AUTOBIOGRAPHY

of

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PREFACE.

Without some pre-consideration, one's first impression might be that autobiography is the highest and most reliable type of all record of individual life. Serious reflection, however, raises many doubts of the soundness of such conclusion; for the individual who writes of himself has many tamptations as well as opportunities to vary from actualities,- not only as to his hidden motives and faults which he may care to conceal or minimize, but also as to his accomplishments, which he might be either tempted to exaggerate to gain undue approbation, or to minimize and thus escape any possible charge of self-adulation.

One of the unanswered queries coming down from the wisdom of the past is, whether any one really knows himself; and, on the other hand, Robert Burns has started down the ages since his day, the unsatisfied yearning of humanity, in what is perhaps the most frequently quoted sentiment of English verse:

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!"

It would seem, therefore, that there is but one basis upon which the superior reliability of autobiography rests, and that is the probability that no other, so well as the author, really knows the actual facts, the motives, the aspirations and the forces that directed him. Personally, I have read but few autobiographies with sincere relish or pleasure; or, without being more or less impressed with the author's egotism and lack of disinterested fairness. One of the most remarkable exceptions to this, I now recall, is The Personal Memoirs of General Grant, which is so entirely devoid of any attempt at exaggeration and so crowded with meritorious activities and history-making accomplishments,- told with a simplicity and directness of detail, that one really might imagine the writer was but a detached and uninterested observer and not the great commander under whose direction everything about which he writes took place.

I have been frequently requested by members of my family to write something about my own life, but up to this time, remembering it contains so little worthy of being recorded, the very thought of attempting it has been so distasteful I have given it no serious consideration.

However, since writing of the lives of Father and Mother and of brothers and sisters who have passed away, during which many things of the past have come before me in review, I have been somewhat tempted to try. If I can do so in such manner as to make my faults and failures a warning to posterity, or my few virtues and successes an encouragement, I may, after it is finished, leave it to be read. Otherwise, it will be destroyed.

CHAPTER I.

ANCESTRY.

Assuming that the human race had a common origin - either from Adam and Eve, as set forth in the Bible, or from a protoplasm, as many scientists now believe - it follows that all those living have had an equally ancient if not honorable lineage.

No one can, with reasonable certainty, trace his lineage beyond a few hundred years, when it disappears in the general confusion that obscures the beginning and much of the past of every human being.

Others, and by far the greater portion of the race, cannot follow their lineage even that far; and I doubt but little, that this greater number are much the happier because of this limitation, for they are thus spared the irksome, if not humiliating task of explaining away or trimming bodily from their ancestral trees the rotten branches it invariably contains - much more happily forgotten than remembered.

Veneration for ancestry and affectionate concern for posterity are common attributes of humanity, yet few indeed are supremely blest in both these respects.

Perhaps, therefore, most fortunate of all are they who can recall from the past or read ~~in~~ the future but such distances as reveal their ancestry and posterity worthy of pride and gratifying to hope.

I am most fortunate in both of these respects, for while our ancestry may be accurately traced but for some three hundred years, not a blemish is found in it, nor is there a single cloud that mars the clear sky of the future.

As each of my posterity - and it is for them this simple tale is intended - has a copy of a small volume, the contents of which were prepared by my two oldest brothers and myself, and which contains facts about our

ancestry in the tributes it contains to the lives of my father and mother, I refer to it for such further knowledge as I have of our ancestry.

I was born February 4, 1852, near Delaware, Ohio. There were many fortunate conditions and influences surrounding and favoring me in early childhood,- a remarkable father and mother and many good sisters and brothers. In fact, there were thirteen children of us,- four boys and three girls older, and one girl and four boys younger. The further fact that I was born and reared to young manhood in the country and upon a farm had a far-reaching effect on my future.

It may, and doubtless does, often transpire that children not so blest in all these respects make very considerable successes in life, but this is perhaps less likely than that even a few who are, should ignominiously fail.

All I know of my babyhood, of course, is mere hearsay and is neither pleasing nor flattering to me; for my oldest sister, who was doubtless much burdened with my early care, often said I was the crossest and most difficult of all mother's children to take care of, and this was fully corroborated by mother herself.

To make a bad matter worse, it was also related that for a considerable time I was afflicted with a series of gatherings near one ear, which enabled me, during this period, to add much to the general discomfiture I otherwise caused the family. The scars left by the lancing of these are still observable.

I cannot, at this late day, successfully meet these implied charges of wantonly disturbing the peace and quiet of the family, by pleading an alibi; although I have not the slightest recollection of committing them. But I think I am entirely justified in urging, in avoidance, that, at the time, I was non compos mentis.

My mother, evidently for the purpose of ameliorating my chagrin by reason of these aspersions, told me that, while very cross and bad as a child, I was the handsomest baby in the family and that my eyes were especially beautiful. When she first gave me this assurance, I was perhaps less than four, for I recall I still wore short, baby dresses, and I vividly remember secretly going to a room by myself, climbing upon

a chair and gazing longingly and very disappointingly in a mirror, trying to observe some remaining traces of my reputed former comliness - without success. The glass reflected a somewhat small, square face, over-topped by a thatch of black hair, which partially covered two very large, protruding ears. The entire face, where not shaded by the little buckeye hat I wore, was so unbelievably blotched - especially the nose - by freckles, large and small, as to make it almost repulsive to look upon, or so it seemed to me then. The eyes were rather large and quite blue, the lids being fringed by long, dark lashes. The color and the thickness of my hair, greatly resembling father's in these respects, partially consoled me; for to be in any way like this kind, gentle, affectionate father was most pleasing to contemplate. The nose was rather a pudgy, nondescript affair, made more prominent and offensive, if possible, by the myriads of freckles it bore.

The investigation was disappointing in the extreme, and I went directly to monther with much suppressed concern, and asked her if freckles ever left a boy's face. She was a very wise as well as sympathetic monther, and evidently sensing from my manner and inquiry the cause of my distress, gently drew me to her, impressed a fervent kiss upon my repulsive, freckled face and assured me that they would gradually leave as I grew up.

As a child I was exceedingly sensitive and timid - more so perhaps than any of the family realized. Curiously, nearly all of my early recollections record wounds to my sensibility, or frights.

When wearing hoops by women came in vogue, I was a small boy, still wearing dresses. One day mother had company, and she and her guests had been talking about hoop skirts. In a lull in the conversation, I stood on tiptoe and whispered in her ear, asking if she would not put them in my dress. The request evidently appeared so ludicrous she burst into a hearty laugh and, before thinking, told the others about it, and all joined in the merriment - so much to my great humiliation that I could scarcely breathe because of a feeling of suffocation it induced; and although mother, who evidently noted how deeply I was wounded, did everything possible to relieve my discomfiture, the incident remains as one of the most distressing of my young life.

Perhaps two years later I accompanied my sister Emma to a dry-goods store, where she went to buy her-

self goods for a dress. She spent much time looking at different materials, but seemed to have difficulty in making a selection. Finally, the clerk waiting upon her jokingly asked me what I thought would make her a nice dress. I had previously been admiring some very flashy, figured red stuff, which hung in sort of festoons from a wire stretched above the counter, and instantly pointed to that as my choice, when, to my consternation, my sister and everybody in the store burst into a peal of laughter which sent my heart thumping with humiliation. Afterwards, they informed me that my choice was what bandana handkerchiefs were made of.

The only incident of my first day at school I recall was the humiliation caused me just after my arrival in the school ground. I had looked forward to going as a great event in my life, and wore some new clothes made by mother. For economical reasons, she always made ample allowance for the future growth of her children by making their wearing apparel quite large at the start. My new pants were so generously provided for in this respect that they probably looked ludicrously full and baggy. One of the big boys of the neighborhood observing this, teasingly grasped me by one arm and the slack in the seat of my trousers and tossed me high above his head, exclaiming, "Say, Pants, where are you going with that boy?" This so distressed me that it drove all the anticipated pleasure from this first day in school and left me a miserable, disconsolate little boy.

I was naturally so very timid as to be afraid, not only in the dark, but of all kinds of strange domestic and other animals, especially strange dogs. One of the most unhappy days of my childhood is marked by a visit of brother Hilton and myself to my Uncle Thrap's home. Our three oldest boy-cousins ranged from three to seven years my senior, and brother Hilton, almost two. These cousins had a very large, black dog, doubtless quite kindly disposed, but every time he came near me I was terrified almost beyond expression, and regardless of all assurances of his harmlessness, could not bear his approach.

One of the last of our sports of the day was running from the fence on one side of the big barnyard to the one on the other. Being the youngest and slowest, I was naturally the last across. While running, our shouts had evidently attracted the dog, which leaped over the fence and, with great bounds, took after us. Being behind, he came directly toward me, with mouth

wide open and yelping so frightfully I was absolutely terrified with horror, and my shrieks brought my cousins to my rescue at once. I was not entirely pacified until we had arrived at home perhaps an hour later.

Another, somewhat ludicrous incident of my unwarranted fright, occurred when I slid off a rather tall straw stack; and just as my feet reached the ground, something, with an awful squawking and flapping of wings, took hold of the seat of my pants, including the skin beneath, and sent me almost flying toward the house,-my speed being greatly accelerated by the beating my legs received from the pounding wings of the old goose whose nest I had so unceremoniously disturbed.

One time mother sent me upon an errand to a neighbor's, who lived a little more than a mile south of our house and which necessitated my going a large portion of the way through the dense woods. I got there a little before dark, and by returning at once could have reached home in early twilight; but I became so interested while playing with the neighbor's son, who was about my own age, that when I was ready to depart it was really quite dark.

I never had been in the big woods at night by myself and the mere thought was appalling. I waited a short time, hoping I might be invited to stay over night, without success, and being too proud to confess my cowardly feelings, I finally started home.

I was barefooted and with the assistance of a stick I carried had but little trouble keeping the path, although it was frightfully dark in the timber. Had any forbidding noise or a strange voice been heard, I think I should have almost perished of fright. However, nothing but the peaceful noises of the night and an occasional rustle of the leaves, made evidently by some little night prowler, was heard, and the nearer I approached home the braver I became, and when the big barn loomed in faint outline before me, I felt older and much more courageous and mature than before, and from that time began to lose much of my former timidity. Previously, I was afraid to climb tall trees or jump from high beams in the old barn, but thereafter I gradually became quite daring in these and other risky undertakings.

It was also soon after this that I overcame some of my superstitious dread of graves and cemeteries at night.

Brother Hilton and I largely earned our spending money by hunting and trapping muskrats and other fur-bearing animals in the late fall, winter and early spring. In the latter season, with a small shotgun loaded with fine bird-shot, so as not to seriously injure the pelts, one of us occasionally went to the Delaware Run, a small stream not far from our home, quite late in the evening, taking a position partially concealing us but where we could see up and down the stream and thus note any muskrat venturing out of its hole. This they usually did about the time late twilight was giving way to the darkness of night and when only the spreading ripples over the still surface of the water, made by the swimming animal, advised us of its presence and where to shoot.

On this evening, having gone up the stream farther than usual, I took a position upon a fence on the north bank of the creek. For the night's vigil, I was rewarded with one muskrat, which, by means of a long pole, I brought to the bank and was about to start home when it occurred to me that in the northeasterly corner of the very field in which I stood, not more than 400 feet distant, was a country neighborhood burying ground.

As I glanced up the slope of the hill to where it was, I was quite startled to dimly see a white object slowly moving back and forth, apparently among the graves, and my first impulse was to scurry homeward. Encouraged, however, by my recent experience in going through the woods at night, I stood still, watching the movements of this object and considering what I ought do.

To add to my apprehension, about this time there were some rather gruesome tales afloat of grave-robbing in places not far distant, the supposition being that the bodies thus stolen had been sold to the authorities of a medical college at Columbus, Ohio, for dissection. And there immediately arose in my mind the possibility that, in this infrequently visited little graveyard, this had been done; and I conjured up a strong probability of an open grave and some of the habiliments of the dead strewn about or hanging upon bushes or limbs.

Something prodded me to investigate, reasoning that no possible harm could befall me and that, if I did not, I would continue to be oppressed by my unfounded, foolish fear. On the other hand, my natural timid-

ity and cowardice urged me to run home and come back in daylight, which would do just as well;-all of which I well knew was but a subterfuge to bolster up my cowardly inclinations.

I have always been thankful I had sufficient strength of purpose to start toward the burying ground, but to be truthful, I must confess, very weakly and with much unwarranted trepidation; for it took all the fortitude I could possibly muster to put one foot before the other as I went up the hill, and I feel perfectly sure had the least, unexpected circumstance arisen, I would have ignominiously run for home.

Nothing of moment occurred as I went on, although just as I entered the graveyard, a big rabbit, which doubtless made this quiet spot its headquarters, jumped out of some bushes in front of me, making a great rustling among the leaves and frightened me almost beyond expression, until I saw its friendly, bobbing, white tail, which told me what it was, as it faded in the darkness ahead.

No, I did not shoot at it, for I was in such a funk I could not even have aimed in the general direction it ran; but I stood there almost transfixed until my hair resumed its natural position, the goose flesh subsided on my body and my legs became sufficiently steady to allow me to go on. And then I tremblingly proceeded to the object I had seen, which proved to be but a large piece of white cloth hanging from a low limb, to which the gentle, night breezes had given the ominous movement which had attracted my attention. How it came there I do not know, but I mustered sufficient courage to go about to see if there were any open graves among the thirty or forty the little cemetery contained, and was heartily glad, after ascertaining there were none, to be able, with the approbation of my conscience and courage, to start home.

I was not a precocious child. Several of my brothers and sisters were unquestionably my superior in memory and, perhaps, also in book studies, and I question whether there was one of them but excelled me in some respect. The most that could be justly claimed is that I was perhaps a good average and may have been fonder of reading than some of them. In disposition and temperament, I was certainly the most unfortunate of the family; for from my earliest childhood to the

present time I have been afflicted with periods of melancholy and sullenness, which I have never been able to forestall nor control, and during which I am not decently fit to associate with others, nor do I take any pleasure in doing so.

There is perhaps no environment so healthful, instructive and interesting as the country. Our farm was quite a large one, 200 acres in extent, and over this, by myself or with brothers and sisters and other children, I could wander in leisure hours almost at will. Indeed, in but a little less restricted manner, could we do so in the fields and woods of all our neighbors.

At my earliest recollection much more than half of the entire country about us was in woods, very largely in its primitive condition, where one could walk all day hunting or in going in different directions under a continuous canopy formed by the tops of great trees. Like every country boy of ten, without realizing it I knew much of natural history, forestry, botany, zoology and a smattering of astronomy and geology, for I knew the names of nearly all animals, trees, flowers, shrubs, bugs, worms and insects common to the country, and could tell their respective names at sight, and also knew largely what their habits and uses were. I knew also the kind of soils and stone that abounded in the neighborhood, and by noting the shadows of trees or even my own, could make a fair reckoning of time, for I could almost unerringly tell the points of the compass in the midst of the deepest woods by the excess of moss and lichen growing on the northerly and most shaded side.

I also knew much about preparing ground and the time of planting, and how to care for and harvest crops; how to feed and care for animals; to ride, drive, harness and hitch up horses, and to do all kinds of work on the farm. Indeed, as compared with boys of my own age, living entirely in cities or towns, I was in all these respects much more sophisticated, and best of all, thus escaped the many temptations and avoided some of the bad habits to which the town boy is so much more exposed.

CHAPTER II.

Without further generalizations, I shall attempt now to somewhat classify the different phases of my younger life under separate heads; although, before doing this, I must ask all readers, not too harshly, to judge the penchant of myself and brothers for hunting and, incidentally, the killing of wild game, for this practice had come down to us as naturally as did the lure of outdoor life.

Like all my brothers and most country boys, I had a great fondness for hunting, fishing and trapping. This doubtless came as an inheritance from several generations of frontier ancestors on father's side, with whom, in the earlier days, it was perhaps not so much a pastime or sport as a necessity by which they provided much of their sustenance and no inconsiderable part of their winter clothing; and also from the sport-loving, English forbears of mother, who were fond of the chase and shooting as practiced in England.

The first shotgun possessed by our family, and doubtless one of the earliest appearing in our neighborhood, was a small, English-made, single barrel muzzle-loader, brought over from England by my grandfather Pratt on returning from one of the different visits he made to that country, and presented to my brother Robert, then a small boy, who was his first grandson and namesake. It remained in the family many years, being used in turn by each of my brothers as they grew older, until long after I left the farm.

There was also a muzzle-loading rifle, fired by use of percussion caps instead of flintlocks, as were the earlier ones which this had succeeded and of which I have but a dim recollection.

At the end of the Civil War, the big bored, heavy army rifles, used by the soldiers, became very plentiful throughout the North, as returning soldiers were

often permitted to take them home when discharged. They were, however, of little value, for the balls they required when used as a rifle were so large and heavy and so impossible to secure they were used only as shotguns. Even in this wise were they in little favor, as they were so heavy to carry and required so much powder and shot to be effective, and often kicked when fired, that few used them.

We had one of these, and I have a vivid recollection of how narrowly I escaped being seriously injured, if not killed, by being "kicked" by its rebound when I fired it, as I shall relate:

We had loaned it to a neighbor whose poultry had been raided by a coon. He was a Welshman, and doubtless had little knowledge of the use of firearms, and knowing a coon to be rather a large animal, thought it would require a big load to kill it. He had no chance at the coon, and as the boys in our neighborhood were going upon a big squirrel hunt on July 4th, it became my misfortune to have to use this gun.

On my way to the woods, I went by this neighbor's to get it. He told me he had not used it and that it was loaded with the charge intended for the coon. I concluded to wait until I had entered the woods before discharging it and re-loading.

