Time to Remember

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Time To Remember

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1951

BOOKS BY
LLOYD C. DOUGLAS

Magnificent Obsession
Forgive Us Our Trespasses
Precious Jeopardy
Green Light
White Banners
Disputed Passage
Home for Christmas
Doctor Hudson's Secret Journal
Invitation To Live
The Robe
The Big Fisherman
Time To Remember

The Riverside Press

Cambridge • Massachusetts
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To my three grandsons,
Arthur, John,
and Douglas Dawson

Doctor's Orders
or
Why I Am Doing This

WHEN I COMPLETED *The Big Fisherman*, a year ago, I announced that I would never attempt another novel, a statement that won for me the first applause I had ever heard from my more ruthless critics.

I was very tired. The long story had occupied my mind for five years. I was seventy-one, badly crippled with arthritis, sick-abed much of the time; and when, on the last page, Simon Peter died, I half envied him.

For a few weeks I rejoiced in my freedom. I had been out of one novel and into another for twenty years. There was nothing more that I wanted to say. Now I would have plenty of leisure to read many neglected books and write to many neglected friends.

But my retirement hasn't been as much fun as I had hoped. I have had more time to reflect upon my aches and pains. I am restless and unhappy. It has been hard on my relatives too who have tried unsuccessfully to entertain me.

My physician now advises that if I don't want to go to bed for keeps, to say nothing of the risk of driving my loved ones crazy, I had better get back to work: I must write something, anything! My family and my publishers have suggested a book of reminiscences.

It had never occurred to me that I might do such a thing. My life story lacks drama. I was never in battle, never in jail. I was never a crusader, never headed a movement, and was equally unskillful at swinging a gavel or a golf club. I was not an athlete nor much of a scholar. I never sought a public office and nobody ever suggested that I should.

If this writing should turn out to be a book; and if you should buy or borrow it, you cannot complain that you weren't warned in advance that it was not written to entertain, educate, or inspire anybody. It is simply an exercise in occupational therapy. It is what the doctor ordered.

THE AUTHOR

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Time To Remember

1. My Papa

MY father, Alexander Jackson Douglas, was fifty when I was born. He had lived longer than most men of his years, having been a farmer, a schoolmaster, a college student, a lawyer, a State Senator; and, when we first met, a rural preacher.

He had also sired a large family and was a grandfather to children older than I, so that by the time we of the second crop came along little kids were no novelty and certainly no treat.

My younger brother and I were taught by our mama to call our father Papa, which we did, and continued to do until the end of his days.

Mama, too, who was his junior by more than a score of years, called him Papa, except on infrequent occasions of brief but brisk annoyance when she addressed him as A.J. Mama was sincerely devoted to Papa but when she called him A.J. we all—including A.J.—took to cover.

When I was a small boy all men in their fifties were elderly. It was not to any man's advantage to appear youthful. The world had always been operated by and for old men and my papa had been brought up in that tradition. In his youth all work was done by hand. There was no power machinery. Even the horse-drawn conveyances and implements on the northern Ohio farm where Papa grew up were primitive. Grass was cut with sickle and scythe, dried and cured into hay with hand rakes. The mowing machine, the hay-tedder, the grain harvester were yet to appear. Wheat was threshed on the barn floor by the same kind of flail used in Egypt during the reign of the Pharaohs.

In the field of manufacture, a man who built wagons made the whole wagon. To do that he had to be a draughtsman, a carpenter, a blacksmith, a wheelwright, a painter and a merchant. It required long experience to acquire so many skills.

This venerable wagon-maker was assisted by poorly paid apprentices who turned the grindstone, fired the forge, dressed the lumber, and stood at

the old fellow's elbow, handing him sharpened chisels and dirty looks, and wishing him dead.

The same conditions applied to all other varieties of employment. In the bank, in the store, on the farm, on the sea, in legislative halls and professorial chairs, it was the old man who paid the piper and called the tune. For economic reasons, then, it was important that a man should take on the appearance and behavior of maturity as soon as possible. Youngsters in their late teens and early twenties grew beards.

When power machinery came into common use and youthful agility was more in demand than seasoned experience, the beards disappeared from the faces of all men who brought their dexterity to market rather than their wisdom. But the statesmen, doctors, lawyers, bankers, teachers and preachers kept their whiskers for many years after the men in the mill had disposed of theirs.

My papa had a clean-shaven upper lip but the rest of his face was bearded and his beard was long and white. I once asked my Aunt Nancy, Papa's much younger sister, how old he was when he began to let it grow, and she couldn't remember having seen him without it.

Apparently it ran in his family to turn gray prematurely. Papa had a great shock of white hair which he kept until his death at seventy-eight. Two of my four handsome half-brothers (all of them gone now) were noticeably gray in their thirties. I envied them their distinguished appearance and hoped that I might share in this inheritance; but, unfortunately, most of my hair had fallen out by the time I was thirty-five, thanks to the influence of my grandfather Samuel Cassel who, according to usually reliable sources (I never met the good old man personally) was bald as an egg, a report partially substantiated by the fact that in the only daguerreotype we have of him he wore a hat. Incidentally, this hat was dilapidated, hinting that Samuel had consented to an impromptu picture-taking by some journeyman photographer met at the village tavern. Though my grandfather was dead long before the organization of Alcoholics Anonymous, he could have qualified for membership as he had quite a capacity for alcohol, and nobody could have been more anonymous.

But to return to my papa: he was five feet, eight and a half inches in height and carried an average weight of two hundred pounds, some of it worn around the middle. He never owned a leather belt; but, had he used one, it would probably have measured about forty-four inches. Papa liked good food and took very little physical exercise; and, as has been remarked

earlier, he had spent several years in the Indiana State Senate, an ideal place to acquire rotundity.

Papa was a good mixer and made friends quickly. He had quite a talent for remembering names. His rather florid face was easily lighted with an infectious smile. He had a winning voice and people listened when he talked. He was a gifted storyteller with an inexhaustible repertory of yarns appropriate to any occasion. Even as a little boy I was one of his most appreciative fans. No matter how often he repeated a well-remembered tale, I sat spellbound, for it was never told the same way twice. Papa had an active imagination and could have been a successful novelist.

Among the most cherished memories of my childhood is the recollection of our small family clustered close around Papa's favorite rocking chair, of a winter's evening, listening intently to the current installment of an adventure story serialized in *The Youth's Companion*. This enchanted weekly arrived on Friday. By common consent, nobody tore off its wrapper until supper was over and the dishes had been put away. Then, in an ecstasy of anticipation, we waited while Papa deliberately opened the magazine and prepared to read. But there was always a torturing delay, for Papa would make a big thing of polishing his spectacles.

At the time, so urgent was my eagerness to get on with the story, I felt that Papa, having had no responsibility for helping with the dishes, might at least have wiped his glasses. Many years later it dawned on me that his maddening tardiness to come to our relief was a calculated ruse to whet our appetite for the feast in store. Papa must have had an instinct for precision timing. He knew intuitively the priceless value of suspense in any form of dramatic entertainment.

In passing, let me record my belief that this capacity for creating suspense in a story or play is a gift rather than an achievement. You either have it or you don't. To secure and hold the reader's or auditor's attention it is necessary to worry him about the outcome. He must be required to wait. But suspense, like garlic, can be overdone. As in the inflation of a rubber balloon, there is a certain split-second when the blower, however ambitious to build up his balloon to a prodigious size, had better stop blowing. The art of divining exactly when to quit elaborating a joke or a crisis cannot be learned or taught unless the minstrel has been endowed by nature with this peculiar faculty for determining how much may prudently be spent on stage-setting. It is a special bequest like the gift of absolute pitch or the uncanny ability of a deported cat to find her way home.

During the winter of 1887 Papa read *Ben Hur* to us. It was the first full-length novel I had encountered and it made a deep impression on me. Whether that may have had something to do with my later interest in first-century pastoral Palestine and the contrasting blare of brass in Rome I do not know. Perhaps not. I tried to reread *Ben Hur* when I was plotting *The Robe* and found it slow going. (However, I have had the same experience with other famous books which I have come back to after a lapse of many years.) When I was about sixteen I read *Innocents Abroad* with whoops of merriment. I had another go at it when I was fifty and found its humor decidedly corny. I could be jailed for the remark I am tempted to add here: Mark Twain had only a couple of tricks on which his wit depended, enormous exaggeration and self-deprecation.

But any man who has earned a reputation for being funny must find himself in a frightful predicament. Being consistently funny is a very serious occupation. (Usually the comedian settles down to reworking the old jokes that had won him his ribbons. He contents himself with making fun of his own bald head or his big red nose or his frugalities.)

A moment ago, before being interrupted, I was recalling those delightful winter evenings when my papa read stories to us in the cosy warmth of the big base burner.

In those days the typical American family of modest means was held together by the fireplace or the huge coal stove in the living room. All the other rooms were cold. The conditions were not ideal. The family was huddled together: those nearest the heat were too warm, the others had cold feet. Frequently there was only one lamp fit to read by. About half past eight the little kids undressed before the fire and scampered off to bed exhaling clouds of steam as they climbed the stairs.

When central heating came in and the whole house was made habitable in winter, revolutionary changes were wrought in family life. Everybody agreed that the invention was a godsend Instead of being bunched together uncomfortably through the entire evening the family promptly scattered after supper. Now everyone had his own room, his own lamp, and could amuse himself in his own way. It was a long step toward the freedom of the individual.

But there's something to be said in defense of the fireplace and the dirty old coal stove. They kept the family intact. The arrival of the furnace in the cellar was the first hard blow struck at the American Home.

Throughout my childhood and youth we never lived in a house heated by a furnace in the cellar, nor did we ever have a cellar. Most of our better-off neighbors had cellars for the winter storage of potatoes, beets, parsnips, onions and canned fruits and vegetables, but evidently it was not considered necessary for the village parsonage to be thus equipped.

However, my papa never complained about this. Upon our arrival in a new parish, a husky country boy was engaged to dig a square hole, about four feet deep, in a shaded spot behind the kitchen where we kept milk, cream and butter in summer. Every day the ground around this hole was well watered. You might be amazed to know how cool it was down there, even in the hottest weather.

When the nippy days of mid-November came we cleared a few circular areas, like enormous saucers, in our frost-bitten garden and lined them with a heavy mattress of straw. Bushels of apples, pears, onions, potatoes, parsnips, beets and cabbages were poured in to be covered with another thick blanket of straw. Then the beds were covered with the earth we had accumulated while digging the saucers. On top of this dirt was a layer of stable manure, which had to be scraped off if the winter turned out to be mild.

Every two or three days, throughout the rough weather, some hapless member of the family was elected by acclamation to brave the blizzard with a shovel and a tin bucket, and burrow into the edges of these caches. That part of it was no fun. But our buried fruits and vegetables kept surprisingly well.

By the middle of March, every house with a cellar reeked of decaying apples. Not even the attar of sauerkraut could compete with the apples. In most households it was customary to use first the apples that were farthest advanced in their decomposition, but the people never quite caught up with this relentless disintegration and were forced by their own theory of economy to eat rotting apples all winter.

My papa often said that it would be more sensible to sort out the ailing apples and throw them away. He was a firm believer in taking one’s losses manfully and promptly before they grew to disaster proportions. He was no spendthrift but he saw no sound economy in supporting lost causes or in saving rotten apples by eating them. I never knew anyone who spent less time fretting over misadventures, and I have my papa to thank for bequeathing to me, either by blood, precept or example, the effortless incapacity to worry very long over something that failed to come off as I had

hoped. In my youth there was much made of the virtue of perseverance. Hang right on, shouted the orators. Never let go! See it through!

My papa was not so imprudent as to debate this matter in public but he had a private belief that perseverance involving sacrifices that stood no chance of ever paying their own way was no virtue at all. Of the old adage, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," Papa once remarked to me, "Well, *twice*, maybe: after that, let somebody else try it." I still believe that Papa had something there. The stirring challenge of the dauntless poem "Excelsior!" always left me cold as the youth who bore the banner with the strange device. Onward he went, through snow and ice, passing up all creature comforts, not pausing even when his girl begged him to come in and thaw out his frozen toes; and at length, completely spent, he arrived at the tipmost, topmost crag where he planted his banner. So what? In the spring the dogs nosed him out of the slush, and that was that.

Of course my papa was all of sixty-two before I was old enough to take much notice of his principles. It may be that when he was a youth he, too, was willing to come at life the hard way; but I doubt it.

In his attitude toward me and my little brother he was always kind and just, but he never played with us, never tossed a ball in our direction, never helped us fly a kite. Sometimes, in summer, when Mama suggested driving down to the river for an early evening picnic, Papa cheerfully consented, but ate his supper in the back seat of the surrey while we spread our tablecloth on the grass near by. He didn't like to sit on the ground and he detested ants. When supper was over, he was for going home. Supper was what we had come to do: having done it, we might as well go home. Mama wanted to linger until dusk, but made no protest. I feel sure that Papa never meant to be inconsiderate. He just couldn't see any sense in our sitting out there on the riverbank, fighting mosquitoes, when we would be so much more comfortable at home. So we would drive home, for it would be no fun for Mama to insist on our remaining longer if Papa was getting restless.

Now if this were all I had planned to say about my father, it would be an incomplete and cruelly unfair portrait of this quite remarkable man who—had he stuck resolutely to one trade—might have gone far. But I feel that the time has come for me to talk about my mama.

2. My Mama

MY MAMA, née Sarah Jane Cassel, eighth child in a compact family of ten, was born a little more than a century ago in the then small village of Mount Eaton, Ohio, where her father, Samuel Cassel, owned and operated a sawmill, a gristmill, and what was vaguely remembered as a "woolen mill."

As a tot Mama was called Sam, she told us, not only because she was her father's favorite but because she was always at his heels, though she did not resemble him in any way, as he was reportedly a quiet, well-balanced man of few words and no gaudy enthusiasms. She was the spit and image of her mother who, in her middle years—according to the legend—was known to have a very low boiling point.

To any fair evaluation of my mama's distinguishing attributes it is necessary to brief her background and the circumstances in which she spent her early years, for she was a peculiar character, resourceful, ambitious, dynamic.

As for these Cassel mills, with which our story begins, my mental picture of these various enterprises, drawn for me by my mama when I was but a lad, is indistinct, for when she was only twelve a fire broke out, one stormy night, and swept the entire establishment away, including their house and most of its contents.

All we ever knew about the catastrophe was reported from the confused memories of a badly frightened little girl who had been gifted with an utterly reckless imagination. Just how big, how flourishing were these mills is anybody's guess. But it is a solid fact that after the fire had died out, Samuel Cassel—together with his numerous heirs and assigns—was completely washed up; and when one loses *everything*, an accurate inventory of what one previously had may be considered unimportant.

The Cassels had salvaged a team of horses and a big wagon. Into the wagon they tossed their few remaining articles of household furniture and took off for "the West." Mama always loved pioneer stories and thought and talked of this migration as a pioneering adventure, which wasn't far from the truth, though the journey ended in Noble County, Indiana. There, in the deep

woods, my grandfather cleared a few acres of sandy soil, hard by a pleasant little stream, built a sawmill, and reportedly made a go of this industry until the quarrels between the Northern and Southern states, which had been simmering and bubbling on the fire for many years, came to full boil; and Sam Cassel was drafted.

He went with great reluctance, not only because he would leave his large family of youngsters facing destitution but because this war, he felt, was none of his business.

Of course everyone knows, now that eighty-five years have passed, that the war was the only way to preserve the Union; but at the time there were a lot of quite honest and patriotic people who saw no good to come of it. They were the "Northern Democrats." This hapless minority muttered that if New England, which, it believed, had been largely responsible for capturing and marketing the defenseless Africans, had suddenly discovered that slavery was all wrong, it was up to the wealthy shipowners to buy back this stolen merchandise and return it.

This suggestion, as anyone can see, was totally impracticable. The number of the slaves had increased by geometric progression. And, in any case, the Southern planters wouldn't sell them. But, any way you looked at it, this war was going to be a bloody business, and the Northern Democrat wanted no part of it. He said, "Even if the North wins, and sets the Negroes free to be on their own, without a dime or a mule or an acre or a hoe, will they be any better off? And wouldn't a war put the North and South at everlasting loggerheads, no matter who won it?"

Let the gentle reader keep it in mind that I am serving merely as a reporter here, making an honest attempt to record what my mama had to say about her father's political opinion as the great tragedy bore down upon the nation. Once the war had begun, the Northern Democrats, or at least the more prudent of them, shut up, donned the uniform and trudged along behind the drum.

My Uncle John was only a kid and he had never been rugged. He left his soft young bones in the National Cemetery at Chattanooga. Mama's favorite uncle, Saul Cassel, a bachelor who lived with them, was buried at Antietam. Grandpa Cassel plodded home with little to show for his experience but a well-developed taste for corn liquor.

"Yes," Mama used to murmur, sadly, "he often broke down and cried about it; but, somehow, he couldn't quit, though he was a good man."

Unhappy old Sam, from there on out, contented himself with odd jobs as a carpenter, helping to build barns and small mills. He put up a little shop, not far from the house, where he mended broken farm tools and various household tackle.

Occasionally, during a swearing-off period, he made beautiful pieces of furniture which he readily sold for more money than was good for him. He would come back from town with empty pockets and a terrific hangover. Once, during a period of sobriety, he built a walnut chest for my mama's fifteenth birthday, an exquisite piece of craftsmanship still highly prized and proudly displayed in the home of my younger daughter, Virginia Dawson.

Grandpa Cassel also made coffins to order which the girls of the family lined with whatever inexpensive fabric was available. Whenever anyone in the neighborhood was reported as very ill, good old Sam would get into his neatly stacked pile of lumber, sort out the right number of oaken boards, and begin planing them; for no embalming was done at that time in the deep woods and funerals were held—especially in warm weather—without delay. When anyone needed a coffin, he wanted it *now*. Mama said that certain parcels of lumber were stored in their cow barn, each tagged with the name of some frail old person who probably wouldn't make it through another long winter; though this recollection may have been a gilding of the lily. Mama was pretty good at that sort of artistry, and I hereby pay homage to her for bequeathing to me at least a semblance of the talent for invention that she was never able to fetch to market.

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Now that my grandfather's little shop is on my mind, perhaps you will be patient with me if I say something more about it; for I'm afraid that if I don't tell you now I may forget to do it later.

When I was a small boy (about nine, let us say) and we visited Grandma Cassel, the shop was still there and in active operation. My bachelor uncle, Worth Cassel, had fallen heir to it, which was quite right, for he was the only child left at home to look after his mother. He had also inherited his father's talent for skilled carpentry.

When we visited there, usually in midsummer, Uncle Worth, whom I adored, would take an afternoon off and devote his time to me. After dinner at eleven-thirty, he would unlock the trim little shop with a big iron key while I waited beside him, quivering with excitement. The place was dominated by a frighteningly large wooden flywheel overhead, high above

the lathe on which my tall, curly-headed, soft-spoken uncle would turn out beautiful little tops and cups and saucers and napkin rings from selected pieces of oak and walnut.

There is no aroma more heady than the scent of hot walnut shavings. The sharp chisels squealed and turned blue as they bit into the hard knots that were to furnish the completed product with its exquisite graining.

(Ah—those irrecoverable scents that distinguished "the old home" from all other places in the world; the peculiar fragrance of the tortured walnut ribbons in the enchanted shop, the perfume of the little beds of mint and anise in the garden, the pungent smell of the old smokehouse, behind the kitchen, where many a ham and side of bacon had hung for days on end over an open barrel of smouldering hickory coals. Yes, and if you will believe it, the half-elusive aroma of the long-abandoned stable; it, too, was of the fragile fabric that summer dreams are made of.)

I often wished that Uncle Worth would let me help push the treadle that operated the big flywheel. Once I ventured to ask him but he shook his head.

"You don't want to get your foot mashed, do you?"

And, of course, I didn't. So we left it at that. I did not debate the matter. It was not customary with us to tease for things. When any of our elders and betters said No, we never objected; much less persisted by inquiring whether our objection was sustained or overruled.

There's still something to be said in favor of this Mama-knows-best technique. It certainly saved a lot of time and temper. We kids never had tantrums, never howled and bawled with the hope (born of experience) that if we made enough racket something would have to give, and we would emerge not only with a splendid victory but the firm assurance that whenever we wanted anything we had only to keep on yelling and kicking until our folks capitulated from sheer exhaustion. It should also be said of such juvenile victories that they probably account for the crowded docket of our present-day Juvenile courts. Had I ever talked back to my papa or my mama in the same tones and terms commonly tolerated today by indulgent parents, there would have been a prompt laying-on of hands.

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After an enchanted hour in the little shop, Uncle Worth and I (with my small hands filled with the new toys) would come blinking out into the bright sunshine.

On the shady porch, Grandma and Mama would be seated, Grandma quite frail and wan, sitting placidly with empty hands folded on her lap, her deep-set, half-open, inattentive eyes leveled at the far horizon, Mama rocking vigorously, discoursing on whatever issue happened to be of urgent interest to her.

Mama was an indefatigable crusader. Maybe that's why I never headed a parade. Crusading was a tiresome trade. It took too much out of you. Loud talk always distressed and confused me. And I distrusted it, too. My childish instinct told me what experience much later confirmed: when people have to shout their opinions they are usually on the wrong side; and they suspect that you know they are.

I would be for running over at once to display my pretty gifts, but Uncle Worth would veer off toward the old stable.

"We'd better not interrupt them," he would explain. "We'll go out behind the stable and dig some worms."

The truth was that he didn't want to be drawn into an argument: a very quiet fellow, was Uncle Worth. Perhaps, you may surmise, he got his complacency from Grandma. But that's a bad guess. The old volcano had burned out now but once upon a time it had been active.

When I was a grown man my papa told me that old Sam Cassel had once told him, in a hush-hush consultation, that when Grandma was in her rip-roaring forties she would go out to the far end of the potato patch and yell "till they heard her clear down to Ryder's mill!"

There was more than a touch of this excitability in the distaff heritage. Mama had all the relentless courage and zeal that martyrs are powered with. She lacked only some wide-open opportunity to have become a great leader. I mean that! Even after this long lapse of years I am persuaded that this is so. Mama could easily have been a Florence Nightingale (though the books say that Florence was mighty hard to live with after she came home from the Crimea). One is reminded of Mr. Churchill's remark about one of his top generals, "Indomitable in defeat; insufferable in victory."

One of my mama's older sisters was also high-geared, startlingly precocious, and anxious to beat the drum. But she couldn't find a drum, and —at middle age—went completely off her rocker, and spent several years in an institution; though there were special reasons for her crack-up. Uncle Henry, who was said to be a competent and conscientious physician when sober, lay sprawled in a drunken stupor while their three-year-old twins were

dying of scarlet fever in my Aunt Amanda's arms. When dawn came, the babies were dead and their mother was hauled away to the madhouse. . . . Not much wonder my mama used to tighten her small fists and grit her teeth when she sounded off about hard liquor.

It had certainly played the devil with many of my kinsmen and some of the friends I have known best and loved dearest. Today, as I review this long list of casualties, and remember how the gentle, patient mothers, wives and children wept and prayed while their beloved lost their inglorious battle, I feel that something should be said here about these tragedies.

No; I am not purposing to go noisily overboard with a smug preachment. I really have no ticket to do that, for the profession in which most of my life has been spent protected me; and as I survey this long, unhappy procession of wreckage I should be honest enough to confess, as did John Wesley, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

At the moment I shall do no moaning over the shabby, shaggy, lousy bums who trudge back and forth on Skid Row, and sleep on park benches with a discarded newspaper for a blanket. Most of them are displaced persons for whom no tears are shed.

But my heart goes out to the Junior Executive who, because he is bright, handsome and companionable, is given the job of entertaining the Big Accounts when they come to town with their wives for two hours of business consultation and a week's spree.

If our Junior Executive had this hilarious hosting to do twice a year or once a month, he might attend to it without much damage, but the Big Accounts keep on coming, relentlessly. Our promising young man rises dizzily almost every morning and breakfasts moodily on Bromo-Seltzer.

Nor is his attractive young wife excluded from the merry-making. She is invited to come along to the party. If she declines and sweats it out at home until 3 A.M., she is in danger of becoming a kill-joy. When her predicament is no longer to be borne, not even for love's dear sake, she can go to Reno and take the cure.

It is quite obvious that no amount of legislation will relieve this situation. We tried that without success. The problem grows more and more serious daily. Hosts who neglect to serve a cocktail before dinner are funny old fuddy-duddies. Parents who counsel their teen-age children on the subject are behind the times.

Well, that will be all, for now. Don't ask me what should be done about it, for I don't know. We speeded up our tempo, concentrated all industry and government in huge, crowded cities, where everybody had to hurry, and needed relaxation at the end of the day's hectic activity. To succeed, to really live, to be in the swim, to be anybody at all, you must find a job in the city.

Of course the problem of dealing with alcohol is of no recent invention. One of the earliest legends recorded in the Holy Scriptures reports that when the world's wickedness had reached such stunning proportions that God felt it was useless to keep it going, under its current management, He decided to erase the whole thing and make a fresh start. Noah was told to build a boat, gather up pairs of all the animals, and ride out a big storm. After forty days and nights, the navigator landed on a mountaintop, found a laden grapevine —apparently the only living thing on Mount Ararat that had survived the global disaster—and proceeded at once to distill some wine, wherewith he got himself so thoroughly swacked that his own children were embarrassed.

It is not in my heart to rebuke Father Noah too severely for this misdemeanor; for, surely, if anybody ever had an excuse for wanting a pick-me-up, it was this mariner who had spent nearly six weeks in an unventilated zoo.

I mention the event only to show that drunkenness is no new thing. It has been humanity's Number One plague from the beginning. But not until our own time has the habitual drunkard found a justification for his performances. Whereas drunkenness was heretofore considered a disgrace, it has latterly become a disease.

Doubtless it is nothing else than that in some cases, but it is the opinion of this reporter that in the large majority of instances these unhappy people would make a more courageous effort to reassert their will, and scramble back to sanity, were it not for the popular sentiment which classifies them as invalids.

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With our tin cans alive with bait, Uncle Worth and I would cross the potato patch and slither down the grassy slope to the river. Then we climbed into the big, flat-bottomed boat that was tied to a stake under a clump of graceful "weeping" willows (the kind they used to carve on gravestones) and drifted slowly past the lily pads until we reached what Uncle Worth thought might be a favorable place to lower the old anvil. He did this gently, so as not to scare away the perch and blue-gills and rock bass. Hooks would

be dropped into the water and presently the red bobbers would be hopping up and down and under.

I am quite aware that this is not a sportsmanly way to catch fish, but it was effective. Our tackle was crude and our methods were primitive, but what we were out there for was fish and plenty of them to fry in a pan, and this was a good way to do it.

In more recent and more prosperous years I have been occasionally inveigled into fishing with much better (certainly much more expensive) instruments, but I never caught so many fish as I did with Uncle Worth's homemade equipment. But I never was much of a success as a sportsman. Perhaps I entered the field of sports too late in life to have any real enjoyment of it.

If there were any fish-and-game laws in operation at that time, we didn't know about them. We caught all we thought we could eat for supper and breakfast.

A few years later, there was a limit on the number you might catch, which was a sensible rule that saved the fish from total extinction. There was also a season, prescribed by law, though my beloved Uncle Paul Beezley, a man of great rectitude, said it wasn't quite fair. The only open season for fishing, said Uncle Paul, was at the period when the resident farmers had to be in their fields cultivating their corn. Once a country cousin of mine, a farmer boy, spent a couple of nights in jail for helping himself to a mess of blue-gills caught in a near-by pond a day or two before the season opened. Would that all our laws were so rigidly enforced. Mama, when hearing of her nephew's incarceration, remembered an old quatrain:

> The law condemns the man or woman
> Who steals a goose from off the common,
> But lets the greater thief go loose
> Who steals the common from the goose.

When the fish had stopped biting and a huge dragonfly was perched impudently on my motionless red bobber and the late afternoon shadows were slanting toward the east, Uncle Worth would row us back home, the oars clattering in their locks. The experienced navigator rarely glanced over his shoulder to plot his course for he knew this friendly river by heart.

Now we were at the shaky little wharf, had tied up the boat, put on our shoes, scrambled up the bank, trudged through the sandy potato patch, and were (Uncle Worth was) dexterously cleaning our catch.

"Want to go with me to prayer meetin' tonight, son?" Uncle Worth would inquire, rather diffidently, without looking up.

Of course I wanted to go anywhere, so long as I could be with Uncle Worth, though prayer meetings were not my favorite form of entertainment. My idol would draw a slow smile of appreciation. He couldn't help knowing that I worshiped him, and it may be surmised that not many candles shone on his lonely shrine.

Soon the flour-coated fish would be sizzling in the big iron spider (skillet to you, no doubt). Grandma would be tending them, with an eye on the country-fried potatoes in an adjoining pan. Mama, an excellent cook, would be at the kitchen table, crafting an appropriate salad made of tender lettuce leaves to be served with a warm, sweet-sour dressing well loaded with slices of hard-boiled eggs and diced bacon. Uncle Worth would be tenderly nursing a little kettle of freshly picked peas.

I would be pacing about like a tiger at feeding time.

"You might fill the wood box," Grandma would say, to get me out from under her feet.

And now—at last—it would be time to eat, almost. We suddenly became silent and sad. Uncle Worth would glance inquiringly toward Grandma; and, getting no response, would murmur, "Jen, will you ask the blessing." Mama, propping an elbow on the table and shading her closed eyes with her hand, would clear her throat and offer a brief prayer, thanking God for our blessings, "both temporal and spiritual," asking for an extension of our good health, putting in a friendly word for "our absent loved ones."

Now the gloom lifted as Mama whispered, "For Chrysake—Amen." Now we could eat. Everything was on the table, ready to be passed, all but the strawberries and cream, which would come on in due time.

Never, at least never in my experience, did fish taste like these.

Ummm-mmm! Good! . . . Uncle Worth would chuckle happily over my applause. Blue-gills were an old story to him He concentrated on his peas. . . . *Ummm! Good!*

Just now I ejaculated these words aloud so I might type them at their full value, and my *Ummm-mmm! Good!* startled me back to the present moment, for I sounded precisely like the typical commercial plugster, in an agony of ecstasy over his merchandise. I wonder what my gentle, long-gone Uncle Worth would think or say if some strident voice had shattered his quiet little world with:

"*Ummm-mmm! Good! Our Peas!* Garden-fresh! Mouth-wateringly de—licious! . . . . After a nation-wide survey! . . . Endorsed by medical profession! Our Peas! Get 'em tomorrow! Get 'em tonight yet! Our peas! That's spelled O-u-r P-e-a-s. Coast to coast! Three out of four! Nine out of ten! Prefer Our Peas. Remember! Get *O-U-R* Peas!"

Doubtless the soft-voiced old bachelor would suspect that he had been misdirected to another world than the one he had left behind.

But we can't stand still, Uncle Worth. We have come into a new era, an era of progress. You'd do well to get back to wherever you were. You wouldn't like it here. It's pretty noisy now.

But now, without further digression, we must return to my mama. When she was only fifteen, her eighteen-year-old sister Mary (my Aunt Molly, one of the happiest and most lovable of all the women I ever knew) who was the teacher in a country school a couple of miles from the Cassel home, fell ill in midwinter, and Mama volunteered to take over until they found somebody.

Apparently the trustees were satisfied with the way things were going; and because Aunt Molly's bad cold was followed by a siege of malaria, a pernicious disease which for many years was endemic in the undrained swamp lands of Indiana, Mama finished the term. Her education was limited to what she had received in that same ungraded school over which she had now presided. But that elementary education was not as inadequate as you might suppose.

I think something should be said here about the advantages of this old-fashioned country school. A child of twelve who was brighter and more inquisitive than his sluggish contemporaries could listen to the recitations of the older ones, while the little dunces who were being hustled too fast into long division could take a refresher course by listening to the younger kids who were still wrestling with short division (and all points east of that).

Mama was quick to learn. Besides whatever she absorbed in school, she read everything that came to hand. There were not many books to be had, certainly not by the Cassels who were "poor as Job's turkey"; but Mama was able to borrow a few old books and magazines from newly come neighbors who had brought them along on their trek from Pennsylvania.

By the next fall, Aunt Molly had married Uncle Paul; and Mama, having acquired a license, continued to teach in the school where she had so ably substituted. The chief qualification of a country teacher, at that time, was courage. It was no trick to maintain discipline when school opened in early September, for only the younger children put in an appearance. But when the crops were in, and the corn had been husked, and the winter wheat had been sowed, a dozen or more man-sized farmer boys in the middle and later teens would stroll in, to squeeze themselves between the rear desks and benches, resolved to give the teacher a rough job.

Mama became known throughout that area as "a good disciplinarian," which was one way of saying that she would, at the first sign of insubordination, grab a six-foot, one hundred and seventy-five pound yokel by the hair, drag him out of his seat, and "whale the daylights out of him." She was more terrible than an army with banners, and quickly won the respect of any and all who were foolhardy enough to dispute her authority. Yessir, Mama "made the fur fly." Not only did we learn of this from her own testimony. We believed it, and could furnish corroborative evidence if called upon.

But Mama's prowess as a schoolmarm was not based entirely upon dauntless bravery and skill in battle. She was an excellent pedagogue. At least she taught the youngsters how to read and write and spell and do problems in simple arithmetic, which is ever so much better than is being done in our progressive schools at present. Maybe Mama did it the hard way, but the kids—when she finished with them—were literate and knew the multiplication tables.

Somehow we have recently come by the idea that adult education, now being made much of, is a modern institution. In Mama's day the little red schoolhouses, throughout the rural areas, were crowded on Friday nights by bearded farmers and their chunky wives, to participate in hotly contested spelling matches. Night classes were held to practice penmanship under the tutelage of some journeyman writer who amazed his disciples by decorating the blackboard with his free-hand drawing of tropical birds with elaborate plumage. Singing bees were held, too, attended mostly by young fellows and their girls. They sang geography lessons about the nation's rivers and lakes and capital cities.

They didn't talk much in school about abnormal psychology, social relations or statecraft. These matters were of no concern at that time. Nobody was in training to become a member of the State Department. (But, please, let's not discuss that.)

In Mama's day a license to teach had to be applied for at the county seat. It was customary for the applicant to attend a Teachers' Institute which was held for a couple of weeks in summer under the supervision of the County Superintendent of Schools.

Somewhat earlier, before the war, the local Board of Trustees, composed of farmers whose own formal education was nothing to brag about, examined the candidate who wanted to teach their school.

One old story, which deserves telling, concerned the examination of a young man from a distance, unknown to the community. In the course of his examination, conducted rather informally in Lafe Ruggles' barn during the noon rest period, the nervous stranger was asked whether he taught that the world was round or flat.

He hesitated for a moment before replying. He was uninformed about local opinions on this subject and he wanted desperately to be acceptable—and accepted. It was risky to answer this question with a word of one syllable. After an interval of quick thinking, he said, "Well, sir, I use both systems. In a community where they prefer to believe that the world is round, I teach it round; where they would prefer it flat, I teach that it is flat." And then he added, "Personally—I have no interest in the matter."

At first glance, the young fellow's reply seems a shocking example of intellectual immorality. Here he was, ambitious to direct the thinking of young people who were to be influential in their community. It was conceivable that some bright youth among them might become the President of the United States, a position demanding the unswerving integrity and love of the truth that had given top billing to the moral splendor of George Washington.

Yet here he was, this young idealist, ready to compromise, to appease, to recant if necessary, to the end that he might earn $30 per month and eventually go to college!

But when one takes a longer view of this teacher's dilemma he did face a more complicated problem than the business of securing or jeopardizing a much needed job.

Let us suppose that the young man firmly believed that the world was round, despite the declaration in his campaign speech that the subject was of no consequence. Having been elected, and having discovered that half the people of his constituency were believers in a flat world (which might have been possible in the Indiana of that period) he decides to set them right.

Previous to his arrival, this issue had not been hotly debated. Now it was a *cause célèbre*! People who had been good neighbors weren't on speaking terms any more. The preacher was urged to talk up and he did. He sided with the faction that paid his small salary. They were the older ones, we will say, the conservatives, the flat-worlders. The younger ones, who had no money, rooted for a round world and shouted that the parson was an addle-pated old this-'n-that. Meantime, the problem was unsolved. Perhaps the young teacher had done better not to have tackled it. Maybe he was right the first time in his decision not to care whether the world was round, flat or square. The far bigger issue was to keep the peace and let sleeping dogs lie.

This is not to argue in behalf of ignorance or a spineless indifference to the value of one's convictions, but plenty of mistakes have been made by zealots who insisted on converting a whole city by Tuesday, at the farthest.

Even St. Paul, fearless apostle that he was, sometimes allowed his zeal to run ahead of his prudence. He would come to town, ablaze with his message and mission, stand up in the Jewish Synagogue and create a furor. An hour afterward, he would be towed at the end of a rope from one court to another, serving as his own attorney, and followed by an ill-tempered mob. He loved argument and was a skilled debater, well informed by the law. Many of the doctrines he elaborated were to become red-hot issues which provided the machinery of dissension in the Christian Church for centuries, such as his belief in foreordination, which gives God the unpleasant task of deciding—quite regardless of their behavior, and their faith or the lack of it—who shall be saved and who shall be lost. Neighbors used to go after each other with clubs and pitchforks over this article in Pauline theology. . . .

(Lest I get into a lot of unnecessary trouble, myself, let me hasten to add that the thirteenth chapter of Paul's First Letter to the First Christian Church of Corinth is one of the most tender and appealing poems on brotherly love that was ever written by anyone, at any time, in any tongue. And I cheerfully concede that for sheer courage in the face of persecution, the great apostle deserves our unstinted praise. Three times shipwrecked, whipped, tortured and thrown into dungeons! Who am I, indeed, to criticize him?)

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After a couple of years as teacher of her home school, Mama was elected to teach a larger country school in Whitley County, many miles to the south, where she boarded around in her pupils' homes.

