to take one down each week from Harrison to see me. She took an afternoon train arriving at 125th Street at 3 and went back on the 5.27.

She always came dressed carefully in travelling clothes with the ancient black leather Gladstone bag clutched in her hand. In it she brought me eggs and butter--such rich golden butter--and spinach. We had good talks and laughs. We got all smoothed out and happy from seeing each other. But then came the ordeal of catching the 5.27.

I used to drive over to the station with her, and we always had plenty of time for if we left my apartment at quarter to five we got to the 125th Street station at five minutes past five at the latest. Nevertheless as we drew near, a sensation of urgency seized her. "Here's the station," she cried. It was like being possessed. Her eyes changed; she no longer saw me. She said, "Good-bye,

dear love," automatically; hurried out of the carriage, gripped that much-enduring black bag tight, and ran up the stairs. That long flight to the platform! It used to shake her all up to run, with fear clutching her: but this was a STATION.

She said to me afterwards when she was describing it all that she used to feel only very callous people dared pretend to be calm in a station, abnormal creatures, who were certain to come to bad ends. "Lord help and save us," she said, "they probably missed their trains and killed themselves."

As she got to the top of the platform a train appeared, instantly. She tried to think of the fact that it was twenty minutes early, and going in the wrong direction, but it made such a noise she couldn't think. She just felt that if it once got away from her it was gone--it would never come back.

She called to the announcer: "Here man Man!" He wouldn't listen. Perhaps it would be safest to get aboard, to take no chances. There were the car-steps where all those people were.

So she and the black bag, which I really think shared her excitement, pushed madly to the steps of a car and attempted to climb up. But because it was so crowded, she had time to ask the brakeman, earnestly, if he were sure it was her train. And it gradually developed that this was *not* her train, but some huge impostor, some really impossible train that would not do at all. Several persons confirmed this. Officials. It was probably true. "You are *sure,* porter? Well. . . .

"I am going to Harrison. . . .

"What! I am on the *wrong platform!* My soul!"

She didn't quite cry, but the frightened little tears were right there, only she had

no time to do anything but run back down those awful stairs. Other people were using them. She remembered that afterwards. But at the time she didn't see them. Her eyes were fixed, her legs blindly felt their way as though they were at a fire--if they would never be good for another step, no matter, they must simply race now.

Down those stairs and then up the other flight. Oh they were so long. *And all this time she could hear trains on the platform above!* Trains coming and going They're *cruel*--when she was hurrying so. Oh please wait!

From then on she said she didn't know what she was doing. She got on the right platform, with about sixteen minutes to spare, but she couldn't collect herself. She was so shaken up. Every cell in her body and brain was focused on one pressing need--that of catching that train--and convinced of the imminent

danger of its getting away. In those sixteen minutes four or five trains came in, before hers, and in spite of all that anyone could say to her she tried to climb on each one. The announcer himself took pity on her, after her third excited attempt, and led her away, promising to point out her train when it came. But when the next wrong train appeared, she began trembling again, and felt she couldn't stand there, so as soon as his back was turned she made for it. And again was thrust back. She felt so ashamed! But not ashamed enough to stop trying.

The next though was hers.

Once on board, she soon relaxed, and recovered quite promptly. The blessed relief of having come safely through so many perils, and the sense of having triumphed over a large, loud, deceiving old train, were soothing enough to make up for her exertions. She had already

turned her mind on the problem of telling Dennis, the gardener, just how much spinach she wanted to bring down to me the next week. Her agony she forgot, just as when a hypnotised person comes out of a trance in which he has suffered, he leaves all pain behind in a moment. It was sponged off the slate.

MOTHER AND THE SERVANT PROBLEM

When old Margaret cooked for us, although there was not a great variety, what she cooked was just right. But Mother was not so successful with her waitresses. There is something about good service, at table, that adds to the pleasure of eating. Even the best of food, with bad service, isn't fun at all. That was only too often what happened at our house. Mother knew that Father valued good service, but because he yelled at her so much to economise, she did not know that he would probably have been willing to pay for it. Although she felt guilty when he criticised the way she ran the house, she was sure she did the best she could under the circumstances.