I had gone but a short distance into the woods when I spied a squirrel but a little distance away, chattering and flouting his beautiful tail on the trunk of a tree not far from the ground. A big rotten log near by gave me a good rest for the gun, which was entirely too heavy for me to shoot offhand, so I stooped, put the gun over the log and took deliberate aim.

It required the strength of two fingers to pull the trigger, but it went off with the report of a cannon, and I found myself, when I became conscious, lying upon my back many feet from the log, badly stunned and with quite a cut on the right side of my face, made by the hammer of the gun as it rebounded over my shoulder and landed perhaps twenty feet to the rear of where I lay. When sufficiently recovered to take an accounting, I found I was not seriously hurt, although my shoulder was quite sore.

I painfully got up, went back for the gun and then, hunter-like, went to the spot where the dead squirrel should be. To my chagrin and surprise, however, there was no trace of the squirrel, nor even the sign of a shot scratch upon the tree where it stood when I fired, showing that it had evidently escaped without injury, except for the effect of the fright it must have received from the loud report. I am inclined to the opinion that our Welsh neighbor may have forgotten to put any shot on the powder, rather than to take the blame of missing my mark with a gun properly loaded.

Our hunting accouterments were of the simplest and most primitive character, consisting of a cow's horn for the powder, a drilling bag for shot or ball and our pockets for general use. The horn was carried under the right arm, suspended by a string over the left shoulder. The loading was accomplished by pouring the charge of powder - guessing at the amount - into the hand and then carefully emptying it into the nozzle of the gun. This was followed by either a pasteboard wad, cut by a wad-cutter of proper size, or perhaps oftener by a bit of common newspaper crumbled into a bunch by the fingers and thoroughly rammed down on the powder to crowd it into the priming tube, upon which a cap was finally placed to be exploded by the hammer. The shot was measured and put in as was the powder, although, unless it was desired they should widely scatter when fired, they were not rammed. The caps came in small, flat, rounded paper boxes, holding about fifty. The ramrod - usually made of hickory - was shod on the ramming end, to protect it, by an iron ferrule, slightly less in diameter than the bore of the gun, and on the other, by a smaller one to which could be easily attached a device with two small, sharp-ended, iron spirals by which loads might be extracted and the barrels cleaned. The ramrod, when not in use, was carried in open ferrules attached to the under side of the gun barrel.

I distinctly recall the first time I saw a double-barreled shotgun. It was in the hands of a hunter whom I casually met while in the woods. I had heard two reports following so closely that I naturally believed they must have come from two guns. When I came near, however, I could see but one, and upon closer examination, I was astonished to see that the

hunter was loading what seemed to me to be two guns in one - an ingenious and most wonderful thing, which I examined with greedy and covetous eyes and with the interest and curiosity of an unsophisticated country boy of eight.

As I walked away, the small, single-barrel shotgun, which had been my companion on many occasions when in the woods and by means of which I had often carried home small bags of squirrel and pigeon, now lost much of its former glamour, and I wistfully wondered if I should ever be the happy possessor of one like that I had just seen.

Later, and when I was perhaps fourtten, I became the actual and proud possessor of a small, light rifle, whose bore was such as to snugly take a large buckshot for a ball. These I could very readily and cheaply acquire at any hardware store, and although it required but little powder, it shot very accurately for a distance of fifty yards or more and I used it for many years in hunting squirrels, with great success.

I always carried it with a wrapper about the upper end of the ramrod to keep the barrel clean by swabbing it out after each shot, thus keeping it in first-class condition. Its lightness permitted me to hold it offhand and do fairly accurate shooting. With a rest, and when not excited, I sometimes made quite remarkable shots.

On one occasion, while hunting, I spied a squirrel sitting upon the limb of a very tall oak tree. The distance was quite beyond what I considered a reliable range for my gun. Knowing, however, it would be impossible to move nearer without frightening it, I rested my gun upon the side of a nearby tree and took deliberate and careful aim, slightly raising the muzzle of the gun to allow for the effect of gravity upon the ball during its passage, and to my astonishment, down came the squirrel. But when it landed, I was even more astonished to see it jump perhaps eight feet high, and immediately upon reaching the ground, again repeat the same antics. With difficulty, I finally secured and dispatched it, and, upon minute examination I could discover no wound or even an abrasion of its skin, but upon

much closer inspection, I discovered that the ball had passed across the squirrel's forehead, slightly singeing the hair and evidently causing a concussion which brought it to the ground and finally into my possession.

During my childhood and young manhood, there were no laws or regulations governing or restricting hunting, fishing or trapping - one's bag or catch being limited only by skill and inclination. There was also a commonly regarded and observed custom which permitted a very free range over the fields, through the woods and along the streams in the neighborhood without any regard to ownership.

As far back as my memory goes, bear and deer, which had once been plentiful in central Ohio, had been driven into the northwestern part of the state, to which locality hunting parties, occasionally formed in our neighborhood, would go in the late fall, sometimes returning with venison.

Wild turkey were still found but were not plentiful. I could scarcely have been more than five when father, for the last time, constructed a turkey trap in a cornfield we owned, which bordered the woods and where wild turkey had occasionally visited in search of food. The trap was but a rail pen about five feet high, covered also by rails, upon three sides of which bundles of corn fodder were stood, the other side being left open except for the rails. A ditch was dug under the bottom rail of this side, which was next to the woods, and in the bottom of this, and leading to a considerable distance away, grains of corn were scattered as bait, to entice them into the pen.

Once inside, turkeys were as securely trapped as if the passage by which they entered did not exist, for when not eating they held their heads high, absolutely unmindful of the way through which they got in.

There were, in my youthful days, edible game in considerable abundance, consisting of squirrel, rabbit, quail, pigeon and a few pheasants. Of fur-bearing animals, there were coon, skunk, mink, muskrat, opossum and fox. The only kind of these I did not hunt or trap were foxes, although on several occasions I ran upon one

while hunting. Each time, its presence was so entirely unexpected that I did not even raise my gun, but gazed almost breathlessly as its low, sinuous form, with its beautiful tail gracefully extended, swiftly and almost as noiselessly as a vanishing wraith faded away into the depths of the forest.

While I have bagged many kinds of edible, wild fowl, I was never other than a very indifferent marksman on the wing, and for that reason, perhaps, was much fonder of squirrel hunting, which was chiefly done with the rifle.

I loved to wander through the great woods, where one could go in almost any direction for many miles under a continuous canopy formed by the interlacing branches of the tops of trees, through the diminutive openings of which the rays of the sun came filtering down, flecking the carpet of dead leaves beneath with myriads of ever-changing splashes of sunshine, thus lighting the otherwise somber shadows beneath.

The method I used required patience, caution and judgment, but was not fatiguing and gave time for thoughtful musing and interesting reveries. After entering the woods to a favorable point, I would sit quietly on a log or stump, gazing in every direction and intently listening. The moment I heard the chatter of a squirrel, or saw one on the ground, I ran swiftly toward it, stopping behind the trunk of a tree reasonably near the one in which it had taken refuge. However much frightened it might be by the noise I made, its curiosity soon caused it to look about to discover the source of the disturbance, and thus expose itself as a fair target for my gun.

If it escaped the first shot, it was usually safe, for by the time the gun was re-loaded, it had found refuge in a hole in some friendly tree, which might be several hundred feet distant and which it could easily reach by springing from branch to branch of adjoining trees without coming to the ground. Whether the shot were successful or not, the report of the gun advised all wild life in the vicinity of impending danger and caused it to remain concealed.

Thus from place to place would I go, using the same tactics and often carrying home a well-filled bag, but more often, perhaps, the result was negligible.

Since those early days, I have hunted brant, prairie chicken, quail, pheasants and sometimes squirrel in the timber bordering streams in the prairies of Illinois and Kansas, in the early eighties,- more than fifty years ago - and have made several excursions into the Indian Territory, now the state of Oklahoma, where we found bear, deer, antelope, turkey and a variety of small game in great abundance; yet my boyhood experiences with that crude, old rifle, in those dear and well remembered woods (now, alas, disseminated and almost destroyed by the hands of greedy mill-owners and speculators) remain the source of the sweetest and most highly cherished memories of all my past experiences as a hunter.

CHAPTER III.

FISHING.

My earliest experience in fishing was with a limber willow sprout for pole, a black thread for line, a bent pin as hook, and a fish-worm for bait. The little creek, skirting our garden on the east and but a few rods from home, was the place. In its diminutive bed, the current when in freshet had dug out here and there small pools several feet deep, where minnows sported in its sunlit waters,- darting under the friendly, overhanging grass and bushes bordering its edges, at the approach of disturbing footsteps.

Into one of these, I would cast my baited hook, and as it slowly sank, if I noiselessly drew it here and there, I was often rewarded by that inexpressibly delightful sensation, known to devotees of rod and reel, coming up through hook, line and pole to my hand, as a bite, which set my heart pounding and my expectations soaring. If I retained my self-control and pulled just enough to keep the line taut and not so swiftly as to pull the bait and hook from its mouth, I was rewarded by feeling the pole quiver and bend as I brought my quarry to the surface and landed it upon the sloping, grassy bank, where its radiant sides glistened as it flopped about in the warm, spring sunshine.

These small fry were, locally, called pumpkin-seed and chub,- the former, doubtless, because of its resemblance to its namesake, and the latter because of its rounded, chubby appearance - although it is possible this may have been its generic name.

From this humble start, as our years and prowess grew, my brothers and I went to larger streams,- first to the Delaware Run, into which this lesser creek and many others flowed. Here fish were larger and of greater variety, among them being pike and catfish. Still later, to the Scioto River, which with its confluents, drained a large portion of the central part

of Ohio; and, while not navigable, carried much water when in flood and a goodly amount in the driest seasons. In it, we found bass and nearly every kind of fish indigenous to the large streams of the Mississippi valley.

In the Scioto River, we used boughten lines and hooks, although our poles, floats and sinkers were always of our own make. It was some three miles distant from our home, and it was seldom we went there oftener than three times a year;- the first time, in the early spring when we drove our sheep there to be washed. This required, usually a half day and was in itself somewhat of a frolic. Our flock numbered, usually, about 100, and it required more than an hour to drive it to the river. Father usually went on ahead with a wagon-load of rails with which to build a pen, leaving us to leisurely drive the sheep.

He would select a low beach bordering upon a quiet, deep pool, where he built a pen with an opening to the water, leaving a gap opposite through which to drive the sheep and then be closed.

Each sheep was caught by a washer and carried into the river to a depth where it would float and could then be easily held and turned about or over at the washer's pleasure, until all the accumulated dirt in its wool was eradicated. When washed, it was helped to the bank on the outside of the pen and permitted to graze about until the remainder were washed. Thus was the flock cleansed in preparation for shearing a couple of weeks later.

When the washing was completed, and after eating a delicious picnic lunch prepared by mother, father drove the sheep home, permitting us to spend the balance of the day fishing.

I am reminded here of a somewhat ludicrous yet striking incident which occurred upon one of these sheep-washing excursions to the Scioto River, and which I think perhaps may be interesting to some of my younger grandsons; and yet, as I look back upon it from maturer years, it seems ludicrous only.

That it may be better understood from our standpoint as boys of nine and seven, I ought perhaps say

that we were, as always in the summer time, barefooted, and dressed in a two-piece, tow suit, with pants rolled up to our knees, ready for walking on land or wading in the water when near rivers, streams or ponds, for our habits were then really semi-amphibious.

Each wore a small, buckeye hat - the kind invariably worn by male, country folk in Ohio at the time, perhaps because they were light and airy, but more particularly, I think, by reason of their cheapness, the price ranging from but ten to fifteen cents - each decorated with a small, black band.

Thus clothed, each carried in his hands a long, hickory pole, entirely out of proportion to our strength and requirements, to which, at its smaller end, was attached a line, with a hook sinker and cork float; and between us, carrying it turn about, was a can of bait consisting of fish and grub-worms, to which we almost invariably added a generous sprinkling of asafetida, which was supposed by us to add a flavor very much preferred by hungry fish.

After father had left for home with the sheep, we leisurely walked down the eastern bank of the river, stopping at such places as we thought auspicious, where near the bank the water was quite deep, having been scoured out by the swift current over a rocky bottom just above and near it, and which formed countless bubbles that eddied about until they came to rest on the surface of the quiet, deep water near the bank, creating a complete covering which we called soapsuds and which entirely shielded its depth from our gaze and beneath which fish were supposed to take refuge.

I have no recollection as to our catch, but we finally reached the long, covered bridge that spanned the river where the Marysville road crossed it. The eastern abutment of the bridge reached perhaps twenty feet above the river, which made necessary a long, high fill to provide an approach for vehicles in entering the bridge. We carefully climbed down the steep embankment to near the water's edge under the bridge and just below a large pile of driftwood which had lodged against the upper corner of one of its abutments, the outer ends of the logs composing it extend-

ing quite a distance into the water.

It was a beautiful, balmy afternoon and the warm sunshine made the lee of this large drift-pile a most inviting place for two tired boys to sit and fish. As we silently watched our bobbing corks carried here and there by the eddying water, coming from under the drift we soon noticed here and there a small turtle crawl slowly out of the water and take a position on top of a log to bask in the sunshine. After a while, we also noticed another object protruding its long head and neck out of the drift-pile, which we at first thought was but another turtle; but, as more of it protruded, we recognized it to be a huge black-snake, coming out evidently to share the warm sunshine with the turtles. As its form lengthened, it gradually coiled itself into many folds, with its big head in the center, quite in reach of the ends of our fish-poles.

Now, while the bite of a black-snake is not venomous, its body is hideously black and ugly and often grows to enormous size,- frequently, a length of seven feet - and, therefore, to our young minds it represented a coiling monster to be destroyed if possible. Its proximity and size perhaps excited our imagination, and we looked upon it with almost breathless wonder. Finally, without indicating his purpose and doubtless impelled by an impulse I did not understand, my brother drew his pole back over his head and brought it down with all his might over the coiled snake, and then, as he vigorously drew it back to strike again, to our borror and amazement, the coiled reptile sprang into the air after the pole until it hung menacingly over our heads, then came tumbling down upon us.

As I have previously said, the bank leading from the road above to the water was very steep, and yet our flying feet could scarcely have traversed the distance more rapidly had it been perfectly level, for we almost flew up it in our retreat. However, when we reached the top I glanced backward and saw the wriggling snake, not following as we had thought possible, but perhaps as frightened and astonished, and, doubtless, much more painfully, crawling as rapidly as we had gone up, down into the water under the driftwood from whence it came.

After reaching the road, the mystery of the affair was solved when we discovered that the hook on my brother's line was broken, showing that, in striking the snake, it had incidentally punctured its skin, and when he pulled it back to strike again he threw it high over our heads, from whence it came down over us so menacingly.

The next opportunity for a day's fishing at the river was usually after corn was laid by and before harvest began; and the third time, between seeding and corn husking in the fall.

CHAPTER IV.

COON HUNTING.

Perhaps the most exciting and best remembered of my younger-day sports was coon hunting. This is one of the largest and in many ways the most resourceful of all the animals we hunted while on the farm. Its activities and depredations were always carried on at night. Therefore, the hunting was nocturnal, also.

It is an omnivorous and most rapacious feeder, and, in its quest for variety, often visited the farmers' poultry, and in the late summer and early fall, lived chiefly upon the green corn in fields bordering the woods. In these it was especially destructive, for while one ear might easily suffice for an adequate meal, its habit was to rear up on a stock until its weight broke it down and then, taking a few bites from an ear, would go to another stock, treating it in like manner, and in one evening might do as much damage as would a sheep and almost as much as a yearling calf. Therefore, it can be easily understood that coon were regarded as the worst of the marauding animals with which farmers had to contend and their destruction accordingly encouraged.

Not only because of the foregoing facts, but also by reason of the value of its pelt, was it hunted, for it was seldom a portion or all of our winter caps were not made of its fur.

In the fall when corn was ripening was perhaps the height of the hunting season, and as nearly every family in our neighborhood kept one or more dogs - almost invariably of the mongrel variety,- there was here and there among them an exceptional, fine coon dog.

We had two of such during my time on the farm, one of them dying of old age about the time I was large enough to enjoy the sport, and the other, which may have received his early training from the older one, was still in his hunting prime when I left the farm.

Hence there was no trouble, upon any auspicious occasion, to get boys and dogs of the neighborhood together for a night's hunting. Dark nights were most propitious, as coon seemed more venturesome then than in moonlight.

There was also another condition common to the fall of the year at that time in Ohio, which added much to the cheerfulness and pleasure of these occasions: From my earliest recollection until a short time previous to my leaving the farm, during the fall of each year, between harvest and seed-time, many farmers were engaged in burning over their clearings,- a clearing being a small area, usually from two to five acres, which from the time settlement began in that wooded country each farmer endeavored annually to add to his cultivated area by cutting and burning all the trees, stumps and logs remaining after the lumber rail and good fire-wood had been taken off. The remaining trees were killed by girdling in the early spring, and in the fall were felled and cut into convenient lengths, hauled together and piled into great heaps here and there and burned, it often requiring many days before they were consumed.

During this season, in almost every direction one looked, might be seen the circling smoke by day and glowing fires by night of these great pyres of remnant derelicts of the original forest. It was during the latter part of dog days and so-called Indian Summer these conflagrations generally took place, when the weather was especially dry and warm by day and propitious for the work. Indeed, this season never seemed natural to me in any other locality in which I later resided, because it lacked these pillars of smoke by day and fire by night, and also that deeper, murky-colored, hazy atmosphere through which the hot rays of the autumnal sun penetrated with difficulty if at all. The nights, however, were perceptibly cooler, presaging the frosts to come.