Then she made the adventure of accepting a teaching position "in the far West," in the then small village of Watseka, Illinois. Returning, after two or three years, she again taught in Whitley County, faithfully attending the summer Teachers' Institute at the County seat, Columbia City.

One day, in July of 1876, when Mama was twenty-nine, she volunteered to help the hard-pressed County Superintendent in grading the examination papers, for she had come to idolize this genial widower who always had a warm smile for her—and had given her a rating with the young hopefuls by publicly calling her "Jennie." I can imagine the flush on her cheek and the quick bounding of her heart when he singled her out for this conferment of distinction. He was prompt to accept her proffered help.

When the Institute was over, Superintendent Douglas married Jennie at the old Cassel home and took her back with him to Columbia City and his houseful of children.

As I reported to you earlier, Mama, as a schoolteacher, was a self-confident and successful disciplinarian; but the new position to which she had been elected, as stepmother to a group of youngsters who had been largely on their own and doing whatever they pleased for a couple of years, was a task for which she was unprepared.

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It probably did not occur to Papa, when he asked Jennie Cassel to be his wife, that she might have a difficult problem on her hands. Only an Angel could have coped with it, and Jennie was no Angel.

Perhaps the situation might have been less trying for his new bride if A.J., prior to the wedding, had gathered his noisy little flock around him and had confided that he was about to present them with a new mother. Had he solicited their co-operation everything might have got off to a better start. But this peace-loving man, whose motto was "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," gave his family no hint of the happy event until he drove his team of frisky bay Hamiltonians up to the door and introduced his young bride. They were stunned and speechless.

It should be said, in the interest of truth and justice, that the Douglas children were not really bad. Indeed, when one considers all the circumstances, they behaved somewhat better than might have been expected.

Seeing we have plenty of time, let us call the roll. Herbert (Herb) and Alice (Al) were married and in homes of their own, Herb working in Pratt's Carriage Manufacturing Company, at Elkhart, Indiana; Al living in Terre Haute where her husband, Ed Mossman, was editing a weekly paper distinguished for its lengthy editorials and limited circulation. They had three children, and not much else. Al was always on Mama's side and when she came home to visit, accompanied by her babies, and attempted to admonish her younger brothers and sisters, one may suppose that the Douglas home was a good place to keep away from. Papa's duties were so heavy, at the time, that he was unable to serve as umpire.

As for the resident children, Elizabeth (Lizzie), about twenty-two, was teaching in an elementary school in town. Lizzie was brimming with energy, infatuated with her job, and carelessly scornful of the ridiculous manner with which schools were taught in the backwoods.

Will, twenty-one, was working in a jewelry store, learning to repair watches. He was a quiet fellow, with weak lungs. One cold night there was a big fire in the block where he was employed, and he joined the other volunteer firefighters, was out all night, came home at dawn soaked to the skin, and was sick-abed all through the winter and spring. Mama dutifully nursed him, for which he was appropriately grateful, but this additional responsibility imposed a heavy burden on her, for she was pregnant now. During his tedious convalescence, Will conceived the idea of a little screwdriver with an attachment to hold the head of a tiny screw while it was being inserted into a watch. Luckily for the young invalid, the thing was patented and paid a royalty which permitted him to marry and take off for the more invigorating climate of Denver where he—and Nettie, too—soon died of what was known as "galloping consumption."

Stephen A. Douglas (Steve), twenty, after a tempestuous year at home, fled to join his older brother in Elkhart.

Minnie, at fifteen, sickened and died of the same pulmonary tuberculosis that had carried off their mother.

Frank, fourteen, was still in school, a noisy, lovable kid, who at sixteen ran away and joined a circus.

Lura (Lou) was only six, an elfish little thing, who was content to call her stepmother "Mama."

I was born on a hot August afternoon in 1877. A year and a half later a baby sister arrived, but soon died of whooping cough. It was in midwinter and the snow was deep. Mama was for burying the baby in the Salem cemetery, a half-mile from "the old home," but because she was far from well and the roads were deep with snowdrifts, they talked her out of it and buried little Mabel in the well-filled Douglas family lot in Columbia City where there was room for just one more alongside the graves of grandfather and Grandmother Douglas and Mary Douglas (Papa's first wife) and three children of the first family who had died in infancy.

When spring came, Papa yielded to Mama's tearful pleadings and the little white coffin was conveyed to the Salem graveyard. It rained all that day. I was taken along on this journey, and claimed later that I remembered being held in Papa's arms, while somebody sheltered us with an umbrella, as the white coffin was lowered to its final resting place; though I couldn't have been more than two and a half years old, and Mama thought my precocious "recollection" of this event was the memory of it as told to me when I was at least four or five. But I still have a distinct remembrance of the little white coffin as it sank into the ground; and, for many years, every time I saw the corrugated white enameled inside of the screw-on top of an old-fashioned Mason fruit jar, I was reminded of it. If Daniel Webster could conjugate Latin verbs at four, I see no reason why I should not remember a shockingly impressive scene that had rocked my little world at two and a half.

3. More About Papa

WHEN my father entered college, after three years as teacher of a country school near his home in northern Ohio, he discarded the redundant *s* which, until then, had adorned the family name.

On the flyleaf of the only book preserved from my grandfather's small library, a leather-bound, pocket-size volume entitled *Comstock's Philosophy* (an elementary treatise on Physics) published in London, in 1782, appears the faded signature of William Douglass, the final *s* resembling a dissipated *f* in a perilous heel-skid on an icy street.

Papa, when asked—a half-century later—what had moved him to omit this second *s*, lamely explained that as a student he had been forced to practice the most rigid economies, that he had hoped some day to be wealthy enough to resume it, but what with small salaries and heavy expenses he had never felt able to afford anything but bare necessities.

And then Papa was likely to repeat the old story about Abraham Lincoln when he was courting Mary Todd. The Todds, who were aristocrats (without portfolio), bitterly resented the intrusion of this uncouth, unpedigreed rail-splitter into their family circle. On the defensive, Lincoln attempted to teach the uppish Todds their proper relation to other natural objects by addressing his letters to Mary "Tod." Brought sternly to task for this sacrilege he replied that there was no good reason for the Todds to spell their name with two *d*'s when God needed only one.

Of my grandfather, William Douglas, I know practically nothing beyond the sad fact that at thirty-six he was suddenly crippled by rheumatism of such severity that he never walked again, though he lived until he was nearly sixty. I cannot remember ever hearing him quoted: if he had any opinions they must have been benign rather than malignant or militant. Nor have I anything to report of Grandmother Douglas who quietly spent her declining years in my father's home.

Papa was only twelve when Grandfather Douglas was stricken with rheumatism. A tenant farmer was engaged but was so neglectful of his duties that Papa and his younger brothers were soon doing most of the work;

so the lazy tenant was dismissed and the Douglas kids took over. They toiled mightily through spring, summer and fall, attending their country school in winter. Bent on acquiring a good education, Papa read everything available; and at eighteen turned the farm over to his brothers while he set forth, first as a country schoolteacher, then as a student at Ashland Academy, and on to college. The fields were then rented to neighboring farmers, Uncle Thomas went to war, and Uncle Michael found a job as accountant in an Insurance Company with headquarters in Mansfield, their nearest big town. Their two sisters, Elizabeth and Nancy, remained with their parents in the farm home until their marriages.

A legend has it that Papa and a boon companion at the Academy had decided to attend the same college. As Papa was descended from a long line of Presbyterians, he would naturally have gone to the young college at Wooster; the other fellow was a Lutheran and had expected to attend Wittenberg College, then fighting for its life at Springfield. They flipped a coin and went to Wittenberg. Because he was practically penniless, Papa found a job as hostler, coachman, gardener, dishwasher and errand boy in the home of the college president, the Reverend Doctor Samuel Sprecker, a warmhearted scholar and seer, who was to become his man Friday's idol and hero.

The main business at Wittenberg, in those early years, was the production of Lutheran preachers. Although it had been my father's intention to study law, Doctor Sprecker needed only to suggest the ministry as a profession for his young disciple. But when Papa had finished his college training and applied for a license to preach he failed to answer the Examining Board's questions correctly.

For one thing, he did not believe that unbaptized infants went to hell; adding, to his inquisitors' horror, that he wasn't sure there was such a place as hell; that he couldn't fit hell into his belief in a God of infinite Love. And, furthermore (as if these heresies weren't sufficient to blackball him) Papa went on to say that he didn't believe in the Devil; for if God had created all things He surely wouldn't have rigged up that kind of competition to dispute His Own authority.

At the noon recess, when the outraged Examining Committee were at dinner in the President's home, kindhearted old Doctor Sprecker pleaded with them to be mindful of the rash young man's inexperience in solving such philosophical riddles; and, having been comforted with their host's fried chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy and warm apple pie, promised to have another go at my papa in the afternoon.

They asked him to tell them how he felt about Martin Luther, for surely he had been properly indoctrinated on the life of the great reformer. But here again my papa froze them by replying that while a general clean-up of the old Mother Church was clearly in order, Martin Luther loved a good fight and was lucky to come out of this one with a whole skin.

This was the wrong answer. The Committee wanted a little more reverence shown for the man who had courageously risked his future, and they said so. But my papa was unimpressed. Considering how firmly the Church handled apostates, the good Doctor had done very well to escape a bonfire and die of natural causes, in bed, with his boots off. And then Papa added that he had often wished Luther had kept his vow of celibacy, and had avoided the criticism of those who thought he broke from the Church primarily because he wanted a wife and children. If he had remained single, said Papa, it would have added much to his stature.

With this, the Examining Board gave up and left the room without the formality of a motion to adjourn.

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It having thus appeared that Alexander Jackson Douglas was not geared for the Lutheran ministry, he resolved to pursue his earlier intention to become a lawyer.

On my desk, as I write, there is a copy of a "whosis," entitled *Representative Men of Indiana* (1880) containing the log of Papa's rather rugged journey, teaching part time in an Ohio academy while reading law, of his marriage to the youthful Mary Jenner, of his migration to Columbia City, Indiana, where he was progressively a Prosecuting Attorney, a State Senator; and, to fill a vacancy, Superintendent of the Whitley County Schools. After a while this was made a permanent position. Papa seems to have traveled far and wide visiting schools. The Lutheran Church in Columbia City, temporarily without a minister, asked him to preach for them until they found a regular pastor. Apparently they didn't hunt for one with any zeal, for Papa continued as their Sunday preacher while attending to his duties in the county schools. He must have been a busy man.

My papa was an excellent public speaker. He often talked to me, in my youth, about the importance of voice cultivation, no matter what profession one practiced. If you wanted to make yourself attentively heard, either in public address or private conversation, you should pitch your voice in the lowest register at your command. High-keyed shouting would earn you

nothing but the other fellow's suspicion that you were in doubt or insincere. You should be careful to enunciate your consonants clearly: the vowels would look after themselves. No matter what he talked about, when my papa spoke, his audience listened. You could hear a pin drop.

He liked to recall a speech he had heard Stephen A. Douglas make in the Fair Grounds at Fort Wayne before a crowd of more than ten thousand people. To make himself heard by that large open-air audience (and, as everybody knows who has tried it, to speak successfully to an out-of-doors crowd, well stocked with crying babies, and the inevitable confusion around the edges is the toughest assignment imaginable) this gifted orator omitted all the little words, such as articles and prepositions and pronouns, in order that he might stress the vitally important nouns and verbs. Papa said that Mr. Douglas began his speech with the following sentence: "Washington . . . farewell . . . address . . . warned . . . people . . . beware . . . factional . . . parties."

In this same connection, Papa had something to say about the proper use of descriptive and qualifying words which, like seasoning, could easily be overdone. "Be mindful," he would say, "not to pile on too many adjectives; and remember to select your adverbs with care, for they are associated with your sentence at the point where it is really doing business."

I'm afraid I have often disregarded that good advice about oversweetening with adjectives. A few years ago, Mr. Bernard DeVoto wrote, in reviewing one of my novels, "Whenever Douglas is in doubt which of two adjectives to use, he uses both of them." I made no attempt to defend myself, for the accusation was true. . . . However, a writer—if he has any sense at all—doesn't talk back to his critics, even when they are unfair. Not long ago, a reviewer said that my composition was "almost ungrammatical." My curiosity was stirred. What kind of sentence could be "almost ungrammatical." My notion was that a sentence might be grammatical or ungrammatical, but I hadn't previously known about this No Man's Land, this twilight, where one spoke almost incorrectly. . . . But, as I have just remarked, a prudent author does not get into a public debate with his reviewers, no matter how roughly they tousle him. Occasionally some indignant victim impulsively blows his top with white-hot invectives, whereupon *Time* and *Life* and *The Saturday Review of Literature* swarm in on him, so that "the last end of that man is worse than the first."

I know of one case in which an enraged novelist ransacked the Thesaurus for impolite epithets to hurl at her detractors in an "open letter." The tough-skinned editors were delighted, for no profession more faithfully

believes in the maxim, “Those whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.”

In the second round of this battle between the author and her critics, they found a candid photograph of the lady with her mouth wide open and an angry frown on her face, and turned the picture loose with no comment under it; just her name. . . . It was fun for them, no doubt; but not what you would call “good, clean fun.”

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In the early autumn of 1881 our family unexpectedly bundled up its somewhat harried lares and penates, and moved into the northern rim of Kentucky.

Papa had begun to feel the weight of his anxieties and increasing cares. Mama was unhappy and begging to have a home of her own. Not only was he the superintendent of the county schools, requiring long drives in all weathers, but he had been preaching every Sunday at the Lutheran Church in town. Many old clients, whose legal affairs he had handled, still came to him with their problems, and his wide acquaintance throughout the county brought urgent pleas from long-time friends to conduct the funeral services for their loved ones. It must have been a heavy load.

The funeral business was mounting. It was on such an errand, one hot July morning, that Papa was driving past the Morrison homestead a few miles to the north. The old farmer had been ailing for a long time. Papa saw the three husky, lumpish Morrison sons sitting in a row on the front porch. He drew up and called, “Good morning, boys. How is your father feeling today?”

“Guess!” replied Bill, the eldest, after some delay.

“Better, I hope,” said Papa.

“Nope,” crowed Bill, for it was the wrong guess. “He’s dead!”

With that, the trio ambled down to the picket fence and arrangements were made for Papa to “preach the funeral” on Friday, which he did. . . . When the committal service had been read at the grave, and the neighbors were busily shoveling, Bill Morrison handed the officiating clergyman a half-dollar, and said, “Thanks, Reverend. Mebby we’ll be a-callin’ on yuh again sometime”—for their maw was poorly.

One day in the late summer of 1881 a fine old Kentuckian named Benjamin Strickland came to visit some relatives who had recently moved to Columbia City. On Sunday they brought him to the Lutheran Church. Next morning he called on Papa and told him that a group of three country churches, a few miles apart, and to one of which he belonged, badly needed a resident minister. They hadn't had one, he said, for a long time now. It seemed like the preachers all wanted to live in big towns.

There was a comfortable, well-furnished parsonage, he went on, not too far from a friendly little town, and only twelve miles south of Cincinnati; but out in the country. If a man had a mind to, he could almost make his living from the four fertile acres belonging to the place. One acre was in blue grass. There was a good barn, a high-wired chicken run, and a pigpen at the far end of the pasture field.

The latest parson to live in the rambling old house, with the huge brick chimney and wide verandahs, had amused himself by tapping the sugar maples in a grove just across the road. The climate was equable. The neighbors were quiet and lived at peace with one another. True, the minister's salary would not be large, but his expenses would be light.

Papa listened.

"Brother Adams," continued Mr. Strickland, "the preacher who made the maple sirup was a one for old-fashioned buckwheat cakes, the kind that are made with yeast. In winter there was a crock of yeast sitting inside the edge of the big fireplace where it was always warm."

Papa smiled understandingly. The picture of this carefree home in Kentucky stirred nostalgic memories of his boyhood on the farm. . . . That afternoon he talked it over with Mama. She was ecstatic!

They could hardly wait for the good old Kentuckian to return home and call the brethren together for conference. Mama was so confident of the outcome that she began to pack up the few things they had acquired during her own tenure. I don't know what might have happened to her if this "call" had failed to come off: surely it would have been a hard blow. Papa haunted the post office and sent to the D.M. Ferry Company of Detroit for a seed catalogue. (If some snoopy, otherwise unemployed sleuth among you should discover that the Ferry Seed Company was not in business at that date, don't come running to me with your troubles. I'm doing the best I can to inform you that Papa was now ablaze with desire to return to the open spaces.)

I have no clear recollection of the excitement which prevailed in our home when the good news came. A lot of people were surprised; no doubt about that. All I remember of the long, hot day-coach journey to Cincinnati was my own shameful behavior while we waited, at the station in Lima, late in the night, for our southbound train. Some friendly old lady, noticing the nice little boy's weariness, presented him with a large, beautiful lemon, which he spurned scornfully.

"*That* sour thing!" he muttered, to the great embarrassment of his mama and his sister Lou; for little Lou, then ten, was coming along with us. I couldn't have borne it if, for any reason, my sweet sister had been left behind. I loved her dearly.

I recall nothing about our arrival in Cincinnati, except the pungent stink of the tanneries near the big river and the clatter of roughshod hoofs and iron wheels on the cobblestones that paved the slope to the wharves. And, blended with the fumes of the tanneries was the aroma of roasting coffee. (When I told Mama, many years afterward, about my remembrance of these smells, she said, "You might have smelled the tanneries on that trip when you were four, but not the coffee. We didn't go that far into the city. You must have smelled the coffee on one of our later journeys to Cincinnati." And perhaps she was right.)

I have no remembrance of our being met by our new friends from Kentucky, or of our necessary trip across to Covington on a ferry, or our arrival at the enchanted old parsonage in the country. I must have been a very sleepy little boy that day.

To my parents, the quiet spot to which we had come was Paradise. The neighbors, riding by and seeing signs of life, dismounted from their horses or climbed out of their antique "rockaways," and strolled in to get acquainted. Stringy little Mrs. Manning, from a near-by cottage, came to the kitchen door with a warm blueberry pie. The autumn days passed swiftly; halcyon days.

Lou and I often went across the fields to visit the Mannings who, it seemed, were very poor. An old fellow, whom we knew only as Blind Tom, lived in a little shack not far from the Mannings. He made charcoal by slowly burning logs in a deep pit. I don't know what kind of logs they were, or anything about the process, or where and how he brought the charcoal to market. Lou and I often carried him a tin bucketful of hot soup and a pan of buttered biscuits for his dinner. He would gratefully let us see how many of his front teeth were missing, and sit down on a log to eat; but he never

talked much. I doubt whether he was very bright. I was for asking him whether he had always been blind, but Lou thought I'd better not. Maybe he wouldn't like to be questioned about it. It never took Blind Tom very long to drink the soup and wolf the biscuits. Then he would get up, and croak "Good-bye!" and go back to work.

Papa had sold his Hamiltonians and the buggy and the sleigh before we left Columbia City. The word quickly spread that the new preacher needed a horse. In a few days we had our pick of many. What we needed, Papa thought, was a gentle not too elderly, general-utility horse that could be ridden or harnessed to a vehicle. And it would be very nice of the horse if he wasn't above pulling a light plow when it was time to make garden. Soon we had an amiable bay mare. Her name was Flora. I'm afraid she had to put up with a good deal of unwanted attention from us kids who treated her like a playmate. Perhaps she enjoyed it. I have often wondered about the private thoughts of animals, and whether they are bored by our friendship. There is a story going around that on my good friend Louis Bromfield's famous "Malabar Farm" which, by the way, adjoins the old William Douglas place in Ohio, a foreman resigned because some of the animals were so petted and spoiled by the Bromfields that "they thought they were people."

(Attention, please! Wanting to be sure that I was correct in saying that my parents had access to a D.M. Ferry and Company catalogue in 1881, I decided to ask for information at headquarters. Finding the name of Mr. D.M. Ferry, Jr., in *Who's Who in America*, I asked him what was the earliest date on which his father might have issued an illustrated catalogue of seeds, and promptly had a cordial letter from him saying that the first seed catalogue his father brought out for general distribution was in 1868.)

A partially grass-grown, graveled lane led from the wide front gate, which was never closed, past the south side of the house, and on to the weather-beaten barn. Beside the lane, and opposite to the spacious side verandah, was a small wooden platform, about three feet high, with a few steps attached. This was a mounting block, intended mostly for ladies who rode on sidesaddles.

When Papa went down to the crossroads store for the mail and *The Cincinnati Enquirer* and perhaps some groceries, he would lead Flora to the mounting block. I do not know whether he could have hoisted himself into the saddle without this assistance; probably not.

He always wore his second-best frock coat and a high topper, known at that time as a "plug" hat. I surmise that an equestrian who turned out in such a rig today would draw a crowd. And, even then, Papa's erect, august figure, riding in formal attire on a lonely country road, must have brought the neighbors to their front windows.

But however much the farmers may have viewed the majestic newcomer at first sight with awed amazement, they were soon to learn that he meant to be one of them. He would lift the dignified plug hat and wave to the countrymen in their fields or lounging in their barnyards. I doubt whether they returned his salute on the first occasion but it was not long until they were waving back to him. Sometimes they would be on the lookout for his return and he would find them busying themselves at their front gates. He would pull Flora up to the fence. Perhaps the farmer's wife, with a gingham sunbonnet loosely tied under her chin and dangling down her back, would stroll out to join them; and their boys and girls too.

Papa soon became the chaplain for our whole neighborhood. He visited their sick, married their grown sons and daughters, buried their dead. They came to the Hopeful Church, only four miles away where, it was said (for I was too little to be interested in that), they felt at home, regardless of the religious denomination with which their fathers had been affiliated.

My papa's sermons, then and always thereafter, were not dogmatic. They effortlessly avoided the polemic issues that had so frequently made otherwise kindhearted people despise their neighbors who militantly stood for tweedledee but stubbornly rejected tweedledum. As I remember my papa's easily understandable homilies, when I was grown old enough to think seriously about them, they were strangely reminiscent of the hillside sermons which attracted great crowds in Galilee. They were illustrated with parables taken from everyday life. "A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said unto his father, 'Give me the portion that falleth to me.' " The people could see that picture clearly. If either of the two sons was restless to get away from the old place, it would be the younger. They had known such cases. My papa, instead of beginning a sermon with a quotation from Martensen's *Systematic Theology*, would be likely to say, "Last Thursday, while we were waiting at a blacksmith shop in Florence for our horses to be shod, a few of us were talking about James Blodgett, and the friendly way he had with horses. One man said the horses seemed to know that Jim wouldn't hurt them by carelessly paring a hoof too far. Jim knew his business, another man said. And as I rode home, it occurred to me that a man so mindful of his duties that even the horses of the community were on his

side, is giving as good an account of his stewardship as any man can in a public office." Then would follow a beguiling talk about making the best use of our talents, whatever they were.

The next time Papa rode into town to have Flora's shoes reset, Jim said, when the job was done and the customer had brought out his well-worn coin purse, "I reckon that won't cost you-all anything, Reverend. . . . Here: let me give you-all a leg up. . . . Thanks, Reverend; come again."

The chambermaid who tidies the hotel apartment where I am living, at present, an intelligent young colored girl in her twenties, tells me she has quit going to church "because the preachers lecture on Sundays about social adjustments, civil rights and such." Down in Texas, where she came from, they preach about Religion, she said. Up here in California, they use big, sixty-four-dollar words. She thinks she may go back to Texas. I told her she could save herself a long trip by going to hear Doctor Fagerburg. "You'll be able to understand him," I said; "and, besides, he's a Baptist, like you."

While we are on the subject of long words used when short ones might be more appropriate, they have a story out here about a prayer offered by a learned guest-preacher at the Commencement exercises in a near-by college. The petition was so ponderous with quotes from the classics, the latest on nuclear physics, and sundry scientific gobbledegook that when it ended, one amused old professor turned to a Faculty crony and whispered, "I hope God is a Ph.D."

But, to return to my papa's pictorial sermons, while most of his auditors listened and learned, a few of the Trustees and Elders and Deacons weren't quite sure. They missed the sanctimonious old phrases from the pulpit and the monotonous, hypnotic drone of the Holy Scriptures which aforetime had provided the incidental music accompanying their Sunday forenoon nap.

The Bible, in their opinion, was a holy thing that you'd better handle gently. It wasn't intended to entertain anybody. If your home was respectable, you had a massive Bible on the marble-topped table in your parlor; and when there was a birth or a death in the family the fact was recorded on the stiff pages in the back of the Book. It was a sacred memorial to God's dealings with the saints of old, and any effort to make it seem interesting and applicable to the people of our time was pretty risky business.

And, too, a couple of the older contributors to the Hopeful Church agreed that they hadn't heard much about Martin Luther and the German Reformation since the new preacher had taken charge.

The complaints were not severe, nor did they represent the dissatisfaction of more than a handful; but it was the handful that bossed the church. And, once the criticism had been launched, it was easy to find fault with almost anything the newcomer did. For instance, shortly after Papa began his ministry in the little church, he commended the congregation on their hearty singing of the hymns.

"But I notice," he went on, "that only a few of you sing the 'Amen,' after the last verse. This brings the hymn, which had been an inspiration to us all, to a depressing finish.

"Now it doesn't make much difference—certainly not to me—whether we sing 'Amen.' But let us decide what to do about it. I suggest that we take a vote on the matter. We will now arise and sing 'Faith of Our Fathers,' and at the end of it you may sing 'Amen' or not, as you prefer."

Nobody sang "Amen" but Mr. Strickland, who shouted it so loudly that many of the younger ones giggled and their fathers whipped out their handkerchiefs and blew their noses to hide a chuckle and a grin. You wouldn't think that a grand old fellow like Mr. Strickland would get mad over the little joke he had played on himself; nor would he have taken it badly if something of the sort had happened at the Masonic Lodge or a meeting of the Grange. But sometimes the insulation on the nerves of elderly laymen in the Church is very thin, and almost any little rub will touch off a blaze. It is too bad.

I have known of cases where some man, who was henpecked at home, and afraid of his shadow downtown where he came, at full gallop, wagging his tail, when his employer called for him, gets to be the Big Shot in his church, the only place where anybody pays the slightest attention to him. Just for the salvation of his own soul, if not for the sake of the Church, he should be firmly taken in hand as soon as he begins to exhibit delusions of grandeur. It would be fun to see a little fellow of that sort start to throw his weight around in a Catholic Church. . . . Boy, oh Boy! . . . Innumerable Protestant preachers would love to have a ringside seat to witness that spanking.

Practically everything I know about the church boss, which is plenty, has come to me by observation and pathetic letters from colleagues in the ministry, over a long period of years. In more than a few instances, the

victims—especially the ones who had passed middle age—never quite regained their self-confidence and the joy they had found in their vocation. Only once, during my thirty years as a clergyman, was I unlucky enough to collide with a small but energetic group of laymen of the sort that my papa once described as "men who knew too much to follow but not quite enough to lead." For the first time in my experience I learned how a minister feels in a position where he is antagonized by lay officials. While waiting to decide whether to fight or run, I sought distraction from my worries by attempting to write a novel.

I knew next to nothing about the composition of fiction. Certainly nobody on the faculty of my alma mater had ever offered any suggestions on that subject, though there may have been good reasons for that.

Perhaps I was only wasting my time, trying to write a novel. But, seeing I wasn't sleeping very well, it seemed more sensible to be busy at something better in the night than staring at the ceiling. Gradually my story gathered momentum. My pile of typed manuscript grew, and as it grew my disappointment over what was happening to me at the church didn't hurt much, any more.

When my opus was finished I named it *Magnificent Obsession*, and sent it to a publisher who had previously brought out a book of mine, a group of religious essays. My manuscript promptly bounced back. The publisher (a good friend of mine, by the way, both before and after he rejected my story) explained that his readers saw no future for it. He figured that it might sell a few hundred copies to my parishioners, but he would prefer not to list it.

I have never been able to brood very long or very painfully over a setback: I have my papa to thank for the ability to toss off disappointments. But I must admit that this rejection of the book on which I had spent so much of myself, and the firm opinion of my New York friend that it wasn't worth publishing, was a severe blow; for my rating at the church was worsening by the hour. But perhaps this publisher could be mistaken. Sometimes experienced editors refused a book that turned out to be successful. It was told of the late Booth Tarkington that his *The Gentleman from Indiana* was refused twelve times before it found a publisher willing to gamble on it. *Ben Hur* made several excursions to the Wise Men of the East before it was accorded any hospitality. Yes; and a venerable publishing house, with whose Directors I have a first-name acquaintance, are still a bit embarrassed when anyone mentions *David Harum*, though no present member of the Board was responsible for its rejection.

So I sent my novel to another publisher and again it was returned. By this time I was beginning to wonder whether it could be true that the whole regiment was out of step but our Jim.

I tried a third time, and it stuck! Quite to everybody's surprise, the book caught on!

Perhaps some old friend of mine will inquire, teasingly, "Why are *you* so steamed up about church bosses? If you hadn't been bossed, maybe you wouldn't have written any novels."

To this question I can only reply that I was lucky. The old adage had proved true that "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."

But my happy release from the captivity of the church boss does not make me indifferent to the plight of other men similarly trapped and with no means of escape.

(I have just now been visited by my long-time friend and colleague, Doctor Willsie Martin, of whom the world is not worthy. . . . He said that never, in his long ministry, was he troubled with a church boss. "But," he added, "I know of cases. A minister once said to me, when I was young, 'Look out for the fellow who can't get along in some other church, and comes to join yours.' ")

My memories of those autumn days in Kentucky are not all etched to the same depth. Of some events which my parents and my sister often spoke in the years to follow, I have no recollection at all. Many occasions, relatively trivial, are clearly remembered.

One sunny afternoon when Lou and I were strolling in the grove we came to a place where the trees were shorter and presently we found an almost open space where an old brick chimney stood in a square frame of ashes. Around the rim of the ashes grew a thick bramble. We investigated. Underneath the broad green leaves we discovered mammoth dead-ripe blackberries. With our mouths and fingers smeared purple we hurried home to report. Papa and Mama followed us with large tin buckets.

Apparently no one had visited the sequestered berry patch for the tall canes were heavily loaded with the luscious fruit. During the next day or two we made several trips to the place and returned with heaping buckets.

Papa harnessed Flora to the newly acquired carriage, of which I may speak further, and drove over to the crossroad store for tin cans and glass jars.

We had several meals which consisted only of warm blackberry cobbler, drowning in thick cream. Papa always called a cobbler a flugoo. I recall that when I sat down before my bowl of flugoo I hoped that Mama had baked enough for a second helping. But there would come an unexpected moment, near the bottom of my dish, when one more spoonful would have ruined me. That was the queer thing about these delicious flugoos. You would be downing the delightful stuff with the hope that there might be more to come; when, suddenly, your spoon refused to rise, your eyes glazed and swam, and your stomach raised up feebly on one elbow, muttering No! No!

Blackberry jam! I have had blackberry jam many a time, during the years that have intervened, but none like Mama's. I hope I haven't wearied you with these thumb-long blackberries, but they were among the truly eventful delights of my brief career in Kentucky.

Someone has just inquired where the cream for the flugoo came from.

(Dear, dear! There's another sentence that got away and went strolling out in public with its slip showing. I know, as well as anybody, that it's wrong to use a preposition to close a sentence with. But sometimes it's difficult to tuck a preposition back in. It makes a trivial remark sound stuffy and pretentious. I heard of a brittle old English professor who became so zealous on this matter that he once write to a neighbor, "The incessant nocturnal barking of your mongrel pooch has become an annoyance up with which I shall no longer put!")

Oh, yes, the cream. We bought it of the Carpenters, a quarter-mile up the road. Lou and I made a daily trip for it. We did not own a cow while in Kentucky. We had a cow several years later when I was about thirteen. I was unanimously elected as that cow's guardian, companion and chambermaid. For one whole year she was in my debt for every mouthful she ate and every drop of milk she shed. And did she show any appreciation? She hated me.

On a hot, humid July evening, when the air was crowded with hungry mosquitoes, and both my hands were occupied, that cow would viciously wind up and throw her burr-filled tail (and no animal of my acquaintance ever had a longer tail with the possible exception of the stone lions which sit out in front of the Public Library at the corner of Forty-Second Street and Fifth Avenue) and wrap it about three times around my neck and drag the sharp burrs across my face. I am told that the more pious people in India worship cows and give them free run of their streets, sidewalks, and

entrances to public buildings. Be it far from me to deride any other man's form of worship; but, in my opinion, the cow, our cow, or any cow, is the least beloved of all God's creatures. Our cow's name was "Bossy." (And she had several other names, too.)

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Without further delay, for the carriage was one of our earliest acquisitions after arriving in Kentucky, I think I should tell you about this remarkable vehicle.

There were four of us and we needed something more commodious than a buggy. But to acquire accommodations for us all would take some doing. Carriages were very expensive. A new one, such as a sedan with fringe on top, would cost Papa six months' salary. He was getting only four hundred dollars annually. This sounds almost incredible, but it should be remembered that a dollar, in 1881, had a much higher value than it has today. I do not know what the depreciation amounts to over these past seventy years, but it is considerable. People did not talk much about the shrinkage in the purchasing power of our money until the U.S. Treasury began to call in the folding currency and issue smaller bills of the same denomination. Many citizens thought that the smaller money might have resulted from the fast footwork of a lobby engaged by manufacturers of leather wallets. But it was soon discovered that the new little dollar wasn't worth as much as its dirty old predecessor. It might be suggested that if the federal government intends to cut down the size of our currency to fit its diminishing value, the change should be made at once. It would not only stimulate the wallet business, but would be a nice break for manufacturers of microscopes. Almost every other industry is subsidized: why not optical goods?

After much inquiry in many places, Papa came home one day reporting that he had found a rig suitable for use either as a two-passenger buggy or a four-passenger carriage. It was not new, he said, nor was it very pretty; but it could be had for twenty-five dollars.

Mama was so happy over Papa's success in finding the carriage that he felt like warning her against too much enthusiasm. "It is not a stylish thing," he said. "But we're not trying to put on style," said Mama. "That's good," said Papa. "If we're not trying to put on style, this is just the rig we're looking for." My sister Lou suddenly closed her eyes tightly and shuddered. "The church people will like us, all the more," said Mama, "if our carriage is

not so good-looking as theirs." "Well," said Papa, "if that's what it takes to make them like us, we'll be the most popular family in the state."

That afternoon Papa rode Flora over to the place where the carriage was, and returned with it in a couple of hours. We three were sitting on the verandah, waiting. Nobody said anything when Papa drove through the gate and came to a stop near the mounting-block. Then Mama sagged back in her chair, and murmured, "Oh, *my*!"

We gathered silently about the carriage which at the moment was a buggy, and Papa showed us how it worked. The cushioned seat for two, with a high weatherproof top, was on a pair of metal tracks extending about three feet to the rear. All you had to do, Papa said, to make a carriage of it, was to slip the buggy-seat back, and the front seats would appear. He gave his side of the heavy seat a push and it budged just enough to cramp its progress. Then he came around to the side where we three were standing and gave it a push which cramped it on that side. Then he went back to the other side and pushed it another half inch. Then back to our side for another half-inch. Then he climbed in, faced the seat, and pushed unsuccessfully with his knees. By this time he was breathing hard, and seemed somewhat annoyed. He climbed out. Mama volunteered to push on one side while Papa pushed on the other, but the buggy stubbornly refused to be a carriage.

Papa muttered something to Mama and she went into the house for a little can of sewing-machine oil, with which they tried to lubricate the tracks. There was more pushing. Papa climbed in again, sat down, clucked to Flora, made a U-turn; and without a word, drove out onto the road. In an hour or so, he was back. We had a carriage now. Two uncomfortable little seats had popped up in front of the much higher one. Papa looked funny on his little seat.

We never tried to make a buggy out of our carriage. When we were caught in the rain, the occupants of the front seats got wet. When Papa drove alone, he folded up the little seats and sat far back on the big one. It was easy to understand why we had acquired the carriage at a bargain.

Through the after years, whenever one of us tried to describe something or somebody as singularly awkward, unwieldy or inept, and lacked the words for it, the "Kentucky carriage" came to our aid.

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By mid-November there were mornings when white frost was to be seen on the ground. About that time our country parishioners were slaughtering hogs. The preacher's family was not forgotten. Our friends would drive up with a fresh ham or a few yards of sausage. Some of this pork we preserved in brine, but Papa had invented a process for curing sausage, hams and bacon; he climbed up on top of the house and suspended the meat on a broomstick over the huge chimney. For many days nothing but hickory was burned in the fireplace. (I have tried to remember whether, on these occasions atop the house, Papa wore his plug hat; but I am not quite sure. That would have been something to see, though, and I wish I could say certainly that this occurred.)

Neither my sister nor I went to school. I was too little and Lou was easily subject to bad colds; and the schoolhouse was a couple of miles away. Considering her family's record for pulmonary troubles, our parents thought Lou might be better off at home in bad weather. However, she probably learned more at home where she was in the hands of skilled tutors.

I have no remembrance of our first Christmas in Kentucky; nor do I recall anything of importance happening that winter. But the arrival of spring was eventful. It came early. Sparrows built untidy nests in the tall pines. Blue jays glided low, buzzed the house, and inspected the eaves of our barn. Robins pulled worms out of the ground. Sometimes this was very funny and made us laugh. A big robin would put his ear to the ground and listen. Presently, as if he whispered some deceitful promise to his victim, the top end of a brownish-red worm would appear. The robin would grab the worm about an inch back of its ears, and pull. The worm, realizing that he had been played for a sucker, would try to wriggle back into his hole. Now the robin would brace himself and give such a mighty tug that the worm would suddenly surrender his full length, and the robin would tumble back on his tail. So far as I know (I am not an authority on birds) a robin's face never betrays his emotions, but he can reveal plainly enough, by a toss of his head, that he is embarrassed. He glances at your window, notes a couple of laughing children, shrugs his shoulder, and takes off with his squirming worm.