Most of the time she felt it was Father's fault that things didn't run smoothly. He made such a fuss, she said. But the fact

was that she couldn't make a house run smoothly. It was not that she neglected it. She worked very hard at it and got all tired out. But what she loved to do was to make a house look pretty and homelike. She created a pleasant atmosphere by the way she arranged flowers and furniture, and she was always busy moving things around and planning new effects. She also worked hard planning the meals, or training green waitresses so that Father's dinner would be properly served. But training waitresses and planning meals was not her forte. So in a room with flowers and a pleasant look to it, we'd have dreadful scenes with Father red-faced and angry because his dinner never seemed just right.

One night we had a new waitress, of whom Mother had great hopes. But while serving Father she held a dish so high that he could not help himself. When he roared at her to put it down lower she

began to tremble. After Father got hold of the spoon he held it in mid-air while he addressed himself to Mother.

"How many times," he said, "have I asked you not to engage a girl who doesn't even know how to hold a dish properly?"

"Clare," said Mother, "hush! Can't you see she is new and doing her best?"

"What I want," said Father, "is service."

He then felt better and helped himself calmly from the offending dish, immediately forgetting the waitress. He tried the food, found it good and started to enjoy it. Meanwhile the trembling girl walked toward Mother. Halfway there she broke down and ran out of the room sobbing.

Father turned in surprise. "What now?" he said, as she disappeared through the swinging door.

"Oh Clare," Mother wailed, "see what you've done."

The next day when a friend of hers came to call, Mother told her about this scene, and bemoaned the departure of the waitress. Her friend was a large commanding woman, who ruled her husband carefully but firmly. She nodded her head several times but said nothing until Mother sank back exhausted from her tale. "What you need," she told Mother impressively in her deep controlled voice, "is a housekeeper."

Mother said that a housekeeper was out of the question. She knew Mr. Day would never consider such a thing. Nevertheless her friend described in detail the peace that reigned in the homes that had housekeepers. And what was more astonishing, she knew the exact person to make Mother's home perfect.

By the time the afternoon was over, Mother could hardly wait for Father to come home so she could tell him all about the treasure she had engaged.

"Clare," she called, before he closed the front door, "come right up here. I want to talk to you."

Father was astonished. This was the time when she was generally so busy with the last-minute details about the house or dressing that she was in no mood for talk. He stuck his cane in the tall pinkish-brown jar, carefully placed so that the large roses painted down one side showed to good effect. He then put his hat on the closet shelf and his coat on its hanger. After he had shut the door carefully on them, he ran up the stairs, two at a time.

"What is it, Vinnie? Is anything wrong?"

"Wrong, Clare? Why should anything be wrong?"

"You said you wanted to talk to me."

"Of course, I want to talk to you. Aren't you glad Mrs. Abbot is coming to be our housekeeper and make everything pleasant for you?"

"Mrs. Abbot! Who is Mrs. Abbot? And what, may I ask, is she to make pleasant for me?"

"Why, the *house,* Clare. Don't shout so."

Father and Mother saw the house through different eyes. They each felt strongly that it was their own home, but the idea that it might be a common one had never entered their minds. Right now Father began loudly:

"This is my home and I won't have--"

"Of course, it's your home, Clare, I don't understand what you are talking about."

"I'm saying I wish my home run with some regard for my wishes."

"That's just what I was telling you, Clare," said Mother. "I have just taken a lot of trouble so that all your wishes can be taken care of perfectly."

"Since when has it been my wish to have a stranger thrust into my home?"

"A housekeeper isn't a stranger, Clare," said Mother. And quickly reminded him that if he did not hurry and change he would be late for dinner.

After the first enthusiasm was over, Mother began to wonder how it was going to feel to have her home reduced to perfect order by some determined woman. She looked forward to Mrs. Abbot's arrival so uneasily that when she came, Mother was astonished to find her gentle and rather vague. Although there was nothing really wrong with her clothing, somehow she gave an effect of things being just askew. Also, her pale eyes never seemed fixed in the direction in which they were looking. None of this

bothered Mother. She was so relieved that she was not to be ordered about in her home like the husband of her commanding friend. But on the other hand, she knew the situation was difficult and wondered if it might not really be better if Mrs. Abbot looked more like a general.