The sons of several of our neighbors, who as keenly relished the sport and were as resourceful as ourselves, often joined us in these hunts,- gathering usually at our home, as a starting point, about the time darkness was driving from the western sky the last, remaining colors left by the departing sun. Each of these occasions was a frolic, a feast and a hunt combined, and each boy's pockets were supposed

to contain material for the nocturnal repast, while among all at least one gun, several axes and several dogs were usually found.

There were woods in every direction, and on the edge of many of these were seen the fires of these burning heaps, and after deciding upon one as the rendezvous for the night's adventures, away we would go, chattering like magpies, happy and jubilant over our anticipated success.

Upon reaching the clearing, we carefully selected from the numerous burning heaps the one having the most favorable exposure to windward, because of its freedom from smoke and, therefore, best suited to cook such provender as our joint pockets might disclose and such as we might later discover in neighboring fields. And then we unloaded, and started the coon dog out to hunt.

Indeed, so thoroughly did this dog understand and enjoy his part in the night's adventure, it was difficult to restrain him until we had decided upon our location.

Then we began our preparations for all eventualities of the night. Two were appointed to bring in fresh corn from accessible fields, and to this our envoys sometimes added melons and sweet potatoes. I was never quite clear whether it was ethical for us to help ourselves so unceremoniously, although I believe we salved our consciences with the argument that, as we contributed our skill and labor(?) in ridding the farmers of their most destructive marauder, we were entitled to their involuntary contribution to our sustenance while doing it. In any event, so far as I recall, no permission was previously solicited nor apologies thereafter tendered.

The corn was cooked in two ways,- first, by roasting it over the coals at the end of a long stick held in the hands and, second, by burying it, with husks on, in the hot ashes. The latter was the way we also cooked potatoes and eggs, but before depositing an egg in the ashes, a small hole was always made in the end to permit the escape of any air; otherwise, it would explode while cooking. The corn and potatoes, when seasoned with the drippings from bacon, were

deliciously appetizing. Of course we had bread, often cookies and doughnuts and occasionally pie, and nearly always plenty of apples.

While we were preparing and eating these tasty viands, our faithful dog was scouring the adjacent woods and fields for coon. He might be followed for a short distance by other dogs of less experience, but they soon returned to a comfortable place before the fire, where they were favored with scraps from our feast.

But not so the coon-wise dog, for he was not only patient but persevering and almost tireless. Did he return from one direction without success, he would, at our bidding, go in another, and it was seldom he did not pick up a trail and eventually tree a coon.

The first intimation we had of his successful quest was a short, staccato yelp, which apprised us as surely as any words could convey that he had found a fresh trail. This was repeated at short intervals as he followed the scent, while a long silence informed us he had temporarily lost it and was running here and there in circles, examining fences and the banks of pools and streams to recover it, for the skilled coon dog was wise to the many tricks his wily adversary had in putting him off the trail.

It often required much patience and labor to discover the particular deception the coon had resorted to in order to deceive his pursuers. For instance, coming to a pond or stream, it might jump in, walk up, down or around and then silently wait until the dog had passed in trying to discover where it had come out, when it would stealthily travel back along the very trail it had made in coming, thus getting a long start upon the weary dog before he could circle about and discover the double trail. By reason of this, would the persevering dog often have to travel much farther than the coon.

Knowing the topography of the neighborhood, we were quite certainly informed of the difficulties the dog had encountered in the chase by the directions and apparent distances from which his occasional barks came. Often an hour or more would elapse after he discovered the trail until his fierce, continuous barking indicated

the coon had been treed, and, many times, this was a half mile or more from the point where the trail was first discovered.

The fact that the coon was treed by no means assured us it would become our prey. It was, however, the signal which started us pell-mell from our comfortable places about the big fire, with our axes and gun, over fences, through fields and woods, stumbling over logs and other obstacles, to the spot.

If it were in a small tree, as was often the case when the coon was hotly pressed by the dog, our chances were good, as the tree might be climbed and the coon shaken off; or, if the tree had little value, it could be cut down. Sometimes, also, by the aid of the light from a hickory-bark torch, its position in the tree might be disclosed and the gun used; but were its refuge in one of those great monarchs which grew here and there in the original forest and had withstood the storms and fires, and also escaped the woodman's axe, for centuries, he was reasonably safe; for nearly every one of these grand, old trees contained hollows in their decadent trunks or branches which gave sure refuge to all kinds of wild life that fled to them for safety.

However closely pressed the coon might be, it never lost its cunning. If the tree were cut down, instead of running out of the fallen top, to which the dogs and ourselves would immediately rush, after it had fallen, (we always held the dogs to prevent them from running under the falling tree before it reached the ground), the coon would sneak back along the trunk, going by the stump, and before this ruse was discovered, might be lodged in another tree some distance away.

One evening we cut down two trees before we became wise to the manner of the coon's escape. But when we cut the third one, two of us remained at the stump while the remainder ran to the top, and sure enough, the tree had scarcely fallen until the coon was caught by the watchers at the stump as it sneaked along the trunk.

Perhaps shaking them off was the most exciting ending of a night's quest. Often I climbed these smaller trees, using a leaning fence-rail to reach the lower limbs. Then I would go from limb to limb, carefully scanning each, for its thick, autumnal foliage afforded

fair concealment for a coon in many places and none must be overlooked on the way upward. It was usually located near the top and upon the outer end of some limb too small to bear the weight even of a boy of twelve. While it was thus secure from reach by club, its position made the task of shaking it off much easier, and then, unless it could catch on some friendly, lower branch, it was soon doomed to the merciless dogs awaiting it below.

On one such occasion, I shook the coon off several times, but it managed to catch and take refuge in another part of this many-limbed and thickly-foliaged tree, which stood in a meadow bordering the woods. It was finally decided between the two brothers and myself, who were together, that I should remain on guard at the tree while they went home,- brother Hilton to return with blankets and remain with me until morning, when brother Harvey would come with the rifle.

It was quite a dark night and I spent rather a lonesome hour waiting. Even the dog had deserted me, having followed my brothers. So I sat with my back against the tree, thinking my presence there would be sufficient to prevent the coon from coming down.

The silence that followed the departure of my brothers possibly led the animal to believe its enemies were all gone, for, perhaps twenty minutes later, I heard a noise in the tree, indicating it was changing position. I was not prepared, however, for what followed, for, while the noise at first apparently resulted from a slow, cautious movement, I soon realized that the coon was stealthily and rapidly descending the tree, evidently with the intention of forcing its way in spite of my presence.

I jumped to my feet, yelling as loud as I could and at the same time running about the tree, while the coon, about ten feet from the ground, was circling the trunk as rapidly as myself, seeking a chance to pass. Thus we went, circling first one way and then the other. Having no weapon - not even a club - and no time to get one, I bethought me of my coat, and pulling it off as I revolved around the tree and yelled, I slapped it about the trunk as high as I could

reach, which seemed to frighten it even more than my noise, for it soon retreated up the tree, giving me an opportunity to gather some clods and small sticks, which I threw at it, causing it to take refuge higher up. But until brother Hilton returned, I walked slowly about the tree, occasionally pausing to listen for any signs of movements in the branches overhead.

At last my brother came with blankets, followed by the dog. By this time, it was past midnight; so each wrapped up in a blanket and lay with our heads to the tree - he on one side and I on the other. Being young and fatigued, we soon fell asleep.

How long we slept, I do not know, but I was painfully awakened by what I at first thought was a hideous nightmare about fighting animals attacking me, which was not an uncommon illusion among the young, caused by fatigue and over-eating. This, however, proved to be a startling reality, for it was a deadly combat between the dog and coon, who were at grips, struggling back and forth over and near my feet. My brother and I, soon thoroughly aroused, joined forces with the dog, and thus the brave coon, which had dared to come down the tree between our very heads and would doubtless have escaped but for the efforts of the watchful dog, finally succumbed to our united efforts. And about three o'clock in the morning, brother Hilton and I, each grasping a leg of the heavy coon, followed by our faithful dog, wended our sleepy way homeward.

CHAPTER V.

A LONESOME COON DOG.

Occasionally, among the early settlers in the wooded parts of central Ohio, was found a dog who hunted by himself and apparently for the love and sport of it. A neighbor, living a half-mile distant, had one of such. This neighbor had no sons and never hunted himself and apparently took no interest or pride in the activities and skill of his dog. It was of nondescript breed, yellow in color and of medium size, and how he became so skilled in hunting, has always been a mystery, for he received no encouragement or approbation from any one.

It may be that in his nightly vigils about his master's premises he had occasion to drive away coon which were attacking the family poultry and followed them to the surrounding woods. In any event, he became almost nightly interested in the sport, and after treeing his coon, would remain at the foot of the tree the rest of the night and until about ten the following morning, when he would go home.

If a stranger came toward him, he would unceremoniously desert his post. He had no especial locality in which he carried on his nocturnal hunting; for sometimes his telltale bark came from one and then another of the points of the compass surrounding his master's home. He might be so distant from our house that his bark could scarcely be heard, but occasionally it was quite near, and in such event we sometimes went out to look the situation over. As soon as we approached, the dog always started for home, leaving us to take such toll of his skill as we could.

One morning in late fall, his bark indicated his quarry had taken refuge in an exceedingly tall walnut tree that stood in a meadow not far from the woods and near a small creek. So brother Hilton, a cousin named

Norman Sunderland, who was visiting with us, and myself, took our old muzzle-loading rifle, with some powder and a few balls, and started a little after daylight to investigate.

We looked about for some time, through the top of the great tree, before discovering the coon, which lay almost completely hidden in the crotch of two limbs,- so sheltered by the foliage of the tree as to leave but one ear and a part of its upper head exposed. It must have been more than 150 feet from the ground, and the only two points from which it could be seen required a shot of more than 200 feet. None of us was especially good with a rifle, brother Hilton and myself being less than fourteen, and cousin Norman, who was perhaps seventeen, had lived always on the prairies of Illinois and was used only to shotguns.

We took turn about firing until our bullets were gone - it being our misfortune to have the ramrod stick in the gun when we rammed down the last ball; so we shot that away also, without effect. Then we went sorrowfully home, empty handed.

Father at this time was perhaps past sixty, and with one exception, I had never seen him fire a gun, although I had heard older brothers and others speak of his remarkable shooting with a rifle in his younger days. The one time I refer to was during the Civil War, when the Confederate General Morgan was making raids in the southern part of Ohio, and for self-protection, loyal men were getting together to practice shooting, thus preparing to better defend their homes in case of attack. All I recall of this was that father shot better than any of the others.

After we had related our resultless experience, a whimsical smile came over father's face, but he said nothing. He looked over the ramrodless gun, and then, taking an old one, which was an extra, he wrapped some candle wicking about its end, which he dampened, and then thoroughly cleansed the rifle barrel, afterwards carefully loading it, and we all went back to the scene of our former discomfiture.

Father walked entirely about the tree to decide from what point to shoot, finally selecting a place

opposite that from where we had fired, because the sun shown on the small portion of the coon's head that was exposed, although the distance was perhaps fifty feet greater. He stuck a piece of fence rail in the soft, moist ground, then stooping behind and using it as a rest, he deliberately aimed and fired.

To our amazement, the coon, which while lying upon the limb looked less in size than a small kitten, bounced off and came tumbling down, with a bullet in the small part of its head which had been visible. He proved to be an enormous fellow.

Father, without saying a word, with the gun over his shoulder started home, followed by the three of us in turn carrying the coon. Our chagrin at our failure was partially compensated by the filial pride we took in father's skill. Later, I became a very good shot with the rifle, which I attributed almost wholly to the lesson his meticulous care and coolness that day taught me.

CHAPTER VI.

WAS IT OR WAS IT NOT SUCCESSFUL?

Before closing this recital of my boyhood sports, I ought perhaps relate one of the most vividly and disagreeably remembered experiences of my hunting days, although in some of its results it was overwhelmingly successful.

In an odoriferous way, it has perhaps seldom been equaled. To have enjoyed it, for that reason alone, one's sense of smell must have been lost altogether or be so entirely incongruous with the preference of humanity in general as to remain in a class by itself.

In the warmer days of late February, when the winter snows were melting and the milder air and swelling buds connoted the approach of spring, nearly all kinds of wild life ventured from winter quarters and went forth in search of food. Then it was that brother Hilton and myself liked to go into the big woods, for it was always an auspicious time for hunting, as the moist, soft snow took faithful imprints of the feet of every living thing moving over its surface. Then we could readily and unmistakably follow the trails of all fur-bearing animals to their lairs and sometimes add their pelts, which at this season of the year had reached their highest perfection and value, to our previous accumulation.

We knew, as every farm boy does, the tracks of all animals common to the country as well as we did their color and bodily appearance; and it was a most interesting and wonderful sight to note the myriads of tracks of all kinds that marred the surface of the beautiful, white carpet of snow during a few days of warm weather. We were sufficiently experienced to guess very approximately the time which had elapsed since each track was made - some being fresh, others one or several days old.

On one of such excursions, quite late in the afternoon, we came upon skunk tracks made, we knew, the night previous, all going in the same direction, evidently

following a leader, and making a well defined path in the snow, in which the individual footprints had been so blended as to make it impossible to estimate their number.

We followed as the path went hither and yon, about trees, stumps and logs, occasionally apparently stopping at some place whose appearance indicated it might offer refuge; then going on again, about brush-heaps and under fences, for quite a long distance, until the tracks terminated in the hollow end of a large log in our own woods about a half-mile from home.

By means of a long pole, we located the whereabouts of the animals in the log, and putting a chunk of wood in the hole to prevent their escaping, with the axe we carried we proceeded to cut into the log near the spot. We took turns cutting and watching. We had with us our single-barrel, muzzle-loading shotgun and a dog,- a youngster, entirely inexperienced in hunting.

I happened to be using the axe when the hollow in the log was reached, and there, within a foot of the opening, appeared the head of one of the skunks, and whether pressed by its fellows behind or upon its own volition, I did not know, yet, regardless of my presence, it unceremoniously started to come out - when I, guided by past experiences, at once put a safe distance between it and myself.

Here I digress to explain that persons who are not familiar with the appearance, habits and means of self-defense of this remarkable animal can scarcely imagine with what sang-froid and assurance it meets its enemies in the open. Neither its eyes, face nor action evince anger or surprise at anything, but rather, indicate a guileless incredulity, that any person or thing, can be so imprudent as to interfere with one, so peculiarly able to care for itself. Neither did I ever see one try to escape by the rapidity of its flight. Therefore, I assume its appearance, deliberation and indifference are intended, by nature, to lure its victims within such proximity as will enable it to assuredly overwhelm them. Be this as it may, it frequently works out that way.

The first one, we dispatched with the gun. Its report and the barking of the dog evidently hastened the remainder out, because, within perhaps less than a minute

twelve more had emerged from their crowded quarters and were spreading in every direction - very deliberately, however, and with tails held high aloft like plumes,- not through pride, I can assure you, but as a sign of instant readiness for action - a fact we had abundant proof of very soon.

With no time to be lost, for the shades of night were gathering about the scene, and with twelve beautiful pelts being coolly borne away upon the backs of an equal number of ungrateful skunks, and our gun useless, we became frantic and desperate.

We first urged the dog to the combat, but before he reached his intended victim, it laid such a perfect barrage of liquid odor between itself and the dog and into the latter's face, eyes, mouth and over his body as to send him yelpingly away, with the smarting and awful nausea it caused. He plunged and rolled in the wet snow, scooping up great mouthfuls only to chokingly expel it again and then take in more,- all the while yelping in great distress.

I witnessed all this with wonder, surprise and almost admiration, for the skunk's marksmanship was unbelievably accurate; although it took no apparent aim and shot from the rear, the discharge was always so timely and the effect so appalling, I could not help it. And yet, I recognized in it all the probability of losing those pelts.

Brother Hilton, doubtless moved by the same impulse and cupidity, acted instantly with me - each grasping a convenient club, and together we attacked - perhaps too boldly - and bent to the task of extermination, and the saving of those pelts.

It was an awful half-hour - perhaps the worst I have ever experienced - that followed, of which I now have no clear, remaining recollection of particulars. Think of it, and make your own deductions, giving blame and credit as you will! Two small boys, one dog (the latter soon joined us with much assistance and vigor, partially, I suppose, because his nausea had somewhat abated, but more, perhaps, for revenge), and twelve healthy, one-hundred-per-cent-perfect-in-the-art-of-self-defense skunks.

At the end, there were thirteen dead skunks scattered here and there over the wet snow, two exhausted,

bedraggled boys, whose clothes were saturated and smelling to the heavens with the virus of their slaughtered victims, their shoes full of water from the slushy snow, and one of the most disreputable appearing dogs one can imagine. Looking upon the scene, one might well question which side deserved the most commiseration.

It was now almost dark, and we gathered our victims into a pile - the whole weighing perhaps fifty pounds - and then tied each to a light, strong pole, when one with the axe, the other the gun, each bearing an end of the pole, we proceeded laboriously and very wearily homeward.

The gentle breeze blowing from the south toward our home bore unmistakable evidence of our approach long before we were within hearing or sight. Mother, ever solicitous for the welfare of her children, was doubly concerned when we were out late hunting; and, as darkness came on, sent some one out occasionally to learn if we were coming. One of her emissaries finally reported we were, but explained, when questioned, that she had neither seen nor heard us, but had unmistakably smelled us.

This peculiar evidence of our approach very noticeably increased as the distance lessened between us and home, and was so unbearably potent and nauseating, when we came within hailing distance, that we were forbidden to come nearer, for we were absolutely personae non grata at our own home. Even the friendly advances of our faithful dog, who was ordinarily a pet in the household, were repelled by threatening cries and missiles, which sent him disconsolately back to our sides, where the three of us stood awaiting judgment.