Soon the bare branches of the maples seemed to swell and intimations of leaves appeared at the top. Papa found a clump of alder-berry canes, cut the heaviest of them into foot-long pieces and made hollow spiles of the bark of a size to fit the auger holes he was boring in the tallest maple trees. We went about, for days, pouring the sap from the pans, dishes and kettles into our large tin buckets, which Papa carried to the kitchen, and Mama boiled down

to a thick sirup. This was good fun, and it was good sirup. It went very nicely on buckwheat cakes; and there would be a thick slice of smoked ham for breakfast. (A man told me recently that our modern smoked ham is produced by giving the pig, while still afoot, a hypodermic shot of some chemical that tastes a little like smoke; though this man may have been kidding me. I am a trusting soul and will nibble at almost anything, no matter how preposterous. However, this is not an invitation to any of you to try to sell me a dead mouse to wear on my watch chain.)

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Almost always, when my sister and I went to the Carpenters' home for our milk and cream, it was Grandma Carpenter who served us. She was very friendly, and often asked us into the warm kitchen for a newly made doughnut or a cookie with red sugar on top. We liked her.

For several days now we had been waited on by an unmarried daughter of the family who told us that Grandma was not feeling well.

One morning, as we entered their gate, we saw something that looked like a black scarf tied to the knob of the front door. I asked Lou what it meant but she did not know. Miss Carpenter met us at the milkhouse and filled our larger tin bucket with milk and the smaller one with cream. Lou asked about Grandma, and Miss Carpenter said, "Would you like to see her?"

We put down our buckets on the kitchen table and followed Miss Carpenter through the living room where the young Mr. Carpenter and his father sat. They always spoke to us when we met them, but this time they took no notice of us. We followed Miss Carpenter into a small bedroom.

Grandma Carpenter was lying on her back. Her eyes were closed and her face was the color of wood ashes. Mrs. Rouse who lived across the road, was standing by the bed, holding a large white handkerchief. As we shyly moved toward the bed Mrs. Rouse wiped off a little wisp of foam that seeped slowly from Grandma's lips.

It was my first experience with Death. True, I had a vague recollection of my baby sister's little white coffin but I remembered nothing about her sickness and death, for I had been very ill when she died; and, besides, I was only a baby at that time myself.

I do not know what we were expected to do or say as we stood bewildered at Grandma Carpenter's bedside. We did not tarry. Lou stumbled

over my foot as we turned away. By the time we reached the kitchen my sister was crying. Miss Carpenter was crying too. She patted us on the shoulder and helped me button my coat. When we were out on the road again, Lou said, "Wasn't it awful?" I agreed. It was indeed awful. I still think so.

Mama was quite upset when we told her, but Papa didn't seem to be provoked.

"It won't hurt them," he said, softly. "Sooner or later they will have to learn about it."

"I know," said Mama, "but I do think Miss Carpenter should have told them."

"Perhaps she thought they knew," Papa said.

Mama put on her heavy coat, tied a shawl over her head, and went to pay our family's respects to the Carpenters; and, after awhile, Papa followed her. In a couple of days, the funeral service was held in the Hopeful Church, Papa conducting it. There was a long procession of carriages and buggies from the house to the church. Lou and I flattened our noses against a front window to see it pass. We were particularly impressed by one feature of this slow and solemn cavalcade. Several men friends of the family had been stationed with guns at half-mile distances along the way, and when the procession left the house, the sentinels fired signals from one to another down the road to the church where the sexton began to toll the bell. It must have taken the procession all of an hour to make the trip. I have known of some very strange happenings at funerals, but this was the only time that I know of when guns were fired to notify the sexton waiting with bell rope in hand. However, it was common practice in many little villages where we lived later for the church bell to toll the age of the deceased when word had come of the death. If it was an elderly person, the community was pretty deep in gloom by the time this rite had ended. Everybody put down his tools and counted. When the bell had tolled forty-six times, there was a breathless moment. If it didn't toll once more, that would be Ezra McIntosh, who was very sick with lung fever. If there was one more sad bong of the bell, it would probably continue into the eighties, which would mean that Grampaw Ruggles was dead.

(Bertha Kraft tells me that when she was a little girl in North Dakota it was considered bad luck to count the strokes.)

Country people, in those days, did what they could to honor the dead. Many a man, of such total insignificance that he hardly cast a shadow as he trudged about, took on dignity when he died. He who had slept uncomfortably for many years on a lumpy corn-husk mattress or a hard straw tick now luxuriated on a new white bed of tufted satin. He who had been nothing more worthy of respect than a patronizing "Hi, Zeke" had become Brother Ezekiel Waterman; and if the preacher was hard-pressed for something nice to say about stubble-chinned old Zeke, he could dip into a warmed-over sermon on the Prophet Ezekiel, for whom obviously our good neighbor had been named.

Nor am I just trying to be funny at the expense of dim-witted old Zeke Waterman who had amounted to so little while he lived. His death gave him his first chance to perform a public service. The people put on their Sunday blacks and shined their shoes. Mister shaved and the Missus crimped her hair. They came from near and far to attend Zeke's obsequies. Zeke had given the entire countryside a day off. They renewed acquaintance with old friends and patched up old quarrels.

After the last clod had been patted on the grave, the people stopped at the village stores for a bit of shopping. Farmers gathered in groups to discuss the low price offered for hogs by the Chicago packing houses, the more thrifty advising their neighbors to hang on to their livestock until the figures improved. The youngsters teased their pop for a half-dollar and had themselves an ice cream soda. If some shy girl said she didn't care what flavor she had, the owner of the drugstore pushed a sirup-button labeled "Don't Care." It was anybody's guess whether Ezekiel was going to be a credit to the land he had set out for; but, in dying, he had done very well by the country he had left behind.

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The summer came on early, bringing beauty and perfume to the honeysuckle vines that shaded the southern verandah, and quart buckets of mammoth black cherries from an old tree in our front yard. Bees with huge cargoes of nectar had trouble taking off from pink apple blossoms.

At dawn, one day about the middle of April, we had climbed into the carriage with a large basket containing cold fried chicken, deviled eggs, potato salad, home-baked bread and peach pie, which we ate in a shady grove on our way to Cincinnati. We turned onto the "pike" at Florence and continued on it into and through Covington. Three times we stopped to pay a

pittance at tollgates. On each occasion an elderly woman came out of the tollhouse, which was also her residence, and cupped her hand for the three pennies before turning the crank that lifted the long bar. Papa would have a friendly word for her and before we moved on she was chattering amiably. Frequently we came upon an old man, sitting beside the road with a hammer, breaking chunks of limestone into little pieces which he tossed onto a pile near by.

It was an exciting day. Flora wasn't sure she wanted to risk the ferry boat but when she saw that the other horses already on board were standing there half-asleep, with one hip sagging, she bravely took her place in line and presently we tooted and were away on our voyage. The big city was full of noise and confusion.

The enormous store where we went to do our shopping was called Shillito's. It is still there and I am told that it is the largest department store in Cincinnati. Mama and Lou each bought a pretty summer dress. Mama's dress was very large and loose, for she was getting fat. I came off with a suit of clothes that would be about the right size when I was six and what would now be considered an absurd little gray bowler hat. We also had new, high-buttoned shoes.

As for the size of my clothes, whenever my parents bought me a new pair of trousers, during the years of my rapid growth, they prudently selected a pair that would fit me about six months from now. By the time the pants were the right size they were shabby. However, Papa and Mama were doing their best with what they had to spend. I never fretted about it.

After our noon dinner we went to visit the Zoological Garden. It was my first glimpse of wild animals. Lou and I giggled at the monkeys and hoped we weren't hurting their feelings; but Papa assured us that monkeys were not easily embarrassed. He said he believed that the monkeys themselves thought they were funny.

There were little ponies to ride, for a nickel, but Mama was afraid we might be thrown off. Mama always took good care that we kept out of danger. This was so, all through the years to follow. I should never have learned to swim if I hadn't sneaked off with the other kids, and lied about it later.

One morning in mid-June, Lou and I, to our surprise, had an invitation to visit the Newcomb family in Florence. Mr. Newcomb, who belonged to our church and was a great friend of Papa's, had an interesting store where he sold a little of everything. "Notions," I think it was called. He had a long glass case filled with ingenious candies for children. He gave me a small tin box containing a tiny copper hoe, rake and shovel, each with a blob of very good taffy on the handle. We played all day with the Newcomb youngsters; and, to our increased surprise, were invited to spend the night. Mrs. Newcomb was not there: her unmarried sister was our hostess. Perhaps Lou knew what all this was about, but I didn't.

Papa came for us the next morning. He seemed very happy and urged Flora to hurry. I was amazed when Mrs. Newcomb came out to meet us at our side door. We found Mama in bed, but she was not ill. She put out her arms and kissed us. Then Mrs. Newcomb led us to a tiny cradle. We peeked in.

"You have a little brother," Mrs. Newcomb said, softly.

Lou made some ecstatic murmurs and cooed a few tender words that are understood only by very young babies. I simply stared bug-eyed at the pink newcomer with the funny little fists. I cannot recall that I asked where our baby had come from. Perhaps whatever of mystery there was about it had been completely eclipsed by the fact that I now had a brother to play with.

In a couple of days Mama was up and doing her own housework again. It was customary in those days for women to try for a new record in their ability to resume their normal occupation after the birth of a child. Sometimes one would boast that she did the family washing the next day. I am told that they usually paid, in later life, for this distinction. Mama was never very well, after she was middle-aged, though she lived to be ninety-two.

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On Christmas Eve, that year, there was an appropriate celebration at the Hopeful Church. There was a tall spruce tree, gay with baubles and lighted with candles. Every child was given a little bag of hard candies; very good, they were. The bags were made of red mosquito bar. There were also oblong bricks of sugared popcorn wrapped in pink tissue paper which obstinately refused to peel off. I was delighted, and a bit frightened too, when Santa Claus came plunging down the aisle and all but smothered me with a beautiful dapple-gray hobby-horse! I do not remember what anyone else got,

except the gold watch that was presented to Mr. Strickland, and I would not have remembered that (so preoccupied was I with my wonderful horse) had this watch not stirred up quite a breeze.

It seems that a few devoted friends of Papa's had begun to circulate a subscription appeal among the members for money to buy him a gold watch. When Mr. Strickland was approached he demurred. The Reverend already had a fine gold watch, he said. If the people wanted to give a watch to somebody on Christmas, it might be more appropriate if they honored some old member of the Church Board who had labored, in season and out of season, to hold the congregation together.

He talked the promoters of this project into the new idea; and, as no member of the Board had served so long, or given so much time and money to the Church as Mr. Strickland, they decided to present him with the watch. He was so pleased that he promised to give the Reverend a present that would delight him as much as a new watch.

This apparently evoked general dissatisfaction, as Papa was to learn later. Many people thought that Mr. Strickland had his nerve, and said so. Others said that Mr. Strickland was a mean old skinflint. Some of them remembered that Mr. Strickland had found fault with my papa's sermons.

Papa may have known, before Christmas, that a rumpus was brewing: I do not know about that. In any case, the gold watch was given to Mr. Strickland, on that Christmas Eve, and Papa consented to make the presentation speech. Many people wondered, on the next Sunday morning, whether Mr. Strickland would make good on his promise to present Papa with a gift, but nothing was done about it. Three or four weeks passed, with no word from Mr. Strickland. By this time, according to the mumbled dissent which the boys of our Navy call "scuttle-butt," the rank and file of Hopeful Church were in quite a dither.

Papa learned of it and was embarrassed. He urged those who came to him with their assurances of full support that it would be better for all parties concerned if they dropped the matter.

One day Papa had an invitation to bring our family to the Strickland home for dinner after the morning service next Sunday. This, then, would be It. Papa and Mama were pleased with the hope that this visit might clear the air of the mounting tension.

There were several guests at the Stricklands', that day, besides ourselves. After dinner, we assembled in the parlor where our host made a flowery

speech about his bees; how he had loved to watch them at their work; what an inspiration they had been to him; and how good was our Heavenly Father to endow these little creatures with a spirit of self-sacrifice in the interest of their mysterious society. . . . Then he presented papa with a glass jar of strained honey.

I was to learn much later of Papa's grateful response. He replied with an anecdote from the story of King David. Once, when a hard battle was raging within a few miles of his boyhood home, David had remarked that he wished he had a drink of water from that old well in Bethlehem. That night, two of his aides, at great risk of their lives, crept through the enemy's lines, and returned with a hornful of water from the historic well. But King David would not drink it. It had cost too much. It was better that he should go thirsty than drink such precious water. So—he poured it on the ground.

"It is in this spirit," said Papa, soberly, "that I accept the precious gift that has meant so much to you, Brother Strickland. This valued honey will not be eaten. It shall occupy a place of honor on our mantel at the parsonage, and all who visit us will be told the inspiring story of it."

It wasn't long until the whole community was buzzing more busily than the Strickland bees. The stingy old fellow discovered that he had done himself up. His hostility to Papa came out into the open. People were taking sides and going to bat.

While this tempest in a teapot was rising to a cyclone, we were unexpectedly visited by a brilliant young man who had been one of Papa's favorite disciples when he was Superintendent of the Whitley County Schools in Indiana. Our guest was experimenting with a banking plan in the public schools, to encourage pupils to start savings accounts. He wanted Papa to go to some prosperous midwestern city and try it out for a few months.

I suppose that Papa, by now, needed very little urging. Any port in a storm!

Within a month we had settled up our affairs in Kentucky and were on our way back to Columbia City where we rented a house and moved in. A few days later, Papa packed his bag and left for Des Moines, Iowa, where he was to experiment with the new banking project. Mama cried and cried. She had been so happy in Kentucky.

4. Mama's Nice Little Man

OF our six months' residence in Columbia City, while we waited for Papa's return from Des Moines, I have nothing to report but our unhappiness.

The new, jerry-built house in which we lived stood forlornly in the middle of a block of vacant lots. The owner had not sodded or seeded a lawn, and the raw, yellow clay was a muddy pond; for it rained endlessly throughout the autumn, winter and early spring.

We had very few visitors. I doubt whether many of our friends knew we were back in town. Mama read and reread to us well-remembered stories from an old copy of *Chatterbox*. The rest of the time we spent looking out at the rain and the mud.

One dreary March day Mama had a letter that made her sing! It was from Papa. The School Savings Bank project had blown up. The adventurous promoter had been disappointed with the results of his experiment in every city where it had been introduced. The banks considered it a nuisance and the school children were not interested.

But it wasn't as if we were out of a job! Papa's letter went on to say that he had foreseen the impending collapse of the school banking business and had written to synodical officials in Indiana inquiring whether there were any country churches in their territory needing a pastor. And he had received word that a group of rural churches in the vicinity of Monroeville had recently lost their minister.

And the officials had queried the Monroeville people who remembered that Papa had spoken there at a convention. If he would come, they would welcome him. He had accepted the bid and would be home on Thursday! Hooray!

If I may adapt a few memorable words from one of Robert Louis Stevenson's most tender verses, no hunter or sailor, home from the hill or the sea, ever had a warmer welcome than my papa when he breezed in, that evening, to tell us about Monroeville while he watched Mama pack our things for the joyful migration.

Lou and I danced with delight! We had hated the house we lived in, and so had Mama. Now we would all be happy again. And let me add, in case my remembered exuberance hints at a forthcoming disaster, we were indeed very happy in Monroeville.

Of course our chief reason for happiness, when we were happy, was the complete contentment of my mama. So long as Mama was happy, nothing else mattered much. We could handle whatever other problems might arise. Mama was back now among people she could understand, friendly, warmhearted, unaffected country folks. (I know that folk is preferred to folks, in this setting, but we always said folks, and I still like the word. Folk, in my private lexicon, is snooty, patronizing and supercilious. Whenever anybody speaks of "these good folk," I know that he considers himself several cuts brighter and more sophisticated than they are.)

Monroeville, in 1883, had a population of about six hundred. Our parsonage, across the street from the white frame church, was five blocks from the business center which was one block long. These business buildings were mostly two stories high. The most imposing was a three-story brick structure which housed Redelsheimer's General Store. The Redelsheimers were the only Jewish family in town. Mr. Redelsheimer was a short, chunky man, probably in his early sixties. He was always in the store, except on Jewish feast or fast days when he closed the shutters and locked the door; for he was a very religious man, and a good man, too, my parents thought. He always wore a black skullcap and shuffled about with quick, short steps in floppy slippers, waiting on his customers with a courtesy and dignity unmatched by any of the other merchants.

I have tarried here a bit, for Mr. Redelsheimer made quite an impression on me. I had never seen a Jew before, but had heard a great deal about them. They belonged in the Old Testament. Moses had led them out of Egyptian bondage. Joshua had marched them around Jericho until the city fell down. David had killed a giant with a slingshot, a story I never tired of, though the picture in *Chatterbox* showing young David triumphantly holding up Goliath's bloody decapitated head by its ears was so fascinatingly gruesome that Mama pasted the preceding page over it, much to my disappointment.

In Mr. Redelsheimer I had found a real Jew who resembled these men of old, with his sober face and kinky reddish-brown beard. When I entered his store with Papa or Mama he gave me a polite little nod and a wisp of a smile, almost as if I were a grownup. He was very gracious toward our family and never charged us the full price for our purchases. I think that this should be quite enough about Mr. Redelsheimer, at least for the present, if

we are ever to finish this story, seeing that I am only six now and still have a lot of ground to cover. The Redelsheimers had a beautiful home in the next block east of the store. It was shaded with tall maples. In the rear of the house was a large vineyard that must have been very carefully tended, for it was loaded in October with the largest and most luscious Concord grapes I have ever seen. There were three children. The two older girls were away at school. We had glimpses of them in summer. The boy, a little older than I, went to our public school. Sometimes he asked me to come over and play with him. I was invited to ride his tricycle: I pined and prayed for one of my own, but that was far too much to hope for. When the grapes were ripe, Adolph asked me to come and have all I wanted. They were delicious! I was given a heavy basketful to carry home. I can't recall that anybody in town was prejudiced against the Redelsheimers. Certainly the kids in school never pestered Adolph about his race.

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Perhaps I should help you to locate Monroeville on your map of the World, for this may be difficult. Our little town was (and is) on the Pennsylvania Railroad, sixteen miles east of Fort Wayne and four miles west of the Indiana-Ohio border. The altitude for some thirty miles in each direction was level; and as the New York Central which cut across the country about forty miles north of us was then engaged in a speed rivalry, between New York and Chicago, the fast trains fairly tore up the ground when they swept past us.

We had two local trains, en route east and west, daily except Sunday. They always stopped to take on and discharge passengers. Monroeville, when in need of something that Mr. Redelsheimer didn't handle, could take a morning train to Fort Wayne and be back home by 9 P.M. The evening train always brought a crowd to the station, not only to welcome the incoming local but to see the flyer swoop through.

Usually the evening local was detained on a siding, a half-mile west, to let the roaring monster go by. This was a terrifying experience that deserves mention here. While still a mile away, the frantic locomotive would shriek two long and two short whistle blasts. Everybody backed away from the track and lined up against the station. You held tightly to Papa's hand and shivered. The awful Thing was growing fast. It was howling again! Surely the Day of Judgment could never contrive a threat comparable for sheer terror! Now! The monster was here; it was zooming by; it was gone; each

car of the long train saying “Zip!” as it rushed past us. “Zip!” . . . “Zip!” . . . “Zip!” . . . “Zip!”

Now a choking, blinding wave of dust and cinders ebbed, and the acrid, stinging stench of coal smoke cleared. It was an aroma we associated with the railroad, for very few people burned coal in their houses. Coal was expensive, and you could buy all the firewood you wanted for a dollar fifty per cord. (More recently I have paid twenty-seven dollars for a cord of wood in California.)

During the time I was chattering about coal smoke and firewood, the eastbound speed demon has crossed the state line at Dixon and is yelling at Ohio to get out of the way; and our local, which had been steaming and panting on the siding, has coughed up a few puffs of black smoke and is ambling out onto the main track.

I’m afraid that the American kids of the future will have lost something when the new Diesel engine has supplanted the steam locomotive. We concede that the locomotive has always been an extravagant contraption, never able to convert into power more than seven per cent of the coal it devoured. And we agree that the Diesel gets off to a smoother start and doesn’t jerk you wide awake in the night. But the Diesel has no more personality than a caboose. From the air you look down on it and its long train of tightly integrated cars, winding through the ravines like a blindworm.

The locomotive inspired a quality of respect that has nearly vanished from our present state of mind and soul. There are very few institutions left now to make a young heart skip a beat and then bound so hard that the startled eyes suddenly swim with tears. It is not the youngsters’ fault, but their misfortune, that life has been made so smooth, so slick, so free of shocks and surprises. They have become too sophisticated, too soon. Doctor Gaius Glen Atkins has laconically fixed the boundary line between the departing era of respectful belief and the fashionable new cynicism as “the retirement of *Amen* and the introduction of *Oh yeah?*” There is nothing left now to fear: we have been assured that we have nothing to fear but fear: but when all fear is gone, there may be little remaining that is worthy of respect. . . . The ancient sage who wrote, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” must have had something there, or the ages would have allowed his words to die.

The Monroeville "charge" was composed of six churches. The farther-away group of three: Massilon, Antioch and Concord, had services on alternate Sundays, requiring much driving in all weathers, over unpaved roads beset with winter's snowdrifts, summer's blinding clouds of dust, and deep mud through early spring and late autumn. Northern Indiana was and is famed for its fertility. Anything and everything grows abundantly in that soil; and, before the roads were conditioned for the horseless carriage, the depth and consistency of the mud in March would tax the strength of a team of draft horses hitched to an empty wagon.

The group of churches nearest us comprised St. Mark's, directly across the road from the parsonage; Flat Rock, a little brick building four miles east which, the last time I saw it, about a dozen years ago, was used to store a neighbor's farm machinery; and Marquardt's, three miles west of us, also named because the membership was composed almost entirely of Marquardts, four generations of them at that time, the three patriarchs of the tribe being well-to-do farmers in their sixties.

It was in this church that I preached my first sermon while still a student in the Theological Seminary. Let me pause briefly to tell you about my earliest experience in the pulpit. Many of the older ones remembered that I had once been a little boy, and when the word had been passed about that I was to preach there on that Sunday afternoon in mid-July, the Marquardts had turned out in full force to see what the young fellow could do.

My sermon was ponderously doctrinal, and I was not very far into it before I noticed that many of my more mature customers, having satisfied themselves that my discourse was utterly incomprehensible and therefore unquestionably orthodox, had retired. I did not blame them. The day was hot, and the farmers who had been toiling all week in their harvest fields were in need of rest. They did their utmost to keep their glassy eyes open and their tanned jaws closed, but the scholarly young hypnotist was laying them out.

Midway of my homily, a baby who had been fretting for some time began to scream, but this didn't seem to annoy anybody. I raised my voice and so did the baby, but nobody stirred. The baby began to shout and so did St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians. Presently the comely young mother who, I learned later, was old Jake Marquardt's favorite granddaughter-in-law, rose and brought her unhappy child down the central aisle. By the time she arrived at the marble-topped washstand which, when the Marquardts celebrated the Holy Communion, was referred to as the altar, the whole

congregation had come to life. Even old Jake had roused: doubtless someone had nudged him. I was momentarily baffled, but carried on bravely.

On the pulpit, which stood on a platform a foot higher than the ground floor, there was a tall glass pitcher full of warm water, with a drinking glass beside it. The young woman shifted Junior, who was now yelling his head off, to the crook of her other arm; and, standing on tiptoe, reached for the pitcher which she successfully dragged from its perch, and eased it down onto the washstand. The congregation drew a soft sigh of relief.

Let me remark here, in self-defense, that had I been trapped by such an absurd predicament a few years later, I might have had sense enough to stop what I was doing and pour the water for the baby. That certainly would have made a great hit with the Marquardts. But I was there to conduct a solemn religious service: I was there to preach; not to pour water for crying babies.

The unperturbed young mother filled the glass and held it up to the baby's lips. He drank greedily, noisily, gratefully—and grinned. By now, all the dark brown Marquardt eyes were dancing. Their heads were wagging from side to side for a better view. Old Jake's hairy arms were folded on the back of the pew in front of him and he leaned far forward, chuckling happily.

If you will believe it, or even if you don't, I soberly went on alone into Thirdly. The youngest Marquardt, having slaked his thirst and stolen the show, signaled for more water. This time he was for blowing bubbles. The kids in the congregation tittered and the baby laughed merrily. This was too much. Old Jake exploded and so did everybody else. I belatedly gave it up. The baby's mama may have noticed that I had stopped, for she abruptly put down the drinking glass and returned to her seat, her numerous relatives and in-laws greeting her en route with applauding eyes.

I still wish, after more than a half-century, that I had been human enough to share the Marquardts' merriment that day, but I was only a scared rookie, serving my novitiate in a serious trade. It was some time before I recovered from the dehydration and vulcanization I had received in the Theological Seminary.

It was not until we were well settled in the comfortable parsonage at Monroeville, and were receiving almost daily calls from our town neighbors and country parishioners, that I began to realize that I was my mama's nice

little man; and I don't mean my mama's nice little boy, but my mama's nice little *man*.

Whoever among you has had the good fortune to have spent his or her childhood in a village rectory, manse or parsonage usually situated adjacent to the church or in its close vicinity, will probably confirm my recollection that this house, although it was our home, belonged to the membership of the church.

I am not about to say that it was common practice for some trustee and/or his wife to barge in and inspect our housekeeping with the proprietary air of a landlord assessing the probable mistreatment of a furnished apartment. That never happened to us. But it is obvious that our callers would feel a little more free to visit us than they might have felt had we lived in a house with which they were unacquainted. For the older ones this place had many memories, reaching back through the years, memories of ministers and their families who had lived happily here, memories of donation parties and weddings and perhaps also memories of private, tearful consultations about what to do with headstrong young Susie, who was bent on going to Chicago and finding a job, or what could be done to persuade Jim not to marry that Catholic girl in Decatur.

Sometimes our callers from the country came primarily to get acquainted and show their friendliness. As often as not they brought along a bushel of russet apples or huge baking potatoes or a pair of cleanly dressed Plymouth Rock fryers. Not infrequently some weary woman from the Massilon neighborhood candidly confessed that she had just dropped in to warm her toes while she waited for Paw to get the horses shod or have his hair cut. But, whatever their motive in coming to see us, they were sincerely welcomed.

If Papa happened to be at home there would be no lack of entertainment, no matter how shy our visitors were, or how long they tarried. Papa could keep an interesting monologue rolling endlessly and effortlessly, with no assistance whatsoever. But if Mama had a family of timid and untalkative people on her hands, she soon ran down; and, after unsuccessfully assuring them several times, in her best pluperfect tone, that it had been very good of them to come and see us, she would call me in for presentation.

(I hereby resent, with bared teeth and elevated bristles, your hasty allegation that I must have been a smug little smart-aleck. I was not! But I was not shy. I had lived mostly in an adult world. By precept and example I

had been taught, probably better than a normal child of six, how to accept an introduction to a stranger; but I was not a natural exhibitionist.)

Mama would beckon me to her side, moisten her finger tips and smooth back my hair to let the folks see my high, intellectual forehead (which, at this writing, although perhaps no more intellectual is certainly much higher) and present me as her nice little man.

With an introduction of that nature, I had my work cut out for me. Doubtless you will concede that it would have been a brutal stab in my devoted mama's back if, after that impressive fanfare of trumpets and drums, Mama's nice little man had stumbled across the room with a finger in his mouth. Not for me was any such unfilial behavior. No, sir! I would march confidently toward the stunned strangers, bow from the waist, smile maturely; and, extending a firm little hand, would assure them that I was most happy to make their acquaintance. And if I was convinced that my suave performance had knocked them speechless I might add that I hoped they were well or tell them it was a nice day, whether it was or not.

And so it was that I became inexorably typed and trapped as Mama's nice little man, performing in and for an adult world, with no opportunities to play juvenile rôles. I was indeed a little old man.

Today I find myself viewing with impatience much of the nonsense taught by modern psychology concerning the lifelong effects of some fright or mistreatment in early childhood. Unquestionably such incidents have been ridiculously overemphasized. Many an ordinary, run-o'-the-mine rapscallion—if his family had plenty of money—has been defended in court by psychiatrists who had found that at the age of three he had been roughly handled by an older child with the result that it had made him anti-social. To most of this modernistic prattle I am definitely allergic.

But I do believe that the early training I received at home had much to do with making a very solemn child of me. I was regularly taken to the Wednesday evening prayer meeting, which was patronized only by old folks. At the Communion Service, a morbid event, even when conducted by my habitually lighthearted papa, the nice little man who had been confirmed at seven would come forward and line up alongside his elders and try to look appropriately depressed as he sipped the blood of the Crucified One. All this was a tragic mistake, made by my mama, with the very finest of intentions.

It is not much wonder if I was not much of a success on the school playground. When the kids "chose up" for a ball game I was among the last to be named, if at all. Mostly I sat and watched, and when the team I favored

stole a base or batted in a run I never jumped up and hollered. I was pleased, but not noisy.

Of course there were certain compensations, though not enough to make up for a lost childhood. Under expert and diligent home guidance I learned to read and write much earlier than the average child of that period. And it certainly is not boasting if I should add that at six I probably could have taught the three R's to the average child of twelve in the progressive public schools of today, if the current clamor of disgusted parents is significant. And, too, I achieved in childhood a sort of intuitional understanding of the adult mind and mood, somewhat like the sixth sense of a not-too-highly pedigreed collie, in the ability to spot "on contact" (as the radio plugsters say of their deodorizing soap) a stranger who could be trusted—or should be avoided.

I was smothered with maternal supervision. I was almost old enough for prep school before I was allowed to go out of our front gate without explaining in advance where I was going and reporting on my return where I had been. When I was twelve and all the Sunday Schools in the township were converging on a beautiful grove, a few miles away, for a picnic all the kids of our church rode in a gaily decorated float, drawn by six horses with tall red plumes on the bridles; all but me and my little brother, who rode in the back seat of the family surrey. My sister had been lucky enough to ride with her schoolmates. But it was safer for me to keep out of that big wagon. Suppose the horses took fright at the band, and ran away! It is a wonder that the kids did not despise me: maybe they did.

But, getting back to me when I was six, there was at least one person in Monroeville to whom I became something quite other than Mama's nice little man. A certain Mrs. Morland had good reasons for knowing that I was not a little man, nor was I nice. I was a disgusting little monster! If you insist I shall tell you about it, but it is not a pleasant story. If it sickens you, please remember that you asked for it.

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It was a bitterly cold Sunday afternoon in January. Papa was away, attending to his duties at the south end of the charge.

Mama had been reading a story to Lou and me. I was convalescing from a mild attack of chicken pox. It was my custom to pick up whatever juvenile epidemic was making the rounds, proving that Nature viewed me as a little boy, no matter what my mama thought on that subject.

When these calamities struck, I was a pretty brave little kid, even if I do have to say it myself. I admit that no pain accompanied such maladies, and a great deal of attention was tendered me. Good old Doctor Engle came, whipped out his thermometer, and would be for wiping it off on the lining of his long coattail when Mama would yell at him to wait until she found a hot washcloth, well soaped, and a clean towel. Doctor Engle probably thought she was very fussy.

For a couple of weeks I would be excused from all the tiresome chores which, in normal circumstances, burdened my young life. I would be given large potations of saffron tea, which I loved, and sassafras tea, if there was any to be had. It, too, was very good. I think I bore my afflictions quite manfully and never teased to be discharged until completely recovered.

On the occasion of which I am about to speak, although I still moved slowly and even limped a little, I had regained something of an appetite; and, at noon, I had been able to take aboard a heavy cargo of canned currants which, until mid-afternoon of that eventful day, had been one of my favorite dishes.

Because good Mrs. Morland is one of the principals in the tragedy you thought you wanted to hear about, you deserve to make her acquaintance. She was, in dimension, what later came to be known as a stylish stout, though she made no visible effort to put on style. She was a little past middle age, whatever that is. I used to think that middle age was about twenty: at this writing, it is somewhere in the early fifties.

Mrs. Morland was a long-time widow (sod) and she lived alone, for her two grown-up children were in their own homes, in distant places. She lived alone in a snug cottage only a block away; and, having plenty of time for neighborly visiting, we saw her almost every day. She was prominent in church affairs. Everybody liked her, I think. Doubtless she was a lonesome creature, for she was ardently maternal in her attitude toward children. Perhaps this will do for Mrs. Morland, at the moment. She was big and floppy, busty, hippy, lappy. Whether her lamp was lit, I wouldn't know at six, but I do recall that she had an ungirt loin.

About two o'clock, the town firebell rang furiously, and at the same instant people began racing through our yard and down our alley. We ran to the kitchen windows. Isenbarger's barn, directly across the narrow alley from ours, was on fire! Great clouds of black smoke hovered over it and angry flames spurted from the haymow. It was a shocking sight! Apparently the Isenbargers were not at home, for their horse and sleigh were gone. It

was only minutes until all the men in town were draining our cistern and all the women in town were in our kitchen, dear-meing and tsch-tsching as they watched from our windows.

Presently the report came into the kitchen that the burning barn was doomed. The Isenbarger buggy had been pushed out into the alley, half-consumed. One woman thought it might have been better to let it burn, and collect full insurance. All attention was now centered on saving our barn. The men threw water on the exposed side and the younger ones plastered it with snowballs.

Perhaps I have delayed overlong in telling you that our faithful Mrs. Morland, arriving early on the scene, had peremptorily cleared a space at one of the windows and had taken me on her capacious lap, for surely a member of the jeopardized family deserved a good look. I was fascinated.

Mrs. Morland's bad habit of tugging me off my feet and cuddling me had never pleased me until now. This time I was grateful. I thanked her prettily and smiled. She was promptly responsive to my appreciation and hugged me.

As I have remarked earlier, the kitchen was crowded. Mama had filled the cooking stove with wood, and the temperature may have been comparable with that of Isenbarger's barn. (Seeing that this narrative is going to make you sick, anyhow, I may as well proceed with the kitchen atmosphere.) This event occurred long before the discovery of m-u-m, and the little bottle that makes household air seem country-fresh had not yet reached the market. This kitchen was no fit place for a terrified little boy, not fully recovered from an illness, but fully loaded with currants.

When the roof of Isenbarger's barn fell in, with a thunderous crash and a mountain of flames that sent everybody scurrying for his life, I sagged back into Mrs. Morland's arms.

"Don't look at it, any more, dear," she murmured, drawing my face tightly against her plunging neckline.

Of course you have seen these currants coming up, in this story. Perhaps you have wondered why they had not reappeared sooner. I need not tell you that I put my currants, all of them, into Mrs. Morland's bosom.

Scooting me gently off her lap, she rose, without a word, wrapped her shawl tightly about her, pushed her way through the transfixed crowd, and left by the front door, bound for home.

We lived in Monroeville, that time, for four years; but Mrs. Morland never picked me up again. I asked Mama if I should apologize to her, but Mama thought it would be just as well not to bring it up. Papa, overhearing, concurred in this decision. I had, he thought, brought more than enough up. If there was any explaining to do, Mama would attend to it. Papa hadn't been angry about it. In fact, when Mama told him the story, late that night, when I was in bed but still awake, he had laughed until it brought on an attack of asthma, which often occurred when he laughed long and hard.

The parson's barn, in case you are still interested in its fate, escaped destruction by the narrowest of margins. The men and boys had continued to pelt it with their squshy snowballs. The old, weather-beaten siding steamed and blistered, while the silent watchers in our kitchen held their breath. After a long period of anxiety on the part of the audience, one of the elderly firefighters was seen smiling and mopping his brow with a red bandanna handkerchief. A few of the women shifted their weight from one weary foot to the other. A couple of them yawned. A man put his head in to say that our barn was safe now. Thus did the afternoon's horrific spectacle come to an undramatic (and disappointing) final curtain.

Mr. Samuel Butler has made a discerning comment in his *Notebooks* concerning a similar occasion. He had been standing for an hour in a densely packed crowd, watching a midnight fire in downtown London. The conflagration, which had badly damaged the top story of a business building, had been apparently brought under control, when it suddenly flared up again, giving promise of more and better entertainment. The audience, which had grown restless, now froze to full attention.

Presently Mr. Butler overheard one Cockney saying to another, "That corner stack is alight now quite nicely," a cheerful observation which inspired the author to add, "People's sympathies seem generally to be with the fire so long as no one is in danger of being burned."

Verily, the human race is a queer institution, and we live in the wackiest of all possible worlds.

This generalization of Mr. Butler's, droll enough to fetch a chuckle, is more soberly truthful than we like to admit. The genus homo, should you be interested in its antics, differs from all other species of animal life mostly by its amazing inconsistencies.

If you, gentle reader, are in no hurry to drive out to the country club where you have an engagement to spend the afternoon knocking a little white ball from here to there to yonder in hope of doing it with fewer swats

than were required yesterday, let us tarry for a moment to look into our relation to the other animals.

And let's have no bumptious protest that you're not an animal! You're certainly not a vegetable or a mineral. Of course we differ from all other animals, though not at the points we usually think of first. We converse with one another, but so do horses: we know what day of the month it is, but so do the swallows who annually spend the summer at San Juan Capistrano: we blaze a trail to inform followers what course we have taken, but any dog can do that.

The animals cannot read or write, which is also true of the large majority of the human race, to which may be added a considerable number of humans who can read but don't. The more highly civilized among us practice monogamy, but so does the beaver who is said to have an even better record for steadfastness.

The main difference between the so-called dumb animals and human beings is in the fact that animals are largely guided by instinct while we, who consider ourselves more fortunate, are out on our own with a free pass to make all the mistakes available to us.

How did we get that way?

Until little more than a half-century ago, the prevailing belief of the Christian World, in regard to humanity's origin, was documented in the early pages of the Book of Genesis. In a vaguely located Asian garden, the Creator of all life, having finished the structural jobs of making the earth, separating the seas from the land, lighting the sky, bringing forth vegetation, the fish and an assortment of animals, produced a pair of human beings, endowed with a superior intelligence which promptly expressed an insatiable curiosity.