Father's reaction from the first--when he spoke to her at all--was to address her in a loud tone, as though she were across the street. If her replies were not satisfactory, as they generally weren't, he then spoke about her, as though she were not present. Mother could never quite make up her mind whether she wanted her to have more spunk or not. She felt that if Mrs. Abbot did talk back to Father there was no telling what he might do to her. Deep down inside her, Mother almost believed that it might even endanger Mrs. Abbot's life if she were to do anything so daring. However, as she didn't, Father declared again and

again that she had no backbone; and that she was a pudding-head.

Mother dreaded the evenings when Father decided to go into the pantry to open a bottle of wine, because it seemed as though every time he did so Mrs. Abbot was sitting there at her table waiting for her meal to be brought to her Father never waited until he got all the way back into the dining-room but, while the door was still open, demanded of Mother the reason why that woman was sitting around out there.

"For your comfort," Mother said.

"She's not doing anything for me," Father said, "she's not doing anything at all."

Mother felt that somehow this was all very annoying of Mrs. Abbot.

To make matters worse, Mrs. Abbot always saw the gloomy side of everything, which especially upset

Mother when she was ill. For although naturally a buoyant person, she was highly susceptible, and needed bright, cheery people and gay flowers around her. Mrs. Abbot was anything but cheering.

As Mother began to feel better, she would send for Mrs. Abbot to see how the household affairs were going. Mother did so one June morning, when she had been ill with a cold, but was feeling stronger. Mrs. Abbot took quite a long time to come upstairs and Mother began to wish she had never sent for her. Just then Mrs Abbot sidled vaguely into the room, her eyes fixed on the far corner. She made a little rush at Mother's bed as though to stand right by her head.

"Good heavens, Mrs. Abbot, don't stand where I can't see you. Go to the foot of the bed."

For a few moments they talked of household matters. But Mrs. Abbot kept

stopping. Her eyes wandered to Mother and rested intently on her face. From time to time she shook her head. Once right in the middle of a sentence she became silent, then leaned forward staring at Mother.

Mother became alarmed. "Mrs. Abbot," she said, "what is it?"

Mrs. Abbot looked at Mother and said in her simple way: "I think you look *sicker* than yesterday."

Mother jumped up in the bed. "Oh! My Lord, Mrs. Abbot, you must not talk that way." Feeling that maybe something dreadful really was the matter with her, Mother fell back on the pillows.

Mrs. Abbot continued to look at Mother without saying anything.

"What a way to tell anyone sick in bed that they look *sicker!"* Mother wailed.

Mrs. Abbot was frightened at Mother's vehemence, but she replied in a faint but defiant voice, "Well, I *do* think so."

Mother by this time was unable to lift her head. She turned and feebly closed her eyes. It did seem as though she felt worse.

"Go," she said in a voice almost as weak as Mrs. Abbot's. "Go back down in the kitchen. I am not well enough to talk any longer."

The main difficulty in dealing with Mrs. Abbot was that her mind wasn't steady or fixed. It had formed the habit of blowing around like the wind wherever it happened to list. She had no proper control over it. In fact, her mind controlled her. One morning, when Mother was saying urgently, "Now, Mrs. Abbot, you won't forget about that soap, will you?" I saw a vague look float into Mrs. Abbot's wandering eye, and her mind snatched her up, as it were, and

deposited her at a distance. She stared at the fireplace dreamily and said: "This isn't the right beach for soap."

"What!" Mother demanded.

Mrs. Abbot came back with a start.

"What on earth are you talking about, Mrs. Abbot?"

Mrs. Abbot looked injured. "I didn't forget about the soap, Mrs. Day, but it wasn't there."

"It is too!" Mother shrieked. "Park and Tilford's are *never* out of Pears' soap! You haven't even got your hat on to go and get it yet. What's the matter with you, Mrs. Abbot?"

Mrs. Abbot sighed and looked forgivingly, though vaguely, at Mother, and went off to put on her hat.

An odd thing about this incident was that she then went to Park and Tilford's and came carefully back with the soap. It

was always like that. At one moment she'd seem perfectly hopeless and the next she'd be as competent as anyone else. I didn't believe she was really quite right in the head, but Mother said she could be quite right enough if she wanted to, and that the thing to do was to be firm with her. Somehow or other it worked.