It was finally decided that we should leave the skunks where we stood, go into an outshed near by, thoroughly wash our hands and faces, change our clothes for clean and dry ones, which would be sent there for the purpose, and then, being at least partially cleansed,- but perhaps more from the fact that the family had by this time become somewhat inured to the extraordinarily enveloping odor we had brought with us - we were finally permitted to enter the kitchen, which we found conspicuously deserted, and get something to eat.

Our poor dog, who could no more change his clothes, than the leopard his spots, seemed doomed to the cheerless outside. But we could not thus ungratefully desert him, so we carried him food and some dry, discarded clothing to curl up in in the shed, then we went wearily back to the house and to bed.

CHAPTER VII.

BAREFOOT DAYS.

Speaking of spring, hunting and fishing, reminds me pleasantly of the eight or ten years of my young life when I went barefoot - quite nine months each year.

The warm rays of the late winter sun had scarcely melted the last of the snow, and long before snappy, cold nights had ceased to come, our boots were cast aside for nature's own foot-covering. Almost invariably did the chilly, often frosty, mornings and evenings of early spring and late fall cause the skin on the tops of our feet to harden and crack into innumerable, small crevices, through which the blood would painfully ooze. Mother treated this unfortunate condition with applications of tallow night and morning.

Regardless of this and many other afflictions which befell our feet,- such as stubbing our toes, stone bruises, thorns in their soles, sometimes trodden on by horses or cows, bitten by flies, stung by bees and cut by saw-grass, etc., the warmer days of late February found us clamoring to go barefoot: and not even the colder days of late November could induce us to voluntarily assume our boots again.

Notwithstanding the many ills endured by barefoot boys, the swiftness it gave to their movements, the readiness with which they could wade ponds and streams, with 'rolled up pantaloons,' the celerity it gave to their climbing, the assurance it gave in riding horses standing-up, and the simplicity of dressing and undressing morning and evening;- especially when one could get into bed before his mother ordered his feet washed, which we regarded as an unnecessary and somewhat cruel regulation intended to detract from the freedom and felicity of boyhood - made these barefoot days eagerly begun in the early spring and most reluctantly abandoned in the fall.

As I recall them, there were some almost unbelievably strange - perhaps psychological - effects certain conditions seemed to have upon our feet at different times. For instance, when raking hay after the loaders over the stubble of newly-mown grass, they were cruelly affected,- so much so, indeed, as to cause us to move very, very slowly and carefully and to frequently sit down and examine their soles for briars and other substances we felt sure had penetrated them - but which we seldom found; all the time complaining bitterly about the excruciating martyrdom we eudured while pulling the rake about in the hot sun to gather up the scattered straws left by the careless pitchers. Even the name of the implement we used was an insult to industrious boys like us, for it was called a "loafer rake" and required two small boys to pull it about. This latter fact, in itself, provoked us to numerous and sometimes acrimonious discussions and resulted, incidentally, in the loss of much time, while we were trying to decide which way we should go next.

Yet, curiously as it may seem, were a mouse, rabbit, rat or even a snake dislodged from the raked-up hay - as was often the case,- our feet became instantly immune to the cruel pricks of the sharp stubble, and we would cheerfully abandon our rake and pursue with surprising speed and agility. But as soon as the chase was ended and we resumed our task, the old trouble immediately returned like a relentless Nemesis, taking the joy out of our young lives.

Let the wise-heads explain these extraordinary phenomena as they may, but the facts remain indisputable. Very many times have I, as a boy, met with these peculiar conditions, and I doubt not but that my assertion can be amply supported by myriads of other equally industrious boys who have had the same bitter experience.

However, eliminating the many cruel tasks, so unfeelingly imposed by our elders, and some exceptional misfortunes such as stone bruises, having the nail knocked off by stubbing the big toe against a hidden rock or root - all of which I have had occur to me,- chilblains and a few other unpleasant incidents, my barefoot days stand out among the very happiest and best remembered of my life.

Those who may not have had similar youthful experiences, can scarcely enter into the spirit of this period in suburban life as did, evidently, John Greenleaf Whittier, America's great, pastoral poet, who immortalized the boy and the time in one of the most idyllic poems of English verse, "The Barefoot Boy"; nor can they fully understand the emotions its memory excites, nor the depths of regret that steal over middle age and later life because of the thought that they can never, never be repeated.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCHOOL LIFE.

The very early age at which every country boy, on a busy farm, was required to perform stated duties and assume minor responsibilities, was not only a valuable experience in husbandry, but was also a fine, mental and physical training. Every task performed and each animal cared for and used presented problems to be solved by the child, similar in effect, if not in importance, to those commonly met in later life.

While these added little or not at all to book knowledge, they immeasurably increased his self-reliance and resourcefulness, and strengthened his reasoning power.

It was not uncommon, more than a half-century ago on the frontier, to meet men, especially farmers, who were conspicuous among their fellows for their resourcefulness and success, who could neither read nor write, but whose minds had been so trained by actual experience and broadened by personal contact and oral traditions, that they were, otherwise, commonly accepted as widely informed and gracious gentlemen. They could successfully meet and match and often excel others, however highly educated, in nearly all ways save in book lore.

My own father narrowly escaped being one of these unlettered, resourceful farmers - happily being able to read and write by having been permitted to attend a country school near his home when he had almost reached man's stature, for half of each school day for a short term. The remainder of the day and Saturdays, he worked in a saw-mill to assist in supporting his widowed mother and her five children. This laid the unpromising foundation which, in evenings and during inclement weather, he diligently strove to build upon - by his own application until his marriage, and, thereafter, by the assistance of my mother, whose parents

had been in such condition financially as to afford their children educational opportunities. Thus he became much more than rudimentally efficient in reading, writing and arithmetic. His fondness for reading opened a wide field of general information to draw upon during his active years on the farm and afforded him much edifying pleasure after his strenuous days were past.

Indeed, one of the most pitiful creatures to be met with in life is a college graduate, without experience in honest toil, devoid of practical ideas and good horse sense, often even of good manners, his head filled with useless generalities; his language conspicuous because of its frivolous vulgarities picked up in "frat" life; his fingers and lips stained and offensive from the use of tobacco; often his morals and physical constitution undermined by even more vicious habits,- finding himself at the age of thirty a helpless as well as hopeless derelict - a total, economic loss to society; and, saddest of all, thus imposing upon his parents and family a despair infinitely more poignant and difficult to bear than death itself could possibly afflict.

Such instances may not be common, but certainly they are not rare, and where the fault lies and what the remedy may be, I shall not here discuss. I wish, however, to leave this word of warning to my posterity: However great your ambition may be for the education of your children, useful, physical toil - especially on busy farms, while young - will give them an assurance and balance of mind and body that nothing else in the way of sports can. Never mind that their hands and clothes are soiled, for the cleanliness within is correspondingly increased and is infinitely of more consequence.

The foregoing, somewhat homiletic observations are not given to justify illiteracy or to minimize the importance of college education; but unless the latter so broadens one's outlook, sharpens his natural facilities and greatly strengthens his purpose, it may be seriously doubted whether the time and expense of acquiring a college education and degree are adequately balanced by the pleasure and usefulness it otherwise affords.

Of all the teachers presiding in the country schools while I attended, there were few I recall as having assisted me greatly; although doubtless each contributed more or less to my advancement. One of these - my first - introduced me to the mysteries of the alphabet, and I remember, as well as anything in my past life, how I stood at her side, twice each day, as she sat in a chair, with her feet resting upon the edge of a wooden platform upon which the school stove stood, and pointed out with the blade of a small pen-knife the shape of each letter, naming and impressing it upon my mind. It required perhaps two months to learn the names and recognize at sight all the letters.

The text-book, I recall, had a green back and, if I mistake not, was called Webster's Speller. Very soon thereafter, however, it was succeeded by the McGuffey series.

After the alphabet, came the spelling of meaning-less, two-letter words, consisting first of a vowel and consonat, such as ab, eb, ib, ob, etc., and then reversing the order, using the consonant first. From this humble beginning, the fair progress I made was interesting and inspiring to me, and it was a great day when I was able to spell and pronounce words of three or four letters; and a much prouder one when, near the end of the term, I was permitted to read in a First Reader, which the teacher kept on her desk, and was told, after my first effort, that I was pro-ceeding quite well.

Another of my earlier teachers, whose appearance, mannerisms and methods of teaching I distinctly recall, was a man who assisted me greatly as a beginner in mathematics and who was almost an enthusiast in geog-raphy, reading and spelling.

He was a big, raw-boned fellow, with a strong face, greatly accentuated by a prominent Roman nose. He was very earnest and agressive, which, coupled with a loud voice, quite impressed his scholars as he read passages from the reading lessons as an example of how the meaning of the text should be expressed.

In geography, in addition to the daily recita-tions, nearly every evening before closing, he engaged the whole school in singing a two-line, rythmic jingle

in couplets - the first line of each announcing a particular geographic fact, and ending with a rising inflection; the second line repeating and emphasizing it, ending in the following. It always began with "Name the north-eastern part of the States," and ran thus: "Maine, Augusta, on the Kennebec River - Maine, Augusta, on the Kennebec River." In the course of time, the names and locations of the capitols of all the states and countries in the known world, as well as the source and mouth of the great rivers and the heights and locations of the large mountains, as well as many other geographical facts, were thus learned and impressed on the memory of the scholars.

This method, of course, exercised and strengthened the memory and vocal chords of the scholars; and each evening, a particular scholar was selected to stand by the wall map, and, with a long stick, point out the particular thing and its location referred to and lead in the singing for its duration - which was considered a mark of distinction - thus giving it a personal attraction; and because it generally put the entire school into a sort of jolly harmony when dismissed, it greatly lessened the effects of the petty annoyances and incidents which take place in a graded country school each day.

It is now more than sixty years since I participated in those exercises; yet even today, by reverting to this simple jingle, I can soon recall many geographical facts that otherwise seem entirely lost to my memory.

I was perhaps between seven and eight years when this same teacher (for he taught several terms in this school) introduced me to the principles of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, as given in Ray's Arithmetic. Following long division, there were given a number of so-called "promiscuous examples," in the solution of which, a pupil was expected to exercise each of the four fundamentals and, in addition, use his reason.

At first I could make absolutely no headway, for each seemed like a puzzle; and without the application of reason, I tried adding, subtracting, multiply-

ing and dividing, hoping by some necromantic good fortune to reach the answer given - of course, without result.

Previously, memory was really the only faculty involved in my studies, and while reasoning and judgment were required in all my activities on the farm, I had not as yet learned to apply them in book studies.

The teacher had very patiently and painstakingly explained several of these problems, but without conveying to my mind why he added here or subtracted there, or multiplied or divided as the case might be. Therefore, the very next day, perhaps, I found I was as much at loss as before.

He had repeatedly impressed upon my mind that the four fundamentals previously learned were the means or tools used under the guidance of reason to solve all the problems in mathematics; and, until one had learned how and where to use each, no further progress was possible. He also impressed upon me, that the way to know this was to read carefully each problem and see what particular thing was to be found out and where to begin.

I floundered discouragingly for several days, almost in despair, but I felt, to give up would really be the end of accomplishing anything worth while in school, and therefore, I doggedly stumbled on.

One morning I took up the book again, with a greater determination than before, and picked out one of these examples I had previously tried. I do not recall its terms distinctly, but it concerned a farmer taking some produce to market, for each measure of which he received a certain amount of money. Out of the money thus received, he bought so many pounds of coffee at so much per pound; so many pounds of sugar for so much a pound; some cloth by the yard, etc. The object to be ascertained was, what was left after paying for all these out of the money received for his produce.

I read it over very, very carefully twice, and having everything clearly in mind, seriously considered what was the ultimate thing to be found out and

where I must begin to do this. As a result of my pertinacity and thoughtfulness, the solution faintly dawned upon me, that the first thing to do was to ascertain how much money he received for the produce he had brought with him and sold. It required but little thought to decide, that if I multiplied the number of pounds or dozens of eggs by the price he received per pound or dozen, and then added the respective amounts, I would have the total he had received for all. Out of this he bought sugar and coffee by the pound, matches by the box, and calico by the yard. By the same process, I found the totals of these. And then, by subtracting the cost of the articles he bought from the amount he received for those he sold, I should have the amount of money he had left. I remember, that after making the subtraction, I trembled with excitement as I turned to the answer in the book to see whether I was right. To my delight, it was the same! I tried another and still another, with the same happy ending,- indeed, I did not stop until I had thoroughly mastered every one. A new power possessed me, and with reason as an ally and guide, I felt all the doors leading into the intricacies of mathematics would open as I approached. I felt also older and much more mature and sure of myself than before, and all my blind stumbling of yesterday seemed afar off, as did also some of the irresponsibility of childhood.

The above is a simple, uninteresting yet truthful recital of the beginning of one of the most important epochs in a child's - my own - life.

From this sprang the growth, determination, pertinacity, courage, hope and ambition upon which every future accomplishment of my life was grounded. For this reason, it standsout, as I look backward from the evening of life, as one of the most prominent milestones in my growth and progress.

Here I pause to say to posterity, carefully watch the halting, stumbling steps of your children intellectually. Don't take it for granted because their report cards indicate they are behind in this or that it necessarily indicates a natural inability. It may be they have but stubbed a mental toe and are limping, and if you do not look carefully into the matter, they may become mental cripples for life - a thing infinitely worse in many ways than to become a permanent cripple physically. If you are not able to do this, get someone who is a mental expert to find out the cause and apply such mental remedy and assistance as may be necessary. Because your boy may never really

make a champion runner, still you would dislike greatly to think that he could never use his legs without limping. I have often thought there may be more mental deformities than physical - among children who have been neglected and whose lives are thus marred forever. But I must not pursue this subject farther.

From the foregoing, it will be seen I owe much to the Country School, even as it existed much more than a half-century ago; and I wish I were sufficiently gifted to adequately panegyrize it for the noble part it has performed in increasing the literacy of the American rural people.

For a half-century preceding my birth, it was largely the only refuge to which the poor - especially those of the rural population - could go to be saved from abject and pitiful illiteracy. Indeed, if it be permissible to apply to so humble an institution, whose curriculum embraced only the three R's - Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic - a title so dignified and imposing, it was the only Alma Mater a large proportion of the rural population of the United States had during that early period. While its beneficiaries who have made notable successes, may be far less in proportion to their numbers, than those who enjoyed the facilities afforded by institutions of higher learning, nevertheless, the simple Country School sent forth countless numbers who, from this humble start, guided only by a knowledge and a determination to press on upon some line of endeavor, guided by an intuitive inclination into a choice of their life's work, using such aids as they could lay hold upon, pressed on and on, to eminence and great usefulness in their chosen field of endeavor.

From this time on my progress was perhaps above the average, for I generally stood quite well in spelling, geography, reading and mathematics. At the age of eight, my help was considered necessary in carrying on the spring and summer work on the farm, and thereafter, until I entered the graded schools in the city of Delaware, I attended only in the winter term.

This, however, had little effect in retarding my progress, for the tasks I performed on the farm steadily increased my physical vigor and growth and expanded my reasoning powers; so that, when the winter term began, I was in superb condition and keenly anxious to be at my books again.

It was during the Civil War, and when I was eleven, I entered the eighth grade in the city schools, and, according to age, I found myself as well advanced as city boys and girls mentally, and in physical strangth was quite beyond most of them, although I was not "up" in baseball - just then starting - and other town school sports.

This year was not marked by any spectacular progress, although I improved steadily and had no difficulty in maintaining a fair standing. The teacher was quite a large and somewhat austere woman of forty. Her face appeared grim and bespoke an unyielding purpose, and she had evidently been employed because of her reputation as a disciplinarian.

She was so watchful that few derelictions escaped her, and those noted were adequately punished - the most inexcusable by a severe whipping before the entire school. The teacher, whom she succeeded, was said to have been a gentle, trusting woman, who sought to preserve order by kindly ways, which succeeded very well with many pupils, but not so with a few ruthless, incorrigible boys, who took her mild ways as a license to commit all kinds of infractions of ordinary school decorum, and acted accordingly; and, with whom, she was physically entirely inadequate to cope. Therefore, she left the school in a deplorable shape at the end of the previous year.

The new teacher, being informed of all this, was expected to, and did largely, change it, but the year stands out more prominently in my mind, possibly because of my natural timidity, because of the many floggings she administered to these obstreperous boys, distressing me perhaps more than the culprits.

It was during this year I began the study of grammar, and while I diligently applied myself in learning the text, I got little understanding of its practical application and real significance. However, I passed quite creditably in all studies, which made me eligible to the high school.

CHAPTER IX.

HIGH SCHOOL.

In entering high school, I began two of the most agreeable and, mentally, profitable years of my life. The principal, who was also superintendent of the schools in Delaware, was a very remarkable man as an instructor. He was an ordained minister in the Presbyterian church, and how he became an instructor I never knew. At the time I came under his tutelage, he must have been more than fifty, was stout almost to portliness and of medium height. His forehead was large, his other facial features regular and, when in repose, they gave him a grave, almost melancholy expression. When interested, he was vivacious, and when much pleased, as he often was, his eyes sparkled and his lips expressed a most winsome smile.

His experience, dignified courtesy, scholarship, honesty of purpose, deep interest in the subjects he taught, coupled with the forceful simplicity of his language and lucidity of his explanations, gave him a remarkable influence over his students.

Then, too, as we passed under his direction, we were no longer addressed by our first names, but it was "Miss" or Mister," indicating our growth in mind and body required the application, balance and becoming conduct of ladies and gentlemen.