Any prudent parent knows that it is inadvisable to tell a toddling baby never to open the cellar door, which might result in his falling down the steep stairs and breaking his neck. It is much better to lock the door; for this youth was born with an inquisitive, if not skeptical, mind. If you can't lock the door, at least you shouldn't mention its possibilities; for the oncoming generation is naturally doubtful of the parental wisdom. Perhaps this is the way it was meant to be. If every generation had believed what its Papa and Mama believed, we would all be back in the tree-tops picking fleas off of one another.

But for some reason best known to Himself, the Creator warned Adam and Eve to keep away from a certain tree. They were to have the run of the whole garden; eat anything else that looked attractive—but in no circumstances were they to experiment with the fruit of this particular tree.

Of course there was only one way for that story to come out. You could safely bet on that one. The record says that it was Eve who took the first nibble at the apple; and the minstrels who, for hundreds of years before any of this was put into writing, gallantly explained that a snake told her it was an exceptionally fine apple.

But, be all that as it may, the delicious fruit didn't seem to bother Adam's wife, so he too had a bite, and an Avenging Angel drove them both out of Eden and into the Jungle. This event, in terms of religious doctrine, was known as The Fall of Man.

Modern Science accounts for the human race in a slightly different way. Humanity, according to Biology, gradually evolved, through innumerable ages, from a low form of life. Man never fell from an original state of beauty, grace and glory. He has been struggling up, out of the sea, which he left as a courageous harbor seal, out of the forest where, for millions of years, he looked and acted like a monkey; after which a few of the boldest climbed down and fought it out with the sabertoothed tigers and the lumbering, all-but-brainless dinosaur. He made a stone axe, built a house, raised an altar, set up a government—and began to pay taxes.

Only a little while ago, comparatively, our grandfathers quarreled with one another over the relative truth of these two theories concerning man's origin.

But in actual fact, there isn't so much difference between these beliefs. Traditional Theology says that Man, after a brief sojourn in a beautiful garden, was pitched out into the brush to fend for himself. Modern Science says about the same thing of its primordial Man, omitting the legend concerning the garden. In short, the Adam of the Old Testament and the arbitrarily named "Anthropos" of the New Biology are blood brothers who have done (and some of whom are still doing) time in the Jungle. Ahead of them both lies a long, rough, uphill climb to higher ground. The New Biology, in its more optimistic moments, thinks that Humanity's physical adjustment to its environment may be nearing the end of its mutations, and hints at another phase of our development; this time in the realm of the spiritual. The same prediction was made by the New Testament, where it says, "We are the Children of God; and, while it is not yet apparent what we

may become, we know that when we meet Him, face to face, we shall find ourselves to resemble Him."

Well, what I have been trying to say is: The similarities between the Older Theology and the Newer Biology, in respect to Man, are much more numerous than their disagreements. In any case, the difference between them isn't worth a fight; certainly not by people who like to think of themselves as Christians.

I hope I have not wearied you with this lengthy dissertation on Primitive Man and his probable relation to the Other Animals. To me it has always been a fascinating subject. Had I ever been able to afford such an expensive avocation, I should have bought a shovel and given some time to Anthropology.

Before we leave this intriguing riddle, let me make one more observation about Man and the other intelligent Animals. It concerns Foreign Policy.

What I mean by Foreign Policy, in this connotation, is the attitude of one genus in its effort to live with other genera in the same world. The four-footed Animals, we say, are directed by Instinct, while Man, at liberty to choose his course of action, arrives at his decisions by a process of Trial and Error. In the main, this is true enough for all practical purposes; but there are many examples of Animals who have practiced Trial and Error.

When the horseless carriage graduated from its experimental phase and became a swift and murderous monster, you used to see a few dead chickens along the road in the vicinity of farmhouses. The hen is, by nature, a highly emotional animal. Instinct had never provided her with anything like a Foreign Policy in regard to motorcars. It is a rare occurrence, today, to find a dead hen on the road; the reason being that only the hens which adopted the policy of keeping off the road when the automobile hove in sight survived. Their posterity inherited this valuable legacy.

But, generally speaking, the four-footers have it all over Mankind in this matter of Foreign Relations. The deer, when menaced by the wildcat, takes to his heels. Once upon a time, the early ancestors of this deer probably had short legs; but a pair of them, somewhat taller than their fellows, decided to make a run for it when a wildcat tried to take over; and escaped. Other long-legged ones made similar ventures without success; but it soon became a stern problem of survival. Only the longer-legged ones remained to reproduce their kind. Today, the deer has a definite Foreign Policy: he runs away: he always runs away and keeps on running! He does not stop en route and try to hide.

The rabbit, menaced by the fox, sits still. He knows that he cannot even place or show in a race with a fox. He sits still, very, very still indeed, as did his parents and grandparents before him. He does not get stampeded, at the last minute, and make a dash for it. No, sir; he makes himself as unobtrusive as possible. No vain exhibitionist is our modest little rabbit. He has a passion for anonymity (if one may venture to put a neat, but retired, phrase back into circulation).

But look at Man! With all his alleged superiority of intelligence, as compared with that of the quadrupeds, how well is he doing in the field of foreign relations?

If any of the other species of the genus homo object to testifying in this unofficial investigation, let us restrict our examination to our own beloved land, as of today, in midsummer of 1950. Have we a Foreign Policy?

One day we are cocky and noisy, flexing our biceps. We have a new secret weapon that will make the Atomic Bomb look like a firecracker! And we won't tell anybody, but the enemy, how it is made. Next day, another Big Shot in the Government announces that we couldn't fight if we wanted to: haven't the personnel or the materiel. That day, when the enemy growls, we toss him a sirloin steak, and softly wheedle, "Nice doggy! Good doggy! You say your name is Joe? Let's be pals, Joe! Good old Joe!"

When I began this, all I intended to say was that in some respects Mankind is but little better than the other Animals, even if an ancient king declared that we are "a little lower than the Angels." True, David, true! *Quite* a little *lower*!

It should be borne in mind, too, that Human Evolution has had a better chance to operate in some areas than in others which, of course, demands that the more fortunate Men assume heavier responsibilities; for, "of him, to whom much has been given, shall much be required."

Sometimes we Americans express an angry impatience with the endless border brawls of feuding nations. Why can't they forget their old hatreds, and live in peace with one another, as we of the U.S.A. do with the Canadians?

Be calm, brother! It's much easier to be friendly and sportsmanly along the shores of the St. Lawrence and the Columbia and the Rio Grande, than on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine and the Ganges. It's much easier to contrive three square meals per day in the Mississippi Valley than in the country through which the Volga flows.

While this long harangue has been in progress, more than two years have passed, and I have been growing taller; but I am still my mama's nice little man.

It is nearing Christmas, and there are to be "exercises" at our Monroeville church in celebration of the enchanted night when Shepherds and Kings, indifferent to such trivial matters as social caste and protocol, knelt together in a stable.

Mama had consented to plan the program for our Christmas entertainment. There were plenty of poor folks in Monroeville, and Mama spread the word that something would be done for the ragged children of our town; something more substantial than candy and popcorn. She canvassed the merchants for donations. She even had the nerve to approach Mr. Redelsheimer. He reminded her, with his usual courtesy, that he was a Jew.

"Christmas is not a feast day with my people," he said.

"But you do believe that Jesus was a kind man, who went about doing good; don't you, Mr. Redelsheimer?"

"Yes," agreed Mr. Redelsheimer, "Jesus was a good man; but he was not a God. There is only one God."

"Well," said Mama, "the birthday of a good man is worth a celebration; don't you think?"

Mr. Redelsheimer grinned and asked her what she wanted him to do. She told him what the church was trying to do for poorly clad children, and he said he would think it over.

On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, while a score of the church people were beautifying the tall pine tree with gay baubles, Mr. Redelsheimer came, in person, with twenty-five new suits of boys' clothes and as many woolen dresses for assorted sized girls, together with warm underwear, socks, stockings and shoes.

The Christmas Eve entertainment was an immense success. Papa made a short talk, and so did Mama, who put in a good plug for the Jews in general and Redelsheimer's General Store in particular. Mr. Amasa (Macy) Robinson, the Sunday School Superintendent, also made a little speech.

Monroeville boasted a Ladies' Band. There was one man in it, Gilt Cruszon, who played the big, battered tuba. Every blast he blew puffed his cheeks, and after each piece played he tugged a U-shaped section from its small intestines and poured out a heaping mugful of a dark brown fluid

which Papa, when queried about it, surmised might be tobacco juice; for many men chewed tobacco in those days, no matter what else they were doing at the time. The Ladies' Band did very well, I think. Sometimes two or three of the instruments would be unable to finish a number quite as promptly as the others; but, eventually, they all got through it, and received hearty applause. There were all sorts of pieces spoken. Occasionally a long line of kids would take the platform, carrying large half-concealed cards. Each performer would stammer through a quatrain and hold up his or her card. When they were done, they had spelt MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Mama's nice little man spoke a piece which, like his pants, was much too small for him. As I have told you, it was not customary, in our home, for children to beg for things, after having been refused; nor was it permissible to beg not to be forced to do things; much less stage a revolt. But, that time, when Mama handed me the rather longish poem I was to memorize and recite, I pleaded with tears to be let off. And when my tears were unavailing I got mad. I forget what the babyish doggerel was. Happily for me, I have always been able to forget the details of events that have caused me much suffering. I have even forgotten the names of people who, through the years, have wronged me.

But the Christmas poem I was to recite belonged in the same age-group as "I am Jesus' little lamb." I told Mama I couldn't do it—and, By Golly, wouldn't do it! I made a last-ditch stand, but it was no good. Mama cried. Here she was working her fingers to the bone to make this Christmas thing successful, and her own nice little man was letting her down!

Then Papa happened in on the scene. Mama and I both tried to state our cases, but the prosecution had the better of it. Papa took me aside and said gently that Mama had been working day and night to bring this affair off. She was tired, he said, and you know how it is. Don't upset her, my boy. Do what she wants. You'll feel better about it, in the long run. . . . So—I capitulated.

On the night of the entertainment, when my name was called, I marched bravely up the steps of the gallows and spoke my piece; but I thought I heard some kids giggle, midway of the torture, and I omitted a stanza that had seemed particularly loathsome. When, after a few eternities, I finished and climbed down, Mama said, loudly enough to be heard by the first ten rows, "You left out one verse!" My pride nearly bled to death.

It was not until many years afterward that I understood this well-intended matriarchal tyranny. Mama had dedicated my life to the Lord,

somewhat in the same manner that the boy Samuel had been trained, from his early childhood, for holy orders. Mama was determined to prepare me for the ministry. In her opinion it was, at its very highest and best, a life of self-abnegation and sacrifice. In her zeal to arrive at perfection in molding my character, and setting me apart from the rough and tumble of ordinary boyhood, she had made me a solemn, moody, lonely child.

Mama's nice little man made no defense, nor did he exhibit any signs of annoyance when later, at home, the matter was brought up, as he had feared it might be. Mama was exultant over our smash hit performance; but, in all affairs where the nice little man was involved, she was a perfectionist. She began to chide me for putting on a poor show: I was easily the worst performer of the evening.

At that point, Papa came to my rescue! The whole entertainment, he said, had been fine! If Lloyd hadn't shown much enthusiasm in speaking his piece, it was not to be wondered at. It was much too babyish for a lad of his age. In any case, it was now Christmas Eve, and nobody was to be made unhappy.

It was on that occasion that I made a new acquaintance, whom I loved, ever afterward, with a devotion akin to worship, *my papa*.

5. Papa's Young Protégé

THAT was a tedious winter, memorable for its high gales, heavy snowfalls, wet feet and bad colds.

But when spring finally arrived it came in with all the hustle, bustle and bounce characteristic of the tardy.

Tossing aside its earmuffs and mittens it had the audacity to rebuke us for not having the garden readied for seeding; and why hadn't we mulched the cherry trees?

In a week the country roads had shed their snowdrifts, and the mud had been milled into dust. The mammoth perennial peonies, for which northern Indiana was famed, began to unfold. Soon the tender lettuce leaves spelled my sister's name and mine in the small plots assigned to us.

Bright gold dandelions were peeping through the grass. How happy we always were to see them bloom, and how hard we worked to exterminate them when they began to go to seed. It seemed to be equally true of People. Babies were always welcome but Old Folks could be a pest.

Now that we have the new miracle medicines to prolong life, Old Folks have become a serious threat to the whole "economy," a word that was never used in reference to the nation's financial structure until the Government began to spend far in excess of its income.

When I was a youngster, "economy" meant "economizing"; and if some wastrel, either by incompetence or extravagance, dissipated an estate for which he had been appointed a trustee or executor, his malfeasance was never referred to as "deficit spending"; it was called "embezzlement."

While we lean on our hoes and rest a minute (for we are planting potatoes this morning and the day is hot) let me call your attention to a few other words and phrases which have been earning time-and-a-half for overtime.

A couple of years ago somebody at the seat of government said that something (I forget what) was "within the framework" of something else.

This brought on a veritable deluge of things that were "within the framework." For some inexplicable reason, whenever anything got "within the framework," it meant more taxes, and the private citizen shuddered at the phrase.

Then "package" and "packaging," especially when contained "within the framework," increased the deplorable habit of taxpayers' taking sleeping pills. This was quickly followed by "impact." Everything made an "impact"—and no foolin'. Some words, rarely used until lately, are sick-abed from over-work; "implementation" and "reactivation" being conspicuous among the more pitiable cases. . . . Perhaps we need a new dictionary.

My little brother, Clyde, suffered a painful accident that spring. He had never been a very healthy child: he was subject to severe attacks of indigestion that would put him to bed for days on end.

On this occasion, late in May, the seizure brought on convulsions, quite frightening to behold. Good old Doctor Engle had gone on a long trip into the country. Mama was beside herself with helpless grief, and while she knelt to weep and pray some neighbor woman thought a very hot bath might help the unconscious little boy. The woman heated a wash boiler full of water, and lowered my brother into it. The boiler had a thick copper bottom, but Clyde did not. When they lifted him out, the poor little fellow's buttocks and heels had been burned to the bone.

It was long before the remedies were discovered which come to the aid of such misfortunes. Little Clyde was very ill all summer. Lou did the housework. Mama gave her full attention to my brother whose only moments of freedom from pain were invoked by sedatives. After I had tiptoed about the house for a few days, Papa decided that it would be better for me, and the household too, if he took me along with him on his pastoral errands in the country. I felt quite important, sitting beside my papa in our secondhand buggy. Our elderly horse knew better than to overexert himself on a hot day.

Papa talked about the growing crops, always waved his tall plug hat to farmers cultivating corn; and, if they were close to the "stake-and-rider" rail fence, he would stop for a chat. He knew almost all of them by their first names.

One day, when we hadn't talked for a while, I asked him if Greek was a difficult language to learn. I knew he liked Greek, for he often looked up a word in the lexicon he had used in college.

"It is a beautiful language," he said. "Want to learn the Greek alphabet? It might be fun for you."

I told him I should like that, if he thought I was old enough. And he said that many boys much younger than I had studied Greek. Anyway, the alphabet was easy. The first letter was "alpha."

"Like in our word 'alphabet'?" I inquired.

"Exactly!" said Papa. "That's where our word 'alphabet' came from. And the second Greek letter is 'beta.' "

"Is that where we get the 'bet' in 'alphabet'?" I asked, with mounting interest.

"Of course!" Papa replied, pleased by my enthusiasm. "We speak of learning our 'A B C's.' The Greeks meant the same thing when they spoke of their 'alphabet.' "

"Did their third letter begin with 'C'?" I wondered.

No; this one wasn't quite so easy. The third Greek letter was "gamma," corresponding to our "G." But I was not discouraged. It was an interesting game to play. Papa recited the whole alphabet, and it was no time at all until I could rattle off at least half of it.

"Some day after you have learned to say all of the letters," Papa said, "I may teach you a few of the words."

"Like what?" I was impatient to know.

Papa was thoughtful for a long time.

"Many of their words," he said, "are associated with beautiful stories which help you to remember them. Do you know what a myth is?"

My answer pleased Papa, and made him chuckle a little. I told him that a myth was a fable, like Jack and the Beanstalk and The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe; and, Noah and the Ark, I added for good measure.

"One of the loveliest of the Greek myths," Papa explained, "was about a beautiful young girl who had wings, like a butterfly."

"She must have looked like an Angel," I commented.

"I was just coming to that," said Papa. "That's where the Angels got their wings. It was the Greeks who gave wings to the Angels. This girl, Psyche, was the first to wear them. To the Greeks, Psyche represented the human soul. Now there is another Greek word, 'ology,' which, in our language, means 'the science of,' " Papa continued. "And if you attach 'ology' to 'Psyche' you get 'Psychology,' the science of the soul or the mind."

This was going to be fun! It was the first time Papa had ever played a game with me. I begged for more. But Papa thought it was enough for one day.

"Well—just one more," he said, "and then we'll make sure we know the alphabet. The Greek word 'pathos' means suffering or pain. Whenever one of our English words has 'path' in it, you can usually tell what it means, even if you never saw it before. Do you know what 'pathology' means?"

I shook my head. Then I brightened. I *did* know! I had tacked "ology" onto it.

"Science of pain!" I shouted, happily.

"Right!" said Papa. " 'Sym—path—y,' same pain. You can't really sympathize with anyone unless you, too, have been hurt the same way."

I have gone to some length here to let you know the nature of my relation to my father. As I have said earlier, he never played ball with me, nor did he ever help me make or fly a kite; but by the time I was twelve years old I was possessed of a Greek vocabulary which many a senior in college might have envied me; and it was all acquired while playing Greek word games with Papa. Latin, too, though we both liked Greek better. Papa said the Romans were never as intelligent or as inventive as the Greeks. If this hurts anybody's feelings, I am sorry. I cheerfully admit (if this helps, at all) that the Apostles' Creed is much easier to recite in Latin than in English. In Latin it belongs to a remote age when Christians really did believe in the resurrection of the body.

My papa left us in 1906 to live forever in some more peaceful clime, perhaps in the Elysian Fields, for he was fond of the open country and would be much happier there than in John's gold-paved city where the sun never sets and endless processions march to the music of heavenly choirs.

In the years which have intervened, there have been many occasions when I have wished that I might have a few words with my dear old papa;

especially on the day when I received a book of mine, published in Athens and translated into the language he had loved so well.

☆ ☆ ☆

During the forty-five years of my life between ten and fifty-five, I probably attended more funerals than anyone else of your acquaintance, unless he should be an exceptionally busy mortician; and it is my considered opinion that of all the practices which organized Christianity performs badly the typical funeral service is by far the worst. And this goes for all the churches that I know anything about. At the one hour—of all hours—when Christian faith is put to its severest test, the Church mumbles, falters, stands helpless.

More often than not, the clergyman reads dismembered passages of Scripture. Here is a sample:

"For though after my skin Worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Just what does that mean, if anything at all?

Then follows St. Paul's explanation of what was to be expected on the Last Day. It was his belief that the world would come to an end in his own time. He and his fellow Christians, who were still alive, would be "caught up" to meet the Lord. As for those already gone, it would be Resurrection Day: the graves would be opened and the sea would give up its dead.

Despite the fact that Paul's timing of the Last Day was a miscalculation, we still read it supposedly for the comfort of the bereaved. Perhaps you will be asking me if I have any suggestions to offer for the improvement of our poor performances. Indeed I have; but I fear they are impractical. Perhaps the Mormons could do it. Maybe I shall tell you about it later, if there is time. At the moment, we must get back to these memoirs.

☆ ☆ ☆

My papa was in great demand for funeral services; and, if the weather wasn't too bad, he would take me along. Nearly all funerals, at that time, were held in a church, and the graveyard was always an important part of the church property; an appropriate place for it, I think. The "funeral parlor" and the secular, commercialized, noisily advertised cemetery were yet to appear.

Well within the scope of my lifetime there have been fundamental changes in our general attitude toward the dead. I hope it will not depress you if I speak of them.

Today, if there is a death in the family, by natural causes, the physician or the nurse or a neighbor phones a mortician who arrives in an ambulance with a promptness exceeded only by the Fire Department. The family, still upset emotionally by their bereavement (for, no matter how long the loved one had been ill, the immediate relatives are never quite prepared for the shock), have been herded into a room where they will be unaware of proceedings. The mortician's men quickly and quietly tiptoe out of the house with the so recently vacated tenement of clay; and by the time the family strolls back to the bedchamber, everything has been put to rights. It is as if father or mother or sister Mamie or little Jimmy had never lived there.

And that night, and the next one, sister Mamie (we will say) who had been sick so long that she dreaded to meet strangers, shares communal lodging with a dozen or more in a sort of public dormitory for the dead.

Now I fully agree with you that the real Mamie, who was Mamie, is gone; and that her frail little body is not our precious Mamie at all. But this modern practice of permitting our dead to be grabbed up, while still warm, by total strangers, and hustled at top speed to a place of business, to be impersonally operated on by embalmers and beauticians, is the most cold-blooded performance that our era of efficiency and assembly-line production has achieved.

Of course the old way of handling these sad affairs was immeasurably worse. There were a couple of days when mortality had much the best of it over any calm consideration of the spiritual Life Eternal. The home was full of the confusion of distant relatives, friends of the family, neighbors, and comparative strangers who had come out of curiosity, expecting to be shown the corpse, preferably by the next of kin, who was thoroughly worn out before the torture was ended.

I think it would be a good thing if every church had a little chapel where the remains of our departed could be taken, after having been embalmed in the privacy of the home. That might help to solve the dilemma. As the matter stands today, the Church, which should be prepared to offer the physical equipment and spiritual counsel so urgently needed on such occasions, is missing a great opportunity to be of service.

The typical country funeral of sixty years ago was, as I have stated earlier, an event of general public interest.

Papa and I would drive first to the bereaved home and head the long procession of buggies and carriages to the church. Usually the remains of the deceased would be conveyed in a hearse provided by an undertaker from a neighboring town who was primarily a furniture dealer. In that case he would have brought a coffin with him.

At the church door, everybody but the drivers would disembark. Papa would get out and I (feeling very important) would drive to the first vacant hitching rack; and, having made sure our horse wouldn't get into trouble, I would slip into one of the rear pews. The church would be full; and in one of the "Amen corners" (a group of about four pews on either side of the pulpit platform) a choir of twenty or more adults, mostly young farmers' wives, would be ready to go into action at the appearance of the funeral cortege.

It would be entering now, Papa leading; and the choir would shrilly blast the peace of the countryside:

> Uh—sleep in JEEZ—ZUZ—Bless—ud sleep,
> From which none EV—VER wakes to weep.

By now the coffin, in the hands of a half-dozen husky farmers, is squeezing through the narrow aisle, followed by the close relatives, in the order of their relationship, the men leaving their hats on. I do not know why the men kept their hats on. Papa thought the custom might have originated with the idea that the male relatives were so stricken with grief that they forgot to take their hats off.

I know that my papa never wilfully tried to make these sorrowing people cry. What he had to say was spoken in calmness and reassurance. But it was obvious that the choir would be contented with nothing less than an emotional storm. In their opinion, that's what funerals were for; to give the bereaved a chance to cry it all out.

Indeed it was common practice, in the country, for an officiating minister to stress the family's loneliness and "the vacant chair" until the whole congregation would have lost all control of its emotions, and would be howling like dogs.

Papa used to tell us of an old "Pennsylvania Dutch" preacher who specialized in such performances. Once, according to Papa's recollection, the good old man, while "preaching the funeral" of an octogenarian, said,

“Now ven you get home, vadder vill not be dere. You vill set down to dinner, and vadder vill not be dere. You vill go to vadder’s bedroom to see dat he is comfort—able, and vadder vill not be dere. Everywhere dere vill be a lackancy!”

But I must get on—and out of this gruesome subject. I’m half-sorry now that I ever got you into it, though I do think it is of quite important psychological interest.

Now the funeral sermon is ended and it is time to “view the remains.” Beginning with the rear pews, presumably occupied by those farthest removed from the close neighbors, long-time friends and the relatives, the audience marches slowly forward to pass the coffin; mothers lifting up bewildered three-year-old tots for their last (and probably their first) look at the deceased.

This seems an endless business. The tension mounts as the procession begins to draw upon the forward pews containing cousins once or twice removed. Now, at last, the immediate family huddles about the coffin, in a complete breakdown. More likely than not, the cold face is kissed. I have seen a mother tuck a warm shawl around the throat and shoulders of the departed.

There is more singing: “Shall We Gather at the RIV—VER?”

We are out in the cemetery now, at the graveside, where a great heap of black soil and yellow clay is held back by a pile of fence rails. Leather lines, borrowed from some farmer’s team, are looped under the coffin, and strong arms lower it into the flimsy pine rough-box, the lid to which quickly follows. Papa reads the conventional “Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God . . . we commit this body to the ground: Earth to earth.”

A neighbor, with a shovel heaped high with dirt, would dump it onto the lid of the rough-box, and an anguished cry would burst forth from the family.

“Ashes to ashes.”

Another shovelful bounced and rattled on the rough-box, and another wail came from the bereaved.

“Dust to dust.”

More dirt and more crying. Then the shovels really went to it with a vim. At least a dozen men joined in the prompt filling of the grave. The fence

rails were tossed aside; and, in less time than it takes to tell it, the grave would be shaped to the age-old pattern.

Then everybody grew quiet and Papa would be ready to pronounce the benediction. But before he did that, he would say, “Friends are invited to return to the family residence for refreshments.”

Now that it was all over, the community felt an immediate sensation of relief, and made no bones about it. The men, amazingly cheered, strolled out to the hitching racks, discussing their crops on the way. The women, who had barely spoken to one another, ambled out in groups, lightheartedly exchanging news of their families.

At the residence of the bereaved, a dozen or more of the women living in the neighborhood had set long tables in the dooryard, under the trees, loaded with heaping platters of fried chicken, cold baked ham, potato salad, pickled beets, deviled eggs, homemade bread, fruit preserves, every known variety of pie, and beautiful cakes with white icing and glamorized by little red cinnamon drops.

Naturally the women of the family received tender attention. They could smile now. It was a wan, weary little smile, but it was a smile; for they had cried until they could cry no more. And the men of the family, who had been out in the barn, were patted on the shoulder by the neighbors who had put the team away in their stalls and filled their feedboxes with the right amount of oats. Then the men would gather around the table. They were hungry. Within an hour, you wouldn’t have guessed that any of these people had attended a funeral. They had cried it all out. I used to cry, too, even when I had never seen a member of this family before. Some kindhearted woman, seeing the Reverend’s little boy with swollen eyes, would bring him another drumstick.

During the thirty years of my own ministry, great changes came to pass in the conduct of funerals. Now, at the appointed hour, a limousine calls for the family. At the mortuary, the casket, surrounded by floral gifts from friends, is already waiting for the service.

The officiating clergyman is ready, too. Perhaps he pauses, before entering the small chancel, to shake hands with the mourners who are tucked away, out of the view of the friends who have come to pay their respects. The funeral service is brief and usually impersonal. When it is ended, all the friends of the family go their way, and the relatives are quietly sneaked out a rear door and into the limousine for the ride to the cemetery. There the earth has been carted away. Rugs, in imitation of green grass, cover all the raw

spots on the ground. The grave is lined with some green fabric. The casket is waiting on a mechanical chassis, well covered with flowers. If it is an inclement day, a commodious tent has been erected to keep the weather out.

The minister reads from a little black book, and the casket, almost imperceptibly, apparently of its own volition, begins to descend. (When these gadgets first came in vogue, they frequently got stuck, refusing either to complete the job or back up. On these embarrassing occasions, a male relative would remain to see the matter through, while the rest of the family was packed off home at 30 mph.)

But, assuming that everything is working properly, the casket begins its descent while the minister reads from his liturgy. When he arrives at "Earth to earth," the mortician lets a handful of rose petals flutter down.

Everybody is spared the shock of seeing shovels in action. The bereaved may have wept quietly, but there has been no emotional release; much less emotional collapse.

That is still to come! They take all their unrelieved grief home with them. They take it to bed with them. It may darken their days. It may make them a perplexing problem to their best friends. It sometimes takes them to the psychiatrist.

No; I'm not recommending a return to the old way of dealing with this most painful of all the dilemmas faced by lonely people who have survived their best-beloved. I am sure the old way was much too heart-rending. But the modern way, which refuses to permit any measure of relief and hides away the sorrowing ones from so much as a handclasp and a sympathetic pat on the shoulder, is wrong; all wrong, and nothing less or else than wrong.

The first funeral I ever conducted was held in our church, but the interment was to be in a country graveyard many miles from town. As I had very few country parishioners, I did not own a horse and buggy. The bereaved family was poor. We wanted to spare these good people any unnecessary expense; so the undertaker drove the hearse and I sat perched high beside him.

It was a very hot day. The graveyard, evidently not used much, was overgrown with tall timothy hay. The old care-taker, who apparently hadn't cared very far beyond the call of duty, met our little cortege at the open gate.

“I don’t know jest how yer a-goin’ t’ make out,” he ’lowed. “The boys ran into a yallerjackets’ nest; and they’s a-buzzin’ around right thick like at the grave.”

But this was no time to abandon the business that had brought us here. We drove on to the graveside. I firmly intend to spare you the details of this event. The committal service was brief and to the point. If I left anything out, there were no complaints. The relatives were too busy fighting yellowjackets to pay much attention to what we had come to do. Nobody lingered.

As boy and man, I think I have seen about everything happen to disturb the orderly procedure of a funeral.

Once, during the early days of my ministry, on the half-mile trip from the church to the cemetery, the team attached to the pallbearers’ large conveyance, frightened by the band, ran away.

The deceased, prominent in county politics, had been an incorrigible “jiner.” In the procession, far ahead of clergy, hearse, pallbearers, family, etc., marched, in full uniform, the Knights Templar, I.O.O.F., Modern Woodmen, Junior Order of American Mechanics, Elks, Moose, and more.

The frightened horses took off for the country by the shortest route which lay straight ahead. At full gallop they plunged through the long files of marching men who scurried to the fences making no effort to defend themselves with the axes and swords with which they were armed.

At a funeral I conducted, some twenty-five years ago, a belated family of relatives arrived at the cemetery after the casket had been lowered to what had been referred to as its last resting place, and firmly insisted on seeing Auntie. Everybody but the protagonists of this idea thought that it was an immensely foolish thing to do; but the late-comers held their ground. It took a long time, but we did it. A lot of relatives weren’t on speaking terms when they left for home.

In that same cemetery I once quite unintentionally lost a whole procession of out-of-town people. In Akron, Ohio, there is an old cemetery, far out in the country when it was established, but more recently encircled by the rapidly growing city. Akron is a hilly place, and this cemetery is an ideal spot to get lost in unless you are familiar with its winding roads. Customarily the undertaker sent a car for me, so I had never paid very close attention to the geography of that burial ground. On this particular occasion, an interment was to be made here by people living some fifty miles away. I

was to have the committal service at the grave, and I had phoned my friend the undertaker that I would drive my own car as I had another errand to do immediately afterward.

Someone from the undertaker's establishment met me at the gate and piloted me to the grave. The out-of-town people had already arrived. After the committal service was over, and I had said good-bye to my new friends from a distance, I climbed into my car and drove away. As I proceeded, it began to occur to me that I couldn't recognize anything but the half-dozen cars I saw in my mirror.

Around and around we went, over little hills and through unfamiliar valleys, my pursuers relentlessly keeping up. I indecorously gave my engine more gas and so did the hapless strangers who had a right to believe that I could be trusted to lead them out of their predicament.

Now, to my horror, we began racing through tortuous roads which I recognized! Surely we had been this way before; maybe a couple of times before! Then, to my immeasurable relief, my pursuers left me. I had taken a right turn and they had gone straight ahead. So I turned around quickly and followed them. Eventually they found an exit. If the strangers hadn't become suspicious of my leadership, we might all be driving around in that cemetery yet. I never met any of these people afterward: I never wanted to, though they had impressed me as being well worth a further acquaintance.

Late in my papa's life, one of his old cronies told him a story that amused him very much, apropos of the odd situations which occasionally turn up in the course of a clergyman's life.

There was to be a home funeral service for an elderly person whose church, at the time, was without a minister. A retired clergyman, living in a city some distance away, had promised to come and officiate; but, at the last minute, when the house was full and running over with relatives and friends, a telegram was received, stating that the minister had missed the only available train that would get him there in time.

One of the neighbors remembered that a young clergyman, of another denomination, had just moved into the community; so somebody was dispatched to request his immediate attention to the predicament. The young man cheerfully consented and presently arrived, out of breath but full of importance, to find the house packed and waiting to get on with it.

Without pausing to make inquiries about the deceased, not even knowing whether the departed was a man or a woman, the young man launched upon

a beautiful discourse about Death and the Life to Come; but after he had referred to "our transformed loved one," and "the departed spirit," so redundantly that he had begun to feel the urgent need of some more personal pronouns, he edged toward a woman seated within reach of a whisper, and asked, behind his hand, "Brother or sister?" And she replied, "Cousin."

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Papa officiated at many weddings. I cannot remember of any held at one of our country churches. Sometimes, but not often, the wedding would occur at the home of the bride. There would be many guests and a sumptuous dinner.

More often the young couple, perhaps accompanied by a few friends, would come to the parsonage. If they came alone, Mama and my sister Lou would serve as witnesses, though I was invited to see the rite performed.

Papa never used the conventional ceremony printed in the little black book. He had composed a brief, practical ceremony which made no allusion to the mating of Adam and Eve in the Garden. Nor did it inquire whether anyone in the audience wanted to put a stop to these proceedings. He felt that it was much too late to be asking such questions.

My mama was a good-looking woman, but especially beautiful, I thought, at a wedding; for on these occasions she crimped her hair and wore something soft, white and lacy at her throat; ruching, I think it was called. It made her look quite gay and youthful. I know Papa liked it too, and was quite proud of her.

Mama was always given the wedding fees which she saved for special purposes. I am not implying that she gave extra attention to wedding parties in hope of a generous fee, but it is a fact that she never crimped her hair on any other occasion.

Papa had his own formula for encouraging a decent reimbursement at a wedding. If the bridegroom handed him less than five dollars, which happened much too frequently, Papa gave them a plain, black and white certificate, bearing the vital statistics of the event. If they paid him five dollars, which was considered good, they were given a larger certificate, with a fancy border in color, and two oval apertures where photographs of the bride and groom could be inserted. If they gave him *ten* dollars, they got a beautiful certificate, with Angels and Cupids romping around the border, and three oval slots for pictures, the third one containing a photograph of

Papa. These extra special certificates were usually framed and hung in the parlor of the new home; and were supposed to help business. I can't remember of Papa's receiving more than ten dollars for a wedding; but ten dollars was quite an impressive amount of money in the eighteen-eighties.

Funeral fees were not included in Mama's perquisites. Papa said he didn't want to take the risk of Mama's being pleased when someone died. He said it playfully, of course; but it was a fact that Mama was gratified when she was given some money to save, no matter where it came from.

And now that we are momentarily thinking about money, perhaps this would be a suitable place to record some facts about the country minister's income.

My papa's salary, when we lived in Monroeville, was $600 annually, in cash, the free use of the parsonage, and donations. By cash I mean cash. He was never paid by check; nor did he ever draw a check himself. He had no banking connections. Our most impressive piece of furniture was a tall combination bookcase with glass doors, and desk which, when lowered on its hinges, disclosed a row of pigeonholes and two small drawers. Beneath the desk were three large drawers containing blankets and other bedclothes not in immediate use. Papa wrote his letters at this desk, a very inconvenient arrangement, for there was no place below it for the accommodation of one's knees. I recall that even as a little boy I wondered how anybody in his right mind could have invented such an unhandy thing. I could much more easily understand why and how Papa could have bought it: he was probably in the middle of an amusing story he had been telling to the furniture dealer, and said yes he would take it, just like that, rather than have his attention diverted from the story.

In one of the small drawers of this so-called "secretary," we kept our money; all of it. There would be a few large and dirty ones and twos, a couple of fives, maybe a ten; also a dozen or more silver dollars and an assortment of smaller coin. We all had access to this drawer. Perhaps, in the late afternoon, Mama would tell me to take a quarter and go down to the butcher shop and buy a half-dozen pork chops. They would be large ones, too, about three quarters of an inch thick. I do not know what that many king-size pork chops would cost today, but I am sure that the price would be higher.

I think I am safe in saying that Papa's cash salary of $600 in 1888 was the equivalent of at least $2000 at present. The value of a dollar depends entirely on its purchasing power. I do not pretend that this is a startling new

discovery of mine; but the fact is that many people seem not to have realized the truth of it. Every day your dollar, no matter where you keep it, in bank, in insurance, in stocks or bonds, or in a little drawer of your desk, is worth a little less than it was worth yesterday.

In addition to Papa's income, which was really much better than it sounds, there were the donations; no trivial matter, these donations.

On a certain day, probably early in December, after a heavy snowfall that had put all wheels off the road and brought out the sleighs and bobsleds, a large delegation of people belonging to the three churches farthest away, would arrive, whole families of them, about ten o'clock. Most of the younger ones would take off immediately for the downtown stores, and some of the older ones too; but enough remained to prepare a noon dinner for everybody. Dining tables were borrowed and expanded. Benches, stored in the loft of our woodhouse, would be brought in and dusted. Our large cooking stove was covered with great iron skillets loaded with the fat, yellow-legged cockerels that our friends had brought with them.

Out in the barn, the men would be dumping large bags of oats into one of the tall bins, and filling another with corn. There would be large sacks of bran, too.

The communal dinner was necessarily served in relays, for the party was large and the seating accommodations were limited, but I do not recall that there was any impatience on the part of those who had to wait. Most of these, I think, were of the younger fry who had been making small purchases at the stores, or "window shopping."

All things are relative; and the little town of Monroeville, in the eyes of teen-agers from deep in the country, may have had the stature of a metropolis.