Mother began to feel that she could relax, and enjoy her house. She even made plans to do over the reception room. She had never been satisfied with the way it looked. Now, as she stood at the door, her hands parting the portieres, her head a little to one side, she considered the changes. Every time she did this, her feeling toward Mrs. Abbot warmed and she wished that she felt a little less impatient with the poor woman.

"Clare," said Mother one evening, "don't you think I was right to get Mrs. Abbot?"

Father had just lifted his glass of cognac He set it down again. Hard. He also laid down his book.

"If you want to know what I think about that woman, Vinnie--" he began.

"Hush," Mother implored him. "Hush, Clare, she might hear you."

"Don't care if she does," said Father. "Might do her good. Last night I tried to tell her how I wanted my bacon, and do you know what she did the whole time I was telling her?"

"I don't know what she did, Clare," Mother said indignantly, "but I heard all the noise. And so did my friend Miss Wilkinson. I think she was really quite frightened. If Mrs. Abbot does not satisfy you, it's your own fault for shouting so much."

Father struck his fist on the arm of his chair.

"When I can't talk in my own pantry--"

Just at this moment, Mrs. Abbot walked into the room. When she saw Father, her breath came in short gasps.

"Oh, Mrs. Day," she panted, "one of your friends called you up, er--she wants you should phone her but the name has deserted me."

Mother looked at her speechless for a second, then before Father could catch his breath, rushed at Mrs. Abbot, pushing her out of the room, talking all the while. "Now, Mrs. Abbot, that will do, if you have forgotten who called me I don't see what good it does to come rushing in at this time of night."

Mother had some friends, Mr. and Mrs. Robbins, in East Sixty-ninth Street, and she knew another lady, Mrs. Wrenn, who lived on Lexington Avenue. Mrs. Abbot used to get them mixed.

Although Mother had hundreds of friends, she had a feeling that it must have been one of those two that Mrs.

Abbot meant. She disapproved so of Mrs. Abbot's mixing them up that she would not mention their names however.

"Now Mrs. Abbot, you should not give me a long message to call someone and never be able to tell me who it is that I am supposed to call."

"Indeed, Mrs. Day, I do try, but somehow the name never seems to be here when I want to tell you."

"Mrs. Abbot," said Mother severely, "everyone can remember names if they just try. If you can't remember them like any ordinary person, why then, keep something in mind about the names that you can remember them by."

For several days things really did seem to go better. Until one day Mrs. Abbot again had trouble with a message.

"What kind of name was it, Mrs. Abbot? I've told you and told you and told you

that you simply must remember the name. It wasn't Mrs. Willets, was it?"

"No," Mrs. Abbot said faintly. "No, Mrs. Day, it was one of them birds." Tears came to her eyes and ran down her small earnest face. "And if it was the Wrenns or the Robbins I kinnot recall."

"Now, Mrs. Abbot," Mother said, "you're just being silly about this and you must stop it right now. It's utterly unnecessary to think of people's names in that way. Why, the next thing, you'll be getting all mixed up about Mrs. Crane, too."

Mrs. Abbot hadn't known till then that Mother's friends included Cranes too. She put her hand to her heart in alarm and backed out of the room.

A year later, as it happened, a gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Edward Sparrow, bought the house next door to ours, No. 41, and settled down there to live. Mrs. Abbot then completely gave up. From that time on, Mother said, she

didn't even try to keep them straight. When any one of those four names was mentioned, Mrs. Abbot's mind fled.

One day she came stumbling and panting up the stairs so frightened she scarcely could speak. "Oh, Mrs. Day!" she gulped out. "Your friends' house is afire!"

"Whose house?" Mother demanded, getting up in a hurry.

Mrs. Abbot's eyes flickered and that troubled evasive look appeared in them. "Why, you know who I mean, Mrs. Day. It's them Pidgeons!" she wailed.

Mother was beside herself. She hurriedly put on her hat and coat and went out on the steps. Mrs. Abbot ran out beside her and pointed triumphantly at a fireman coming out of the Sparrows'!

When, not long after this, Mrs. Abbot was called home to look after some sick relative, Mother said it was a mercy, for

if she had stayed much longer Mother felt she would never be able again to see her friends as normal human beings.

Not long after Mrs. Abbot left, Mother decided that a well-trained butler and his wife wouldn't need looking after.