My start under his tutelage was the beginning of the most important and profitable part of my earlier school life. Here I began the study of algebra and took additional mathematical work in Ray's Higher Arithmetic. The course also embraced grammar, physical geography, history, and latin as an elective.

I advanced easily and very satisfactorily in mathematics, a little less so in grammar and even less, still, in the other subjects.

History and language required less reasoning and more memorizing, and while I applied myself sufficiently to make creditable daily recitations, they proved rather uninteresting.

In grammar, I became sufficiently expert to parse the different words, and to analyze a given sentence by diagraming it upon the blackboard - showing its subject, predicate and all its qualifying words and clauses; and yet I did not grasp its real significance nor fully understand how to apply my knowledge in every-day life. To a large extent, I indulged in the same provincial inaccuracies of speech as before. In other words, with me, grammar remained a subject to know sufficiently about to pass a creditable examination in, but not to be seriously applied in the language of every-day life.

One of the most regrettable things I have to deplore is, that I did not acquire, and by application and constant use make second-nature to me, a clear, practical knowledge of proper usage in speaking and writing. If this is not done when young, it really can not be well done at all. It is perhaps even more difficult to acquire by those surrounded by and steeped in the common usage of ungrammatical localisms than it would be to learn a new language sufficiently well to express one's thoughts in it without conscious effort. If one attempted to do this on the frontier, he was looked upon askance, for he was considered pedantic or, to apply the local synonym, "uppish," which meant, in common parlance, that he was ashamed of the language of his forefathers.

It is said a little learning is a dangerous thing, and perhaps there is no branch of knowledge to which this applies so forcefully as to the correct rules of writing and speaking; for, if they are not made so entirely one's own by continued usage, a lapse may occur at any time.

I remember that one of the highest authorities in language in central Ohio fifty years ago, and who had a remarkable technical knowledge of the subject, was a professor of ancient and modern languages in a leading college, who had been used as a child and youngster to the common, ungrammatical localisms in general use in

his neighborhood; and it was proverbial that this great philologist, if, when delivering a lecture or public address, departed from his carefully prepared text to especially emphasize a particular point, was almost sure to lapse into unbelievable inaccuracies of speech.

I wish I might adequately impress upon such of my posterity as may have an ambition to successfully engage in such profession or business as requires something more than fair judgment, brain and brawn, that there is nothing so potent in bringing this about, in connection with fair natural endowments and determination, as a usable knowledge of correct writing and speaking.

Had I been so equipped when I began my professional career, the pleasure of the different positions I have since held in professional, political and business life would certainly have been immeasurably increased.

Returning again to my high school work, I must say my interest and delight in mathematics made its study the source of the greatest satisfaction and no little pride. There could be but one solution to each problem, and, to one who had mastered each preceding step, his advance was easy and unmistakably plain.

Of course, algebra was curiously fascinating; for, in it, letters represented unknown quantities, and, by indicating their addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, in connection with known quantities, the process went on until an equation was reached indicating the result - from which the letters, by the process of elimination, were removed, leaving only known quantities.

Higher arithmetic was, if possible, even more enjoyable, and it may not be too strongly put to say I was near if not the head of the class. In this I found myself so sure, that having mastered every preceding step, I was content with a careful examination of each problem in a lesson - reasoning it out mentally, feeling I could assuredly do so if called upon to demonstrate it upon the board.

This assumption was put to a severe test one day, when an exceptionally difficult problem was embraced in the lesson. Many members of the class were previously called upon - all of whom responded that they had not solved it. Finally the professor called my name, and I answered that, while I had not actually worked it out, I had carefully examined it and was quite sure I could do so if required.

In perhaps ten minutes, I worked it out on the board while the class looked on; and, upon examination, it was found the result corresponded with that in the text book; so I proceeded to demonstrate it.

When I had concluded, the principal remarked that I had reached the stated result, but he was of the opinion the process might be shortened, and attempted to show how this could be done. He followed my work to a given point, where he digressed upon the theory he had announced and, following this diversion to its ultimate conclusion, he found himself wide of the proper result. He began again, to see that no errors in his calculations were made - with no better ending. Finally he asked me to go over my demonstration again, and when I reached the digression he had made, I somewhat timidly attempted to show where it was wrong. After I had concluded, he frankly told the class I was right and warmly commended me - for he was a very just and impartial man. Ever afterwards, he took much for granted in my standing in mathematics.

So pleasant and profitable had been the two years under the direction of this quite extraordinary instructor, I greatly regretted their conclusion.

CHAPTER X.

A TRAGEDY.

Although the high school did not end my school days, an occurrence of far-reaching consequence happened about this time which resulted in making a very successful merchant of my brother Hilton and almost consigned me to farming as an avocation.

For several years previous to the Civil War, he and I had taken, if not important, at least, boys' parts, in farm work. We assisted in feeding the stock, milking the cows, currying the horses, carried the wood and ran errands.

In looking backward over these early, pastoral activities, I recall many semi-comic as well as serious instances,- how, for instance, when milking cows in freezing cold mornings, the milk plashing from the bottom of the pail to the sides would instantly freeze, and often our fingers would become so cold we had to thrust our hands between the cow's udder and flank to warm them sufficiently to proceed; how the cold fork handle and curry comb would almost freeze our hands and compel us to slap them together and against our legs to make the blood circulate freely again and take the numbness out; how our boots, that had been greased the evening before with tallow, would freeze and become so stiff and unyielding as to be difficult to pull on or walk in.

At this early time, all the cutting in harvest time was done with sickles, scythes and cradles, and as the meadows were cut - usually three or more mowers following each other,- he and I followed closely, each with a stick sharpened at both ends, tossing the newly mown hay right and left over our shoulders, scattering it about on the stubble to dry.

We also raked swaths of cradled grain into bundles to be bound by the following binders, and raked after the hay loaders so that nothing might be left

to waste. We rode the horses about the big barn floor as they went their weary rounds in tramping out flax, wheat or oats, and turned the fanning mill when the seed was cleaned. We dropped corn and potatoes in the planting season of spring and followed after the men who cultivated the young plants, to uncover those over which the shovel-plow had thrown dirt in passing.

Indeed, we were, in almost countless ways, the boyish factotums on the farm, subject to the beck and call of our elders; so that our days were filled with boyish activities and our nights with restful sleep - unless disturbed by nightmare induced by over-eating.

It was well we had been thus prepared with a general knowledge of farm work and had some experience in all kinds of cultural activities, for when the Civil War broke out and our two older brothers had enlisted, we automatically took their places as best we could for boys of nine and eleven.

In many things, it required our joint effort to do anything like a man's work. In plowing, at the beginning, one held the handles of the plow and the other drove the horses, for, at the corners, it required the strength of both to pull the plow about or to loosen it when its point became fastened in a hidden root - as neither was tall enough to hold the handles without reaching upward.

While our work must have been very indifferently done and more or less unsatisfactory, yet, because nearly all able-bodied young men had enlisted in the service of their country - except a slacker, here and there, who was almost universally despised by his loyal neighbors - nearly all kinds of makeshifts were resorted to in planting, growing and harvesting crops, so our inefficiency had to be endured.

At the close of the war, we had grown in stature, experience and physical strength and could do reasonably well all kinds of farm labor and took almost entire charge of everything. At this time, I was equal in stature and weight to brother Hilton and could do my full share of the work, although perhaps his judgment was still superior to mine.

After returning from war, brothers Robert and Harvey went almost immediately to Illinois to locate, leaving us to continue the farm work as before; and this we did for several years thereafter. In the meantime, we attended school at Delaware, always walking the two miles distance, morning and evening, regardless of weather. We also took care of the stock, and, on Saturdays did extra work,- cutting and hauling wood, bringing in corn fodder for the stock and taking care of all other pressing matters about the farm. As previously intimated, this harmonious, brotherly association was tragically ended in a most unfortunate way:

When the weather was at all favorable, mother was punctiliously insistent that her children should attend church and Sunday school at Delaware. Sometimes everybody walked; otherwise, we went in a large, three-seated spring wagon. One Sunday, we had just gotten home and Hilton and I had stabled and unharnessed the horses and were preparing their food on the barn floor by running sheaves of oats through a revolving cutting box.

The knives which did the cutting were fastened to an iron shaft, to one end of which a crank was attached with which to turn it by hand. These knives were slightly curved, resembling in this respect those of an ordinary lawnmower. When turned in the box, the knives enmeshed into slits in a solid, rawhide roller,- thus assuring the thorough cutting of everything passing under them.

Sometimes the material being cut, if pressed in too rapidly, would clog the knives and it was necessary to turn them backward to release it. On this occasion, I was turning the crank and he feeding the oats; and when the knives became clogged, I turned backward to relieve the oats and then turned forward again. By some misadventure I never could quite understand, the fingers on one of his hands were caught between the cruel knives and the roller and were drawn in to the hand, cutting them into bits and almost scraping out the inside of his hand.

His piercing cry was the first intimation I had of the tragedy, and as it was impossible for him to withdraw his hand without my reversing the cutter,

the cutting was double; although, fortunately, in reversing, the knives fell practically in the same places where they had already cut. But when his hand came out, he gathered it into the other one, jumping up and down in great agony and then started on a fast run for the house.

I was by this time as much frightened as he and followed him, but I had no idea of the serious nature of his injury until mother gently removed the hand which held his cut fingers and they gruesomely dangled from his hand in short pieces, held together only by pieces of skin - thus presenting a most nauseating and painful sight.

I went at once for a doctor, but it was in the fall of the year when much sickness prevailed, and not one was to be had. I waited for hours, going from office to office hoping one might be gotten, without result; and, late in the afternoon, getting entirely discouraged, I went home to report.

Very fortunately, soon after my return, our family doctor - if a family having as little use for one as ours did could be so designated, - who was returning from visiting patients further west of us, happily came by and was called in. By this time, the bleeding had stopped and, mother having kept the injured hand thoroughly soaked with warm water, the pain had largely subsided.

To get the effect of the best light, he was carried into the yard, under the spreading branches of a great pear tree, where his injuries were carefully examined and, after removing innumerable particles of chaff and pieces of straw, were properly dressed. The doctor insisted upon taking out the middle finger altogether, but to this mother would not consent.

It took perhaps six months for his wounds to heal, during all of which time particles of chaff and straw worked out - their presence having greatly retarded healing. It was, also, I remember, quite difficult to keep down the proud flesh and to prevent his fingers from growing together, which was done only by careful dressing and keeping cloths between the injured fingers.

His long finger, while saved, was of little use because it was stiff and unbendable except by placing one of the adjoining fingers behind it, and is so to this day.

I have given the particulars of this most lamentable accident because in many ways it seriously affected the lives of both brother Hilton and myself. I have never entirely recovered from the effect of the shock this accident gave me, nor the resulting regret that I was the innocent cause of it. Up to this time, from my earliest remembrance, we had been inseparable companions. We slept, worked, hunted, fished, swam, and sometimes quarreled and even fought together, and, excepting father and mother, I had held him in closer relationship than I did any other human being; and now, in a moment, this was changed, so that, in almost every way, our pathways in life were thereafter separated,- although, as brothers, our relations have uninterruptedly continued most affectionate and cordial.

Because of his crippled hand and incapacity to work on the farm, it was thought he might better take a commercial course and prepare himself for the mercantile business, for which he had much natural aptitude. This he did, and became later very widely known and wonderfully successful.

On the other hand, my services were now doubly necessary on the farm, and for several years thereafter I did a large portion of the work and had become so proficient that father, I think, was of the opinion I should make it my life occupation; for upon several occasions he talked with me about doing so, even offering to make favorable terms for me to take over and manage the farm.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME MORE TRAGEDIES.

The unfortunate incident in the life of brother Hilton, related in the preceding chapter, reminds me that, as a small boy, he was somewhat unfortunate in the matter of injuries by accident. At one time, he attempted to climb upon a moving sled, heavily loaded with wood, when he slipped and fell in such way that a runner passed over one of his legs between the ankle and knee, fracturing both bones; and the friction, caused by the heavy, moving sled, seriously burned a large spot in the flesh. This reminds me, also, that while on several occasions I had narrow escapes, yet I was never seriously hurt.

When a boy - possibly four,- mother sent me to call the harvest-hands to dinner. I was barefooted, and when I reached the wheatfield and made my errand known, everybody stopped work, and father, who was cradling, set the cradle down in the stubble with the handle up, which left the sharp edge of the scythe also up - although it was concealed by the long stubble about it. I was quite near him at the time, and he particularly cautioned me not to go near it.

However, as every one started home, I passed quite close to the upturned handle, entirely forgetful of his warning and the direction of the menacing scythe, and unfortunately stepped upon its sharp edge with the weight of my body, the scythe cutting just behind the ball of a big toe.

My screams brought father instantly to my side and he gathered me in his arms, holding my bleeding foot in his big hand, and tenderly and soothingly carried me home. Not a word of reproach did he utter because of my careless disregard of his warning, and to this day his kindly forbearance stands out more clearly in my mind than any other part of the unfortunate incident.

Because of the flexibility of the toe, the cut proved to be not a serious one, but had I stepped on the scythe with the whole weight of my body with the middle of my foot, I doubtless would have been crippled for life.

Perhaps few sons have heard the agonizing voice of a loving father nor have seen the hopeless despair in his face at the time when he believed his son had been killed; but such was my good, or bad, fortune on two occasions: Several years before the Civil War, when I was about seven, father and I were hauling flax from the field to the barn, where, upon the big barn floor, it was being tramped out by horses, the leader being ridden by brother Hilton, while brother Harvey stirred the flax and turned it over until it was thoroughly tramped out.

Father and I, in going for a load, had reached the entrance to the field and he had gotten off the wagon to open it. As I turned the horses in, one of the loose bottom boards of the hayrack, having worked forward somewhat, touched the "nigh" horse, causing it to jump forward. This frightened the other, and before father could climb on the rack, they were galloping away across the field, but little restrained by my feeble efforts to stop them.

The terrific speed they made across the dead furrows and other obstacles encountered caused the hayrack and loose bottom boards to bounce and rattle unbelievably. I was sitting on one of the center cross-pieces of the rack, with nothing to brace my feet against to aid in pulling on the lines; so I slipped forward on one of these loose bottom boards, put my feet against the front cross-piece and pulled with all my might - with scarcely any perceptible effect.

As we approached the opposite side of the field, the wagon struck some object which tossed the rack and loose boards almost out of the standards and also threw out the coupling pin which held the rear part of the wagon to the front; and as soon as the hounds of the wagon had slipped from the coupling pole, they plowed deeply into the ground, thus throwing the rear wheels and axles of the wagon high in the air and

causing the hind wheels to turn a complete somersault, and in doing this, they tossed the rear end of the rack and board upon which I sat even higher up, from which height, with a tremendous force downward and forward to the ground, throwing the loose boards and myself directly under the hayrack, in the way of its merciless cross-pieces in the rear, by which I was cruelly rolled, scraped and bruised as it was dragged swiftly over me, and where I lay entirely oblivious of everything.

The first sound that found conscious recognition in my ears was the pitiful exclamations of father as he held me in his arms, bemoaning my fate. Very soon, however, I was sufficiently recovered to understand everything and was able even to get upon my feet. Not a bone was broken, but I was bruised everywhere and badly scraped on the side of my face by the cross-piece as it passed over me, causing quite an abrasion and much bleeding.

The field about us presented a strange appearance from the point where father and I stood. To the rear, was the overturned rear part of the wagon; near us were the loose boards, upon which I had been sitting, which had fallen with the hayrack; a short distance farther on was the hayrack itself, which, after passing over me, soon became detached from the front wheels, and in the northern end of the field, galloping back and forth, were the frightened horses, still drawing the forward wheels, from which the long coupling pole protruded behind and slightly upward, waving like a great tail.

Another catastrophe, which might have resulted fatally, occurred several years later: Father had purchased an old house, perhaps thirty feet square, which had been temporarily placed upon a vacant lot to give room for a business building on the space it had originally occupied. It was of the old fashioned, heavy, frame type, and when it was moved on the lot, a somewhat shallow excavation had previously been made where the center and greatest weight of the building would rest, and blocks were placed under it at this point to hold the floor a small distance above the natural surface of the ground.

Before it could be moved to father's lot, it was necessary to raise it sufficiently, so that two long, pine timbers, reaching beyond the edges of the building, could be run under, supported at each end by a low, two-wheeled truck, upon which to move it. As there was little room for a grown man to work beneath the center of the building and turn the jackscrew, I was put there for this purpose.

When the building was thought to be raised sufficiently, the owner of the trucks and implements for moving it put the end of one of the long timbers on a truck, and then, going to the other end, raised it up quite high and pushed the end resting upon the truck under the building near the corner - then perhaps three feet above the ground.

Something obstructed the beam after it was run under the building a few feet, when, without a word of warning to any one, the man foolishly dropped the end he was holding and started forward to see what prevented it from going through. The moment he did this, the end beneath the building was raised several inches, striking one of the heavy cross-supports upon which the building was then supported, held up by jackscrews and blocks at the center and at each corner. The tremendous purchase the long, heavy beam had when its outer end was lowered drew the building in that direction, thus throwing the jackscrews and supporting blocks out of plumb, and they began to creak and move as if to fall.

I was lying upon my back, still turning the central jackscrew when the ominous noise began, which alarmed me greatly, for I instantly realized I was in grave danger. If I attempted to crawl out and the building came down before I got from under it, I would assuredly be crushed. If I remained in the shallow hole at the base of the blocking, which was now leaning and moving toward me, I would be assuredly doomed. With not a moment to spare - as the entire structure was gaining momentum rapidly - I wormed myself quickly to the other side and lay prone and low in the shallow excavation at the foot of the blocks. And then the frightful crash came. But above the noise and turmoil it caused, I heard the agonizing cry of father, pitifully repeating, "My God! My God! My boy is killed'. My boy is killed!"