Dinner for everybody was dispatched quickly. Farmers were not in the habit of lingering over their meals. They came to the table for only one reason and they attended to this business with a minimum of conversation. It was not long before everything had been cleared away, and the donations were brought into our kitchen from the sleds and sleighs. Good-byes would be said and our benefactors, peeling the blankets from their horses, would climb into their vehicles and make off to the accompaniment of a jubilant jingle of sleigh bells, bound for the long trip home.

Now we would take an inventory of our newly acquired blessings. If the minister and his family were fond of smoked ham, smoked bacon and

smoked sausage, they wouldn't have to buy any meat for many months. We would find large tin buckets of lard, stone jars of butter put down in salt, dozens of eggs put down in a loathsome solution of some slippery stuff, dozens of tin cans containing tomatoes, and more dozens of canned corn, though Mama was always suspicious of tinned corn after a can had exploded one night about 3 A.M., waking everybody up and requiring the walls and ceiling of the pantry to be repainted.

We had glass jars of cherries, plums, peaches, currants, gooseberries, blackberries, raspberries (the black ones; there were no red raspberries at that time), bags of large potatoes and apples, bags of hickory nuts and walnuts, dozens of glasses of jellies, jams, and other, fruit preserves, sweet and sour cucumber pickles, sauerkraut, and pickled crab apples, very good and very pretty.

The job of disposing of these gifts was by no means a simple task. We were not at liberty to sell any of these things, even if there had been a market for them; and it was risky business to give them away, for if some woman discovered that we had given one of her glass jars of plums away, it might hurt her feelings. Mama did give away many highly perishable food products, under promise of a cross-your-heart, hope-to-die secrecy; but it was more blessed to receive than give such presents.

Now we had to clean house from top to bottom, for the day's entertainment of that many people, half of them small children, was almost enough of a disaster to have alerted the Red Cross (had that useful institution been available). Yes; and all this had to be repeated in March or early April, when it was too muddy for the farmers to get into their fields; for the three churches nearest us would come then with their donations.

It usually happened that when some particular fruit was had in great abundance, we would be literally smothered with it on these occasions. Once, when there had been an exceptionally large crop of apples, we were given apples in every conceivable manner in which an apple might be preserved.

At the end of this eventful day, Papa was seated in his favorite rocking chair, placidly rocking when Mama, weary beyond any words to sing of it, came in and announced almost tearfully, "Papa, we have *eighteen gallons* of apple butter!"

Papa chuckled a little; and, reaching for her hand, fondled it.

“But it isn’t funny,” Mama said, soberly. “What on earth will we do with this much apple butter?”

“We’ll paint the barn!” said Papa.

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I have tried to give you a fair and honest picture of this great and good man who could so easily have been a success as an actor or a novelist, who could have been a successful lawyer had he continued in that profession, who could have graced some metropolitan pulpit had he aspired to such a distinction. But his heart was in the open country and he loved best the simple life of country people.

Sometimes, I think, he had a brief touch of nostalgia when he remembered his days as an attorney. He often reminded his congregation, when preaching on some text in Romans or Galatians, or Ephesians, that the Apostle Paul was a lawyer. His favorite sermons pictured Paul pleading his cause before Felix, or Agrippa, or Gallio.

He had no interest in the high-pressure evangelism so widely practiced at the time of his ministry. He thought it dishonest to work on the emotions of a congregation, night after night, in a “protracted meeting,” where three or four leather-lunged people would be encouraged to moan and howl in competitive prayer while the choir sang, “Just Now: Come to Jesus Just Now, Just Now.” It was his belief that most persons who embraced the Christian faith in such circumstances were quickly disillusioned. Oh, he could have stirred an audience to panic, if he had wanted to; no doubt of that! But he detested such tactics; and, in my opinion, his integrity adds to his stature.

My papa was about as free of prejudice as any person I ever met. He was always a booster for the underdog, always gave a suspect the benefit of the doubt. Although a loyal supporter of the Foreign Missions undertaken by his denomination, he often told me privately (what it would have been imprudent to say publicly) that an American Christian should think twice before deriding the age-old, inherited faith of a foreigner’s race and nation. How often he repeated the Master’s recorded words, “And other sheep have I which are not of this fold.”

Papa often stressed the importance of kindness and peace in the home. Divorces were rare in those days, and persons who invoked this solution of their domestic problems were usually considered to have brought a measure

of disgrace upon themselves, regardless of the reason for it. My papa felt that almost any solution was preferable to family bickering and strife.

He knew of one household in which the parents hadn't spoken to each other for twelve years. When supper was ready, Maw would say, "Tildie, tell yer pap supper's ready," and Pap, seated a few feet away, would be told that supper was ready. All the communication these people had with one another was cleared through one of the children, several of whom were born while this feud was on.

The older people of our church in Monroeville remembered a choice story about the family of a minister who had served them many years before we came along. It was a large, noisy family composed of parents who often disagreed and a half-dozen or more teenage-and-up sons and daughters who didn't always see eye to eye on domestic problems; but, for all that, Monroeville liked them. It is a disquieting fact (but a fact) that people are more often loved for their imperfections than for their inimitable righteousness.

This clergyman's family were poor. There were too many of them to thrive on their father's meager salary; and the legend about them candidly admitted that the kids were all too lazy to work. As a sample of their poverty, one story had it that sixteen-year-old Jim was sent downtown to find his brother Bill, aged eighteen; and, finding him sitting on a curbstone in a long row of other loafers, said, "Bill, Pop wants you should hurry home. He's gotta go to a funeral, and he wants the shirt."

For the relief of these unprosperous people, the members of the Monroeville congregation once planned a "surprise party" for them. This benevolent conspiracy involved an invitation to the entire family of the parsonage for evening dinner at one of their parishioners' homes. And while they were absent, the membership of the congregation invaded the deserted parsonage, bringing with them large supplies of food. Then, having filled the kitchen and dining room with their gifts, they turned out all the lights and sat down, most of them on the floor, to wait.

It was to be, as I have said, a "surprise party"; and, as a surprise, it was a complete success. On the way home, the minister's entire household had got itself into a rip-snorting quarrel, with no holds barred, and punches permitted below the belt.

The silent, waiting surprisers could hear them coming down the street, long before Pop clumsily inserted the big iron key in the front-door lock. It was quite too late for the stunned congregation to escape by the back door.

They sat transfixed, and waited while their minister who, at the moment, was in the middle of an address that fully expressed his disapproval of all his children and his wife and his job and the town he lived in and all the people in it: They waited, I say, while he drew down the hall hanging lamp, scratched a match on the seat of his pants, and had his surprise.

Sometimes—not very often—my good mama would (as the current saying goes) blow her top. It might occur on washday when she was very tired and easily annoyed. It never lasted long; but while it lasted, there was a good deal of it, and one could only imagine what inclement weather the poor sailors frequently encounter on the sea.

On these occasions, my papa, if at home, would drag his old hickory rocking chair into the little alcove that jutted from our front parlor, and softly sing a hymn remembered from his childhood. I recall only one stanza. Perhaps there was only one.

My days are glid-ing swift-ly by,
And I, a pilgrim, stran-ger,
Would not de-tain them as they fly,
These hours of toil and dan-ger.

How dearly did this kindhearted old man love peace! Often and often he recited the text, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.” He would be greatly distressed, I fear, if he were with us now.

6. Music Lessons

IF only June could have been induced to furnish the climate in northern Indiana all the year round, Papa might have continued indefinitely as pastor of the Monroeville charge; but those long drives through howling blizzards and bottomless mud were getting him down.

During our fourth winter there he was afflicted with bad colds and a tedious attack of influenza (at that time known as "la grippe"), an enervating malady that often persisted until it was equivalent to a pernicious anemia.

So, when it had become apparent that we would have to go someplace where Papa's work would not involve so much exposure to rough weather, synodical communications were again set up with this end in view; and, early the next autumn, Mama regretfully packed our well-battered household tackle and we moved to an excited town of 2000 population in Ohio.

The reason for the excitement was the current discovery of natural gas, previously unknown in that region. Long an undistinguished, clean and quiet shopping center for a prosperous farming area and a pleasant place for the retirement of Old Folks when the farm was turned over to son Jim, now ugly wooden derricks were everywhere about and drills clattered in their casings all the way round the clock.

The street lamps burned all day because it was cheaper than to pay the old lamplighter to turn them off. Small industries, attracted by the prospect of inexpensive fuel, needled the local merchants to buy stock in their concerns to pay for their migration. The town was, as I have indicated, in what is modernly called a tizzy. This gas boom, incidentally, was of brief duration. It was not long before the City Council was hiring a man to turn off the street lights at dawn, and in a few years the municipality had resumed its former habits and dimensions.

I have not bothered to name this pleasant little city for the reason that some very highly thought-of family may be living there now whose great-grandfather might have been the crusty old Treasurer of Papa's church and the Chairman of the School Board and Top Man on the Leading Bank's Totem Pole.

Should you be really frenetic about finding this place, board your automobile at Toledo and you can drive to it in less than an hour. In the past sixty years its population has increased only about fifty per cent, which indicates that it hasn't changed very much since our brief residence there.

As is customary with towns of that size, our town was over-supplied with Protestant churches, most of them engaged in a struggle for survival which included cannibalism and other predatory practices traditionally frowned upon by the statesmen who write the unwritten laws governing international warfare.

But if there was any one of the eight or ten competitive churches that might be said to be a little more prosperous than the others it was Papa's. The sanctuary was a handsome brick structure located on a prominent corner, and the membership included many of the Older and Better Families.

Papa's salary was $800 per annum and he had to go to the Leading Bank, on the first of each month, to get this $66.66; for the Treasurer of our church was also the Big Shot in the bank who seemed to enjoy the sensation of seeing his betters wag their tails and bark for their bones.

Incidentally, I knew later of a similar case where the minister, a rather sensitive fellow, was compelled to return to the bank two or three times for his pittance because Mr. Big was "in conference" and mustn't be disturbed. As I have said, earlier in this document, I do not believe in hell; but sometimes I wonder. I might be mistaken about that. So, if you believe in hell, don't let anything that I have said affect your faith.

My papa's income also included the free use of a commodious parsonage on a shady street not far from the church. I do not recall any donation parties. That sort of thing was practiced only in country parishes, and we were now living in a town that wanted to be a city. It has been my observation that a town of 2000 people is more formal, at its top social level, than the typical midwestern city of 200,000.

Papa enjoyed his preaching here and his Sunday congregations grew. And he greatly appreciated the music which was provided by a male quartet. These four old cronies, then in their fifties, had furnished the special music, without compensation, for many years. After they had sung an anthem, always *a cappella*, and had resumed their chairs, each man reached into his vest pocket and brought up a little lozenge to nibble on. I thought their close harmony was the most wonderful music to be had in a religious service. It was the first time I had ever heard any vocal counterpoint that was better than a screech: It was so melodious and reverent that it moved me to tears.

The ladies of our parish were prompt to call on Mama, but our parsonage was far from being the popular rendezvous and comfort station that we had maintained in Monroeville, and Mama missed the neighborly chats to which she had been accustomed. Her happy talent for making new friends had shone to much better advantage in the little village or in the open country where one didn't leave an engraved card when paying a call, and didn't have to decide whether to accept an invitation to join the Browning Society. When it came to the three R's, Mama knew her way around, but what she didn't know about the gifted Mr. Browning was comparable only to her experience with champagne and caviar. Mama was lonely and lost.

My sister was unhappy too. She was a young lady now. In Monroeville it hadn't mattered so much that she was not permitted to dance. Plenty of seventeen-year-old girls belonged to churches that disapproved of dancing and card-playing: they disapproved of the theater, too, though that prohibition was of academic interest only, as there were no theaters. It was also customary for ministers and other persons of great rectitude to inveigh heavily against "dime novels." I often wished I could see a "dime novel": I wondered what there was about them that deserved all the mauling they received. I once asked Papa whether he thought it was wrong to read "dime novels," and he didn't know: he had never seen one.

As for Lou, in Monroeville there had been parties that pulled taffy and played charades. But now that we were in a big town that yearned to be a city, youngsters about to graduate from high school did not pull taffy. They rolled back the rugs and danced. My sister was a very lonesome girl. She cried often and had little to say. The last straw laid upon her overburdened camel was an episode involving roller-skating. This was the latest craze among young people in their upper teens. There were two or three halls down town where high-school students of Lou's age and young married folks met, on Friday and Saturday evenings, to practice the new sport. Lou had been invited and was keen on going. She had flown a trial balloon about it, several times, during family table talk, without stirring any interest. But on the occasion I speak of, my sister was in earnest.

Supper was over. Papa had gone to his study, adjacent to the living room. Mama and Lou were just finishing the dishes. Lou had been saying that she did wish, ever so much, that she could go roller-skating, and Mama had said that she had better not.

It wasn't at all like my docile sister to argue about anything, but as she and Mama came in from the kitchen and sat down, Lou asked, "*Why* not?"

This surprised Mama a little, but she tried to be patient. Well, for one thing, she said, we couldn't afford it.

But it only cost a quarter, Lou said, and she still had the money that Steve had sent her on Christmas.

But the skates will have to be bought, Mama said, and they will be expensive. It would be much better to save that money for something she needed.

The skates would cost only two-fifty, Lou said, and she had enough money to pay for them.

Mama wasn't getting anywhere with this line of argument, so she thought up another reason. All sorts of people were going to these roller-skating places. Some of our church members might not approve of it, and we wouldn't want to do anything that might hurt Papa; now would we?

But lots of the young people from our church go there, Lou said. Surely there couldn't be any harm in it.

But Papa hadn't been at all well, Mama said, and we shouldn't do anything that might worry him.

Lou mumbled something that sounded like "Nonsense." And Mama said "*What?*" And Lou said, "Papa isn't sick. He has never preached better in his life! Look how his congregations are growing! More people every Sunday! More young people, too!"

The conversation had modulated to a higher key; and Papa, doubtless noticing its animation, imprudently strolled in and sat down, without realizing what he was getting into.

"You're feeling well, aren't you, Papa?" Lou inquired.

"Never felt better in my life!" said Papa.

I realize that this is not the time or place for me to pause and deliver an address; but it must be done somewhere in this book, and it will be just as appropriate here as anywhere else. It was true, as Mama had said, that Papa wasn't very well. He was sixty-two now and had been slowed up, more than a little, by the energy-sapping siege of flu. But he wasn't going to let his physical condition discommode other people if he could help it.

But while we are on the subject I want to make a speech entitled, *The Tyranny of the Chronic Invalid*. I never spoke on this subject publicly before, but I wish I had; for it is an important matter.

I have known homes that were completely wrecked by a selfish old mother with "a heart condition" which she could turn on and off like a faucet. The utterly devastating thing about her heart ailment was she really did have an erratic heart. She had had her own way about everything for so long that when someone else in the family wanted to do something that mother objected to, the old lady would have a heart attack, a real one, too, that would bring the doctor at full gallop. And the family would have to give in, after which mother quickly pulled out of it.

Of course she needn't have had these spells. She could have minded her own business, if she had any, and given the other members of the household a chance to live their lives with freedom and joy. I do hope that some nice old lady, who has been clubbing daughter Fanny with her bad ticker until son-in-law Bill goes alone to the bowling alley (or some place) of an evening, happens upon this book.

A few years ago I had a long, pathetic letter from a woman in her later thirties who had a good secretarial position and lived at home with her mother. Her brothers and sisters had married and were in homes of their own. Her mother loved her devotedly; much too devotedly, but she was not in very good health and any little fretting made her ill. Her mother, she wrote, would sit at the front window and wait for her return at five-forty-five, and if she was fifteen minutes late, she would find her mother badly upset. Several years before, she had fallen in love with a fine fellow who wanted her to marry him; but mother had cried and cried, and was really ill over it.

So, she had asked Jack if he would be willing to have mother live with them; and Jack hadn't wanted to, but finally consented. Only now she had Mother to persuade that this would be a good way to settle it; but that had put Mother to bed. No, Mother had no particular objection to Jack; but we were so happy, just the two of us. And so, the letter went on, she had told Jack that they would have to give it up.

Only they hadn't. That was the part of it that she wanted to tell me about. (I had thought I saw it coming; for the letter didn't sound as if it had been written by someone with a red nose and swollen eyes caused by weeping.)

She had asked Mother, one day, if she could take care of herself all right if she went to visit Madge over the week-end. Madge lived a hundred miles away. Mother thought that would be fine. She would get along very well, by herself, over Sunday. So, she had left home Friday afternoon, but she hadn't

gone to visit Madge. She had written to Madge, telling her all about it, and Madge had replied "Goody!"

Now this was where *I* came in. My unknown friend said her conscience didn't trouble her one bit. And she had been paying these fictitious week-end visits to Madge quite frequently. Everybody was happy, including mother. No, sir; her conscience hadn't bothered her. But what did *I* think of it?

During the past score of years I have been receiving quite a lot of mail making comments upon stories I have written or asking questions about them. Such correspondence, I believe, is called "fan" mail. And my mailbox also contains many letters on all manner of subjects. It would be quite impossible for me to answer all of these letters myself, and get anything else done; so my secretary replies to most of them, saying about what she thinks any sensible person would say on such occasions.

But, once in a while, a letter will turn up that takes some doing. In the case of this particular letter, I sat down at my typewriter and experimented with a reply. I told this girl that she would be sorry, some day; that nice people didn't do such things; that she had better make her mother's last days happy, and incidentally save her own soul.

I closed the letter with every good wish, and pulled it out of the machine. On rereading it, I didn't like it, and decided to try it again. One phrase of the reply I had written piqued my imagination: it was my implication that her mother, quite evidently her senior, might die sometime. It would be droll, I figured, to ask her if she had ever considered poisoning her mother. It wouldn't be much worse than what she had been doing. But perhaps she had no sense of humor. In any case I shouldn't want her to be showing the letter to her friends. So I tried it again.

This time I wrote her a real scorcher! If what she had foolishly called her conscience didn't trouble her, there was certainly no excuse for her pestering *me* with her problems. I told her I was a busy man, and didn't thank people for dumping their misdemeanors into my lap and asking me to figure them up on my adding machine. I told her she had no right to send questions of that nature to total strangers!

But when I looked this letter over I was aghast to discover that it was the equivalent of plenary absolution. So, I tore up all the letters I had written, and decided to stand on my constitutional rights. I wasn't obliged to answer her letter at all; and I didn't.

I knew of a case where a selfish old man practically imprisoned his three daughters. He, too, was an invalid, and kept the three of them on the jump, waiting on him "hand and foot." He went to bed promptly at eight-thirty and it distressed him if there was any stirring about the house after that hour. The old fellow hung right on, too, lacking the grace to die until he was eighty and his girls were long past the mating period. He often told them what a fortunate family they were, and how happy they all had been. (End of harangue on *The Tyranny of the Chronic Invalid*.)

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So—now the fat was in the fire. Mama, by virtue of seniority and well-established custom, stated the case with vigor. We couldn't afford it. The church wouldn't like it. And she was for putting her foot down on it, right now!

But when Lou came to bat it was easily to be seen that we had gone far past the place for the putting down of feet. My habitually obedient sister wasn't merely disappointed: she was 212° angry, and didn't care who knew it! We wanted her to be a pious old spinster and walk alone when other girls of her age were having fun. And she wasn't going to stand it any longer! She was going back to Columbia City and get a job; any kind of job, doing washings, scrubbing floors, *anything*!

When Lou had finally run down, and was crying, Mama left the room, saying as she went that we'd see about that. But we all knew that that had been already well seen to. We were miles and miles beyond the point of no return.

After a while Papa said, softly, that we'd think of something better than scrubbing floors; and, meantime, we would all try to be patient with one another, and Lou could go roller-skating if her heart was so set upon it.

With that, Lou cried some more and went over to Papa and kissed him. Then, as she was about to leave the room, she came back and kissed me. And I cried a little, too. I was very proud of my sister, that night, and I envied her. It was true, as she had said, that being the preacher's kid, in that era, was no picnic. I could have testified to that, myself.

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It is time now for me to introduce you to the Superintendent of Public Schools, for he had much to do with shaping our several destinies.

Him I am going to call “Mr. Auburn.” That was not his name: it was the color of his ferocious beard and his heavy, menacing eyebrows which, many people said, could be aimed in different directions, independently of one another, like a terrier’s ears. He was a bachelor in his mid-forties, a massive mountain of a man, too big for his clothes, too big for the chair you offered him, and too big for his job which, he confided to Papa, he had accepted only because the gas-boom promised to transform the town into a city and he wanted to be in on the ground floor with a school program that would set a new pattern for elementary education.

Mr. Auburn, who had struck town the same year Papa had come, immediately rocked the community with his innovations. He had called a Teachers’ Meeting, for the afternoon before school opened in September. Schoolteachers, he told them, without pausing to say how lucky he felt to be facing so many bright and lovely ladies and how they were going to be just one happy family, could be roughly divided into three categories; and he proceeded at once to this tripartition as roughly as possible.

One class was composed of elderly women who hadn’t had a new thought since our old dog Tray was a pup but hoped to hang on to their jobs until eligible for a pension. Another class was made up of kittenish young things who intended to teach until they had saved enough money to buy their trousseaus. The third class, unfortunately in the minority, contained teachers of all ages who believed in education and tried to make it attractive to children.

All normal children, he said, were by nature resistant to the processes of civilization. It required more skill to educate them today, he went on, than was necessary in our grandfathers’ time; for, only a few years ago, and from then on back to The Jungle, it was standard practice to beat them and twist their tails until they learned enough Arithmetic for their own self-protection in a world of great wickedness.

Now that it was becoming unfashionable, especially in our cities, to clout our young disciples over the head with whatever weapons were at hand, our whole educational system was in need of revision. Schoolteaching now required brains and imagination, or the kiddies—bless their little hearts—would run the show.

To insure against this disaster, continued Mr. Auburn, we would have to scout for teachers who were so sincerely in earnest about education that the youngsters would be induced to believe in it too.

To achieve this, said Mr. Auburn, the has-beens and never-weres would have to be weeded out of the teaching staff, and much better wages paid to the people chosen to fill the vacancies. He himself would lay this proposal before the Board of Education. And that would be all for today.

Merely to say that this blunt speech produced a city-wide convulsion is not saying anything about it at all. But while the relatives of some of the more seriously stricken professed to be indignant, it was generally held that the new Superintendent gave promise of being really in charge of the schools, and not a timid yes-man taking orders from a self-perpetuating Board of Education composed of a half-dozen penny-pinching old fuddy-duddies.

On the morning that the schools opened, according to my sister's direct report, it was announced that the High School students would meet in the auditorium at ten-thirty for a convocation to be addressed by Mr. Auburn. They came, chattering noisily but were presently hushed by curiosity. A stereopticon had been set up, about forty feet from the stage, and beside it stood young Bill Witherspoon, captain of the soccer team. Bill was feeling his oats, and when he turned to frown on his disorderly idolators, they came to attention.

Mr. Auburn came striding upon the stage, waited until you could hear a pin drop, and announced that all the boys whose voice range was baritone should join him in singing "My." He sang "My" and a few boys timidly joined him. Everybody laughed.

"We can do better than that," said Mr. Auburn. "Bill, you're a baritone; aren't you? Now! All you deep voices! *My!*" This time he got splendid results. He tried it on the tenors, a third higher. He got excellent co-operation from the sopranos and altos. Now he had them sing "*My*" together in all four parts. They liked it. Mr. Auburn signed for them to do it again, and they did it again with more enthusiasm.

One of the most popular girls in the senior class, a redhead named Virginia, whom everyone called Ginger, came down the aisle and seated herself at the piano. It may not have occurred to any of her schoolmates that she was the granddaughter of one of the tough old members of the Board of Education, but she was. (Oh, this Mr. Auburn was a slick operator!)

It was very quiet in the auditorium while they waited to see what would turn up. The new Superintendent signaled for them to rise.

“Now, Ginger, if you will give us a full chord,” said Mr. Auburn, “we will sing ‘My Country ’Tis of Thee.’ ”

It was quite wonderful, they all thought, and when they sat down they applauded, though they weren’t sure whether they were applauding themselves or Mr. Auburn. But one thing *was* sure: the new Superintendent was their man!

He did not compliment them on their good singing, Lou reported. He seemed to take it for granted that they would do anything he asked.

He said this meeting was a “convocation,” probably an unfamiliar word with them. But anyone who knew his Latin could tear the word apart and understand, without asking, that it meant “a calling together.” The syllable “voc” meant “call” or “voice” or something “vocal.” So many of our English words were from Latin. People who didn’t know their Latin weren’t very well educated. Incidentally, that word “educate” was from Latin. “Educate” meant “to lead out.” That syllable “due” meant “to lead.” “Induce” meant “to lead in.”

Then Mr. Auburn gave Bill Witherspoon a sign to turn on the pictures, which he explained. This was the Colosseum, built 2100 years ago, where the Romans held their field and sports events. It used to be covered with a beautiful veneer of marble plates, which were stripped off a few centuries later to decorate the Pantheon (the next picture) and a few centuries after that the marble was peeled off the Pantheon and used in the building of St. Peter’s Cathedral (the next picture).

There were pictures of the Forum, as it looks today, and brief comments on the great men and great events celebrated there. And when the pictures were all shown, Mr. Auburn said he intended to teach the Latin classes himself, and hoped there would be many students signing up for it.

“But don’t enroll for it,” he said, “unless you intend to work at it! It is not part of my job to teach. I shall be doing this because I want all of you who really desire an education to get this training. Latin can be dry, dull drudgery, or it can be good fun. It’s a mistake to think that education is a matter of getting marks and grades, with a diploma at the end of it!”

Then they stood and sang “My Country ’Tis of Thee” again, and Mr. Auburn waved them out with his big hands. And they knew that this was the first time they had ever really been at school. They were for Mr. Auburn, lock, stock and barrel!

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I have dwelt, perhaps overlong, on this episode; but I think you will agree that Mr. Auburn deserves remembrance. He addressed other "convocations" in the lower grades. He appeared on the playgrounds. He nagged the Board of Education for more money. He was the talk of the town.

One Sunday, early in February, he attended our church. Next day he came to call. Papa was invited to speak at a convocation on March 4, at the hour when Mr. Benjamin Harrison was inaugurated President of the United States. Afterward, Papa and Mr. Auburn were just like that. Mr. Auburn volunteered to teach a class of Young Married People in our Sunday School. It quickly drained a large flock of Young Marrieds from other churches, and made a lot of people angry. The chairman of the Board of Education, who by this time considered Mr. Auburn a Public Enemy in spite of the fact that nearly all the parents with children in school were definitely on his side, came to Papa and cautioned him against encouraging the Superintendent in his ruinous innovations.

Papa stood his ground and politely informed the tight-fisted old Church Treasurer that he would exercise his rights as a citizen without consulting anybody. It was a courageous stand; but, as usual, the man who paid the piper called the tune, and the following September found us back in Indiana. Incidentally, Mr. Auburn, now that the gas-boom was evaporating, decided that the game wasn't worth the candle, accepted a bid to a down-state city ten times the size of ours.

But that spring, when Lou wanted to be out on her own, and Papa asked Mr. Auburn for advice, the ubiquitous Superintendent came to our house, two evenings a week, to teach my sister bookkeeping, which brought her a job, that fall, in her cherished Columbia City. Mr. Auburn was quite a fellow!

In May of that year, 1889, there occurred one of the greatest disasters ever experienced in America, the Johnstown Flood. A dam in the Conemaugh River, a few miles above the deep valley in which this Pennsylvania city is located, having been weakened by the excessive pressure of heavy rainfall, suddenly gave way. The swollen river plowed through Johnstown, carrying houses, bridges, streetcars, railroad trains, everything! Two thousand people lost their lives. Twenty times that many

lost their homes. The whole nation was deeply stirred. For a couple of weeks the newspapers talked of nothing else.

An enterprising publisher announced a new book, containing the complete account of the catastrophe, with interviews, comments by notables, photographs, artists' sketches, etc. Agents for the book were wanted at once.

As school was just closing and I had nothing important to do, Mama suggested that I might try my luck as a book agent. She sent at once for a "prospectus," and I launched upon my new job.

I never considered myself much of a success as a salesman. In the years to follow, I had a go at it, a couple of times, without distinction. It takes more brass than I have to get into a stranger's home and try to sell him something he does not want. But the book about the Johnstown Flood sold itself. Here was something that gripped everybody's interest. Nor did this twelve-year-old lad have trouble about gaining entrance to the houses of his potential customers.

The lady who opened the door considered me harmless, or at least gave me the benefit of the doubt, and when I told her what I was up to, she invited me in. I showed her the horrible pictures and she was fascinated. And when I told her that this was only the "prospectus" and that the big, fat book contained a great deal more of the same, she wanted it.

The book cost only $1.50. It was my custom to tell the purchaser who I was, so she would have reasons for trusting me. I would tell her also that it would be a great convenience if she paid half of the price now; for I would have to send cash in full to get the books. They usually consented.

When I tried to sell books later, while a college student, I wished I could make the same arrangements about a down payment; for, many times, the lady refused to accept the book on delivery.

I netted $75 in my canvassing for the Johnstown Flood book, and $75, in 1889, was quite a lot of money. It was decided by me, this time, but with the full approval of my parents, that it should be spent on music lessons.

Shortly before my parents were married, Mama had bought a melodeon; or, as this instrument was sometimes called, a "reed organ." Professional organists resent the word "pipe-organ." All organs, in their lexicon, are

equipped with pipes. Hence, a “reed organ” is not an organ, at all, but a melodeon.

Mama had never learned to play on her melodeon. Her marriage, quite unexpected at the time of her purchase, brought a large helping of responsibilities which demanded her full time.

While we were living in Kentucky, she sometimes picked out a few harmonious chords, but never talked about taking lessons; nor did my sister show any interest in music. As a very small boy I began to experiment with the melodeon, and Mama often said she hoped that I could have music lessons some day. And now the time had come.

We consulted with the lady who played the melodeon at our church. She consented to give me lessons, twice a week, at fifty cents each. I went to her home for the lessons. The lady had a piano, but I did my practicing on our melodeon. By the end of summer I knew my scales in all keys. Nobody had to drive me to practice. I think I had a natural aptitude for the organ. Until that time I had heard only one real organ. A wealthy friend of the Lutheran Church in Columbia City had presented a very good two-manual organ to the congregation. The young woman who played it had a natural “feel” for it, I think. I was deeply moved; and the girl, a friend of our family, permitted me to sit close by, one day, while she practiced. It was the pedal organ that stirred me most.

I loved Mama’s melodeon, much better than the piano. The touch required by the melodeon was about the same as for the organ; and it was the height of my ambition to get to a real organ, someday.

My instruction in music was interrupted by our return to Indiana. Doubtless we could and would have gone back to Monroeville had that position been open. We went to another charge composed of only three churches. We lived in Uniondale, a small town in the northern part of the state, on the main line of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, whose beautiful parlor-car trains, bound for Washington, D.C., paused briefly for water about one o’clock in the afternoon. We lived only three or four blocks from the tracks.

On summer days I was usually on hand, with a few other barefooted kids, to stare at the fashionably dressed people in the dining car which obligingly stopped within fifty feet of the cattle-loading ramp where we sat dangling our legs. Sometimes the people smiled and waved to us, which made me feel rather sheepish, not only because it was bad manners to stare at them, but because I had fully resolved to be a passenger on that train,

someday, and didn't like the idea of being considered a little hick doomed to spend my life watching my betters ride by in luxury trains.

I did not hold it against these fortunate strangers that they were unaware of my resolution. True, I envied them, but not to the extent of covetousness which, if my definition of the word is correct, contains a high percentage of hatred for people who are better off. It never occurred to me to despise these lucky ones.

I have never been quite sure about the ingredients of the word "covet" as it is used in the last one of the Ten Commandments. It may involve what is latterly known, in academic circles, as "class hatred," the bitter envy of the have-nots in their mental attitude toward the haves. Or, it may be a warning to the man who has little or nothing that he must not flatten his nose against the rich man's windowpane and wish that he had this fortunate fellow's luxuries. If the poor man persisted in that course, it might put bad ideas into his head, such as theft. In any case, the Commandment against covetousness seems to be candidly intended for the protection of the man of property.

Indeed, a close examination of these Mosaic laws which traditionally regulate the conduct of Jews and Christians reveals a special interest in the affairs of people in the higher-income tax brackets.

For example: In the Commandment which concerns the proper observance of the Sabbath Day, the law makes a man see to it that not only his immediate family must abstain from work, but his beasts of burden, and his manservant and his maidservant, and his week-end guests.

The fact is that the overwhelming majority of the people who hold the Ten Commandments in high esteem as their moral laws do not entertain guests on the Sabbath or any other day, nor do they have a maidservant, much less a manservant.

Quite obviously, the Commandment against *wishing* one had what the rich man has is a good law which should be obeyed for the poor man's own sake, if for no better reason.

But it might be appropriate to add another Commandment, at that point, intended to ease this "class hatred" implied by the laws prohibiting covetousness; something like the following:

When thou in thy camel's-hair coat, or thy wife or thy daughter in their minks, drive thy big Cadillac, ye shall not splash muddy water on the clothing of them who wait on the corner for the bus.

In short, if a law against *wishing* is in order, so is a law against *showing off*. No; I'm not rabble-rousing: I do not live on that side of the tracks, myself. But I'm telling you that we Americans cannot afford to be split up into classes. Our Master gave us an effective cure for that trouble when he said, "A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

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But, to get back to Uniondale, and the fascination of the luxury trains on the B. & O., I hope you have not put me down as an insufferable little snob for believing, with all my heart, that good things were in store for me.

Throughout my childhood and youth, and during college days, I firmly held an intuitional assurance that Destiny would eventually befriend me. Even on dark days, I had that faith. Explain it? No; I can't account for it; but it is the truth.

In the country round about Uniondale, most of the roads had been graveled. Papa did not have to drive long distances, and traveling was easier. He was delighted to be back among his cherished country people. And Mama was at home again. No formal calls. No Browning Society.

Uniondale was not as large as Monroeville and less compact. Monroeville had one solid block of business houses on both sides of the street. In Uniondale the business places were scattered among old residences which meant to stay where they were, come what may.

We lived on a corner, two blocks from the principal street. When we went "downtown," we met this main street at a square where, on one corner, lived a man who ran a dray and whose barnyard was cluttered with all manner of vehicles for hauling freight. Across from him was the residence of Doctor English, the only physician this side of Bluffton, our nearest big town. One of the two other corners was a vacant lot, grown high with weeds, and on the remaining corner was Lee Ormsby's Drugstore.

Lee hadn't taken naturally to agriculture; so his father, a well-to-do farmer, had set him up in business. This drugstore made no pretense of being a pharmacy. At that time, the doctor did not write prescriptions: he carried his medicines with him. A drugstore, sixty years ago, was a drugstore, a far different institution than the drugstore of today where you can buy anything from a hamburger to a go-cart. Lee Ormsby's shelves were filled with such patent medicines as S.S. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, and Peruna. It

seemed that many elderly people were greatly benefited by Peruna, for it was immensely popular throughout the country until Prohibition, after which no amount of advertising was sufficient to restore it to the esteem it had enjoyed previously.

The Ormsby Drugstore did a thriving business in Peruna and a wide assortment of patented pain-killers. This was long before the passage of the Pure Food and Drugs law. Anybody could buy as much as he wanted of medicines loaded with narcotics. Babies who cried were promptly soothed with paregoric which was seventy per cent laudanum. If you had paregoric in the house, you didn't need a baby-sitter. Give Junior a big spoonful of paregoric (and Junior loved it for it was sweet and flavored with licorice) and you wouldn't hear another squeak out of him until the next day.

I well remember when Lee installed the soda fountain in the front end of his store. It was quite a novelty and soon turned out to be the most profitable feature of his business. Some people said that Lee was his own best customer. Whenever he served a 5¢ ice-cream soda he had one himself. Earlier in this writing I think I spoke of a soda fountain that had one flavor labeled "Don't Care." Perhaps you thought I had made that up. My daughters, my nurses and my secretary warned me that even my most loyal friends might have trouble believing it. It's a fact! I saw it with my own eyes! At Lee Ormsby's soda fountain. Lee was a one to show off. It was said that whenever he sold a couple of "two-fers" he would help himself to a 10¢ "seegar," and put a drop of perfume in the end of it before lighting up.

Next to Lee's place was the Logan residence which stood well back from the street on an exceptionally large lot filled with fruit trees and tall maples. Mrs. Logan was an ardent worker in Papa's church. She visited us almost every day. Mr. Logan never came to church; nor did he go anywhere else except during the fall when he would spend several weeks in Canada hunting deer. He was always successful, too. The Logans were elderly and had married children who also were good friends of ours. But to their great surprise, if not delight, they had produced a son, Sam, long after their grandchildren were old enough to go to school. Sam and my little brother, Clyde, were of the same age and constantly played together.

A couple of years after the quadrennium spent in Uniondale, my brother, who had heard nothing from Sam in the meantime, was surprised one day to have a letter from him.

"Dear Clyde," it said. "How are you? Well I hope. We are alright here. Do you still have the white rat? Mind that pair of rabbits I had? I have sold

lots of rabbits. School has took up again. I hate school.

Your friend,
SAM LOGAN

P.S. Pap died last night."

The next house adjacent to the Doctor English residence was a barbershop downstairs and the barber's home in the remainder of the building. From here on to the railroad station there were residences large and small, but no other business houses.

On the other side of the tracks there was a huddle of stores and a considerable space occupied by the Ditzler Saw Mill. The Ditzler brothers were prominent members of Papa's church and their children were good friends of mine. I still hear from Willie Ditzler who is a retired merchant fond of foreign travel.

Scores of the families who owned the big farms of our county had migrated, a generation or two earlier, from the areas in Pennsylvania thickly populated with "Pennsylvania Dutch." It was a long-established custom for excursion trains to carry these people to and fro. One October, a couple of hundred Pennsylvanians would arrive for a fortnight's visit with their Indiana relatives, and the next year the Indiana people would avail themselves of an excursion fare, and go back to Pennsylvania. Always there was quite a crowd at the station to welcome the visitors. Such exclamations of joy! Such hugging and kissing and weeping! The Pennsylvania men wore whiskers, flat-brimmed hats and what appeared to be homemade clothes, and the women wore funny little bonnets that did them no good. Their dresses made them look fat and shapeless. Very few of our Indiana Pennsylvanians wore any such gear; only a handful of the very old people.