It was not easy to find a couple who could satisfy the family requirements. It might have been easier if Mother had not at last seen a use for the empty butler's room off the pantry. As there was space in it for only one narrow cot, this meant that the wife slept alone in her room on the fourth floor. But at length a French couple named Dominique and Henriette arrived at the house. They were a little old, but Henriette's cooking and Dominique's serving were perfect. It looked like a happy arrangement for nearly a month. By that time, however, Dominique had begun to be slack, the quick, careful manner he had had when he came was now gone and he was

becoming more languid and weary every day.

Mother said he must be getting old. She had a little talk with Henriette about him. Henriette cried. She said, yes, she herself had seen this change and it frightened her. It was true that he was no longer young, but never had she seen Dominique look this way before.

He certainly looked bad. His face had become grey and he looked like a sick man. Finally he came to Mother and said that they must leave. Very politely, on leaving he explained that his room was of such a heat at night that his suffering had become unbearable.

Mother took this as a kind of impudence. Nevertheless, she went into Dominique's room, off the pantry. It was small and narrow, with a window high up. In the French fashion Dominique had kept this window tightly closed. There was also a large radiator. This feature Dominique

had regarded as something mysterious and not to be touched. As we bought the city steam, it had poured liberally and steadily into his radiator night and day. In consequence of his French dislike of draughts and night air and his French distrust of mechanical arrangements, Dominique had spent his nights bathed in perspiration and in an atmosphere of a stokehold.

Mother tried to explain to Dominique what had happened, but Dominique felt that he had suffered a great deal and was completely convinced that his health had been permanently injured and that he and Henriette must go.

This discouraged Mother and Father with couples and with the French nation. They settled back into their old routine of cook and waitress.

At the end, even this became too much to contend with and the last waitress, Katherine, finally took charge of Mother

and Father and the whole house. The dreams of perfect service were gone, for Katherine was independent and from New England. She spoke her mind on all occasions, particularly if she disapproved

She browbeat both Mother and Father but served them, in her own way, devotedly. The three of them quarrelled, but underneath Mother and Father knew they had something on which they could depend.

MOTHER'S LAST HOME

Mother sometimes talked to Father about the advantages of living in an apartment. Father said it was all nonsense. A respectable man owned his own home and didn't go living around in a "hole in the air."

However, as time went on, more and more people they knew lived that way. Many of their conservative friends bought apartments, which Mother felt made things altogether different. She said so to Father one day, adding, "Bessie and Eustis have bought one."

"What the devil did they do that for?" Father asked.

"Why, to live in, Clare," said Mother. "And you'd be a lot more comfortable in an apartment, too," she added.

"I have told you over and over again that I don't want an apartment," said Father.

"But if you buy it, then it is your home just like a house," Mother insisted.

"It's a hole in the air just the same," Father replied, then after a moment added disgustedly, "a damned hole in the air."

Father died in his own house, but a few months afterwards Mother got rid of it, a largish house at 43 East Sixty-eighth Street, and bought herself an apartment at 1170 Fifth Avenue. It was just what she wanted. It was on the fifteenth floor; looking south and west, it was flooded with sunshine, and had a magnificent view all over Central Park and the Reservoir.

All the same it was hard to leave 43. She had lived there a long time, and memories were strong. Also, as she was always unable to throw things away,

when it came time to clear the house, every nook and corner was filled with tightly packed objects. All of these still clamoured to be used. However, Mother and Katherine worked like beavers tying up packages to go not only to the new apartment, but to friends and charities, until the chauffeur who had the job of delivering all these bundles gave notice. He said that there was too much of it, and he could not stand it. Mother said that if he were a man he ought to be able to stand at least as much as she could, and that if he hurried up and carried a few more things at a time it would not take him so long. A few days later he insisted on leaving just the same

Mother knew she would feel sad if she saw the alterations being made on her home, so she announced that she would not even drive through Sixty-eighth Street after she had made one more trip for some extra precious electric light fixtures, a few curtain rods and an

enormous mirror, which she valued highly but had been unable to find a place for in the apartment. It had taken her some time to find a home for this mirror; but at last she discovered that The Girls' Club of the Church of the Peace Everlasting would be pleased to instal it in the Club Room. Just as soon as she heard this Mother bustled around triumphantly to 43.