Although somewhat unnerved by the narrow escape, to relieve my father, I instantly cried out, through the dust and debris about me, "I am all right, father,- not hurt at all."

He was hushed by my cheering words and the instant relief they evidently gave, but it was several moments before I could find my way out through the wreckage and obstructing blocks about, during which I heard not a word from any one.

However, when I emerged, covered with dust and the dirt gathered in pulling myself here and there on my way, I found him standing near by, his face pale, lips trembling, his body shaking and his eyes staring almost as if in a trance. Perhaps my distressed appearance unduly accentuated the extreme danger through which I had passed, for after pathetically embracing me as if to assure himself I was alive and unhurt, he broke forth into an uncontrollable tirade of angry expletives against the man whose crass stupidity had so nearly cost me my life, and for a moment I thought he would assuredly strike him down, for father was a giant in strength and courage.

So frightened was I at his menacing words and attitude that I clutched one of his threatening fists and begged him to desist. My touch and frightened voice seemed to break the evil spell, for he looked into my amazed face for a moment as if in a daze and, again putting his trembling arms about me, said not another word.

Only upon one other occasion did I ever see this naturally kind, gentle and affectionate father exhibit a belligerant passion such as that above described. This was during the Civil War. Very soon after my two older brothers had entered the army, my father planted in our front yard a tall, neatly trimmed sapling, brought from our own woods, for a flag pole,-from the top of which, upon all auspicious occasions, floated a Union flag made by my mother.

A few miles west of our place lived many so-called 'copperheads',- men living in the North who secretly sympathized with the South and who became offensively bold in expressing themselves when reverses to the Union armies led them to believe the South might eventually win. Their conduct was particularly exasperating to loyal people who had sons or fathers in the Union army, and therefore, during such depressing times, our flag was always afloat.

Upon the particular day I mention, father and myself were in a small shed adjoining our front yard, making shingles. I was punching holes in each so that a nail might be driven when it was laid without splitting it, and then piling them up. He sat upon a shaving-horse, shaping them into proper form, when suddenly we were startled by loud, angry, blasphemous words coming from the direction of the road before our house; and, listening for a moment, we realized that the voices were those of a group of so-called Rebel sympathizers on their way home from a Democratic rally held that day in Delaware. Now, while by no means were all Democrats in the North then Southern sympathizers, yet nearly all of these Copperheads voted the Democratic ticket, and we soon discerned that their anathemas were directed against father as a staunch Union man and that they intended to tear down our flag and destroy the pole.

I was greatly excited and alarmed, and especially so when I saw them entering the yard. But father rose from the shaving-horse, grasped in one hand the shaving knife and in the other the heavy frow used for splitting shingle blocks, and walked over to the flag pole, where he stood calmly awaiting their approach. His hair, which was never closely cropped, was lightly tossed about by the breeze; his face wore an expression I had never before seen there,- determination, I would say, and hatred; his right hand, holding the sharp, long drawing knife, rested above his head against the pole, ready for instant use.

He waited until the men were within perhaps ten feet of him before he spoke, when he began to denounce them as execrable Rebel sympathizers, afraid to go South and fight on that side but stayed in the North to frighten women, children and old men, and continued by saying: "The first one of you who comes a step nearer this flag, I shall, as sure as God gives me the strength, split his head to his shoulders!" I shuddered as I watched him, and I shall always remember his heoric outline as he stood there, ready to do battle for his country's flag. For a moment they hesitated, apparently undecided whether to go forward or turn back; and then, evidently awed by father's scathing words and menacing attitude, they suddenly turned and went out of the yard.

Their departure was a great relief to me, although after climbing into their wagons, they whipped their

horses into a mad run, yelling, swearing and firing pistols into the air - all of which convincing me that, had they not been really the cowards father had denominated them, they would have assuredly killed him, as they were evidently prepared to do if necessary.

Father came back to the shed and to his work again almost as if nothing out of the ordinary had taken place; but I noticed it was some time before the grim and determined expression faded from his face and in its place there returned that kindly, benevolent, affectionate appearance that naturally made men, women, children and even animals trust and love him.

So greatly am I indebted to this affectionate father that I feel I ought not permit posterity, by any misconception of the two instances above related, get the impression he was either easily excited to wrath or had many personal encounters, for neither is a fact.

The only time in his life while I knew him, and, for that matter, so far as any tradition handed down relates, that he actually had a personal encounter or, putting it plainly, a fist fight, was also during the Civil War. It was, too, the culmination of a discussion with one of these same Southern sympathizers, living about three miles west of us,- one John Taylor by name. He was father's equal in stature, excelled him in weight and, perhaps, even in strength.

They casually met in Delaware one day, when each was fastening his horse to the same hitching rack in front of a bakery, next to which was a millinery store, and greeted each other as was their custom.

Taylor, although married, never had a child, and for this reason could not perhaps understand the feeling of a man like father, with a family of twelve living children, the two oldest of them being sons and in the Union army.

It was almost like a lighted match touched to tow for one of these Southern sympathizers to meet a Union man in those dark days of uncertainty, and especially was this true if the latter had sons or relatives in the army. This fact was abundantly attested when, in less than five minutes, the two were hurling angry words at each other, which were quickly followed by blows. Their loud voices brought both the baker and milliner out at once. The former was perhaps less than five feet six and of medium

weight, while the latter was very tall and surprisingly slender. The first blow aimed at father, when he called Taylor a lying Rebel sympathizer, was warded off and Taylor's powerful fist landed full upon the nose of his own horse, causing the blood to fly freely and frightening the animal almost beyond control. Then the slim, but gallant milliner rushed between the two giant combatants and was instantly shoved by father, with terrific force, against Taylor, the back of the milliner's head striking him in the face. In turn, the enraged Taylor shoved him toward father. The milliner, being neither dressed for such ill-usage nor able to extricate himself, was hurled alternately back and forth, his long coat-tails extending here and there ludicrously like the crippled wings upon a great wasp, while he industriously yelled "murder!" and "police!" at the top of his voice,- the small baker, more discreet and less bold, looking on in helpless astonishment if not merriment.

Soon the town marshal appeared on the scene and straightened matters out by first rescuing the dishevveled milliner, who was almost limp and exhausted from the bruises received in the ordeal through which he had just passed. Taylor's nose was still bleeding from the bruise produced by the back of the milliner's head. Father was little the worse for the fray, having only some scratches inflicted by the milliner while vainly attempting to hold on to something in his swift flight from one combatant to the other, and also a bad tear in the long tail of the soldier over-coat he wore, received in the same manner. Learning from the little baker what had occurred and how the trouble originated, and being well acquainted with all the participants, the marshal permitted them to go their respective ways without comment.

The only witness to the fray from the start was, as I have said before, the little baker, whose discretion overcame any inclination to interfere; and therefore, this afforded him opportunity safely to enjoy it all. Often thereafter have I seen him hold his sides as he laughingly attempted to imitate the ludicrous spectacle of the tall, slim milliner being helplessly shunted back and forth as he yelled for help. Indeed, his coffers were often, thereafter, enriched by a few pennies, paid him by my brother and myself for cookies ostensibly, but principally that we might again hear repeated the graphic story of the combat for our entertainment.

It needed but the additional evidence of this encounter to convince mother that it was unsafe for father to go alone to town, during the dark days of the war, and thereafter she tried always to arrange that some member of the family should accompany him.

I must add, in conclusion, that never in my life did I hear my father use any vulgar or profane language, although on both of the occasions above mentioned it was unmistakably forceful if not elegant.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PASSING OF BOYHOOD.

Here I am come to that period of transition when I was no longer a boy nor yet a man. I was sixteen, quite large in stature and strong bodily and could in most ways do a full-grown man's work.

Geographically, my environment up to this time was very limited, for but twice had I previously been to exceed ten miles from my birthplace,- once to Columbus, Ohio, during the Civil War, to visit a cousin who was located near that city in a military camp, and again to Cleveland, Ohio, on a Sunday school picnic excursion, which included an hour's ride on a large steamer upon the lake, which was the greatest event of my earlier life.

Now the down on my face was growing and thickening and even coloring, but I was ashamed to go to a barber shop and ask for a shave; neither did I have any implements for performing the rite at home. Also, my thoughts shyly and most covertly turned to the fair sex - not to any one in particular, but in a most impersonal and general way.

Now, too, strange and quite pretentious fancies, for a poor farm-boy, occupied my day dreams of becoming famous or wealthy, the culmination always to be reached while my father and mother lived, so I might lay my successes before their astonished and happy attention.

These secret musings, always too extravagant and impossible of attainment to meet the credulity of those to whom I might have revealed them, found no lodging other than in my own fancies.

When I was learning how to properly do the many kinds of work upon the farm, there was a zest to my labor which spurred me on, which was now lacking; for now I was much experienced and sophisticated in farm

duties,- could fell trees, cut and load saw logs, split rails, lay up worm fences, handle the scythe, cradle or sickle, stack hay or grain and perform all the various kinds of general work on the farm, and finally, as the crowning evidence of my capability, could lay as straight a furrow in plowing as any one.

So, as the early spring again started the yearly round of monotonous duties, I lacked the spirit of curiosity and adventure of earlier days. To get up in the early daylight, milk the cows, feed the stock; curry and harness the horses before breakfast, then hastily despatching that meal, go forth to six hours of steady grind; go home again; water and feed my horses; eat dinner; return to work until six o'clock, quit for supper and, after this, milk the cows; feed and care for all the stock again,-- had lost much of its earlier glamour for me.

Then, too, I now began to realize the monotony of the unceasing round of domestic duties performed and directed by mother and by other wives and mothers in the neighborhood, and the pitiful economies they were forced to practice to make each dearly earned dollar go as far as possible, so that something might be added to the yearly accumulations from the farm. With many this did not result in any addition to their bank account, but only slightly retarded the enlargement of their constantly increasing indebtedness, which must eventually result in the loss of their farm.

Of course, the farm folk had many things to enjoy outside of their duties; for, in the spring, they heard the early lyric note of the skylark, the cheerful, encouraging chirping of the robin, the ecstatic whistle of the bobwhite and a thousand other delightful melodies emanating from the wild life - big and small - about them, and which swelled to a grand chorus from early spring until the threatening snows of winter, like a falling curtain before a stage, silenced it for the year.

They enjoyed this, too, in a certain way, especially in the early spring as the chorus was newly started; but as their daily grind went on, it lost gradually its charm and became as uninteresting and as little considered as was the air they breathed or the bright sunshine that lighted their working hours.

I earnestly considered all this; and, as I weighed its material and social reward, it seemed pitifully small and uninviting.

Father, I knew, because I had become strong and vigorous and quite resourceful in farm activities, was hopeful that I might remain on the farm; but mother, on the contrary, I believe secretly wanted me to continue in school and fit myself for wider fields. She did not say so in terms, but she talked of my going to college in a casual way, and never by word or otherwise attempted to persuade me to remain on the farm.

She had ambition for her children far beyond their merits perhaps, and every one of them doubtless owed much more to her than to father for such aspirations as they had. But my hesitation about leaving the farm, which I knew would be a great disappointment to him, caused me much difficulty in reaching a decision. The harvest season being now over and all the manure accumulating in the big barnyard having been hauled out and spread over the land to be seeded - and which now I was engaged in plowing - the time was at hand, I knew, when I must decide, as my services on the farm would be less required the remainder of the year.

As I went the weary rounds behind the plow, I gave almost constant consideration as to what decision to make. I think no farm work is more conducive to meditation than plowing, for holding the plow while the horses, without the influence of the guiding reins - one in the furrow and one on the land - would go steadily on, automatically stopping at each corner; and thus did the work require but little attention except to steadily hold the handles of the plow. I realized also that the life of every farmer I knew was crowded with labor, and in but few instances was it rewarded with very substantial pecuniary results at the end. Their average health was perhaps fair, but little or no better than that of those engaged in other activities; but their diversions were almost negligible.

And after repeatedly turning this over in my mind, I finally, though reluctantly, decided to start to college in the fall - perhaps salving my conscience, in making the decision, by determining to devote all my spare time, morning, evenings and Saturdays, to helping in the farm work.

At dinner I bluntly announced my decision, for fear I might let the opportunity pass by. I saw mother was really pleased, while father, who exhibited no surprise and concealed whatever disappointment it may have caused him, offered no objection. And now, it being decided, I felt it was "up to me" to try to do as well or better than had I remained on the farm.

At this time, I had no fixed choice of a calling. As nearly as I can now interpret my youthful preferences, I would say they were about equally divided between the professions of teaching, preaching and practicing law. I must say, parenthetically, that this statement may be a surprise to living brothers and sisters, but I was seriously considering each of them for several years.

That fall I entered the Ohio Wesleyan University at Delaware, in the senior preparatory department, on the standing my two years in high school gave. I chose the classical course, embracing both Greek and Latin, and which included, also, algebra, geometry, botany and chemistry.

I boarded at home, walking always once, often twice, each day the distance of two miles to the college recitations and applied myself diligently to the work. The tuition was met by a certificate or receipt, which had been given father when the college was founded because of his contributing a certain amount of money to its establishment; and which permitted his posterity to use it in payment of the tuition charges to an equal amount.

I had absolutely no money of my own. Indeed, during the many years I worked on the farm, I never drew any wages except when occasionally working a few days for a neighbor. Only by this means and the sale of such pelts as we gathered together in the winter and that derived from peddling wild blackberries, raspberries and elderberries in the town, were my brother Hilton and myself able to accumulate anything - although, be it said to my father's credit, we never appealed to him in vain for money for anything absolutely necessary, and even small change was given us upon demand, for spending money.

Up to this time and during this year, I had never worn any garments other than those made by mother, except footwear and some of my headwear. Therefore, one of the most distressing and possibly depressing things I had to contend with in college was the incongruity of my clothes as compared with those of most of the other students. Regardless of these discouragements, I pursued my way undauntedly, and at the end of the year was easily promoted to the standing of a freshman.

The next summer I took charge of the farm work, again cradled all the wheat - some eight acres; several acres of oats; harvested all the hay and did everything a big boy or young man could during the three months, and was in superb condition for college again in the fall.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN UNEXPECTED INCIDENCE.

Some two months after college began, one of those peculiar, inexplicable and utterly unexpected incidents, which sometimes change the current of life, disturbed my college plans, and I have never quite been able to conclude whether it was beneficial or otherwise.

In late November, father met one of the directors of a school district in a little village some three miles west from our place, who was anxiously looking for a teacher for the coming winter term, which was to begin the first of December. In the course of their conversation, father casually mentioned my name. For some unaccountable reason, the man immediately inquired whether they could get me to teach the term, offering forty dollars a month, with the assurance of first-class board at ten dollars a month.

This evidently pleased father, for he told the man he would talk it over with me that night and let him know later. After considering it carefully and discussing it with father and mother, and feeling somewhat complimented by the importunity of this director, I concluded to accept, and the next day all preliminary arrangements were concluded.

It was necessary to procure a certificate from the county examining board, of which my former high school superintendent was the chairman. Therefore, I appeared before the members of the board a few days later and passed, and received permission to teach for the ensuing six months. The more I thought about teaching, the more pleased and excited I was, but had I realized what was actually before me, no wages nor other inducement could have persuaded me to attempt it.

There was one young man, who, in the summer time, worked with his father at carpentry, and had been granted permission to attend, although he was quite beyond the legal age and three years my senior. There were also several boys, as well as girls, who were in age my

equal or more. The schoolroom, which properly and comfortably could seat but about thirty-six, was crowded with the more than sixty scholars that passed into it the first day. The teacher who taught the winter previous had had much trouble in governing this school and at the holiday season was discharged for that reason.

To make the unpromising future more forbidding, the three members of the board, having the trouble of the previous winter in mind, I suppose, put in an appearance just after the school was called, and there being no vacant seats, stood near the platform where the chairman, as spokesman, without further introduction, began in a somewhat belligerent manner to tell the scholars that the board intended to stand by the teacher "through thick and thin" and would expel any scholar who failed to obey such rules and regulations as he might make.

As I noticed the ominous winks, nods and signs exchanged among some of the older boys my heart sank with dismay and apprehension, and I felt intuitively unless something were done at once and while the board was present to counteract the unfortunate impression the visit had caused, which I assumed the scholars believed I was privy to, the task of teaching an acceptable school was immeasurably increased, if not made impossible.

For a moment I stood, almost speechless, following the conclusion of the chairman's remarks; then a happy suggestion came to me which seemed to say, stand by your scholars, stand by your scholars! And as soon as I could carefully control my voice, I said;

"Perhaps no one in this school is more surprised at this unexpected visit from the school board than am I, although it was doubtless intended for the good of the scholars as well as myself, and for this reason I am grateful. But I must say, if I don't like and can't trust my scholars and they come to regard me in the same unfortunate way, I shall certainly not call upon the board to turn any of them out, but will walk out myself and turn the key back to the board. Therefore, I propose to stand by the scholars as against the school board and everyone else." Then, jokingly, "And, hereafter, if the scholars and myself, jointly, consider

the presence of the board necessary, I shall send a committee of pupils to invite them to come again."

For a moment almost absolute silence prevailed, and then everybody, including the school board, laughed, and the first ominous shadow over the school term was happily passed.