I have often wondered whether they still have these annual excursions. Perhaps someone who knows will write and tell me.

Uniondale was only a mile north of the Wabash River which, at that point of its progress down-state, was a shallow, sandy-bottomed, lazy stream, easily fordable except during the spring and autumn rains.

I heard someone say that a stream does not deserve to call itself a river unless it is able to grind the grain that grows on its shores. This the Wabash could do a little farther down; but when it passed the vicinity of Uniondale, it was too young to be given any serious work to do. It was at the right age

to entertain, on drowsy summer afternoons, the barefooted boys who came with a can full of earthworms to catch small sunfish.

Nobody tried to swim there. It was too shallow for swimming. But it was a good place to wade. Easily frightened mothers, among whom my mama rated top billing, felt quite contented to have their children visit the Wabash, and some of the happiest memories I have of my childhood relate to the idle hours I spent there, sprawled on the warm, grassy riverbank, making pictures of the white clouds which hovered so close, and wondering dreamily what was beyond the blue ceiling far away.

The school that the Uniondale children attended was only a short distance from the river. As our family had arrived about the same time that school opened, I made acquaintances promptly. We had a good teacher, a young man named Longfellow. I became very fond of him. We were happy to learn later that he had been able to graduate at the State University.

It was the little red brick schoolhouse that appears so frequently, these days, in old men's memoirs; an ungraded school, of course, such as my parents had taught. Mr. Longfellow, at that period of his career, had not traveled; nor had he the equipment to do such a stunning job of teaching as our remarkable Mr. Auburn. But he had read everything that came to hand and was sincerely interested in education. Schoolteaching for him was more than a potboiling job.

Late in the fall, Mr. Longfellow had the usual experience of the new teacher when the big farmer boys, having finished the corn-husking, showed up at school. He was quite patient with their disorderly conduct for a couple of days. Then he went after them. He was a farmer boy himself and in excellent condition for the work he had to do. It did not take long. The corn-huskers did not gang up on him, whether from a sense of sportsmanship or because they were taken by surprise I do not know; but the battle was brief and decisive. When it was over, everybody knew who had won, and there was no necessity for any more flogging during that year.

The oldest boy in school, Charley Someone (whose other name escapes me) was eighteen. He had taken no part in the revolution. As the desks were built for the occupancy of two scholars, Mr. Longfellow asked Charley if he would sit by me, for I was a little dunce in Arithmetic. I surmise that it may have been the first time that Charley had ever been assigned to such a responsibility. He made a big thing of it. Doubtless he might have resented the task of tutoring, or even of being seen with, some fifteen-year-old

lunkhead, but he had a sound, unashamed interest in the welfare of a small boy.

This same attitude is noticeable in a henhouse. You put ten hens in one chicken run and immediately the hen who is to take priority sets to work at proving it. In a day's time, every hen knows her own relation to the others. Hen No. 1 can peck any hen in the flock. No. 2 can peck all but No. 1. No. 3 can peck all but 1 and 2.

It will be too promptly surmised that Hen No. 10 has let herself in for a very unhappy career, with all the other hens authorized to peck her. This, however, is not the case. Hen No. 1, while armed with authority to peck Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, and the others, is on excellent terms with Hen No. 10; never thinks of pecking her; will defend her if No. 8 and No. 9 are too belligerent; will sometimes call her attention to a crippled bug that she herself doesn't fancy.

Same thing goes for the whole social structure. Mrs. Upsofar can and does peck Mrs. Gotrocks and snubs the Plush sisters, but she invites Bridget O'Hooligan, who used to be her cook, to come up to her boudoir for a dish of tea. Yes, and Mr. Upsofar coldly brushes off Mr. Comelately, who wants to talk to him in the lounge car of the nine-o'clock commuters' train, but encourages George, the porter, to talk about his daughter Dinah's new baby.

As I was saying, Charley took me under his wing and taught me how to figure percentages, even at the expense of giving up recess time.

Papa continued his practice of taking me along on trips to funerals, so that I might look after the horse. On these journeys we resumed our talks about Greek words, adding new ones to my vocabulary. We didn't do much about Greek grammar, but enough to let me know that it wasn't easy. I was surprised to learn that while our language offers a choice of only a singular and a plural number the Greeks have an intermediate, dual number, consisting of only two persons or things. I was also to learn that it wasn't sufficient to conjugate the verbs in all tenses, but there were many "irregular" verbs to be considered.

It can easily be seen that while we lived in Uniondale we were practically in the open country. Our parsonage was situated on a double lot with enough room for a large vegetable garden which we utilized to full

capacity, even to the extent of raising sweet corn, potatoes and melons in abundance.

To the rear of us, and separated from us by a high, impenetrable hedge of arbor vitae, was a sprawling, ramshackle old tile mill operated by a weary and taciturn man of sixty and his three grown-up sons who hated him and their job. This tiling was used for drainage. The finished product was a red cylinder of kiln-baked clay about two feet long and five inches in diameter. The operation began with wagonloads of clay, dumped into a huge hopper, moistened with water, and stirred until soft and malleable. This stirring was done by an enormous spoon with a handle the length of a telegraph pole to the end of which a horse was attached.

All day long this pole was drawn slowly around and around. The horse was a tall, big-framed but emaciated, dapple-gray stallion, totally blind. His sad predicament reminded one of Samson after he had delivered himself into the hands of the Philistines.

I went out there occasionally to watch the work at the tile mill, but never stayed very long. It was too depressing. The men never laughed, rarely spoke; there was nothing to be heard but the creaking of the long pole and the heavy breathing of the old horse on his endless journey to nowhere. I made up a story about him and his proud exhibitions at the County Fairs where he wore ribbons woven into his luxuriant mane and tail and was given prizes for his beauty and strength. Dear! dear! How far the old fellow had come down in the world, and through no fault of his own. He had grown old; that was his trouble. Surely no one could blame him for that. Old age can be a great tragedy for horses—and people. I learned that early, though it didn't bother me much.

The barn belonging to our parsonage was small and in disrepair. The Church Trustees agreed with Papa that we should have a larger barn and a chicken house. Uncle Worth was summoned to do the carpentry. He lived with us, that first summer, and in addition to his board and lodging he received a dollar fifty per day. I do not know how many hours he worked. He was out there, sawing and hammering, when I woke up in the morning; and, after working hard all day, would often take another hitch at it after our five-thirty supper.

About the middle of August, when this work was nearing completion, Uncle Worth, perched on the progressing roof of the large new chicken house, with his mouth full of shingle nails, mumbled to me, watching him from the ground, "You have a birthday pretty soon, don't you?"

"The twenty-seventh, Uncle Worth," I replied promptly.

He continued to nail shingles until his mouth was cleared.

"I see that Barnum and Bailey's Circus is in Fort Wayne that day," he said. "Would you like to go?"

Would I like *to go*! I could hardly believe my ears, but well I knew that my Uncle Worth wouldn't joke about a matter as serious as that. I took off at top speed for the kitchen door, incoherently spluttered my amazing news to Mama, and without waiting for her reply, danced back to Uncle Worth who had descended his ladder and was opening another bale of pine shingles. He was laughing merrily at my antics. Mama joined us, and her face was sober.

Uncle Worth gave her no chance to object. He had been working hard all summer, he said, and needed a day off. He had never seen such a big circus and he intended to go. And it was my birthday, and he was taking me along.

"But how will you get there?" Mama wanted to know.

Uncle Worth had figured that all out. We would start early and walk the four miles to Kingsland. There we would board a local freight train that carried passengers, and we would be in Fort Wayne in time for the parade. In the afternoon we would see the show and come home that evening.

And so, to my boundless delight, and somewhat to my surprise, it was quickly settled that Uncle Worth and I were to make this thrilling adventure. And, once the matter was decided, Mama seemed pleased that I was to have such an unusual experience. She knew I was safe in the company of Uncle Worth. Never before or since have days been so long as those which intervened.

While we wait for these days to pass I should like to make a few remarks about the singular characteristics of time. In this country, thirty-six inches make a yard and sixteen ounces make a pound avoirdupois. This was true when I was born and it is still true, in all altitudes and all weathers. But the length of a day or an hour has no fixed value: it depends on what you are doing. A day may be of extraordinary length because you are waiting for some anticipated pleasure or it may be overlong because you are in dread of something unpleasant.

An hour of waiting in a hospital corridor for an operation to be completed and an hour spent at a bright and lively musical comedy have no relation at all. Even so small a fragment of time as three minutes has no certain value. Three minutes is a much longer time to the boxers battling in a prize fight than to a pair of lovers talking on the long-distance telephone.

Everything else that is in common use (except our money) has dependable worth; dimension, weight, height, length, breadth, thickness, tensile strength. Everything else is measurable; all forms and forces of power are measurable, by calories, B.T.U.'s, KW's, H.P.'s, M.P.H.'s, CC's, etc.

It would be interesting if a precision instrument were invented capable of estimating—by some arbitrary standard—our lengthy hours of waiting for some promised joy, and our longer hours of fretting over some probable calamity. If by the same instrument we could accurately measure the length of our hours in which happiness had been achieved and promised joy fulfilled, and calamity endured or averted, it might be possible to know how long one has lived.

By common consent we measure our age by the number of candles on our birthday cake, but that is only guessing. Nobody can tell *me* that the four years between thirteen and seventeen are of the same length as the four years between sixty-three and sixty-seven, though most of the *days* in the latter period are much longer than the *days* spent in the teens.

I have toyed with the idea that time flies faster for the elderly because for ages the hourglass was in common use. The old man's hourglass had been turned over and over and over so often that the little hole in the middle had been cut larger by the abrasive sand which trickled through it. As many of you as believe this to be nonsense need not bother to tell me: I fully agree with you.

All that I have been trying to say is that time, albeit one of our most precious elements, is unstable in value. A legacy consisting of negotiable bonds, jewels or real estate may be saved or dissipated, but time can be wasted even when one is not using it at all. So far as I know nothing can be done to save it for a rainy day. An ancient sage offered this prayer: "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." But he did not explain what kind of wisdom he had in mind.

I think it should be said, in any discussion of this difficult problem, that our life seems to be divided into two periods: the first period distinguished by hopes, anticipations and as much realization of these hopes and anticipations as may be possible; the second period devoted to reflection and review.

Whatever may be the restless anxieties of anticipation and the satisfactions or disappointments of realization, it behooves every man to prepare for his later years of reflection and review; for memories can either

bless or burn. Many prudent people carry life insurance or buy annuities to support them physically when they have retired from business. This is, of course, a sensible preparation for the future. But it is equally important to prepare for a comfortable thought-life in the years to come.

Memories of deeds performed in aiding other people to take a fresh grip on their problems, memories of risks taken to save the life of a comrade in battle or the rescue of a drowning friend at the old swimming hole, or the fresh start you gave to some young fellow in your employ who had made a bad mistake, such reflections and reviews are real property in a man's old age. But memories of friendships neglected or abused, memories of estrangements that were never cleared up, memories of favors you could easily have done but didn't do for others who counted on you for encouragement or a recommendation or a loan that would have put them on their feet again—all such memories make bad bedfellows.

I admit that this sermon has become tedious. I introduced it here in an effort to show you how long it was from that August afternoon when my Uncle Worth said we were going to Fort Wayne to see The Greatest Show on Earth until the early morning of my thirteenth birthday.

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You can make that trip in your car today in less than an hour. It took all forenoon for us to do it on foot and by rail. I had never seen such crowds of people as were massed along the principal downtown business street. Luckily for us the garish parade had made most of its tour and was on its way back to the show grounds when we joined the spectators. We saw all of it.

The procession was headed by a big man with a broad-brimmed hat, riding the most beautiful white horse I ever saw. The bridle and saddle were covered with silver ornaments and the horse seemed to be having fun, for he would dance with mincing little steps and nod his head. A short distance behind this man who, I thought, must be either Mr. Barnum or Mr. Bailey, came a large troupe of riders in gaudy costumes, mounted on frisky horses of all colors; bay, gray, black, white and spotted.

Trotting and tumbling along on foot, on either side of the company of riders, came a couple of clowns, one of them dressed like a fat, shapeless old lady from the country, wearing a gingham sunbonnet and carrying a parasol that had been completely demolished, all but the ribs. She pretended to have

got lost from her family and kept peering into the crowd and calling "Hiram!"

Later in the parade another clown with whiskers and a battered straw hat was making a bewildered search for "Tildie." It was very funny, the way he ran through the parade, rushing from one side of the street to the other, getting himself almost run over by the circus horses who paid no attention to him.

I wondered whether the country people who lined the streets, some of whom bore more than a slight resemblance to these clowns, thought this caricature of themselves was so very amusing.

All my life until I was fifty or thereabouts, the farmer was considered a fair target for comedians. It was not much wonder if youngsters brought up in the country wanted to live in town. Doubtless the ridicule heaped upon the farmer accounts for the swollen populations of our cities.

In my childhood many a young fellow forsook his independent life in the country and went to Chicago to work in the huge meat-packing industries, found lodgings in shabby, crowded tenements, and toiled like a slave; all because he resented being called a hick.

Happily for the farmer, he has come into an unprecedented prosperity. No pale, anemic, city-grown snob cackles "Hey, Rube!" at the farmer today. As a matter of principle, this writer is firmly against Government subsidies. We have had much too much of that. But if any class of people in this country ever deserved substantial encouragement, surely it was this hapless tiller of the soil. No matter how hard the poor guy and his family worked to raise their crops, they were always in jeopardy, menaced by forces beyond their control. One season, the excessive rainfall in spring would keep the farmer out of his fields until it was too late for his corn to mature before the frost caught up with it. Next year, a six weeks' drought would burn up everything he had planted. Every so often, the grasshoppers would move in on him and devour his crops.

When there was a good year, and everything matured in abundance, the prices for his products fell until he could hardly give them away. Farmers in the prairie states would often use their worthless corn for fuel to heat their houses in winter.

I think the farmer deserved assurance that his toil and sweat would earn him a good living. It is a pity, though, that he has been obliged to surrender his traditional freedoms in order to be eligible for these benefits. Now he

takes orders, how much and what he shall plant, and when and where and how. Time was when the farmer bragged that he wore no man's collar; that in his business, although it was risky, he could look any man straight in the eye and tell him to go to the devil. He can't do that any more. He has a master now.

But the big cities have lost their allurement. People who thought it smart to live in the city think so no longer. They have been moving out to the suburbs in such numbers that even the suburbs are no longer fashionable. They are going back to the country now to get out of the dirt and the din. . . . "Hey, Rube!"

I believe that if the farmer's age-old predicament were sensibly explained to the nation as a whole, a majority of the people of other less hazardous occupations would willingly consent to a federal stabilization of prices for farm products. Nobody wants the farmer to starve.

The objection arises at the point of the wanton, wicked waste of the surplus food which the Government accumulates through these expensive subsidies. On one hand we allocate a thousand millions of the taxpayers' money to feed the starving in foreign countries while three thousand millions are invested in food that lies rotting in caves. A six-year-old child could figure that one out. We are supposed to be in a representative form of Government. I want to declare, here and now, that no Government official who consents to such shameless folly represents *me*!

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Of course I can't remember everything in that long parade, but soon after the large troupe of equestrians came a band wagon, painted with gay colors. The band played very fast music and it was very loud. You might think the horses would be frightened but apparently they were used to all manner of noise and confusion. Behind this band came an open buggy with no top and spindly wire wheels with rubber tires. It was drawn by six Shetland ponies, hitched two abreast, and two fine-looking men rode in it. I asked Uncle Worth if these men were Mr. Barnum and Mr. Bailey, and he didn't know. Many people, standing near, overheard me and laughed, and I think Uncle Worth was embarrassed; for he was a shy person who didn't like to attract attention. I wanted to add that if these men were Mr. Barnum and Mr. Bailey, perhaps the big man who led the parade was the President of Fort Wayne or maybe the Governor of Indiana, but I didn't because that might make Uncle Worth wish he hadn't brought me along.

There were lovely ladies riding astraddle, like men. It was the first time I had ever seen a lady with no dress on. I wondered what Mama would have thought of that.

Now came three tall camels, single file, exactly like their pictures in the Bible. Their riders were dressed like the Wise Men from the East. Following them were two Roman chariots, each drawn by four horses harnessed abreast, reminding me of the chariot race in *Ben Hur*, the wonderful story that Papa had read to us on winter evenings when we lived in Ohio.

There were many cages of wild animals, but the sides were closed. If you wanted to see the animals you would have to come to the show. Some of the clowns rode in little carts drawn by ponies and goats. One clown's carriage was drawn by a very big dog. Uncle Worth said the dog was a great Dane. I think this clown and his dog was the funniest thing in the whole parade. The children along the street laughed more at that than at anything else the circus people had. Every little while the big dog would get tired and lie down, and the clown would step out of the carriage, unharness the dog and invite him to climb in, which he would do. Then the clown would draw the carriage for a few yards! Then he would lie down and pant until the dog returned for his trick.

Near the tail end of the parade came the elephants, a half-dozen of them. One was a baby that had to trot a few steps frequently to keep up with the others. All my life I have been curious about elephants. I see no excuse for the creation of an animal as clumsy and as poorly equipped to defend itself as the elephant. It is said that he has remarkable intelligence: if so, this too is a misfortune, for his keen brain would make him aware of his numerous disadvantages.

Throughout my lifetime I have had something like Walt Whitman's sympathy for animals, most of whom deserve our pity. The more intelligent of them have quite given up any hope of independence. Long ago the horse decided that the easiest way to get along with men was to do their bidding. Dogs have no self-respect. They will put up with all manner of indignities. If you ever attended a dog show you noticed that as the Board of Judges approached one of the exhibition dogs the owner would put one hand under his dog's chin and with the other hand hold up the dog's tail so he would stand the way his owner thinks *he* would stand if he were a dog. You will never find a cat consenting to such treatment. It has often been said that nobody ever owned a cat.

Many years ago we had a Sealyham. This make of canine is often called a "one-man dog." It was certainly true in the case of Zocco: he was my dog. He treated the other members of our family courteously, but there was never any question about who owned him. He would indulge in the silliest antics to inform strangers of our close comradeship. It never occurred to him to demonstrate his affection unless we had callers. On such occasions he would plunge into the room at high speed, leap into my lap, and lick my face. If the visitors thought this was cute, and called to him in baby talk or dog talk, he would jump off my lap and saunter out of the room, giving them what has become known as the perfect squelch. Through the decade that Zocco lived with us, I spent many hours almost every day for months pounding out novels on my typewriter. Soon as I settled to work in the morning Zocco would stroll into my library and lie face down with his chin on the toe of my shoe. If I got up he would bound to his feet, but if I reached for a book the joy left him and he would heave a deep sigh as he settled down again to wait. I know he felt that novel-writing was a tedious business, and probably wished that I was pursuing a different occupation.

The last thing before going to bed I would tell Zocco to come with me and he would follow me to the library, hop up on the davenport and lie down on his side, with his head on his little pillow. Then I would cover him with a small blanket, leave the room, and close the door. Should I return, five minutes later, Zocco would be found lying on the floor. He would pretend to be asleep, but it was easy to see that he was embarrassed. As I left the room I would catch a glimpse of a half-opened eye.

Well—after the elephants came the noisy steam calliope which must have been a pretty hot job on an August noon. All around us the crowd was breaking up. Uncle Worth wanted to know if I was hungry. I hadn't thought much about it until that moment, but now I knew that I was very hungry indeed. We had risen very early and I had been too much excited to eat. I told Uncle Worth I was hungry as a bear!

The show grounds occupied a large pasture, more than a half-mile from the corner where we had stood to watch the parade. Uncle Worth inquired of a policeman whether there were eating places near the show, and he thought we had better have our dinner downtown.

In those days everybody that we knew had dinner at noon; so, by the time we had located a recommended restaurant, we found it not only packed

with customers but nearly out of food. After some waiting we came upon two vacant stools at a long counter and were told that the only thing they had left was a grape pie. Uncle Worth asked me if I would like a piece of grape pie and I said I would. At that moment, such was my urgency, I could have eaten a pie filled with corn silk.

This grape pie was the largest, deepest and best-looking pie I had ever seen. Uncle Worth bought it in its entirety, and the waitress, a very tired and tousled lady, pushed it toward him in its pan, together with two pie plates, two wooden-handled knives, two forks and two large spoons. He returned the small plates and asked for a large one. Then he cut the enormous pie in two, slid half of it onto the big plate for himself and suggested that I eat my half from the pan. I may have forgotten to tell you much about my Uncle Worth, but he was a very understanding person. Occasionally (but not often enough) you will come upon a person who has a special instinct for knowing exactly what to do at any given moment. It is a sort of sixth sense. We have no word for it in the English language; perhaps because we so seldom have a need for it. The French call this talent *savoir faire*. Uncle Worth probably did not know what *savoir faire* meant, but he had it. He gave me my half of the pie in the pan swimming knee-deep in purple nectar.

Of course I knew better than to use a knife on my pie. My mama had taught me better manners than that. But my hunger now advised me that it would be sheer affectation to bother with a fork when the work to be done could be dealt with more effectively with this large spoon. In normal circumstances it is advisable, I think, to string along with the established rules for genteel conduct at the dining table; but this grape-pie dinner was no normal affair. This was an emergency! Only a craven coward would have taken counsel of conventional manners and customs at such a moment.

But, for the sake of my heirs (and let me explain that I use the word “heirs” playfully to designate my children, seeing that by the time the Estate Taxes are paid there is practically nothing left to inherit) I may say that I do have a proper respect for established law and order.

For example, at a formal dinner party for twenty, the lady dripping with diamonds and strangled with ropes of pearls, who has been doing a lengthy monologue on her current obsession, had better not put both elbows on the table and pick up her squab in her fingers and gnaw the meat off its frail little framework unless she is very, very sure that every one of her dinner companions knows that she knows her behavior is in the worst possible taste. If she is certain of that, she is free to take off her shoes, unbuckle her

girdle and comb her hair. But it's dangerous business to take liberties with rules unless you know what they are.

I feel the same about modern art. Many of these recent pictures disclose bad drawing. I hold that the modernist who violates the rules for correct drawing has no license to do so until he has proved that he knows what the rules are. If he prates about his independence of the rules when he has never learned them, he is a phony. And the same thing goes for the lower-case poet, the crooner and the groaner. Learn the rules, I say, before you take liberties with them.

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Frequently, through the years, I have eulogized that memorable grape pie in the presence of women friends and relatives who have attempted to build for me a custom-made pie of the same character. I have appreciated these earnest endeavors and have properly expressed my gratitude. But to have a pie like that requires certain ingredients difficult to assemble and it must be served under specified conditions not easily met. The pie must be baked in the forenoon of August 27 by a woman well past middle age who never was in a beauty parlor. The grapes must be of the Concord species and grown in Allen County, Indiana. Furthermore—and perhaps this is the most imperative factor to the success of the pie—it must be served to a starving boy on his thirteenth birthday, and eaten with a large spoon. If any of these ingredients or conditions is lacking, grape pie is just about what you thought it was before I brought the matter to your attention.

Uncle Worth and I arrived at the show grounds in time for a leisurely visit to the menagerie. All my life, as I have told you, I have had much interest in animals, whether wild or domesticated. The fact that they do not talk to us, except by pantomime, does not mean that they do not communicate with one another. I have visited zoos where the animals gave many evidences of desperate unhappiness. There is a poorly lighted animal house in the Central Park Zoo in New York where the tigers seem to have lost their minds through close confinement and complete lack of diversion, and pace to and fro all day from one side of the cage to the other, nosing the bars. If we must imprison wild animals, for our education or entertainment, it would be more humane to place them in something like their natural habitat. The San Diego Zoo seems to have done that with success.

The Barnum & Bailey menagerie's personnel did not appear to be sad, though they were in small cages. Perhaps their apparent complacency

resulted from their recent feeding. Everybody connected with the show seemed contented. The big elephants rhythmically shifted their weight from one massive foot to the other while they tucked away their trunkfuls of clover hay, but were not morose.

As for the circus performance, it was very like the shows you have seen under "the big top"; much too much going on at the same time; much risking of life and limb, obviously a tough way to earn one's living, though it is commonly believed that trapeze performers are so infatuated with their dangerous trade that they are unhappy doing anything else.

The show reached its climax in a colorful and terrifying pageant, on a gigantic stage, depicting the Burning of Rome. This was of thrilling interest to me. I had been deeply absorbed by the stirring novel, *Ben Hur*, which Papa had read to us on winter evenings in Ohio. In our small but well-selected family library there was a leather-bound set of a five-volume edition of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* which I had tried to read, though that was a pretty tall order for a twelve-year-old boy.

Nor did I ever lose my early infatuation with Roman history, especially concerning the exciting period when Christianity, in its infancy, had sought refuge in the caves along the Appian Way.

I had hoped and expected that when I went to college there would be many interesting things taught about the Romans under the Caesars; but the grand old man who taught History was concerned only with the dates, sites and commanders of historic battles, and the equally grand old man who taught Latin was concerned only with Latin Grammar. I doubt whether either of them realized what they had missed, though surely both of them must have heard of *Ben Hur*.

As a lad I had promised myself that I would see Rome some day. There were many years, after I was out of college and into the ministry and on such beggarly wages that we could hardly meet our living expenses, that the prospect of foreign travel seemed quite remote; but even then my young wife and I studied the Italian *Baedeker* with all the enthusiasm of tourists who had steamship tickets in their pockets.

It was indeed a high moment in our lives when, on one summer night, lighted by a full moon, we sat silently in the deserted Colosseum and remembered at least a little of the tragic history that had been made in that ancient arena.

Eventually the time came when I felt moved to write a novel which began and ended in that enchanted city on the Tiber. Doubtless my lifelong interest in Rome aided me. I am sure I have General Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* to thank for much of this early preoccupation with the Roman Empire. Perhaps I should also give credit to Barnum & Bailey.

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We lived in Uniondale three years. Near the end of our third summer there, Papa's devoted friend, Mr. Leigh Hunt, who had been responsible for our leaving Kentucky, several years earlier, came again to visit us for a day.

Mr. Frank Hunt, Leigh's father, and Papa were approximately of the same age and had been long-time friends. Leigh was born and reared on a farm in Noble County, Indiana; and, while still in his upper teens, taught in the Columbia City schools during my papa's tenure as County Superintendent. It was natural that the bright and handsome young teacher should receive many special favors from his Superintendent, favors he never forgot through the after-years of his phenomenal career.

During this visit of Mr. Hunt in Uniondale he reported that he had just come from visiting his parents, and that his father seemed to be growing old. And Papa, too, was getting along in years. It was time he had an easier job.

Here was Mr. Hunt's proposal: The old Salem Church, only two miles from the Hunt family residence, had been inoperative for years, except for funerals. Mr. Hunt thought it would be a great comfort to his father if the church had regular services on Sunday mornings. He begged Papa to be the minister. Nothing to do but a sermon on Sunday; no long drives in the night. Papa and his old friend could have pleasant chats together. As for the salary, that would be taken care of.

Mama was happy with the thought that we would be returning to the Salem area. Leigh Hunt remembered that the old Cassel home was within a half-mile of the church.

Inquiries were made. The old home was for sale. Papa and Mama bought it. I do not know what they used for money. Perhaps Mr. Hunt had something to do with that. I was never told. I never asked.

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Early in our second summer at Uniondale we made the acquaintance of Mr. Clinton Weber, a professional musician of Fort Wayne. Mr. Weber had been bereft of his wife, and their eight-year-old daughter was living temporarily with her uncle and aunt on a large and prosperous farm near Uniondale. These people were active members of our church. Frequently Mr. Weber visited his little girl and was brought to our house to call.

It soon came into our conversation that Mr. Weber not only gave instruction in piano and organ to advanced students but was the organist and choir director in one of the largest Protestant churches in the city. Mama was prompt to say that I was infatuated with the organ and religious music. Mr. Weber seemed pleased and asked me to play something for him on our melodeon. I protested that the only pieces I could play with any satisfaction to myself were certain hymn tunes, and Mr. Weber said that would be fine.

I had found that by gathering up three notes in my right hand my left was free to play the bass two octaves lower than it was scored, giving it something resembling the tone-quality of the resonant pipes in a pedal organ. When I had finished "O God Our Hope in Ages Past," Mr. Weber leafed through the hymn-book until he found the famous Easter hymn, "Allelujah," which, fortunately, was one of my pets.

I hope I am not making an overlong account of Mr. Weber's great kindness to me. The fact is that Mr. Weber's encouragement and practical assistance were of immense benefit to me later when as a college student I earned much needed money playing a church organ; and, during a long vacation when I was a theologue, a very generous salary was paid me for playing the organ during the initiation rituals of an ancient secret order.

Moreover, my association with Mr. Weber gave me an appreciation of church music at its top level to which I heartily wish every young clergyman had access. I do not know how much emphasis is placed on the importance of religious music in the curricula of theological seminaries today. I do know that when I was a seminary student not one word was ever spoken on this subject.

Getting back to Mr. Weber: I still had most of the money earned by selling the book about the Johnstown Flood, and insisted on paying my new benefactor for the lessons he gave me on his frequent visits to Uniondale during that summer and the next. The fees I paid were only a pittance compared to his charges for students in the city. I think he accepted my trifling payments only to let me feel that I was co-operating.

Four times that summer he took me back with him to spend the week-end. I not only sat close to him during choir rehearsals and his organ practice, but was given a chance to experiment with his wonderful three-manual Austin. That was a red-letter day for the youngster whose eyes swam when an organ spoke.

Mr. Weber watched me with the alert eye and ear of the person we latterly call a "talent scout." After I had drawn on a combination of such sticky-sweets as "Vox Humana," "Vox Celeste" and "Vox Angelica," he chuckled and remarked, "Be careful you don't drown yourself in all that sirup!"

I was more than a little embarrassed by his comment, and he patted me on the shoulder.

"They always do that," he said, "the young organ students; they go for the tremulants, reeds and strings. They're just like the new sales girl in the candy shop. The proprietor tells her, on her first day at work, 'Help yourself freely to all the candy you want.' This man knows that after a day or two of all the candy she wants, she doesn't want any more candy; certainly not for a long time."

It delighted me to find that the pedal organ was going to be easy for me. Even with heavy-soled shoes on, the pedal keys were right where I had thought they would be.

Mr. Weber said my being left-handed would be to my advantage in playing church music. He insisted that left-handed people are left-footed also and that most of the church organ music is pedaled with the left foot. While he talked he was riffling through the large pages of a book of classical scores, which he placed on the organ desk. He pointed to Saint-Saëns' No. 3 in C Minor and said, "Now if you were playing the organ with a Symphony Orchestra, say in something like this, your left-footedness would do you no good."

I assured him that I wouldn't be doing an organ concerto, and he said, "By the way, what are you planning to do?"

I told him that my parents hoped I would enter the ministry.

Mr. Weber wanted to know whether I felt it was my vocation, and I confessed that I had received no celestial signs.

"But I do love churches," I said, "big ones, with big organs and stained-glass windows, like this one, and the ones I have seen in pictures."

“But aren’t you interested in saving souls?” asked Mr. Weber, and I said “No.”

“That’s good,” said Mr. Weber. “No lad of your age should be interested in saving souls. It’s not healthy. I’d rather you’d be normal.”

Incidentally, speaking of left-handed and left-footed people, they not only are more dextrous at the church organ, but the standard keyboard of the typewriter was arranged by and for left-handed operators. If you don’t believe it, notice how many of the letters in most frequent use are huddled on the left side of the machine, while such signs as * ¼ ½ @ ¢ ? / are on the extreme right.

I was taught to hold a pen in my right hand. Contrary to modern psychology, which views with alarm the hapless left-hander who is taught to write with his right hand, I never developed any nervous tics, never stammered, never sniffed, never involuntarily made funny faces, never was under compulsion to spit on every third telephone pole; and, so far, haven’t blacked out and murdered any of my relatives. Modern psychology knows a lot of things that aren’t necessarily so.

7. The Old Home

SO now we were living at Mama's old home which none of us had seen since Grandma Cassel's death, four years earlier.

The proverbial saying that it takes more than a house to make a home was true. The place was not as we had remembered it.

On the occasions of our visits there, everything looked about the way it had looked in Mama's teens; the enchanted little carpenter shop with the lathe that turned out toys, the spice-scented garden, enclosed in a tall picket fence reinforced with hollyhocks and covered with morning glories, its sandy paths leading to clumps of rhubarb, anise, old-fashioned pinks and sweet williams, currant and gooseberry bushes, and an arcade of Concord grapes. And, of course, the usual vegetables.

Nearly all of the furniture in the old home was hand-made either by Grandpa Cassel, long gone to his rest, or by Uncle Worth who, after his mother's death, had disposed of it by gift and sale and had moved away.

The people who had bought the old place were friends of our family. A death in their household had altered their affairs and they, too, had moved away. The house was bare. The little shop had been sold and taken elsewhere. The recent tenants had decided to make the garden more profitable, so they had cleared out the herbs and shrubs and flowers in favor of more vegetables. The old fence had been removed.

Stripped to its bones the house seemed smaller than we had thought. The property contained five acres, but not more than one acre could be profitably tilled; for, only a short distance behind the house and small accessory buildings, including a diminutive barn, the land tobogganed sharply down the hill and made off through the brambles to the creek. (When one writes this word, it is creek; when one speaks the word it is crick. I never heard a crick called a creek.)

But directly west of what had been Grandma's garden was a sizable piece of sandy soil suitable for potatoes.

If I may stroll on, at this juncture, for a half-century or so; after my mama's death at the age of ninety-two, I bought the old place. It had been in my hands since my parents had briefly owned it, and was in need of repairs. I was advised of some distant relatives who had been in hard luck. The man was a carpenter of sorts. I told him they might have the place, rent free, if he would mend the leaky roof and make the house habitable. I knew next to nothing about these people except that they were reputed to be immensely religious and spent much of their time attending evangelistic camp meetings.

The last time I saw the house, my tenants had moved out. The weather had moved in. The rain had poured through the gaping roof into the attic and through the attic into the second floor and through the second floor into the first. The place was a complete, irreparable wreck; plastering had fallen in, wall paper had peeled off in long strips. The only thing left in the house was a pious motto needled into an old-fashioned sampler. The motto said, "Thou God Seest Me."

I told my congenial cousin, Watts Beezley, who had driven me over to view the ruin, that it was foolhardy courage for a man to face a motto like that while committing a major crime.

Not long ago I sold the old home to another warm friend of mine, John Scott, my cousin Sadie's substantial husband, who wanted the potato patch. When I bought the place I was given an abstract of title showing how many people had owned it before good old Sam Cassel bought it. The transfers of title went back to 1827. The two earliest owners either had had "a passion for anonymity" or were unable to read and write, for they had made x's for signatures. I imagine that they felt very foolish when someone asked for their autograph. This bulky handful of historic documents I was so sorry to give up that John told me I might keep them. All he wanted was the use of the potato patch. It was unlikely that anyone would ever dispute his right to it, he said.

Papa was never very happy in his position as Mr. Frank Hunt's private chaplain and Sunday morning preacher (but not pastor) at the old Salem Church.

For one reason, the job gave him an uneasy rating as a minister. The Lutherans were glad enough to see one of their own faith at that post, but there was no organized lay congregation, no Sunday School. The whole project was irregular; hadn't a leg to stand on.

Too, Mr. Hunt was in frail health and rarely felt well enough to attend church services. The other people in the neighborhood, if they went to church at all, had their own churches with Sunday Schools for the children. It was easy to see that Papa's occupation offered him no challenge and no hope of improvement.

But the overshadowing reason that dwarfed all the other reasons for Papa's unhappiness was the hateful fact that the job was a dole, a charity. Papa had always been underpaid for the amount of work he did. But that was ever so much better than being overpaid. Here we must pause for reflection.

A few months ago a long-time friend and colleague of mine had just resigned his pastorate of a great church to accept an endowed chair on the faculty of a great university. In explaining to me his various reasons for making this decision he used the phrase "security of tenure." I replied that all the other reasons were excellent, but to have a job from which one couldn't be fired or retired might be the ruination of a good man. No, sirree! Give me *insecurity* every time!

In our family there was a book called *Farm Ballads* by Will Carleton, a popular midwestern poet *circa* 1880. The book was illustrated by a handful of drawings appropriate to the text. The one I remember best was a picture of a bearded old gentleman and his wife in the back seat of a big farm wagon en route to their future home. The title of the poem was "Over the Hill to the Poorhouse."

Later, this institution became known as the County Farm. The inmates were encouraged to cultivate small vegetable and flower gardens, partly to occupy their time and partly to pay for their keep. But the institution was still the County Poorhouse and it was not considered an honor to live there.

Such being the case, anyone who could move his hands and feet—and had a shred of self-respect left in him—shrank in horror from the prospect of having his Board and Lodging defrayed out of the Public Purse. So long as he could push a wheelbarrow or ride a load of manure, he proudly maintained his economic independence.

Now—this abhorrence of pauperism made pretty rough going for a lot of unlucky people who would have been pleased with a little wider selection of foods, and better clothing for themselves and their children—but their *independence* was too precious to be swapped for comforts acquired from the Township Poor Fund.

The thrilling fact about those early days is that the people's lives were insecure from the homemade cradle to the homemade coffin. They were not afraid of hunger or the cold. True—their lives were full of hardship. Their babies were born without skilled assistance. They wove their own clothes, made their own furniture, cut their own hair, and buried their own dead. But they kept the one thing to be cherished above all other things: THEIR INDEPENDENCE OF PUBLIC ALMS.

We all know how this independent spirit has changed. A few years ago, the federal government became aware that a large number of people in the United States should have a higher standard of living. It may be surmised that this sentiment was developed mostly by investigations made in the slums of large cities where malnutrition, overcrowding and inadequate sanitation were shockingly on display. Such wretchedness certainly needed attention, and it is a credit to the government that measures were taken to alleviate these conditions. The cities themselves should have attended to it of course, and doubtless would have done so if their own political systems had been any less disreputable than the slums.