Intent on her errand, she did not at first notice that her car could not draw up at its accustomed place because a large and disreputable-looking truck stood there, its sides already bulging with rubble, doors and pieces of wood. Inside, men with axes chopped at the carving and panelling in the dining-room, and at the very mirror that she had intended to bestow on the Girls' Club. Dust, plaster and noise were everywhere, and as for the fixtures and curtain rods they had long since disappeared. For a moment Mother was stunned. It is one thing to

leave your house and know that someone is planning to remodel it; but what she saw was quite another matter.

"Oh! Oh!" she cried.

Trembling from the shock, but already indignant, she got out of the car and darted right at the very first man she saw and asked him what he meant by breaking things up. He, of course, was just a workman and knew nothing about it. Mother held him to account just the same, also the broker, the contractor, and the new owner. She felt so bad, and said so with such conviction, that they finally began to realize that something must be done. For several days they argued with her that they started work on the day scheduled--to which Mother replied that they had never told her the day and it had been put right in the papers when they sold the house that she was to take out of it anything she wanted--instead they had chopped up

everything. Finally the contractor himself took her to a place where mirrors, fireplaces, doors and other objects salvaged from wrecked homes lay stacked awaiting chance purchasers. He invited her to choose anything resembling hers. She chose the best mirror she could find for the Girls' Club, without feeling in the least compensated for the destruction of her own. She had seen with her own eyes those shattered fragments of glass.

Before she moved in, in fact the very day that she had decided she wanted the apartment, Mother had started right in to plan how she was going to make it comfortable and homelike. It was a domain of her very own where, out of a square blank space, she would create just the atmosphere she wanted. Her mind raced on through the process of settling, until she could see herself leading her visitors through her new

home on a tour of inspection before even the paint had gone on the walls.

Her home had always been of such absorbing interest to Mother that she never could resist showing it. Long after the novelty of 43 had worn off and after she had lived there some time she still showed it to people. This habit distressed one of my brothers. He came to me much upset one evening when Mother was giving a dinner to some foreign friends of his. "The question is," he said, "how to keep Mother from showing them the house. One place we went the other night they showed their house; and some country friends showed both their house and their garage! They think it's so extraordinary."

"Tell their harrowing story at table," I suggested.

He felt he couldn't do that. Mother mightn't hear it, anyway, giving orders to the servants.

"Then for heaven's sake, *let* her show the house," I said. "It will give them something to talk about when they go back to Europe. It'll at least wake them up."

He couldn't take that view of it.

Later in the evening I heard Mother showing everyone the house, in relays. In her excitement she even showed *me* to two of them, Mr. Hunt and Mr. Clyde. Hunt was in a cloudy condition but kept clinging to a phrase he had found helpful--viz.: "No, really I should have thought it more than twenty-five feet wide."

"It's only twenty-five," Mother assured him. And Hunt turned confidentially to me, saying with a fixed smile that really he should have thought it considerably more than that. The-er-halls, you know. He waved his hand. "It's only twenty-five," Mother repeated, and carried him off to the third-floor bathrooms.

"Did you show the rest of the people the house?" I asked Mother the next morning

"Yes," she said. "You know that horrid old man they dined with last night had shown them his, and I thought they might like to see what a really nice house was like."

The new apartment had a special aspect it was a kind of toy place that she had ingeniously contrived to make into a home. So it was no wonder that a friend, calling there for the first time, had no sooner got into the living-room and started to make herself comfortable than she found herself hustled right back again to the elevator landing, so that Mother could show everything straight from the beginning.

This landing had not seemed very big, but it had managed to absorb several large and elaborate pieces of Empire furniture decorously set off by two oversized steel engravings: one of

"Prince Albert's Harriers," the other of a "Meeting of her Majesty's Stag Hounds on Ascot Heath."

Inside, all was rather dark and quiet, except for the loud tick-tick of the grandfather's clock. The hall and the living-room were papered in soft dark green. However, the dining-room, opening off one end of the hall, had a strong rich, crimson-flowered, damask-like paper. It somehow was appropriate with the black heavily carved Jacobean furniture and dark woodwork to match. Taking up one whole side of the room were two glass-front china closets, rather like bookcases, where Mother kept her best gold china and Venetian glass. The sideboard, a massive structure, and the serving table were covered with silver pitchers, dishes, plates and platters, a coffee urn and a tea set.