Suffice it to say that I concluded the term quite to the general satisfaction and approval of the neighborhood. To me, however, it was one of the most trying experiences of my life. Night after night I lay awake, tossing, thinking and arranging until after midnight, how to turn aside impending difficulties. Could I have quietly gotten rid of a half-dozen of the most troublesome of the sixty scholars, my work would have been infinitely easier; but I could not and did not seriously consider that course, for these needed schooling perhaps more than any equal number in the school.

CHAPTER XIV.

MY FIRST JOURNEY FROM HOME.

It was an indescribable relief, when the term closed without serious trouble and with the general approval of the school board and neighborhood.

Following a few days rest, before returning to school as I had intended, I suddenly decided to make a trip to the Kansas frontier. This came about perhaps because the son of a neighbor of ours had gone there several years previously and had apparently done quite well, and it was often talked about in our neighborhood. And now I had more money - an even ninety dollars, after paying my board - than I had ever had in my life before. And to the regret of my mother especially, and possibly my father, I invested some twenty dollars of the funds I had in outfitting, and with my sister Ella accompanying me as far as Illinois, where I stopped for several weeks visiting relatives, I proceeded to Kansas.

It is surprising how money vanishes when one is traveling. After I paid my fare to Illinois, spent a dollar here and there and then bought a ticket to Topeka, Kansas, and from that city to the town of Burlingame, a little farther on, I had but five dollars and some odd change out of the $120 I had received for my winter's work.

I was a thousand miles from home, in a wind-swept country, upon whose rolling prairies the young grass, under the encouraging influence of the bright, spring sunshine, was then just attaining a height to exhibit endless, tiny ripples and waves as the wind hurried over it in its race to the North. I was strongly fascinated by the wide, unsettled reaches of the panorama that passed the car window as I traveled from Topeka to Burlingame.

In an hour we reached the town where, of all the few thousand people the state then contained, the only one I knew was supposed to live. I was lonesome,

homesick and bitterly regretful I had come. However, I went directly from the depot to the Post Office, carrying my big valise which I had bought purposely for the trip - having been informed by the person from whom I purchased it that it was made of sole-leather, but which the travel scars, even this short distance, had shown me was but a poor, cheap imitation, made of thick pasteboard thinly covered with imitation leather. It looked to me then just as I felt,- very cheap and inconsequential.

When I reached the Post Office, I boldly inquired at a window for Mr. Mason, and being informed he was in, I asked to see him. He recognized me at once, as I did him, although he was at the time double my age, at least. His greeting, however, was more formal and less cordial than I had hoped, for, while so much his junior, I had come directly from the neighborhood of his birth, where his family still lived. It is possible, however, that this impression may have been the result of my depressed spirits rather than the effect of his greeting, for he was naturally a rather undemonstrative man.

After inquiring about his family and their neighbors, he asked me what I had in mind, and I told him I wanted to get something to do while I was looking about. This gave him the opportunity of explaining the situation, and he informed me frankly that the country was filled with people looking for jobs in town; but, if one wanted to get work on a ranch (I believe that was the first time I had ever heard that term applied to what we called a farm, in Ohio), he had no doubt but that a place could be easily found; and then he went on to say that but the day before a man named Oliver, who owned a large ranch about four miles out of town, was in looking for farm help, adding that Mr. Oliver was highly regarded and very reliable.

The vision of that solitary five dollars in my pocket as the only remaining barrier between me and actual and humiliating want caused me to ask the privilege of leaving my valise with him while I immediately walked out to interview Mr. Oliver. He graciously assented and gave me minute directions how to get there.

That walk was a most memorable one, and had it not been for my straitened condition financially, it would have been a very interesting and pleasing one; for as I briskly walked along the winding wagon-trail, which seemed to have been made for no other reason than because of the whim of the first one who drove in that direction, the green grass, reaching and waving away in every direction, seemingly to Infinity, almost entirely unrestrained by fences, was a most wonderful sight. I carried my coat on my arm and occasionally doffed my hat to the grateful breezes as they passed me swiftly on their way ever to the North, whither the prevailing winds of Kansas blow, as if bent upon arriving at the ice fields to become cooled again.

I left my friend at perhaps half-past ten, in the town of Burlingame, and before noon I easily reached the Oliver ranch - only to be again disappointed by being informed by Mrs. Oliver that her husband had found a "hand" but the day before. It was possibly the disappointment she noticed in my face that caused her, very graciously and kindly, to say, "Lunch is just ready and Mr. Oliver will soon be in. Will you not stop and eat with us and talk with him?" I readily accepted, for I was young, hungry and discouraged; all my bright fancies of a clerkship or other agreeable employment in town were gone; and now, even a chance for working on a farm seemed remote.

Shortly after, the men-folk came in, there being two of the Oliver brothers, each six feet or more tall, rather raw-boned and over forty; and the two "hands," one being the man employed the day before. By a word aside to her husband, Mrs. Oliver had evidently explained my presence, and as they gathered at the table, he pointed to a seat, kindly bidding me to join them. During the meal, not a word was said about employment or my knowledge of farm work, but general inquiries were made as to how long I had been in the country and whether I had friends or relatives in Kansas; all of which I answered, and also explained my friendly relations with Mr. Mason.

At the conclusion of the meal, the men and myself went into the yard, where the elder Oliver asked me if I could milk. I explained I had been raised on a farm and had done much of the milking from childhood. "Well," said he, "this young man," pointing, "whom I engaged yesterday, said he could milk, but we find he is by no means an expert and it is questionable whether

he will suit us. So if you are quite sure you can do a full share in milking thirty cows, I think I will let him go and give you a chance."

I protested at his offer to discharge the other man to give me the place - although I was confident I could fill the requirements he spoke of, so far as milking was concerned - for I feared the man might be in as unfortunate condition as myself financially. But the man stated that he was perfectly willing I should take his place. So it was settled that I should remain for the night, to show my aptitude in milking, and if I were satisfactory, I could stay at twenty dollars per month, with board and washing, and the next day when they went to town they would bring out my valise.

CHAPTER XV.

How curiously things sometimes happen. Here I had secured a job, in what then seemed the most dire extremity, because I could quite well do one of the most detestable tasks I learned to perform in my boyhood on the farm.

That evening, just before dark, when the flies were less disturbing, thirty cows were driven into a "Kansas corral," on one side of which was a long shed covered by prairie hay; and along one side of this shed numerous stanchions were built, into each one of which a cow, which could not be well managed otherwise, was fastened so it could be milked.

With overalls furnished me to protect my best clothes, I joined the two Olivers and their other employee in the milking.

I was on trial, and that fact, coupled with the extremity to which I had come, accentuated by the horrible thought that, should I fail, I might have to appeal to my good father for money even to return home upon, caused me to milk as I had never done before. I remembered also the admonition I had often heard from my parents when a boy,- "be sure to milk each cow dry;" because the last coming from the udder was always the richest. And therefore I did my work rapidly and thoroughly.

It was the height of the milking season, when the cows were fresh and the nutritious, succulent, young prairie grass was overwhelmingly abundant. Each of us had a milk pail, and on a platform just outside the corral were two very large kettles, each holding, I would guess, twenty gallons; and when a pail was filled it was emptied into one of these, which, when also filled, was carried to a cellar and strained into a long, shallow vat which stood partially immersed in a receptacle of cold water. At

the end of the milking, it was found I had done a full share, and I could see that my employers were both satisfied and pleased, for the total of the milk that evening was fully up to standard, showing that my work had been thoroughly done.

I slept that night in my underclothes, in a bed, with the other regular hired man, in a small house originally used as a place to press cheese. It was perhaps eight feet wide and ten feet long, with shingled roof and the sides and floor of unpainted boards, all in the rough. I describe this little building because it was there, for a little more than six months, I slept every night.

Youth learns more assuredly, if not readily, by experience than in any other way, and this period spent with the Olivers was in many ways very helpful to me. The two brothers, both well educated, before coming to Kansas, lived in New York state and together founded and operated an academy for young ladies and men,- a sort of preparatory school, I think, to fit them for college. The younger of the two was more than forty, but was still a bachelor. The elder had been married for many years, their children consisting of three girls, who I would guess were respectively fifteen, thirteen and six, and one boy about three. Another girl was born while I worked there.

They were of Scottish extraction, Presbyterian by church preference, and were cultivated gentlemen. Mrs. Oliver was a gracious, delightful little woman, a great worker and manager and a most prudent and watchful mother. Exactly how she managed to perform her manifold duties so smoothly, patiently and uncomplainingly has always been a wonder to me. She was assisted in many ways, of course, by the two older girls, who also did much outside work such as driving the cattle out to graze in the morning and bringing them back in the evening. Each had a pony, and they rode as swiftly, gracefully and nonchalantly as skilled cowboys, either in the saddle or bareback.

The language, manners and social etiquette of this family were interesting and instructive to me; for everything seemed to be done as unconsciously, certainly as unpretentiously, as were their breathing or any other involuntary movements.

They never inquired about my antecedents, nor how much I had gone to school, nor by what chance I had come to Kansas, but accepted me upon the plain I had made for myself when I applied for the job, - that of hired man.

It was with much rather whimsical interest I heard the older girls discuss with their father or uncle problems of different kinds encountered in their school work, especially in mathematics, as they were then beginners in algebra; for, with all these, I was freshly and thoroughly familiar.

Here I must especially introduce my bed- and room-mate, William Rollinson by name. He was perhaps fifteen years my senior, of about my own height and weight, sandy complexioned, of Norse extraction, and a most faithful and intelligent worker. With the elder Oliver, he carried on the dairy work, including the taking care of the many calves they were raising by hand and also quite a number of pigs which were being largely fed on buttermilk.

Soon after my arrival, and when we had come to understand and appreciate each other, I learned the sad story of his unfortunate domestic relations and how he was finally forced to procure a legal separation from his unfaithful wife.

He had but little schooling, although he possessed a very good mind and a strong, clear voice for singing which he was very proud to exhibit. In a little, neighborhood Sunday school, he led the singing, although he knew nothing about notes and could only lead in such songs as he had previously learned the tunes to.

Not long after my coming, a new singing book was introduced into the Sunday school, which greatly disturbed Rollinson, for until he could learn the new tunes, he was, as a singing leader, entirely hors de combat. Some of the songs it contained I knew in the East, and while my voice was in nowise the equal of his, yet I could, by humming them, teach him the "swing," so he could soon sing them much better than I.

For several years previous to my leaving Ohio, each winter, in the country schools, a German named

Goff gave singing lessons. He led the singing, or rather accompanied it, with a violin which he played perhaps accurately but I never thought very musically. In any event, he was a very painstaking instructor, and every scholar who at all applied himself soon learned the notes and was able to read music. Thus I was able to teach these new tunes to Rollinson, and hence his difficulties were happily solved; for, thereafter, until the school had learned them all, each Sunday he would introduce and practice a new one, until all were learned.

After a hard day's work, plowing or cultivating corn in the heat of the sun and drying wind, I would sometimes fall asleep while our lesson was going on, but he never awakened me; on the contrary, as gently and delicately as if he were my father, he would undress and put me to bed without my having the slightest knowledge of his kindly action until the next morning.

Believing that I was, as compared with himself, quite learned in a bookish way, he evidently exaggerated my future prospects and seemed to want to take some financial interest in helping me through college; for, before I left the Oliver's, he proposed to furnish me money for that purpose and wrote me later to the same effect.

He was, regardless of his unfortunate domestic trouble, amply able to do this, for in addition to an eighty-acre ranch he owned, he had quite a little cash in bank and some loaned out, but of course I could not accept his kindness; for then, and years thereafter, my future looked not nearly so promising to me as it evidently did to him.

We corresponded for some time after I left, but as the months went by, our exchange of letters became less frequent and finally ceased altogether. A period of more than fifty years elapsed before I again heard from him. This came about in rather a strange way:

My sister Ella, who was married and whose husband's name was Carter, lived for quite a long while in Olathe, Kansas, and for a number of years had lived near, and

was quite well acquainted with Rollinson. One day she casually mentioned my name in his presence, which caused him to make inquiry as to my identity. And thus was revealed the fact that her brother was, fifty years previously, the youngster who shared the diminutive sleeping quarters in the little cheese-press house in Kansas.

The surprise of Rollinson and my sister was mutual, and both immediately wrote me regarding it. In August of that year, my wife and myself, in a trip to the East, visited my sister, who took us to the Rollinson home. He must have then been more than eighty. No longer were his steps springy as of old; his hair was white, his form slightly bent, and his beard, which now grew uncurbed by scissors or razor, thickly covered his face and reached down and rested upon his breast. This gave him the venerable appearance of a patriarch, which indeed he was. When we met in his yard, he grasped my hand and intently looked into my face for a moment and then, as recognition lighted his eyes, like a patriarch of old, he embraced me and imprinted a kiss upon my check with the pleasure and fervor of a father whose long-absent son had just returned.

A few evenings later, upon the invitation of a Mrs. Davis, residing in Kansas City, he and I dined and spent a delightfully reminiscent evening at her home,- for she was none other than that sweet, hoydenish young horseback rider of whom I have spoken,- Miss. Ella Oliver, of fifty years before - now become a dignified and most charming matron, mother and grandmother, as well as a gracious hostess.

The six months I spent in the employment of the Olivers I have always considered as one of the most valuable experiences of my earlier life. It taught me self-reliance and courage in adversity. The very extremity to which I was reduced when I arrived there gave to all my future expenditures of money a restraint and careful consideration that has served me well throughout life. For, as I milked the cows, followed the plow and went the weary rounds of general work on the ranch, I often looked back over the six weeks between the time I had received the money for my teaching the winter previous and my arrival at the Olivers, and could see how unthoughtfully and quite foolishly

I spent money here and there which did me no good and might have been more profitably saved.

The immediate effect of these ruminations is shown by the fact that, during the term of my employment, I actually spent upon myself less than $2.00,- $1.25 for a cheap pair of plow shoes, 25 cents for a chip hat and 50 cents for a ticket to VanAmberg's Show, where with the entire Oliver family I went on one occasion. This reminds me also of a curious and somewhat interesting fact; - that after these few expenditures, my five dollar bill still remained intact and was almost sacredly regarded as a talisman against future misfortune.

However, one day the elder Oliver, just as he was starting to town, asked me if I had any change I could spare, and I produced and handed him this lone five dollars. During the entire period of my employment, I did not ask for, nor did he offer to pay, any part of my accumulating wages. When the first month and then the second passed without the mention of payment, I talked the matter over with Rollinson, who I knew had worked for them for many years, and he explained that it was their custom, at a stated period each year, to pay the wages and generally adjust their business affairs for the year; and that, in the meantime, if I needed any clothes or other necessities, they would arrange to supply them. He also assured me I need have no fear that I might not receive my wages.

At the end of my six months, including the five dollars and a dollar earned by working on the Fourth of July binding oats - which had been cut by a dropper and it was feared might be spoiled by rain unless it were bound and shocked - there was due me the total sum of $126.00.

Binding oats on that Fourth of July, reminds me that the prairies and fields of Kansas, at that early time, were infested with rattlesnakes, and not infrequently cattle, horses and dogs were bitten, and, perhaps only less frequently, people. On this particular day, while we were binding, I narrowly escaped myself: I had just gathered up and was putting the band about a bundle of oats, when a vicious noise advised me one was near. The rattle was somewhat muffled at the start, and Rollinson, who was binding near, heard it also and both of us stood still trying to discern the point from

which the noise came,- for, to move without knowing this, was more hazardous than to remain quiet. In a moment, however, the noise increased, and just then the sinuous body of a two-foot rattler slid ominously from the bundle of oats I held and dropped near my feet as I sprang aside.

Several of the domestic animals on the ranch were bitten while I was there; and one day, while Rollinson and I were repairing a fence across a small stream flowing through the ranch, we witnessed a curious battle between a large rattler and a Shepherd dog. We heard the dog barking on the bank of the creek a short distance from us, and went to learn what the trouble was. On the edge of a still, deep pool the rattler was coiled ready to strike, while the dog bounded about it, out of reach, savagely barking - evidently for the purpose of getting the snake to straighten out so he might spring in, seize it and break its back before it could strike.

We threw some missiles at the snake, which fell, incidentally, near the dog, causing the latter, in avoiding them, to move further from the snake, which immediately took advantage of the dog's distance to uncoil and glide into the water. The pool was some thirty feet wide, and the dog instantly sprang in in pursuit. His snakeship swam less rapidly than he could move on the ground, and the leap of the dog landed him so near it that it instantly coiled and struck the dog on the side of the face.

The pitiful cries of the dog showed how instantly and unbearably painful were the punctures made by the cruel, venomous fangs. After striking, the snake glided swiftly into the thick brush on the opposite side of the creek and escaped. In a short time, the dog's head was swollen almost beyond belief and we feared he must die. However, we plastered fresh mud upon the wound and, later, applied such other lotions as we thought would be beneficial. With these, aided by his own intuitive attentions, he recovered.

On another occasion, just after the family had eaten dinner and we were standing in the yard near the door, the young son of the Olivers, in his bare feet, was standing in a foot-path near his father, when the latter noticed a rattler coiled, ready to strike him.

He reached out one of his long, strong arms, grasped the little fellow by the shoulder and lifted him out of its reach just as the snake struck, and thus saved him from possible death.

CHAPTER XVI.

The termination of my service at the Olivers was caused in a most unexpected way to me as well as them, for I had by this time become quite at home and fairly contented and was seriously considering working on, saving my money and eventually buying a ranch for myself. For land was then very cheap, and, unless exceptionally well located or was bottom land, could be gotten for from three to ten dollars per acre; and a very little farther west, could be homesteaded or preempted at government prices. About the first of September, a letter was received from my brother Harvey, who lived on a farm near Saybrook, Illinois, stating that he had applied for and obtained the consent of the school board in his district, to employ me to teach the ensuing winter and summer school, and requesting me to let him know at once if I would accept. The wage, he said, was to be fifty dollars per month and I could board with his family. Such an inviting prospect I felt I could not turn aside, and mailed my acceptance at once.