Once the government had assumed this parental interest in the welfare of the people the program of freeing everybody from want took on size and unction. Things were to be made easier for all of us. Life in this country was to be relieved of its anxieties. First of all, we were to be guaranteed a living whether we worked for it or not. If your job was distasteful, you could quit. Arrangements had been made for Unemployment Compensation. Instead of encouraging you to keep your job and give it your best attention, in the hope of promotion and a higher wage, the government had glamorized your temptation to roll down your sleeves and walk out.

It was no longer the country of my childhood. Honest thrift was openly denounced. Economy was an old-fogy idea. Spend your way into prosperity. Save nothing for a rainy day. Let the government keep you!

And so began the era of paternalism that has so gravely afflicted the spirit of the once proud America. The administration has done its level best to make our people soft; to pauperize them; to shear them of their independence; but it hasn't been able to complete the job. The country has been badly handled, but it is a mistake to think that the damages to its spirit are beyond mending. We must not lose our belief that the people of America were destined to remain free and independent.

And now we will return to my papa whose unhappiness in his work at the Salem Church started this discussion of "Security of Tenure."

I think he was quite lonesome, especially through those first few months as winter came on. During the autumn he had taken long walks in the neighborhood. Directly across the road from our property was an eighty-acre timberland, mostly oak, ash and hickory, very old and valuable trees. It was kept clear of underbrush and was one of the most beautiful forests in all that area. Papa took delight in his rambles through this woodland.

There was no rural mail delivery in those days, and Papa would stroll down to the tiny village of Wilmot for *The Columbia City Post* (one day late) and the occasional letter from former parishioners and Mansfield, Ohio, relatives.

When we went to Wilmot we turned west in front of our house on a gently zigzagging, unpaved, sandy road that followed the course of the creek at a distance of some three hundred yards. We passed the red brick schoolhouse within a stone's-throw of our potato patch and proceeded to the Salem Church. There we left the road, turned to the right, climbed a low rail fence, and walked through a wheat field that angled toward the creek. The creek was growing wider here, almost a river. We climbed another fence and were in another large woodland belonging to Mr. Ryder who owned the wheat field and the gristmill that was powered by the dam. We crossed the bridge over the dam, passed the mill, and came to a little clump of houses, a blacksmith shop, a gravel pit, and the general store. In the front end of the store was the post office with a large cabinet of small mailboxes; a few of them lock boxes. The only advantage in renting a lock box was the satisfaction of being able to get your mail while it was being distributed, which took quite a long time, for there were many postal cards to be read; and, too, Mr. Hicks, the postmaster, would often have to leave the mail only half distributed while he waited on a customer who had difficulties deciding which piece of calico she wanted.

We were accustomed to living in villages, but none so small and apathetic as Wilmot. Last time I was there, my good Watts Beezley drove me over to see the old mill dam. We stopped the car on the bridge. The aged clump of willows on the banks below the falls was still there, picturesque. Beside the bridge was a neatly hand-lettered sign, WILMONT.

"But look, Watts!" I exclaimed. "It says 'Wilmont!' "

Watts laughed and said it had been put up by that WPA; and then he mumbled a couple of descriptive adjectives which did the WPA no good,

and added, as usual, “Excuse me, Reverend.”

Little Wilmot, which the WPA, with its recognized talent for ineptitudes, had renamed Wilmont, was not much larger than when we had lived there. A garage and filling station had been added. A half-dozen flat-bottomed, homemade boats were pulled up along the shore of the pond. Occasionally someone catches a few blue-gills, Watts said. The old Ryder mill had burned down, leaving an ugly scar.

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As for Mama’s feeling about her return to the old home to live, the changes which had occurred did not seem to bother her very much; or, if they did, she had resolved to make the best of it; and this was the right part for her to play, for she had been keen on coming. Indeed, if Mama had not so strongly urged it, I doubt whether Papa would have consented.

Mama already knew that Uncle Paul and Aunt Molly Beezley, with their eleven children, had moved away. Aunt Molly was Mama’s favorite sister. The Beezleys had gone to a farm in southern Michigan. I deeply felt the loss of them. That Salem-Wilmot country was not the same with Uncle Paul and Aunt Molly and the Beezley kids out of it.

Whenever we had visited up there, Watson (Watts), about my age, still living and afflicted with rheumatism as I am, and Tom, a year older, and Sam, a couple of years older, would go swimming in the small near-by lake, and fish for blue-gills with homemade tackle. The Beezleys were poor but they always had enough to eat, and were about as happy a family as I ever knew; never a cross word.

I know that Mama missed the Beezleys when we moved to the old home. The Beezleys all called her Aunt Jen.

Let me interject here that when Mama died, after long widowhood, in Monroeville, we took her frail little body to the old cemetery adjacent to Salem Church. We carried the casket into the church, so our surviving relatives might have a last view of their old friend. Aunt Molly was gone, but Uncle Paul, in his early nineties, was there. The good old man was nearly blind, very absent-minded and bewildered. I sat by him, and when the time came for him to take his last look at Mama I accompanied him. He rubbed a shaky hand along the top of the casket, but couldn’t quite understand what it was all about. He remembered me and called me by name, but he couldn’t figure out who was dead. Presently he inquired, “Why

didn't you bring Aunt Jen with you this time?" All who were left of the Cassel tribe listened intently. I thought I had better explain; I raised my voice. Here was Aunt Jen, I said. Uncle Paul understood then, and wept. Now he was the only one left.

But I must get back to Mama when we lived at the old home. Uncle Henry and Aunt Amanda Coyle, who had lived in Etna, only a few miles away (a village later renamed Hecla) had moved to Columbia City.

Uncle Perry and Aunt Maggie Cassel still lived on their farm, only a mile from the Frank Hunt home. Aunt Maggie was Mrs. Hunt's sister. I had always enjoyed our visits with Uncle Perry and Aunt Maggie. They were childless but had adopted a little girl of my age when she was about seven. She was a gay and lovable child and was their pride and joy as long as they lived. But, now that we had moved into the neighborhood, we saw very little of them. When we were guests they had made quite a fuss over us. As permanent residents, they simply took us for granted.

Somebody was telling me, not long ago, about an old friend of his by the name of Jones or something like that, whose small manufacturing business in Bucyrus or Muscatine or somewhere, making shirt buttons or those threaded wooden pegs that fit into glass insulators on telegraph poles, or something of the sort, was required to go to New York annually to consult with his distributors, the Beaver Brothers, Inc., perhaps. I am finding it more and more difficult to remember names.

Well, every time Fred Jones went to the Big Town the Beavers rolled out the red carpet for him. The honest fact was, as both Jones and Beavers well knew, all the business they transacted on these occasions could have been handled by mail or telephone, but Jones had punched out quite a lot of shirt buttons and had built up his industry into one of the Beavers' Better Accounts, and they could well afford to show him some hospitality. They urged him to bring Clara along. They met him when he arrived on the Twentieth Century. They gave him pairs of hard-to-get theater tickets. They lunched him at their best club while their wives took Clara on shopping tours. They slapped him on the back and called him Fritz. There was a cocktail party at the 21 Club. And so forth.

When it came time for Fred Jones to retire, he and Clara decided to make their home in New York. Joe and Alice, now in homes of their own, warned them against it. Joe, who was taking over the telegraph pole business, said, "You don't know anybody in New York. You'll miss your old friends."

"The heck we don't!" said Pa Jones.

"You mean the Beavers?"

"Of course I mean the Beavers, and all the people we met through them."

"Well, I'm telling you, Pop, you'll be sorry! That was just a business courtesy, that running about with the Beavers. You'll see."

"All right, all right; so I'll see."

"O.K., Pop: you win. But I want you to make two promises."

"Maybe: let's have a look at 'em."

"Don't tell anybody you're moving to New York and don't list the old home for sale; at least not for a month or two."

"Good old Hal Thompson is going to be mighty sore if I don't tell him. He's coming over this afternoon to interview me about the retirement—and our plans: wants to do a front-page piece in *The Clarion*."

"He won't be sore if you don't tell anybody else. You can wire him when you're sure."

"I've already listed the house for sale, with the Tuckers."

"Tell Tucker you have changed your mind."

"But I haven't!"

Joe hustled back to his office and phoned Tuckers, taking a thirty-day option to buy the house and making a $500 retaining payment.

Fred was for taking the Beavers by surprise but Joe thought he'd better wire he was coming, as usual; so he did that. He did better than that. He sent a lengthy night letter: he was retiring. Joe was taking over. He and Clara were arriving Thursday on the Twentieth Century.

Next morning Joe had a long telegram from Beaver Brothers, Inc., congratulating him, wishing him well, hoping to see him soon. And warm regards to his fine old dad.

Quite a crowd of long-time friends saw them off. Clara wept a little. Fred was restless. When they pulled into the Grand Central they both lacked the gaiety they had always felt. Young Eager Beaver met them. Dad was laid up at home with a monstrous cold, Eager said, and Uncle Forest had gone to Chicago on business. Eager accompanied them in a taxi to the Plaza but couldn't stay; he had a luncheon engagement. "We'll be seeing you," Eager said to his watch.

I had intended to tell you all of this story, but there is far too much disappointment in the world, as it stands, without raking the ashes for more of it. In this case there were only a few days of depression. Fritz wired Joe that they would be back on the twenty-first. Two dozen people came down to meet them. Joe had hauled up the flag at the old home which Pop flew only on national holidays.

"Yep," Fritz would say, "New York's all right for a week, but I shouldn't care to live there."

But whatever may have been my parents' various disappointments on moving to the old Cassel homestead we all had at least one thing to be grateful for, the marked improvement in the health of my brother.

I have not said much in the foregoing pages about this lovable child. There was a difference of nearly six years in our ages and he had never been rugged enough to share much in my own activities.

This is not to say, however, that I had seen but little of him. I had read stories to him by the hour when he was sick-abed; nor had this ever been a tiresome task for me. Clyde was brighter than most youngsters of his age and the stories he enjoyed best were more adapted to a lad of my years than his.

One of his singular characteristics was his generosity. It is natural for little children to welcome the coming of Christmas and their own birthdays, mostly for the gifts they hope to receive. The first letter written by the average citizen is addressed to Santa Claus.

My unselfish little brother was always contriving gifts for the other members of our family. He anticipated our birthdays far in advance and began preparations for Christmas when the first leaves of autumn fell.

I well remember one occasion when my own ineptitude caused him great sorrow. He had planned to surprise me. Shortly after his own birthday in mid-June when he was four, Clyde had slipped away from the house long enough to buy a few pennies' worth of candy. How he had managed to pull this off I do not recall, but by some hook or crook he had acquired this small bag of candy to present to his brother on his birthday in latter August, and it soon became evident that his agony of waiting for the day to come was devouring him piecemeal.

After an eternity or two it occurred to him that I should share his torture, so he took to dragging the little bag of candy, tied to a long string, through the room where I happened to be sitting. I pretended not to notice. Clyde continued his parade, back and forth, more slowly, each time a little closer to my feet as he passed.

When we discussed the incident later, Clyde agreed that where he made his mistake was in asking me to guess. His mission had been fully accomplished when he dragged the bag of candy through the room the first time. Sooner or later my curiosity would have broken me down.

In brooding over this unfortunate error on my own part I have always tried to excuse myself on the ground that I was deeply interested in the story I was reading, but I am still remorseful.

Clyde came to a full stop with his candy bag touching the toe of my shoe.

"What have you there in that bag?" I inquired.

"Guess!" said Clyde.

"Candy," I said.

His pale little face fell, but presently lighted.

"You don't know what kind it is," he said, victoriously, as he made off with it.

It was nearing summer's end when we arrived at the old home. About this time, for no particular reason that anyone could explain, frail little Clyde, whose digestive difficulties had kept him housed quite often, began to pick up. He ate like a lumberjack, grew taller, took on weight, shook off the troubles that had dogged his uncertain footsteps, and made up for lost time by setting a new pace for his big brother.

Mama was so delighted over his recovery that she offered no objection to our excursions and adventures. This gave me more freedom from maternal supervision than I had enjoyed previously. Clyde and I were constantly on the go, from morning to night. Luckily for us, there were but few chores to do. School did not "take up" at the little red brick schoolhouse until early in October. The gardening season was over. As yet, we did not own a cow. Mama looked after our two dozen hens.

Clyde and I explored every square inch of our small domain. We trapped wild rabbits in the near-by woods. We brought home big buckets of huckleberries from marshlands miles away. We went fishing. The latest occupants of our property had left Uncle Worth's leaky flat-bottomed boat, chained to the same old weeping willow where I had last seen it. We labored it out onto the bank, bailed it, calked it, and made it seaworthy. Every afternoon but Sunday we were paddling about among the lily pads and cattails, catching blue-gills, rock bass, perch; and, as the nippy days and frosty nights of November came on, my brother and I caught many three-pound catfish that were cold and hard and lively as trout.

I am now about to sell you a nice large mess of catfish, which may take some doing, for the catfish is held in low esteem by many accomplished epicures. I cheerfully concede that the catfish tugged up out of the bottom of a pond on a hot day in July is unfit for food; but so is any other fish caught under these conditions.

The catfish has two strikes against him because of his appearance. He is an ugly creature with a head disproportionate to his tapering, black-skinned body. He has large, wide-set eyes, and habitually wears a sinister scowl. He has a cruel mouth, turned down at the corners, and filled with three rows of sharp teeth, slanted inward. Two long, needle-sharp horns form the places where his ears ought to be. It is said that a stab by one of these thorn-like horns is poisonous. That could be so, but I have often felt the prick of them without getting into any trouble.

Your catfish is a greedy, foolhardy rascal who does not content himself with merely tasting your bait and thereby becoming involved with your hook. No, sir; he swallows bait, hook, line and sinker at one gulp; and seeing that your hooks are to be had at four for a penny you had better not try to extract one from his stomach's pyloric orifice. Get out your jackknife and let him keep what he thought he wanted; for if you try to salvage your tackle he will either bite you or snag you with one of his sharp horns.

The business of dressing him out for the skillet is tricky, too. When you are through fishing for the day, and have brought your catch to that big oak stump behind the barn, detach your catfish (at least a half-dozen of them, I hope) from the stringer, pick him up with a pair of pliers, and drive a ten-penny nail through his head and into the top of the stump. Slit the skin back of his head; and, with your pliers, pull his shirt and pants off. It is a messy business, but it can be done if you like catfish.

Our household practically lived on fish, that fall. Having derived from long lines of Protestants, on both sides of our family, we never tired of fish.

After the first hard frost we spent our Saturdays (school having commandeered the other weekdays) clubbing the walnut and hickory trees for nuts which we hauled home in a borrowed cart. The walnut, as you may know, is well protected. It not only has a hard shell; this shell is covered with a thick hull. The most practical method of hulling walnuts, a dirty job if ever there was one, is to spread them out on the ground and leave it to time and the elements to disintegrate the hull. But no matter how long you wait for this to occur, your hands will be stained a beautiful shade of brown. This color was known by our family as Guthrey brown, because Papa, when a boy, knew a large family of neighbors named Guthrey who made their own clothes and dyed the cloth with juice extracted from walnut hulls. One of the distinguishing qualities of this dye is its permanence. It never fades either from fabric or fingers.

It was during these carefree days that I really made the acquaintance of my brother. He was a witty lad, his brand of humor slanted slightly toward the satirical. He poked fun at many people and things, but most of his fun was had at his own expense. Anything for a laugh.

Now that he was well enough to risk exposure to rough weather and had quite outgrown the small overcoat that had belonged to me, Mama set about it to make one for him out of Papa's second-best frock coat. Mama had had success in making clothes for herself, but had never experimented with heavy material. What she lacked in tailoring skill she made up for in courage. We all held our breath, crossed our fingers, and hoped for the best.

At that time, the sleeves of women's garments had begun to puff out a little at the top. I do not know whether this trend had influenced the architecture of my brother's overcoat, but I do know that when he put it on for a fitting he looked very funny indeed.

I didn't stick around while the new coat was in its final phase of dress rehearsal. Later in life I developed at least the average man's ability to keep a straight face on occasions when it would have been impolite, if not positively wicked, to grin; but at fourteen, I found it more prudent, in certain circumstances, to slip away quietly without risking an accident.

There was no mirror in the living room where Clyde stood when the completed overcoat was ready to be put on view. I had gone upstairs. Mama called to me to come down and see the nice new overcoat. I thought I detected in her tone an almost pitiful wistfulness to be reassured. It was very

seldom that Mama felt the need of my approval. I sincerely wished that I could rush to her relief with such words of praise as Papa was offering. But I knew I mustn't try to do it. I shouted something that sounded like I'd be there in a minute. Papa was booming congratulations. That was all right for Papa: he had had a lot of practice in restoring people's ailing faith in themselves.

At length they grew tired of waiting for me to show up. I heard Clyde clattering up the steep stairs. I could tell by his composure that he hadn't seen himself yet. He came into our bedroom and walked directly to the mirror, leaned one high-pouched shoulder toward it for a better view; then the other. Then he began to rock with stifled laughter. He sat on the edge of the bed awhile, wiping his eyes and holding his lame stomach in both hands. When he thought he could stand another look he again consulted the mirror.

I, too, had laughed until I didn't feel very well. We sobered down. "Are you going to wear it?" I inquired. "Of course!" Clyde said.

I am not finding it an easy assignment to report on the various absurdities in which my brother delighted. One thing I must make clear: there was no malice in him, nor was he ever willfully sacrilegious.

When, for example, he suggested to Uncle Perry that he might name his newly purchased Berkshire boar in honor of an ultra-pious neighbor who had recently done him dirt in a trivial business transaction Clyde did not know that our misanthropic uncle would find pleasure in telling the joke to another local pagan.

This much had to be said for Uncle Perry: he did not claim authorship for a witticism that had been contrived by someone else. It was long before the day of party telephone lines, but news did get about through the country, losing little while in transport.

"And him a preacher's boy! I must say! 'Pears like he'd a-had a poor fetchin'-up!"

Nor did my humor-loving brother mend matters much when, sorrowfully rebuked by a neighbor in the presence of our parents, he admitted that it was a rude thing to say, seeing that Uncle Perry's fine Berkshire hog had never done him any harm.

I should like to pause here long enough to say something about the sad state of religion deep in the Hoosier hinterland three-score years ago; not meaning that at fourteen I was philosophizing on this matter, but even as a growing lad I heard much talk about it and was amazed and disgusted by it. Not until later years did I try to account for it on any rational ground.

The prevailing thought-life in the remote rural areas of the Mississippi Valley did not improve very much from the toil-weary days of the post-pioneers to the era of the horseless carriage and paved roads to town. By "post-pioneers" I mean the second wave of the immigrant tide composed of the children and grandchildren of Europeans who had settled in our eastern states.

Most of these hard-working country people slaved on their land and in the woods as their fathers had done before them. There were no libraries, nor would there have been either the time or the incentive to read books even if they had been available.

Occasionally some youngster, brighter or perhaps lazier than his contemporaries, would escape from this unrewarded drudgery and find employment in one of the growing cities. Returning home on a visit, his report on better living conditions and lighter work would spread discontentment among the younger fry, many of whom would follow his example. Sometimes an ambitious youth would get to college and set a pattern for his relatives and friends.

In one of my papa's country parishes there was a family of five tall, handsome sons. The eldest managed to go to the State University. The rest of them joined him. All five graduated, studied law, and set up their business in the state capital where they soon became the most influential legal firm in that city.

But most of the country people clung to the land and endured the endless toil it exacted of them. Of course this is not to say that they had no recreation or entertainment at all. As I have remarked earlier, the country schoolhouse was a center for many adult activities; Friday-night classes in penmanship, choral singing, spelling matches. But to such diversions, the churches made little or no contribution.

Sixty years ago, in what I have designated as the Salem-Wilmot area of Noble County, the large majority of the country people—whatever may have been their differences of opinion about many things—were almost belligerently Protestant. There may have been substantial reasons for this attitude. On many occasions, in the west European countries from which

these immigrants had fled, the old Mother Church had taken sides with predatory rulers as the feudal system made its last stand. But all that had been a long time ago. No such grievance persisted in young America.

It was unfortunate, I think, that there were no Catholics and no Catholic Church in the Salem-Wilmot country. You may think what you like about the Catholics, they do set a fine example of belief in and loyalty to their religion.

If the subject of religion happens to come up on the golf course, Sunday afternoon, one of your foursome, when queried about his church affiliation, may reply, "My parents were Congregationalists. I suppose I am, too." Another may say, "I was brought up a Methodist, but I'm afraid I don't work very hard at it." You turn to the third.

"You're a Catholic; aren't you, Jim?"

"Yes, sir!"

"And you work at it."

"Yes, sir!"

"Did you go to church this morning?"

"Of course!"

Now if the three of you non-practicing Protestants think you know Jim well enough to indulge in some playful ribbing, one of you may risk saying, "But Jim *has* to go to church, or he'll go to hell."

Quite unruffled, Jim smiles and replies, in the soothing tone of one quieting a mental patient, "Sure, sure; that's a good enough reason." He may add, "If you chaps want to go to hell, don't let me detain you."

But, seriously, the avoidance of punishment isn't Jim's sole motive for going to church. Religion is in his blood; he had it in his milk as a baby; it's the chief heritage in his family's tradition. He can remember when he and his father and his aged grandfather knelt, close packed, elbow touching elbow, in the same pew; nobody whispering or waving a hand to a friend; everybody serious.

Maybe the old priest officiates, maybe one of the younger priests; it doesn't matter. Maybe the short sermon is good, maybe it's dull; that doesn't matter, either. Jim is here to worship. Perhaps Jim knows his Latin, perhaps not; but the mass is the same, and Jim knows what to do. The scent of incense does something to him. When he attended mass in Africa, footsore,

homesick, depressed, it comforted him: he was at home here; everything was the same; he inhaled deeply of the incense. He had one possession that hadn't been dirtied or defiled or injured, his Religion.

I am fully aware that what I have been saying here may stir up some controversy. I shall not be surprised if good friends of mine write to inquire why I am pleading the cause of the Roman Catholics, particularly at a time when they are doing very well without any assistance from Protestants whose faith they deride.

Perhaps I can save someone the bother of writing me such a letter if I answer it before it is written.

I am not a Catholic, and I couldn't be a Catholic. I haven't had the training for it. It is not for me. Nor am I discharging an obligation to Catholicism for benefits personally received; for the Catholic press, when it has taken any notice of me, has usually warned its readers that my interpretation of events in Palestine during the ministry of Jesus is spurious. In fairness I should add, however, that I have in my files hundreds of friendly letters from Catholics expressing approval.

What I am trying to make clear is that my interest in Catholicism is strictly impersonal and objective. I want no part of it for myself. But I recognize Catholicism's essential strength which resides in its age-old, unchanging properties and procedures in an unstable, insecure, restless and badly frightened world.

Protestantism, in a time like ours, suffers of many disadvantages. Its over-all label is unfortunate. It is not, and should not be called, a "protesting" institution. It's a long time since we "Nonconformists" were "protesters." We have nothing to protest about. In this country we outnumber the Catholics two to one.

Our so-called "free" churches endlessly examine themselves to discover what ails them. Perhaps *that's* mainly what ails them—the *examination*. Practically every denomination continues to tinker with its face and form, redefines its principles, changes its methods, merges with another church and is required to change its name. It lacks continuity. It tries to keep up with the times, and the times are out of joint. It relies too much on the variable popularity of its pulpit and not enough on the steadying inspiration of its altar.

The large majority of our Protestant churches insist on keeping themselves up to date in an era when everything that is up to date is

distressing to the spirit. We are living in an era of unprecedented confusion. The political governments of the world offer but little comfort to their constituencies. New laws appear almost daily, many of them promising a little more "security" to one group at the expense of another, but nobody feels secure. We fly the same beautiful flag and rise to sing the same National Anthem. But almost everything under Government control is in a state of alteration. Even in matters so trivial as the price of an airmail postage stamp, nothing "stays put."

Now shelters are being planned to save our lives should an up-to-date war produce new terrors. Where can we hide?

But our most fearsome insecurity is an affair of the heart. We want something durable and time-testing to cling to; some Spiritual Refuge that we can recognize.

The large majority of our Protestant churches, excepting those of the Episcopalians, are locked up six days out of seven. This is too bad, I think.

What I had started to say, before making this detour, was that our midwestern country people, sixty years ago, were almost solidly "Nonconformist" in their religious beliefs and practices. No long-experienced Episcopacy counseled them about their leadership. Almost any pious-toned stranger, with a gift of gab and a long-tailed coat, could organize a summer camp meeting or a midwinter revival. The older folks were converted and reconverted; the younger ones attended the meetings for the entertainment they provided, such as an epidemic of unintelligible gibberish gifted to some who were able to "speak with tongues." And there would be trances, too. One journeyman evangelist gave a select few what he called "the third work."

Once, when I was still a small boy, I attended a prayer meeting with Uncle Worth. It was an off season for "big meetin's," and only a few old folks limped in. They prayed long and loud for the unsaved youth of the community. It was customary, on such occasions, for the despairing oldsters to sing, "Where is my Wandering Boy Tonight?"

But, had some wayward, misdirected youngster, suddenly made discontented with his bad habits and evil companions, looked about him for guidance to a brighter, better way of life, he certainly would not have consulted these morose products of "the third work."

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We went to an ungraded school in October, in the little red brick schoolhouse only a stone's-throw from the old home. Our teacher was a friendly, inexperienced young lady from Albion, our county seat. Her attitude toward the little kids was maternal and they loved her. Perhaps she would have done well with a roomful of six-year-olds. In her attitude toward the older boys and girls, some of whom were of her own age, she was self-conscious and recklessly chummy.

It soon became her custom to remain at her desk during the recess period, the bigger boys and girls huddled about her, but it was not long until the older girls were appearing on the playground at recess, and were not co-operating pleasantly in their school work. Then one of the older boys, who was gently stroking a small mustache, took over at recess, releasing all the other older boys for out-of-door exercise. It was apparent that these love-birds were unaware that anybody had noticed. The hard-hit young man frequently found something in his Arithmetic that puzzled him and would go to the teacher for help. It became habitual for all the other scholars, even down to the tots, to scrape their feet on the floor while these private conferences were in session. It goes without saying that our teacher had lost her authority. Her pupils were quite out of control. Clyde and I did not go back to school after the Christmas holidays. Papa and Mama, not having much to do, seemed to enjoy teaching us at home.

Then spring came on with a hop, skip and jump, as it always does in Indiana. Papa bought a friendly but lazy old farm horse for a song. We borrowed a plow, and planted a large, productive garden. We all worked like slaves that summer, and it was a good thing we did, for Mama canned great quantities of food which gave us a chance to save a little money.

Again the autumn days arrived. Again my brother and I brought home big buckets of wild berries. We went nutting and fishing. We were tanned the color of an old saddle. Clyde was physically fit as a fiddle. School "took up" with a middle-aged man in charge. He was not much of an inspiration but he kept order.

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It was midwinter. Deep in the night, Mama shook me awake. Papa was sick. Groggy with sleep I followed her downstairs to their bedroom. Papa looked dazed, bewildered. One side of his face sagged peculiarly. He was

mumbling something unintelligible, and trying to lift his right hand with his left one.

"Papa has had a stroke!" Mama said. "You'd better go for the doctor."

I flogged our sleepy horse into a stiff-legged trot and rode to North Webster, six miles away.

"Your mama is right," Doctor Williams said, after I had told him my story. "I would gladly go with you, my boy, if your father was in pain. There's nothing I can do now. Make him comfortable. I'll be over directly after breakfast."

"Will Papa get well?" I wanted to know.

"Perhaps," the doctor replied. "Many times they do get well. Did he have much trouble with his breathing?"

I told Doctor Williams that I hadn't noticed.

"That's good," he said. "Tell him I said not to worry."

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Papa's enforced inactivity did not worry him. As I have told you earlier, he was not very good at worrying. But he was bored by his idleness as he sat, month after month, with empty hands. Gradually his speech returned. Sensation was slowly restored to his right hand. It was a great day for him when he was able to write a letter.

Again Clyde and I were busy in the garden. Our half-brothers and -sisters came to visit Papa. Some brought their families. Our brothers went fishing. They borrowed shotguns and brought in fat gray squirrels from the woods. Mama had done well with her chickens. The young Plymouth Rock fryers lost their heads by the half-dozen. Lou had a vacation and helped Mama in the kitchen. We were well visited that summer, but not much out of pocket, for the food represented labor; not money. And many of the fish we ate were caught by our visitors.

Late in the summer, good old Doctor Gottwald, a professor in the Theological Seminary at Wittenberg College, drove from Columbia City to see Papa. He had been out beating the bushes for gifts to the Seminary's endowment fund. He may have thought that Papa might introduce him to some of the Leigh Hunt money. But Mr. Hunt was abroad and couldn't be reached.

However, Doctor Gottwald accepted the warm invitation to remain with us for a couple of days. Mama told him I was planning to go into the ministry, though that was going to be difficult. Doctor Gottwald had access to a scholarship fund. He said it was only a hundred dollars but it would pay tuition and fees in the Academy. I could easily find a job, he thought, to pay for my board and room. So it was settled that I should attend our country school another year, which would complete the equivalent of the eighth grade. A year from now I would enter "Second Prep" at Springfield, Ohio. Perhaps I should mention that Papa told the Professor of our informal chats about Greek and Latin. Doctor Gottwald had seemed surprised. I think it may have influenced him a little in offering to help me.

Well, I think that about buttons up the story of my childhood. The next time we meet I shall be a pretty cocky Second Prep, with a sore tongue and a new clay pipe, than which nothing is hotter than a candied sweet potato. I had just bought, for twenty dollars cash, the entire contents of a room on the fourth floor of the men's dorm which a Junior Theologue had just vacated; a bed, worn-out springs, worn-out mattress, desk, one desk chair, two very shabby upholstered chairs, a small coal stove, a coal scuttle, a shovel, a washstand with a large bowl and a pitcher with nose missing, a slop jar, and a very dirty, tattered, home-woven rag carpet. It was indeed a rag carpet.

My people were poor, but I had never lived in a dump like that.

8. College Days

WHEN the nineteenth century was at halfway mark or thereabouts, a baker's dozen of small colleges, fostered by as many Protestant denominations and engaged primarily in the education of young men for the ministry, began a serious struggle for survival in Ohio.

Not long afterward, in the more prosperous areas of all the midwestern states, many more colleges than could be adequately supported, entered upon their perilous existence.

It was not that the elder statesmen of the churches hadn't realized what they were getting into; but the need for institutions of higher learning was urgent. Self-anointed prophets roamed the country, holding camp meetings in summer and "big meetings" in winter. These men had no education and didn't want any. The Lord's Apostles, they said, hadn't gone to college, they had simply opened their mouths and the Holy Ghost had told them what to say. One itinerant custodian of a mouth that had been filled in this manner boasted that he was not an alma mater of any institution, a statement nobody bothered to dispute.

Had the responsible officials of the denominations pooled their interests in higher learning; had the churches in Ohio, for example, thrown all their available men and money into three rather than thirteen colleges, these projects might have had a little better chance to succeed; but sectarian loyalties and rivalries were—to quote an idiom of the hinterland—"horse-high and hog-tight." Once the Congregationalists had organized a college at Oberlin, the Presbyterians felt challenged to throw their weight into a little college at Wooster and the Methodists got busy at Delaware and the Episcopalians had laid a couple of Kenyon's cornerstones at Gambier.

But it sounds much easier than it is for a religious denomination to surrender its identity by making common cause with others. Here you have the same problem faced by a nation forced to sacrifice its sovereignty in the interest of a united front: same problem you have in cutting down our national taxation for domestic expenditures. We are unanimous in our belief that heavy cuts must be made in our domestic taxes, so long as the cut isn't

made where it affects me and mine. I must have that irrigation dam; Uncle Alex is desperate for flood control. In like manner most people believe there are far too many churches. Let us merge them—all but ours.

Of course this Federal Taxation problem seems simple enough; it's a matter of sheer selfishness and lack of patriotism, provided you don't stand in dire need of an irrigation ditch which had been promised you to redeem desert land you wouldn't have bought had you known it was to remain worthless.

And as for the amalgamation of the Protestant churches, this could be easily accomplished, in the opinion of all Protestants who never go to church except to attend weddings and funerals. It is generally conceded by Protestants, I think, that the primary attraction of Roman Catholicism is its history. This institution, unlike movie stars, isn't quite as old as it says it is, and as for "Apostolic Succession," there was one period when for seventy-five years the question, "Pontiff! Pontiff! Who's Got the Pontiff?" raged throughout France and Italy with all the vim, vigor and vituperation of a modern Presidential election in the United States of America.

But, admitting a few (typographical?) errors in its claim to an unbroken history from the days of Christ's Apostles, the Roman Catholic Church is far the oldest institution on earth; and if I were a Catholic that fact would mean a great deal more to me than the recent hierarchical proclamation of the "Dogma of the Assumption." To my way of thinking, the whole package of Catholic dogmas is acceptable mostly, if not solely, because of its proved antiquity. As a Protestant, I find that the "Apostles' Creed," which is the inheritance of all Christians, is much easier to say in Latin. Let the Catholics hang on to their cherishable possessions: it is their most valuable property. They're better off without the discovery of any more Saints or Bones or Dogmas.

But let us mind our own business and get back to the Protestants and their feeble little colleges in Ohio. At first their faculties were composed almost exclusively of scholarly clergymen, a few of whom had had the benefit of higher education in the older eastern colleges.

It must have been largely a labor of love when a young professor with a diploma from Princeton consented to bury himself at Wooster, Ohio. It must have been even more difficult to entice college-trained teachers to these little schools after the christening festivities were over and the second summer colic had set in. It was then that the frail little colleges had to plow back their own harvest into the soil. The top half-dozen in the graduating class

would join the Academy Faculty so that six Academy Professors could become College Professors. The subject in which I would have been most interested and industrious was English Literature and Composition. It was taught in our college by one of our alumni freshly promoted to that position from his former post as administrative officer of the Academy. He was an intelligent, personable gentleman whom everyone liked, but he had no preparation for evaluating, much less for creating, English. All that I know about "Creative English" I learned the hard way, by trial and error, after college days were over.

As I have told you, in earlier pages, I had lived a singularly sheltered life at home. It is a literal fact that I had to ask permission to step off our premises and report on my doings upon my return. I had not been conditioned for a totally unsupervised life.

Papa, whose partial paralysis had cleared up more quickly than we had dared to hope, drove me to the little railroad station and put me on a very dirty train that made all the stops. Until that day I had not traveled much on trains, but they all smelled alike and the aroma was heady. Fine coal cinders had percolated into the red plush seats, lubricating oil had dripped onto hot brake shoes. The Pullmans do not smell like that; only the day coaches. I inhaled deeply. I grinned foolishly and chuckled. Would you believe it? I was free! I was absolutely on my own! I wanted to do something to exemplify my independence!

I must confess that I have dreaded to see this moment arrive. Confession may be good for the soul but it can be bad for one's reputation. Some of you, persons of great rectitude, are almost sure to be disappointed.

The next time the train butcher came through with his big basket of oranges, bananas, chocolates, magazines, cigars, etc., I bought a package of Sweet Caporal cigarettes. I had promised Papa that I would not walk from one car to another while the train was in motion. Kindly give me credit for obeying that order. I didn't have long to wait, for the train stopped frequently.

Mama hated tobacco. Papa would smoke a cigar with Mr. Leigh Hunt whenever he visited us, and it was a known fact that he had smoked cigars when he was a lawyer and legislator. But he too detested cigarettes. I had occasionally transgressed but only once had I been caught at it.

On a bright moonlit evening, in the previous winter, a boy of my age picked me up in his family's sleigh and we drove a few miles to a "big meetin'." Johnny had bought a couple of "two-fers." I don't mean twofer a quarter but twofer a nickel. A twofer cigar is in no way related to Chanel No. 5. Johnny and I smoked all the way to the evangelistic services. I knew I smelled very bad. Mama would be up to greet my return. As we passed through Wilmot the store was still open and I bought a couple of pennies' worth of peppermint drops which I chewed up on the way home and smeared over my knitted scarf.

Mama heard the sleigh bells and opened the door. She kissed me and began to cry aloud. Papa was in bed asleep. Mama led me into the living room and made me kneel down beside her while she took "our wayward son" to the Throne of Mercy. It was an agonized prayer, punctuated with sobs. I was very unhappy as, of course, I should have been, vile little creature that I was.

But now, on the train, living my life according to "the devices and desires" of my own heart, I could smoke in peace. My conscience? Oh yes, it troubled me a little; but not enough. Did I enjoy the cigarette? Not very much. I maintain that it was simply the symbol of my independence; something like the Boston Tea Party. I had been penned up too long; something had to give.

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Wittenberg Academy, College and Theological Seminary, at Springfield, Ohio, were on the same campus, one of the most beautiful campuses in this country, I think. When I first saw it in mid-September of 1894 there were six buildings in all; Recitation Hall which housed all classrooms of the College and Academy, the five-story dormitory for college and academy men, a small dormitory for women, a small but lovely library, a Divinity hall with classrooms and living quarters for theologues, and a little gymnasium.

Very few Academy students were from out of town and these few kids were playfully ribbed by upperclass collegians. As I was entering at Second Prep, with four years of college to follow, I was of the Class of 1900. Seniors would stop me to inquire what class I belonged to, just to hear me say, "1900," which sounded a long way off. And sometimes I added that I was doing three years in the Seminary too, and then they *would* laugh! 1903! . . . Well, it does sound a long way off; doesn't it?

Vast improvements have been made at Wittenberg: many new up-to-date buildings. But when I arrived the "Dorm" had no central heating. Each little room had its own little coal stove. Out back of the dormitory stood two long rows of coal sheds, securely locked, for even the more honest could delay ordering a fresh ton; one could easily get out of funds, and the coal people had to have their money in cash right now. (Just like income taxes.) Carrying your coal up four flights of stairs meant that you needed a lot of education. Limited toilet facilities were in the basement only, and there were three shower-baths but no hot water. I hope and believe that the Business Executives and the Faculty were ashamed of that.