One special feature of this room was a great mirror taken from 43 before the

vandals had started work on the house, and set into the wall opposite the door. Not only was the long hall with its sofas and chairs and tables reflected in it, but also the living-room and a glimpse of the Park outside. Many guests narrowly escaped real injury when they bumped into the glass, thinking the apartment really did extend beyond. Mother was divided in her emotions between impatience at their stupidity and gratification at the success of the illusion.

Mother had always had a blue room, and the one she had in the new apartment was far from being an exception. She said that she had never had a blue room with walls as blue as she wanted before; this blue was bright and strong and Mother liked it very much The beds were brass and the furniture white. All the upholstery was of the same blue brocade as the curtains, a little greyish in colour and woven with a minute leaf-pattern. Also the coverlet

and bolster. The bolsters were hard round cylinders which lay precise and unyielding at the head of each bed, firmly repelling any person who was so badly brought up as to try to rest on a bed when it was made up. On the floor was a rather lightish blue carpet. On various pieces of furniture were blue candlesticks, dishes, boxes; and a blue carafe beside the bed was covered with bluebirds flying around it.

As Mother shepherded her visitor out of the room she always carefully lowered the window shades so that the sun should not fade the walls.

There was a middle room, but for some reason it had no hold on Mother's affections and she hardly showed it, but passed straight on to her bedroom.

She had always loved her bedroom at 43, and her main problem was to engineer into this smaller space all her beloved objects. Her brass bed with its

canopy of ruffled lavender curtains went along one wall, facing so that Mother could look out on the Reservoir while she ate her breakfast. Although the beds in the other rooms had round stiff bolsters she had always liked her stiffly starched white pillow-shams, against which she piled her embroidered and lace baby-pillows. The bureau was rather large with its swell front; but it needed to be, to hold her silver toilette set which had incorporated into itself a lot of extra objects: silver boxes, some cologne bottles of solid silver, some of cut glass with silver tops, a couple of extra powder dishes, and an extra vase which had just arrived the Christmas before.

On a little round table at her bedside was her telephone, a book of verse, a prayer book and her carafe. The couch was, like that in the guest room, one of those heavily springed affairs with a rolling elevation at one end not high enough to permit sitting up like a chaise

longue but which nevertheless prevented anyone from really going to sleep on it. Ladies lay down on these couches, covered with afghans, for a little rest after lunch, half-lying, half-sitting.

When she came to the living-room Mother explained all the difficulties they had had getting the soft pine wood in the panelling and deep window embrasures stained the precise light red mahogany colour dear to her heart; as she told this she lovingly plumped the red velvet cushions that were in the corners of the large green overstuffed chairs and sofa. These had been in the library at 43 when Father bought the house from Mr. Brooks Between the windows and out into the room stood Father's George Washington desk. The great Turkey red, blue and green rug covered the floor.

The room was full of familiar objects which Mother caressed lightly as she showed them. On the desk was a tall,

embossed brass lamp which had been converted from oil to electricity. It had a red-flowered shade which was trimmed top and bottom with a deep band of chenille. On either end of the mantel were Grandma Stockwell's gold and white French vases, filled with straw-flowers. A black bust of Grandpa Day stood on the grand piano, between photographs of two of his grandsons. Near them drooped the lamp made of Tiffany glass and shaped like a lily.

Off to one side of the room was a book-nook. In one corner of it hung a small cage-like lantern. When this was lit the bulb showed up as a little monkey. Mother adored this funny object and kept it lit only a second for fear that one day the bulb would burn out.

One of her favourite pictures was of a choir boy singing with all his might and main. She always said that it reminded her of one of her own dear boys at St.

Paul's. The other was of some chickens coming out of the shell and pecking at some strawberries. These were both oils in deep gilt frames.

On each window ledge was a bulbous pink jardinière filled with ivy. The electric light fixtures were of solid brass and branched majestically out as though to take their place in this crowded room, which had somehow achieved what Mother had wanted--solid comfort and hominess.

In all her homes Mother had had a reception room. It stood for something in her life and the lives of her friends. It was a setting with an atmosphere of formality which helped them through awkward or disagreeable situations, which had to be dealt with but which were just as well not brought into the centre of the house. It was just as much help if the visit were pleasant, although purely formal, for the stiff chairs and

fragile aspect of the objects around permitted nothing else. Its traditional furnishings were French. Mother's had always been done in pink and gold.