Through the winter weather, when the baseball and football players were inactive, the gym was closed except on Wednesday, when the girls had the use of it, and on Saturday for the men. There were three shower baths with hot water.

I do not mean that we were all that dirty and aromatic, though some of us were, no doubt. We had kettles on top of our little stoves. I repeat: this was a long time ago, but cleanliness, even then, was next to godliness; and I am ashamed to be making this report. I submit that no group of Christian men, however desperate to found a college, had a right to ask their sons and brothers to live in such a boorish environment. I should hasten to add that many of the older students tried to counsel the younger ones in matters of morals, but manners were in short supply even with our elders and betters who had come mostly from the open country where the social graces were too often ridiculed as an effort to "put on style."

In my time at Wittenberg College we had four national Greek-letter fraternities. In the order of their establishment at our school they were Phi Kappa Psi, Beta Theta Pi, Phi Gamma Delta and Alpha Tau Omega. When I became a freshman I joined Phi Gamma Delta, most of whose members lived in Springfield. I think I was the only "Fiji" of my college generation who expected to study for the ministry. The rest of them were to go into business or medicine or the law. I believe I was the only one of the lot who studied Greek.

When, at the end of my freshman year, I was at home telling Papa about the Fraternity and also that these Greeks didn't take Greek, he inquired, naïvely, "What do these Greek letters mean?" For there hadn't been any fraternities at Wittenberg in his time.

"Sorry, Papa," I replied. "These fraternities are secret societies: these Greek words, for which the letters are the initials, are never spoken above a

whisper and never even whispered outside the fraternity hall."

Papa laughed until his asthma strangled him. I wanted to know what was so funny. When he was able to talk he told me.

"You have a secret society, my boy; no doubt about that. When a student, who knows no Greek, whispers a Greek motto into the ear of a student, who knows no Greek, it is a secret that will never get out; never!"

When I arrived at Wittenberg none of the fraternities boasted a dwelling house. Their headquarters were rented halls in the downtown business district. Our hall was a large, cheerless room on the walk-up second floor over a drugstore. Its furnishings consisted of three or four dozen ordinary wooden chairs, a table, and a pot-bellied stove fueled by natural gas. The plumbing leaked, not enough to risk an explosion, but plenty. We made a big thing of the fact that no one except members of the fraternity were permitted to enter. If the non-fraternity element in college had known that the secret we guarded so carefully in our downtown hide-out was a bad stink of leaking gas they might not have felt so wormy about their social inferiority.

I had my fraternity to thank for the frequent invitations to Sunday dinners in their homes. Perhaps that was enough to expect of one's fraternity in those long-gone days. And my membership in a respected national college fraternity has given me quick access to many an enduring friendship I might not have had through the years which were to follow.

But I have often wondered whether fraternities and sororities provide enough blessings to the minority who belong to them to pay for the serious damage they cause. After I had been out of college for ten years and active in my profession, I was invited to become the Religious Work Director at the University of Illinois, a position created and mostly subsidized by the International Student Y.M.C.A. After four years at that post I became the minister of the First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor, patronized largely by Faculty members and students at the University of Michigan. I spent five years there. So, for nine years I occupied what might be called a ringside seat with every opportunity to observe many facets of the student's private life.

In both of these positions I frequently served as a confidential advisor to students in trouble. My office at the University of Illinois was in the Students' Y.M.C.A. Building which had dormitory space for sixty men. It is needless to say that they were non-fraternity men, else they would have been living in chapter houses. The non-fraternity men referred to themselves as

“independents.” To fraternity men they were “barbarians”: “barbs,” for short.

Now this does not mean that all the fraternity men held the “barbs” in contempt; not at all. Occasionally an “independent” would break a record in athletics or pull down a handful of other honors. He might then be tardily bidden by a couple of fraternities. With a cackle of malicious joy he could tell them where to go, and the whole campus, Greeks and barbarians, bond and free, would applaud.

But, viewing things by and large, the student was much more comfortable if he belonged to a fraternity. The deuce of it was that you couldn’t explain why you didn’t belong. Perhaps you hadn’t wanted to; perhaps you had been bidden and had declined. But you couldn’t go about wearing a placard telling this to the public.

The Y.M.C.A. was often referred to as the barb’s fraternity; and, because the Y.M.C.A. housed many religious activities, it was easy for a thoughtless youngster to deduce that religion might properly be left in the custody of the socially unwanted.

This predicament may seem to elderly people, who have forgotten many things of importance to youth, as a mouse begot by a mountain; but this dilemma of being overlooked by the fraternities can be a tragic thing. I have been through this heart-breaking business with a ladder and a lantern, again and again.

I knew a case of a sensitive youngster who had every right to believe that his daddy’s fraternity would be happy to welcome him. In the event you have not kept abreast of the changes in fraternity policies and problems through the years, a student whose father or uncle belonged to Alpha Alpha Alpha (let us say) is referred to as a “legacy.” What to do with legacies is a distressing question. The boy’s papa may have been a very popular fellow but there is no one in the active chapter now who ever heard of him. Junior himself may be a noisy, impudent pain in the neck who barges into the Alph chapter house to announce that this was his daddy’s “frat.”

Fraternities are not called “frats” except by the bards; it has been all of a quarter-century since fraternities were “frats.” Of course this is a small thing to cavil at, but the universe is made up of small things. Here you have the same problem to be encountered in California where the residents of San Francisco go into a screaming tizzy if anyone refers to their city as “Frisco.” My Uncle! How they hate that word “Frisco.” The seasoned resident of Los Angeles venomously despises people who say “L.A.” Only the hicks and

people in “Frisco” call Los Angeles “L.A.” Only the hicks and people in “L.A.” call San Francisco “Frisco.” Naturally, Los Angeles is called “L.A.” more frequently than San Francisco is called “Frisco.” There are three or four times as many hicks in “L.A.” as there are in “Frisco.”

Of course, if you live in the East and have never been out here, you may say you’re going to Frisco, implying that you and good ole Frisco have been frisking about together for lo! these many years. But if you do that you are a hick, so the rule still holds.

To get back to Junior and his daddy’s frat. The Alphs did not welcome him. They told him to get th’ell out of there and not come back until they sent for him. You retort, “Somebody should have briefed Junior before he left home.” Right you are, brother; but they didn’t. And now there’s nothing to be done. If Junior doesn’t want to feel like an outcast through his college days, he’d better move to a more comfortable environment.

Here is the case of four youngsters who were chums all through high school. They travel on the same train to the University. Three of them are bidden to Beta Beta Beta. Freddy Frey is overlooked. Freddy is a Catholic. Fifteen years ago the Betas would have bidden him. But, about a dozen years ago the Betas had bidden a couple of Catholic boys and pretty soon they had eight Catholic members and Father O’Toole was dropping in to call. Then the Betas’ Alumni Chapter reared up on its hind legs and decreed that there were to be no more Catholics admitted until further orders. It wasn’t that they had any objection to a Catholic because he was a Catholic, but they didn’t want to see the chapter tagged as a Catholic fraternity, as it certainly would be if the current trend continued. The alumni would have taken a similar action if the undergraduate chapter was filling up with Seventh-Day Adventists or Latter-day Saints or Jews.

Freddy Frey might be desirable personally, and it was too bad that this problem had come up; but there it was. The three cronies are very unhappy. They tell Freddy that they will decline to accept their bids, but he insists that they toss him to the wolves and save themselves. Perhaps one of the exclusively Catholic fraternities will bid him. But by now the Catholic fraternities had bidden their limit of housing space.

Freddy told me all about it, one day. I ventured the wrong guess that this incident must have had the effect of binding him more tightly to his church. Strangely enough that hadn’t happened. He had never realized at home that there was any discrimination against Catholics; but, if that were true, he would reject the handicap.

I thought he was making a mistake and told him so. He had his parents to consider. Anyhow, he could get along without a fraternity, I said. It might be an incentive to work harder and earn some medals. But he hadn't a drop of cum laude in him, he said. I told him he was a good sport to cut loose from his chums when they were bidden to the Betas; reminded me of Jonah, I said.

"What about Jonah?" inquired Freddy.

"Jonah, Freddy, was a prophet whom the Lord ordered to conduct what you might call a novena in Nineveh."

"I've heard of Nineveh," said Freddy. "Quite an old city. What's that line, 'One with Nineveh'—and Someplace."

"Tyre," I assisted. "Nineveh was very old and enormously wicked, and Jonah didn't want to go. But he was afraid that the Lord would arrange transportation for him, so he boarded a ship that was just sailing in the opposite direction, paid his fare, went to his cabin, and fell asleep."

"You're making that up," muttered Freddy.

I opened a Bible at the right place and pushed it across the desk. He read in silence for a minute or two.

"Well—whadda yuh know?" Freddy said.

"You ought to read the Bible some time, Freddy," I said. "Interesting book. . . . Getting back to Jonah, a great storm came up. There were representatives of a good many religious denominations on board"—

Freddy peered suspiciously into the Good Book.

"You win," he said.

"And they all prayed," I continued, "all but Jonah, who was hiding from his God. But the storm was growing worse: shipwreck was inevitable. So Jonah found the Captain and told him that the storm was his own personal property; his God had sent it. If they would pitch him overboard, the storm would cease."

"A good sport, was this Jonah," Freddy said.

"He was all of that," I agreed. "The Captain hesitated to penalize such courage, but disaster was imminent. He said (if I may make a free translation of it), 'I hate to do this to you, chum, but if you're sure you're right about the storm, over you go.' And over he went."

. . .

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However upsetting it may be to the young man whom all the fraternities overlook, this indignity seems to hurt the girls even more cruelly.

It is when the girls get home that the disaster really shows up. Some of the other girls she had chummed with at home are now wearing sorority pins. This is hard to take.

I was close enough to a few sorority seniors to risk asking why this girl or that had been skipped. Some of the reasons, given to me confidentially, were incredibly trivial. One girl they had rushed briefly and dropped had been invited to Eta Beta Pi house for luncheon and had eaten the lettuce leaf on which her salad was parked. This wasn't done. Perhaps I should add that this foolish thing occurred *circa* 1920 B.V. (Before Vitamins.) It's quite proper to eat one's lettuce leaf now: lettuce is good for what ails you. In any case, the secret societies aren't so stuffy now about the smaller details of etiquette, table manners being what they are at present.

In the great (as to population) State Universities today the fraternity and sorority dilemma, which has caused so much heartache, is materially reduced. It is in the smaller co-ed colleges that the casualty list is about the same as ever.

Our larger institutions of higher education have taken on an entirely new appearance and character since the veterans of World War II have arrived. The vets are older, more serious, more experienced. A year of hot war, combat war, compounded of mud and guts, blood, sweat and tears, is more aging than a cycle of the traditional peacetime horseplay and rah-rah which identified American college life.

As for the Greek-letter fraternities, the typical vet, who wants to learn something that will quickly help him to a job that promises to support him and his wife and baby he has already accumulated, takes a dim view of them. In his opinion they are a silly caprice of arrested adolescence, an expensive elaboration of the kid gang's cave, complete with grip, signs, passwords and a peephole in the door.

Alumni who graduated within the past dozen years aren't subscribing so extravagantly as aforetime to the undergraduate chapter's handsome new lodge, which is still on the drawing board. Today the alumnus who is earning enough money to help Junior live in fancier quarters than was his custom at home fears he may have to borrow money to pay his taxes.

While we are on the subject of changes wrought on college customs by the arrival of the veterans, it should be noted that the old peace and calmness of the academic world has largely disappeared, driven into almost total eclipse by job-hungry men who haven't time to "take it easy."

In my library I have an old textbook which my papa studied, a sort of philosophical anthology, stating in a condensation the theories of such giants as Kant, Spinoza, Descartes, etc. The first line of the Introduction says, "Knowledge is the product of leisure." Perhaps my papa believed that when he was in college. I'm sure I didn't: I just believed in leisure, period.

Certainly nobody would believe that knowledge is the product of leisure if he were to risk life and limb by crossing a busy university campus today. These institutions have pitched out the refinements to make room for the techniques. What was known as culture is on the run. One youngster, taking an oral over-all exam was asked to tell all he knew about Keats. He replied, "I know nothing at all about them; I don't even know what they are."

For my own part, I am sorry to see the universities converted into machine shops. There was something to be said for that little quadrennium of leisure, even if many of us did take advantage of it without improving our minds very much.

But, no matter how we may deplore the disappearance of leisure and the classics, that is what has happened. Not infrequently some highly rated, ultra-conservative professor, who has won his ribbons by refusing to say either yes or no to any and all questions, comes boldly forth in one of the huge weekly pictorial magazines with an announcement that he notices signs of a turning tide; thinks that teachers and students alike are becoming less materialistic; and that the world is on its way back to an emphasis on the spiritual life.

If you want to know how many people are likely to believe this, note the publicity it achieves. The magazine boys feature the article; give it top billing on the cover, accompany it with pictures of the Prophet at his typewriter, and with his wife and with his dog, and on the golf course, and being fed nuts by the little girl who lives next door.

I devoutly wish that I could see what this good man of far vision thinks he sees. I am sure he is honest. Few are less likely than he to say these things for the sake of making a thousand dollars and some screaming headlines. Maybe it's a mirage that he sees. For eventually this return to Religion, to Repentance, and to Faith, will come. It always does—

eventually. But not until great wickedness and skepticism have beaten a few nations to their knees.

That's the way we got the Crusades and the massive Cathedrals. Perhaps we will get a few more of these costly cathedrals.

Next time you are in New York, go with your dearest friend—or alone—to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and sit quietly for an hour: see what it does to you.

There may be more of these very expensive cathedrals built in this country. No, not soon; but later, when we have reached desperation. A few quite inspiring cathedrals could be built for less than we have paid—plus what we have yet to pay—for the Atom Bomb. Perhaps we will have to wait for the great new American cathedrals until everybody has had much more than enough of this amazing scientific discovery.

At this juncture, one of the more practical-minded members of the Committee on Rehabilitation may suggest that instead of wasting labor and treasure on cathedrals we'd do better to spend it on feeding, clothing and housing the world's poor.

A similar protest was voiced on one occasion during the Master's ministry in Palestine. An impulsive devotee had poured a vial of costly ointment on his feet. One of the Disciples objected to this extravagance. The perfume could have been sold and the money given to the poor.

Yes, we must take care of the poor, but that job is endless. "The poor," Jesus said, "are with you always."

Whenever we feel greatly in need of heart's-ease we launch another campaign to find remedies for diseases of the body. We have responded quite cheerfully to these appeals. Lately we have been made aware that this planet of ours is a dangerous place in which to live. Our Government thinks it might be safer if we gave aid to "the backward areas of the world."

How do you mean "*backward*?" Perhaps you're thinking of some areas where the farmer plows with a camel hitched to a crooked stick when what he needs is a tractor and irrigation machinery and fertilizers and better seed.

Wouldn't it be odd of God if He considered the USA a backward nation?

I am fully aware that what I have been saying is disheartening and it is likely to tag me as a confirmed pessimist. This is not true of me. I have been throughout my lifetime an incorrigible optimist. There is a great deal of honest goodness believed in and practiced by our generation, and it gets

very little praise for it. A few days ago one of the big bakeries in our town had a $100,000 fire. The bakery's competitors, instead of capitalizing on this opportunity to take over the business which the damaged bakery could not handle, came forward immediately with the loan of their facilities so that there was no interruption at all in the service. Meantime, one hundred employees, who would have been thrown out of work by the fire, were taken over for the duration of the repairs so that there was no loss to them. Seeing how seldom good news is called to the public's attention, I phoned the papers suggesting an editorial on this subject, but they did not get around to it.

Good deeds of this sort happen every day and pass unnoticed. But what I am talking about is a general spiritual revival, not an occasional incident of excellent sportsmanship.

All of the fraternities of my alma mater live in chapter houses now. While I was in college the Phi Kappa Psi boys leased a decadent mansion that had long been the home of an old family which had dwindled down to a bankrupt octogenarian.

As the Phi Psis had been the first national fraternity to organize a chapter at Wittenberg, most of the faculty were members. Beta Theta Pi had come next in order of founding, so the rest of the Faculty were Betas. The Betas and Phi Psis hated each other, a little more vigorously after the Phi Psis acquired their house, and took on airs, and began to have parties. With this competition, the Betas began having parties, too. They opened their fraternity hall to the girls, employed a dancing teacher, and went in for an expansive social program. We "Fijis" pretended to abhor the idea of inviting women to our hall. Fraternities, we maintained, were for men. Our social rating was something like that of the Dead End Kids. I never learned how to dance.

In 1897 the Fiftieth Annual Convention of Phi Gamma Delta was held at the brand-new Hotel Schenley in Pittsburgh. Our Wittenberg undergraduate chapter was represented by two delegates, William Henry (Bill) Robbins and me. Bill's family was well-to-do and he had been around. It was the first time I had been exposed to luxury and Bill generously coached me on how to get along with the haves.

Fortunately, I was able to make a decent appearance. I had been working on Saturdays in a men's furnishings store and my wages were paid in

clothing which my employer—a very fine fellow, by the way—made for me at a big discount. I not only had modish street clothes but a formal dress suit, for I was a member of the Glee Club. Perhaps I may speak more of this Glee Club and its two weeks of out-of-town engagements annually, if I have time. These trips were fun and earned a little money.

Oh, yes, I had a pair of patent leather pumps, too, which I wore at evening sessions of the Fraternity Convention, though I owned only a half-interest in them. They were necessitated by these Glee Club performances. Classmate John Milton (King) Cole was an excellent violinist. He belonged to the Glee Club, but hated to pay five dollars for a pair of shoes he couldn't use anywhere except on the stage. So—because the vocal octette, to which I belonged, wouldn't be on the stage while King was fiddling, we divided the expense. It required some prompt footwork on the part of the King and me to get in and out of these shoes. Backstage people always made way for us.

So—I was well enough dressed at the Fraternity Convention. Incidentally, the survivors of that Convention met for a reminiscent dinner in New York in 1947. I wanted very much to attend but wasn't well enough. They asked me to write them a letter to be read on that occasion. I enclose a few lines of it.

"One night, after the day's serious work was over, everybody was down in the swanky, shiny, new cocktail lounge (although I don't remember that they were called 'cocktail lounges' at that period) having a friendly glass of beer and getting personally acquainted.

"The table where Bill Robbins and I sat was surrounded by about fifteen youngsters representing almost that many colleges and universities. On the other side of this big round table a small group quietly discussed some of the recent social doings in their respective chapters. The group of participants and listeners grew larger.

"We heard of what was going on in beautiful chapter houses, mostly in the older Eastern schools; the parties, with home girls imported; the proms, the assorted gaieties, the almost-everything that poor little Sigma Chapter didn't have.

"As I listened I grew more and more miserable over the plight of my brethren back in far-away Ohio and felt traitorous over my inability to make a comparable show of our social antics at little Wittenberg.

"At length, I collected all my courage, won the full attention of the entire table and began to tell them about Sigma Chapter.

"We had, I said, a 50-room chapter house. So long as I was building this chapter house, I thought I might as well give it a favorable location, so I situated it on a hill overlooking the campus. It was a fairly steep hill, which gave our establishment a commanding position. Its grounds were exquisitely landscaped. . . . I described a few of our parties. These brilliant affairs of ours (or mine) made all the social functions we had heard about from our Eastern brethren seem very small and tepid by comparison. . . . I went on and on. My audience sat stunned, wide-eyed, transfixed, while I proceeded to gild my lily to the full extent of my ability. At length—I ended my story. My audience was speechless, stupefied, awe-stricken.

"Then, breaking the silence, came the quiet voice of Bill Robbins. 'Douglas,' he remarked, apologetically, 'is a darned liar.' "

One of my most pleasant memories of college days concerns my employment on Saturday afternoons and evenings in a downtown haberdashery.

First let me say that I had always detested Saturday, not for its having done me any specific injury, but just on general principles. At home there had always been an ashes-burning stove to clean within and polish without, washtubs to fill and empty, and enough other drudgeries to cancel a jaunt to the river for fishing in summer or skating in winter. On Saturday, too, the family bathed, a miserable business in cold weather. This affair was conducted in the kitchen, immediately after we had finished doing the noon dinner dishes. Papa bathed first; my little brother and I followed. It would be nearing two when we boys would be out of our baths and into fresh clothing; rosy and smelling of soap. I am remembering us, at the moment, as being, respectively, about eleven and five.

One feature of our papa's Saturday-afternoon routine was the winding of the clock which Mama had bought when she was a schoolteacher. It stood alone on the mantel in our living room, which we called the sitting room, though most people said "settin' room." This fussy and noisy clock was as conceited and eager for attention as a White Leghorn pullet after having laid her first egg.

It was an eight-day clock: that is, you wound it up every Saturday, but in an emergency you had one day of grace. "Emergency?" you inquire, "like a death in the family?" . . . No, it needn't be that bad. When there was a death in the family it was a country custom for some helpful neighbor to stop your

clocks, probably as a courtesy to the deceased. The same neighbor's Aunt Maria would turn all your mirrors to face the wall. I have no theory to explain that one.

Mama's clock was an excellent timepiece, but the apparatus that struck the hours wearied as the week wore on, so that by two on Saturday it could hardly drag one foot after the other. Earlier in the week the striking had been prompt and decisive. No loafing now; mind you! Put down that book, and clean out the stable. But by two on Saturday afternoon the clock was completely exhausted. I should add that the striking, whether lively or ailing, was preceded by a warning whirr, similar to the rat-a-tat-tat-tat-tat racket made in these days by small boys who bob up from behind the shrubbery to machine-gun you.

Mama's clock would emit a dejected whirr, and strike two; "b-o-n-g . . . b-o-n-g." Papa would now come forward and wind and wind and wind, both the keeping-time side and the wearied striking side. It was a long hour that we had to wait. My brother and I would stand before the clock as the dramatic moment neared. We shivered with excitement. Smack on the button, at three, the refreshed little clock laid the egg: "Tttt-bang-bang-bang!"

My working hours at Mr. Bethel's Men's Furnishings Store were from one to eleven P.M. About 10.30 P.M. a half-dozen or more members of the undergraduate chapter of Phi Gamma Delta arrived to await my release from duty. Occasionally one of them would buy a shirt or a scarf. But whether they bought or not it pleased Mr. B. to have so many potential customers seen in his shop at that late hour. Mr. Bethel had only one full-time assistant, for it was a small store and the proprietor, a genial fellow in his late thirties, operated with small capital and much competition.

The local taverns had a strict eleven-o'clock closing ordinance; but Poor Jake, who was a deacon and helped take up the collection at the beautiful German Lutheran Church, was a good friend of Police Sergeant Maloney. The contingent of collegians left Mr. Bethel's store shortly after eleven and arrived a few minutes later at the closed and shuttered tavern where Poor Jake, a serious, dignified, fatherly man of sixty, awaited us in his cozy back room. There was a fireplace and a big bowl of free pretzels was on the table. We had a mug of beer and swapped yarns for an hour. Sergeant Maloney joined us as our guest. It was an inexpensive diversion and a good time was

had by all. Nobody felt the necessity of getting tight, though it must be admitted that the beer stimulated conversation. As for overdoing the consumption of Poor Jake's potations, the good old fellow would have frowned darkly on such conduct.

Of course when I had graduated from college and had entered the Theological Seminary, it seemed more prudent to discontinue these late Saturday night get-togethers at Poor Jake's tavern, though I continued to work on Saturdays for my benefactor, the generous Mr. Bethel. I came to have great esteem for this good man.

Deep in the winter of my second year in the Seminary, Mr. Bethel was put to bed with a serious attack of flu, which had become a widespread epidemic. He sent for me and asked me if I would take charge of his store while he was ill. I was happy to try. It was a whole month before Mr. B. was able to return to duty.

I was given free rein to do what I liked. It had often occurred to me that we might do something to reduce our inventory of slow-moving goods. I contrived a plan and explained it to my employer. We would have a special sale on Saturdays. We had a lot of shelf space that was filled with empty collar boxes. Detached shirt collars in those days sold for 15 cents each or two for a quarter. I was for putting two collars or a necktie or a 25¢ handkerchief in a box, and filling the front windows of the shop with these boxes. A placard would announce that one of these boxes held a ticket entitling the purchaser to a beautiful $2.50 umbrella, and there were to be two or three other less expensive prizes, caps, scarves, etc.

The scheme was entirely honest. The customer was assured of a 25¢ value. If he didn't get something he could use, he could exchange it for anything else valued at a quarter, but the exchange would have to wait until the following Saturday. We would be much too busy to do the exchanging at the time of the sale. Mr. Bethel laughed and remarked that not many men would bother to exchange their merchandise.

"We will hope not," I said. "If the collars are too small for Pop, perhaps Buster can wear them."

Every evening after the store closed I went to the Bethel home with the day's receipts. We closed the shop at nine on all evenings but Saturday.

I cannot give you a detailed account of this project, but it was indeed a gratifying success. Mr. Bethel was delighted! We literally cleaned out the store! Fresh merchandise was ordered in considerable quantity, for which

Mr. Bethel was able to pay in cash which meant a better discount. I had greatly enjoyed my experience as a salesman. It was a lot of fun.

When I graduated from the Theological Seminary to become the minister of a small-town church in Indiana, Mr. Bethel entreated me to stay in business with him, offering me much better wages than the $66.66 per month I would receive in my chosen profession; but I didn't like the idea of spending my life as a merchant. One of my classmates in the Seminary was offered, on the eve of our graduation, a promising position with a firm of building contractors, and took it. His fiancée, whose father was a minister, had begged him to do it. My fiancée, whose father was a minister, expressed no eagerness to go in for more poverty and regimentation; but hoped and believed that the future would be a little less tough on us—which it was—though we had to wait many years for any sizable improvement in our income.

The cold fact is—and perhaps I should have told you earlier—that while in college I had entertained many misgivings about my choice of a profession.

To begin with: I hadn't been given a choice. From my earliest childhood I had been told that I was to enter the ministry. . . . Yes, I know; I could have revolted. But I kept postponing a personal decision until I was far past the point of no return.

As it turned out later, the ministry seemed to be my most suitable life work, but it certainly gave me some anxious hours as I neared the time for being addressed as "Reverend."

It was at that point that I hesitated. I did not want to be a "Reverend." I did not want to be revered. As "the preacher's kid" I was supposed to be more than a little more dutiful and pious than the other kids. College had given me a brief reprieve from this frying-pan: now comes the fire.

The chief of my reasons for being reluctant to go in for holy orders was my secret wish to live a normal life, which is quite impossible in the ministry. To be a preacher implied that one considered oneself equipped to advise other people on what they should believe and how they should behave. The implication that I felt myself to be a pattern of moral precept and practice was not to my taste. Much better would I have liked the role of a layman, listening to another man expound his views on these matters.

Perhaps it was this very reluctance of mine to solve all of my people's problems at the first try that gave me the measure of success I have had as a

minister. I didn't know all the answers, and said so. Not knowing quite what to say to the bereaved was, I think, a little better than knowing too well.

Another reason for doubting whether the ministry was my job concerned others who, unlike myself, would have no choice. In due time I would marry and there would be children, no doubt. I was well aware of the restrictions my position imposed on me. There had been plenty of innocent pleasures I had given up because some narrow-minded old sourpuss might make trouble for Papa. I was a gregarious fellow, I liked people, I wanted to be one of them. Doubtless my children would dislike the captivity that would be awaiting their arrival.

In all fairness to everybody, I must say that when my daughters joined our organization, we were luckier than most. Our girls were given plenty of liberty. And I know that there was plenty of criticism, but not from people whose friendship we prized or needed.

What my college days lacked the most of, during my nine years on the Wittenberg campus, was firm, constructive discipline. There should have been a mature man, socially knowledgeable, to supervise our behavior; for the large majority of us were from the country and stood in need of coaching in the amenities of gracious living.

The old dormitory was certainly no place for an ambitious youngster who dreamed of making something of himself. Our table manners were quite dreadful. Many of the upper classmen were good enough to counsel the preps and freshmen on matters of morality, but even they, after graduation from the Seminary, would probably be baffled when confronting two forks and three spoons in the place set before them in the home of their most generous parishioner.

It was indeed fortunate for me that I had been brought up in a clergyman's home. I was familiar with such pastoral services as weddings and funerals. My classmates, who had come from homes of lay families, had to learn by experience. Not a word was spoken about these ministerial acts by any of the three elderly professors in our Seminary.

Our Seminary had a shorter year than the College. We closed early and opened in mid-October. This was to give the theologues a little longer time to serve as supply preachers, usually in country churches not very far away.

As vacation neared, at the end of my second year, I was approached by one of our professors who had heard from the minister of our best church in Des Moines, Iowa, asking for a student to take over some of the pastoral chores, such as the visitation of the sick, hinting that if the youngster liked the job he might stay on. (I gathered that the Reverend Doctor Wirt didn't think it mattered much whether one had two years or three of our Seminary's instruction.) Professor Bauslin asked me if I might like to go, and I said yes, and went. My first night in a sleeping car was spent en route to Des Moines.

Doctor Wirt and two sons, college students at Drake University, met me. It was a beautiful morning.

The good Doctor was an incorrigible "joiner." He not only belonged to a half-dozen or more secret societies but was much interested in them and I think that the many friendships made through these organizations were at least partly responsible for the popularity he enjoyed. Des Moines was the mecca for one of these lodges, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. There was certain liturgical work in the upper brackets of this institution which was carried on only in the Des Moines Temple. At the time of my arrival in the city they were looking for an organist to play for their ritualistic exercises. Doctor Wirt, knowing of my experience with the organ, suggested my name and I was promptly elected to the position which was very lucrative. So this income, added to the salary I received as assistant pastor and preacher during Doctor Wirt's extended vacation, made it possible for me to go back to school with more money in my pocket than I had ever earned until then. This windfall, supplemented by the money I earned as organist of the Presbyterian church in Springfield, carried me to the end of my Seminary course without resorting to manual labor.

There were three elderly men on the Seminary faculty. The professor who taught Hebrew specialized in Hebrew grammar. I do not recall that he ever had anything to say about the Hebrew people. The professor who taught preaching and pastoral care was not himself a well-known preacher. The third professor, Doctor Samuel A. Ort, was an intellectual giant but lived in a world far over our heads, discussing the logic of various doctrines in which I, personally, had no interest whatsoever, my belief being that in that field one man's guess was about as good as another.

We would have been glad to get a little better acquainted with our professors outside of the classroom, but we were never asked into their homes. Times have changed. Teachers and their students are friends and co-workers now; this, I think, being as it should be.

9. More About Mama

THERE are a few stories about my mother in her advanced years—stories well-known in the small Indiana town where she lived so long—which will a little better acquaint you with her stalwart individualism and her witty eccentricities—interesting items about her which did not fit very well into the pattern of the earlier chapters. They are disconnected, but worth telling, I think.

One of the typical stories about her was told of an occasion, in her ninetieth year, when, cane in hand, and a basket on her arm, she had toddled down to the post office to mail a letter. Consistent with her frugality, she never bought more stamps than she needed at the moment. On this day she asked for a three-cent stamp and tendered a twenty-dollar bill in payment. It so happened that the post office's cash reserve was low, and they couldn't handle that much money. They were quite willing to trust her, but Mama abhorred indebtedness and the thought of owing anybody three cents was insupportable.

Directly behind her stood a tall, well-dressed, amiable man who said, "Madam, if it will be a convenience to you, I can change your money." She thanked him graciously; and when the transaction had been completed she said, "I see that you are a stranger among us. I am Mother Douglas. Perhaps you will tell me who you are."

Said he, "I am Reverend so-and-so, the new minister of the United Brethren Church."

Mama offered him a wrinkled little hand and said, "I am glad to meet you, sir. I want to shake hands with a preacher who is able to change a twenty-dollar bill!"

My mother was conspicuously old-fashioned. Never, in my recollection, did she change her manner of dress, or her habits, or her opinions. By refusal to alter the fashion of her clothing, she claimed that she could be in style—for a brief period—about once every twenty years.

I often tried to give her a few modern conveniences in her little home, but she preferred a primitive mode of living, and had no use for labor-saving gadgets or electrified gimcracks.

Once I bullied her into consenting to have an electric range installed in her kitchen; but, as soon as I was out of town, she ordered them to come and get it, and bring back the little old oil stove.

I made use of all the persuasive powers I possessed to be allowed to build an up-to-date bathroom in her home, but she steadfastly refused, because, she said, a bathtub made her faint. Then I asked her to consider *my* welfare; that I wasn't used to going out of doors to a little wooden house on the back of the lot, and that some dark night when I was visiting her I would fall down and break my neck. This did not move her, either, but it must have made an impression. For the next time I was there, and before going to bed, was gropingly making my way in the darkness to her comfort station, she amazed and startled me by turning a switch in the kitchen which flooded this area with light. "Now," she called, "you'll not fall."

When the Great Depression first struck, and the banks all over the country were closing, and people by the thousands were becoming bankrupt overnight, Mama took her cane in hand and walked down Monroeville's main street, first on one side and then the other—going into every place of business. They tell me she shook her cane in the face of each proprietor (with all of whom she had a first-name acquaintance) and said: "People are in a panic. They are taking all their money out of the banks everywhere. This is what makes banks fail. All the money I possess is in the bank here in Monroeville. I am not taking out one penny, and I don't want you to. If all the businessmen leave their money in the bank, it will not fail." I am happy to add that the businessmen followed her good advice and the bank continued to function.

Here I am reminded, for no reason whatsoever, of my erstwhile advice to budding authors, to wit:

I have come to believe that the secret of good writing lies in the amount of revision a man is willing to do. Of course, one can revise and revise until a composition becomes so smooth and slick that it fails to make traction on other people's imagination, but there is very little writing that cannot be improved by revision.

When I was a kid I was set at the task, occasionally, of running the churn —an old-fashioned up-and-down thing that required more labor for the amount of results achieved than any other machinery I ever tried to operate.

At long last the butter would begin to show up around the keyhole and great globs of it would appear in the churn, and at that point—for some reason which I have forgotten—we poured in some lukewarm water.

The next phase of the operation required the pouring off of all the liquid, after which this loose, sloppy mess of butter was spread out on a board and we began to work some more water out of it with a wooden paddle. After I had paddled this butter until I felt it was about right for human consumption, my mama would take the paddle and contrive to squeeze out about a quart more of fluid—not because she was any stronger, physically, than I, but because she was more dextrous with the paddle and probably had a little more patience than I.

And to this day, when I am engaged in boiling down a page of narrative or dialogue for the sake of gaining strength through economy, I find the task somewhat on the order of the old butter-making experience. I highly recommend this to anyone first attempting literary labors.

The Spartan character of Mama's habits was not reflected in her state of mind. She had a delightful sense of humor (as I have shown you), kept herself abreast of the news, and was always bright as a button. In her late eighties she frequently wrote a column of reminiscences for the Monroeville *Breeze*, recalling important events which had occurred so far back as the Civil War. She called this column "Under the Juniper Tree."

One day when I was visiting my mother, I asked her how she liked a new preacher who had recently come to town. She said: "I like him, but I tell you it's hard to sit there each Sunday and hear him preach that old-fogy stuff." Which wasn't so bad for an eighty-eight-year-old!

She took an interest in everything that was going on in the town; bragged about any new building, when it went up, as if she had built it herself; frequently wrote me about the beautiful landscaping and gay flower beds that the Catholics had made at their church, and wept when the Toonerville trolley line to Fort Wayne went out of business (not that she ever rode on it herself).

On a visit to her not long before her death, my mama was telling me a few things she would want attended to, and closed the conversation by saying:

"And be very sure, Lloyd, that the undertaker does not try to make me 'pretty.' I want my friends to see me as they knew me. I don't want the same thing to happen to me that occurred on the death of my old friend in the

country. She had never in her life had a permanent, or used rouge, or lipstick, for she had devoted all her time to work on the farm and the raising of a large family. But when her husband went to the undertaking parlor to see her for the last time, and gazed upon her changed features and hair-do, he said to the man in charge, 'Les, who *is* this woman?' "

My mother was an outspoken, independent, determined, cash-and-carry old lady, who lived to a great age and managed to keep her wits about her almost until the end, which occurred on a bright Easter morning when the church bells were summoning her neighbors to observe the day forever sacred to our faith in the Life Everlasting. She couldn't have picked a more fitting moment for her departure; for she was a woman of sturdy confidence in our survival, firmly believing that "because He lives, we shall live also."

Brief Intermission

MANY people, including myself, dislike prefaces. If the man has anything to say, let him proceed to say it without explaining how he came by the idea. His reasons for writing it should turn up presently.

In the case of this book, however, I felt that the reader should be informed, at the outset, concerning the nature of my project. In the event that you skipped my preface, let me repeat that on the advice of my physician I intended to write something every day; something remembered from a life which had arrived at the actuarial finish, three score and ten being considered par.

In addition to the slowing-up process due to age, I have been in frail health, bedeviled by arthritis, and experiments with "miracle" drugs for same which damaged my heart. If you will believe it I have recently spent two months sick-abed with mumps.

There are two varieties of mumps, *viz.*, contagious and senile. Doubtless the medicos could have found a more polite name for the kind I had, for many an elderly person can and does have all the discomfort of the earlier mump without being senile.

What I am now trying to say is that my book has moved forward with something like the frisky gallop of the three-toed sloth.

Meanwhile, the world has got itself into more and worse troubles. It is possible that we may be headed toward a third world war. In any case, we are headed toward preparations for it. Many products, not necessary to our national defense, will be in short supply, such as paper and the other ingredients used in the manufacture of books.

My publishers and I are agreed that it may be a couple of years or longer before my proposed book of recollections could be brought out. So, we have decided to publish it in two volumes.

The second volume will deal with my memories of life in the ministry and as a novelist.

I shall begin at once on Volume II. I hope to meet you there.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

Lloyd C. Douglas died February 13, 1951.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *Time To Remember* by Lloyd C. Douglas]