Mother felt so strongly that she did not have a proper home without a room of this sort that although the remaining room in the apartment could only be reached by going through her bath, or the living-room--it just had to be a pink and gold room. When it was finished all Mother had to do was to look around at the gilt furniture and the pink walls, and all her associations with that sort of room came back and she was able to receive and dismiss in this room someone whom she did not wish to join the intimate circle in the next, as ably as she did at 43 when the library was on the second floor and the reception room right at the front door. Without really taking her mind off her visitor, she could hear the pink porcelain clock ticking and she knew that it stood underneath the great

Venetian glass mirror on the glass cabinet filled with its assortment of bric-a-brac and the porcelain figurines that made up the monkey orchestra. She could see from her armchair the two column-like porcelain lamps; one pink with a landscape painted on it, the other of blue Delft. Both of them had as shades round white porcelain globes. Grandma Day's vase with the doves on it was near the alabaster vase with the doves feeding out of it, a memento from Venice.

There was one great difference in this room from its predecessors. It was used. Mother loved to sit in one of the pink satin and gilt chairs by the window. With her feet on the little mahogany footstool and a book of poems resting in her lap, and her light lavender wool scarf thrown over her shoulders when it was a bit cool, she would watch the changing colours over the Reservoir and the lights begin to come on in Fifty-ninth Street and Central Park West.

However, Mother was usually active, and after she felt settled she sent out word she was again at home on Thursdays--wondering if people would come so far uptown. She need not have given it a thought for every Thursday saw a group sitting around the dining-room table, which had been set with a lace cloth, and at one end the tea-service Mother poured, as she laughed, and got indignant, and told stories on herself and others with equal prodigality.

Katherine might be grumpy on other days, and set Mother's tray down the wrong side, as a sign of displeasure, or worse still a signal that she was about to retire into what Mother called "her spells" when she didn't speak. But on Thursdays she was always jocular and interested as she slipped in and out with hot water or more of her famous doughnut balls.

The dark side of life in the apartment consisted mainly in a kind of warfare with

the people who lived on the roof. They seemed to Mother, who could hear them sing and jump, rather noisy. But their great sin came from their efforts to beautify their roof, where they made a garden which was larger than the drainage system could stand. The pink room and the red wallpaper in the dining-room suffered.

There was a great deal of talk but at last all was repaired. And just in time. For Mother was, for the first time in years, giving several big receptions. She had a new and rather young daughter-in-law, that winter, a challenge which Mother met with energy and interest; and solved by treating her as a new granddaughter.

All day long, on the great days, boxes of flowers came every few moments until the apartment was crowded with them. Mother got more and more excited by each arrival. Imported maids and

Katherine got under one another's feet as they washed and stacked silver.

A little after four commenced the stream of ladies in black and purple satin, jangly with jet and jewelled lorgnettes. Around their necks were ermine tippets and their hats were of shining velvet and they nearly all wore ostrich plumes. Their husbands, when there were any, wore morning coats and striped trousers. An occasional daughter slipped unsubstantially in and then out again.

Mother sat enthroned in the living-room wearing a new royal purple velvet gown and carrying orchids in her left hand. By her side stood the new daughter-in-law in pale beige lace carrying an old-fashioned bouquet of tea roses and forget-me-nots. There was punch, tea, coffee and chocolate, layer cakes, doughnuts, sandwiches, hot biscuits and brownies--in the dining-room.

Mother was in high feather, her voice carrying above the chatter as she sat there completely in her element greeting one old friend after another, until by seven-thirty at each reception, triumphant if exhausted, she had greeted, steered around, introduced, and poked up more than a hundred persons.

It was the beginning of a gay and busy winter for Mother until one Thursday, late in January 1929. On that day there were fourteen people around the dining-room table, and Mother was gayer than ever, but afterwards felt a queer pain on her left side. On Friday she lay quiet and unlike herself in her room attended by Katherine. By Saturday, however, she was joking and nudging her doctor while telling him some mischievous story. Ten minutes later, without ever having known she had the dreaded angina pectoris, she died.

The following Monday, dressed again in her new velvet gown and surrounded by orchids, she seemed to receive for the last time the friends who crowded in to bid her farewell.

THE END