Thus, again, the drift of my life seemed to be curiously determined by a mysterious force entirely without my volition.

I advised the Olivers of my changed plans and that at the end of my working month - then quite near,- I wished to leave. I was somewhat surprised and certainly not ill-pleased at the regret expressed by the brothers at my determination. The elder brother, however, informed me he would arrange at once for my wages, and upon the day before I was to leave he brought me his personal note for the entire sum of $126, which he told me I would receive the money upon by presenting it at the bank in Burlingame, with which he had arranged for that purpose and which resulted as he said.

This cultured and educated family, whose language and manners bespoke good breeding, and whose associations with me, even in the capacity of hired man, (although all of us ate at the same table and in many ways I was treated as a member of the family) was very helpful to me. They were a large family, yet every one, big and small, joyfully and, doubtless, healthily participated in the various labors the management of the ranch imposed.

After receiving my money, and with my big, shoddy valise again in the care of Mr. Mason at the Post Office, I suddenly became obsessed with the idea of making a hasty trip to Newton, Kansas, which was then the terminus of the Santa Fe Railroad and was very widely advertised throughout Kansas and the East generally, because it had become the point from which the cattle, driven from Texas to the North, were then largely shipped. Therefore, I purchased a ticket to the new station of Newton, which I reached that afternoon.

It was about eighty miles Southwest of Burlingame and was rapidly becoming the rival of Abilene, on the Union Pacific, which, up to this time, with the exception of Baxter Springs, in the extreme Southeastern part of the state, had been the point from which were shipped the countless cattle being driven up from Texas and held to fatten on Kansas grass and then were sent to market.

I arrived at Newton, as I recall it, about three in the afternoon. It was certainly an uproarious hamlet. Its sole water supply consisted of a well in the center of its principal street - then some 600 feet long - which was lined on either side, from the little temporary depot Northward, with board-and-batten buildings, newly finished or in process of construction. Nearly all of these were used - many before completion - as saloons, dancing halls, gambling dens and kindred frontier attractions. It is possible there was a grocery or a general store, but if so I do not recall it, and must have had as its chiefest attractions liquor, gambling or dancing.

The first graveyard of the town had been most auspiciously and, I might say, generously started the

Saturday night previous by the sudden demise of six men, whose lives had been snuffed out in a few moments in a gambling-house brawl. I think the spot where they were buried, with their boots and clothes on, in crude, wooden boxes hastily nailed together, is still pointed out as a somewhat gruesome but indisputable evidence of the lively as well as deadly activities of the early days and nights of the now reputable and prosperous city of Newton.

At the time of which I write, neither the town nor the county was organized, the only semblance of authority appearing in the person of one man, appointed by the governor as a peace officer. Whatever restraint his presence exercised upon the inhabitants must have come from the badge of his authority, for nine out of ten of the male inhabitants carried conspicuously, in their holsters or hip pockets, abundant warning to all concerned that each was a law unto himself.

There was but one casualty - for it was said to be a quiet, uneventful evening - the night I spent in the town. I heard the report of the gun, but did not see the shooting, which took place in a gambling house diagonally across from the place where I sat in front of the building in which I had engaged lodging for the night. Indeed, several shots were fired in rapid succession, though this in itself signified but little, for every few moments reports of pistol shots were heard in some direction,- usually fired by yelling cowboys arriving or departing from the town and shooting at signs or into the air in the exuberance of their feelings upon arriving again in civilization after the many dreary days on the trail from Texas.

The effect of the shooting just referred to was evidenced a little later by a burly man backing out of the door of the place where it had occurred, dragging by its long hair the limp form of a smaller man, clothed in black pants, shiny shoes and long-tailed coat of the same color, buttoned well up in front, and about whose throat was tied a flashy necktie, the loose ends of which lay limply upon his breast. And in the same manner he brought it out did he drag it into the center of the street where he left it, after giving it a contemptuous and vicious kick, and reentered the saloon. In a moment he came out again

carrying a very broad-brimmed hat, which he tossed toward the prostrate body, and again went into the saloon.

The garb of the still figure lying in the street, which one might think would be only worn by a frontier parson, I was informed was a style much affected by gamblers and frontier fakers in those days. Whether the man was dead or died later, I never learned, for I left the town the next morning by the early train; but he was soon borne by persons who gathered about him into another place across the street.

After arriving in the town, I looked with almost fearsome amazement upon the scenes it presented; for I was but nineteen, a stranger amongst almost unbelievable conditions, and certainly in an equally strange country.

The newness of the place was shown by the fact that the surface of its only street was absolutely unmarred by plow or scraper, and the prairie grass, while much trampled by the feet of horses and men, still struggled for existence. Even about the new curb surrounding the only well, was spread the fresh soil thrown out in its digging, and in every direction, north, south, east and west, as far as eye could see, stretched the endless reaches of grass-covered prairies, untouched by the plow and unbroken by human habitation,- although, here and there, in many directions, myriads of dark, moving specks could be seen, indicating the location of the many droves of Texas cattle held about the town awaiting sale and shipment. I remember, also, as our train approached the town from the east, small bands of antelope, frightened by the noise it made, moving swiftly and gracefully away into the distance, their white, bobbing rumps still being visible when the somber color of their bodies was blended into the general landscape.

It was certainly the outpost of settlement in southern Kansas at the time.

That evening I walked up and down the short but almost crowded street of the little town, - going into or looking through the open doors of some of the many houses fronting on either side - and what scenes I

viewed! I saw men seated about great, round, cloth-covered gambling tables - before each a stack of red, white and blue chips, as well as gold, silver and currency, while in the center, awaiting disposition by the God of Chance, or perhaps the more potent influence of the "bluff" concealed behind the imperturbable cheek of a professional gambler's stoic countenance, were even greater piles of cash - more money, indeed, by far than my young, inexperienced eyes had ever before beheld.

There were all kinds of alluring gambling devices, each presided over by a skilled agent of the house; and at his hand, in plain sight of every one, were stacks of bright yellow gold pieces and also piles of crisp, new bills, evidently for the purpose of exciting the cupidity of gazers-on.

Brazen music and the raucous voices of brazen men, and even more brazen women, added to the almost demoniacal excitement prevailing in the place; and crowding about every game of chance, stood cowboys, whose broad sombreros, chaps and spurs, sunburned faces and parched lips indicated their exposure to the hot sun and drying winds on the long trail up. Many of these, having received their pay for the drive, now gambled it away, always at losing odds, as nonchalantly as if it were really trash, to be disposed of quickly. Their laconic words, voiced in that delightfully musical southern drawl, expressed no regret and they chaffed each other mercilessly as one after the other was duly fleeced.

Had any reader stood near me in a gambling den, on one side near the north-west corner of the room, he would, like myself, have particularly noticed four men gambling about a smaller table, for the actions of one of these must have attracted his attention. He was rather a stocky, medium-sized man, with smooth-shaven, square face, his long, thick, black hair combed straight back behind his ears, forming a sort of fringe about his neck and coat collar. His peculiar actions, however, were his most distinguishing feature, for the room was filled with strange people, many of them strangely dressed and all engaged in what to me were very strange pursuits. He seemed, however, to be losing, for each time the chips and money in the center of the table were raked in by one of his companions, he would swear wickedly and then resoundingly

bump the back of his head against the board wall, until one would think it must be cruelly bruised, and doubtless it would have been but for his thick, protecting hair.

On the train back to Burlingame the following day, which was quite crowded, I sat with a stranger in the front seat of the car, the entrance to which was cut off when the car door was opened, as it was at the approach of every station. Four men occupied the two seats next ours, the backs of which had been turned so they faced each other, and to my surprise, one of these was the curiously acting gambler of the previous night.

I could hear but remnants of their conversation when the train was going full speed, but when it slacked or stopped, all they said. When we were but a few stations south of Burlingame and the train had slackened preparatory to a stop, I heard this gambler say to his companions, "It served him right and he deserved to be shot!" Whom he referred to, of course I did not know, but I assumed it was the victim of the night previous, or one of the six killed the Saturday evening before. In any event, the man who sat directly opposite him and who, all the way up, I had not heard utter a single word, instantly drew his right-hand from his side, grasping a pistol which he pointed directly into the gambler's face (and incidentally toward me, for my seat was directly behind), and angrily and most icily exclaimed, "You are a d----d liar, sir! That man was my friend and no one can slander him in my presence now that he is dead. Take your lying words back instantly or I will fill your dirty carcass full of lead and send your perjured soul directly to settle with him!"

I crouched down below the range of his gun, as did also the stranger beside me, although he was in much less danger; yet doubtless he thought the shooting might become general. Fortunately, the gambler quickly and most abjectly swallowed his provoking words and humbly apologized, and by the time the train had stopped, the trouble seemed to have passed. However, I was most heartily glad to leave the car, a few miles farther, at Burlingame.

Before closing the story of my experiences at Newton, I must refer to the night I spent in the hotel in this spirited, young, frontier town. I slept - or perhaps occupied would be the proper word, for I slept but little - in a bed in the only bedroom the hostelry contained, which occupied the entire space in the upper story and was perhaps 25 by 80 feet in extent.

It was reached by an open stairway leading from the floor below, which landed directly in the room. About the room, with their heads to the wall, were some forty beds, half on one and half on the other side. This left a rather wide passageway down the middle, and between adjoining beds a small space, perhaps three feet wide, was also left to give passage to and from each bed. Every bed was double, and, as lodging was in great demand, was always occupied by two. No closet or other place being provided for one's clothes, he was compelled to hang them on nails near his head or dispose of them otherwise as he thought best. I folded mine and placed them under my pillow, for in my pants pocket was all the money I possessed.

I retired quite early and before any of the many other occupants of the beds that night, but I could not sleep - at first, because of the boisterous noises coming from the lower story and from the street, and, later, for the reason that every few moments a lodger would come in, ushered by the night clerk to the bed to which he had been assigned, and, later still, by reason of the incongruous noises made by sleepers snoring in many keys, or by the squeaking of beds when restless occupants turned and sighed because they could not sleep.

The man who shared my bed came in quite late, and as he undressed and prepared to get in, I lay very still, entirely on my side of the bed, with one hand under my pillow secretly grasping my precious pocketbook. I cannot say that I slept at all, for if so, it was in short naps from which I was soon awakened; and, at the first sound in the room below, I arose, dressed and went down. Never, so far as I know, before or afterwards, did I meet my bed-mate; neither can I now recall another so restlessly and sleeplessly spent as was that night in this new, frontier hotel.

CHAPTER XVII.

After reaching Burlingame, I again visited my friend Mason, thanked him for what he had done and bid him good bye, taking the next train for Kansas City and thence, by way of St.Louis, started for Illinois. At St.Louis, our train being too late to catch the connecting train for Bloomington, Illinois, I was compelled to stay over night. At that time, St.Louis was one of the busiest and most prominent cities in the West. It did a great water business up and down the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, and also by rail to the West, South, East and North, and here congregated people of every strata of human life, from men of the highest standing down to the lowest dregs, - the flotsam and jetsam, the thugs, touts and derelicts of the frontier.

It was dark when the train stopped, and the depot, within and without, seemed crowded with shouting hackmen; many of them with raucous voices and sinister looks, - one of them even grasping my valise as if I had asked him to take it. Instinctively I warded them off, and finally perceiving a vehicle standing at the curb, with a long body and a seat running along either side, I voluntarily got in and took a seat.

I knew not a single soul nor the name of any hotel in the city, and when the driver came in to collect fares and inquire where I wished to go, I hesitated with embarrassment, for I did not really know. He noticed this, and glibly told me he would take me to a nice hotel if I would leave it to him. His very looks and actions aroused my suspicions, but what could I do! Near me sat a benevolent looking old gentleman, who had evidently overheard the conversation, noticed my embarrassment and guessed my inexperience in the city; for he kindly inquired whether I was a stranger and unacquainted in the city; and when his suspicion was confirmed by my answer, he said,

"You must be very careful whom you trust or where you stay in this city. There are many respectable, cheap hotels, but I advise you to insist upon going to the Planter House, one of the best in the city. It will cost you a little more, but you will be comfortable and absolutely safe."

I thanked him and followed his advice, but when I told the driver my decision, he strongly tried to dissuade me, assuring me he could take me to one equally safe and much cheaper. His peculiar looks and suspicious insistence fully confirmed my confidence in the elderly man's advice, and I stood aggressively firm in my demand and was taken to the Planter House.

I have always been thankful for the kindly interest of this good stranger, and I never recur to the happenings of that evening without some misgiving as to what might have befallen me, a friendless, country boy, alone the first night in a large city.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TEACHING SCHOOL AGAIN.

Without further incidents worthy of mention, the following afternoon I was once more among friends and relatives. Brother Harvey was particularly kind and listened with much interest and astonishment to my recitals of what I had been through; but the proudest achievement, in my own estimation, was that, having landed in Kansas almost penniless and certainly friendless, I had, without other help, earned and saved more than $100, and after paying my fare back to Illinois, there still remained in my pocket more than I had started with from Ohio the early spring previous.

Here I also found my brother Hilton, who had taught the spring term in the school which I had contracted to teach the ensuing year, and who had contracted to teach in an adjoining district some six miles to the east. After beginning and teaching several weeks, he was taken with malarial fever, which compelled him to give it up temporarily; and, as my school was not to begin for several weeks, I was requested to take his place ad interim. Therefore, almost immediately I went to the city of Paxton, some fifteen miles distant,- the county seat of Ford County, Illinois, in which both school districts were located - to procure a certificate entitling me to teach, making the trip on horseback.

The prairies over which I rode were very flat and low and so near a perfect level as to afford but little drainage and were here and there marked by sloughs near and east of my brother's farm. These were almost invariably filled with water and were really the source of the Sangamon river,- a stream of no inconsiderable size, fifteen miles farther south. They covered many hundreds of acres and were the rendezvous, feeding and hatching places for many kinds of aquatic birds,- the tall grass and springy, boggy ground about them gave

security to their nests and also furnished abundant food for themselves and broods. So abundant were these birds in spring, both night and day, the atmosphere for miles about resounded constantly with the ever continuing roar of their incessant cries.

It was certainly a hunter's paradise in those early days, and some had shooting blinds along their boggy edges. Many remarkable stories were then told of the result of single or double shots fired into flocks when myriads of duck or brant rose from its muddy surface when disturbed. One man I well knew, a plasterer by trade, who was a very successful hunter, told me he had killed and recovered more than sixty ducks by discharging both barrels of his gun into a mass of rising birds one early morning.

The deep, black land about as well as in these sloughs was unbelievably rich and, when not too boggy to cultivate, produced great yields of corn. In most places water was but little below the surface and could be provided for stock either by shallow wells or by plowing and scraping pools. In early spring all the roads over this flat area were in most execrable condition. The one leading to the town of Gibson City, which was located on the northeasterly border of these sloughs, was particularly bad; and I have seen four horses hitched to the hind wheels of a wagon, using the coupling pole as a tongue, driven by a man sitting on a large packing box fastened between its standards, laboriously floundering about in the deep, black soil which filled the spaces between the spokes of each wheel so completely that they looked like moving disks of solid, revolving mud, almost half buried in the yielding ground. Thus in bad weather, on foot or horseback, were farmers forced to market their eggs and butter and procure their necessary groceries.

A few miles to the North of these sloughs and in the same rich prairie, yet perhaps not so wet, was the famed 40,000 acre farm owned by a man named Sullivan, who came from central Ohio and who it was said moved back and forth between his old and new home four times before finally settling to stay in Illinois.

Such indecision and vacillation was very frequently - I might say almost invariably - observed as family and neighborly ties were broken in the East, and before

new ones in the West had taken permanent root, during the time of the westward sweep of civilization, which ended only with the settlement of the Pacific coast.

Kansas perhaps experienced more of this than the states farther to the East or West. Its grass-covered, sweeping prairies, rich soil, inviting timber, fringed streams, mild winters and abundance of grass gave promise of rich reward to the husbandman; but settlement there was often cruelly and hopelessly followed by drying winds, grasshoppers, great prairie fires, unbelievable floods, blizzards in winter, cyclones in summer, and also malarial sickness which invariably accompanies the breaking up and putting under cultivation the sod of a new country when subjecting it to the domination and service of man.

I have mentioned the peculiar conditions surrounding my brother's home because I have little doubt but that they contributed largely to the malarial fever with which brother Hilton was afflicted as well as the chronic rheumatism of brother Harvey, which caused him to give up his farm and move elsewhere.

Immediately after taking the examination at Paxton, I took my brother's place in the school he had engaged to teach. The neighborhood which it served was quite remarkable for the class of people it contained and the interest they all manifested in the general public welfare, especially the school. For a number of years previous, all the teachers had been exceptionally capable and their effect upon the scholarship and deportment of the pupils was very noticeable.

I secured lodging and board with a family by the name of Robbins - Mr. Robbins being one of the directors. As I now recall, there were six children, the two oldest being beyond school age, but all were exceptionally bright. What might have been the antecedents of Mr. Robbins I do not know, but his wife was of French descent, and while not very remarkable as a housekeeper, was in many ways so as a mother and seemed very ambitious for the advancement of her children, all of whom were naturally precocious.

The oldest of these attending school was a daughter, almost my own age, a very bright, vivacious and

beautiful young woman and by all odds the most studious and farthest advanced of the scholars attending. She had much talent also for music, playing quite well upon the small organ the family possessed, and accompanied herself and others of the family - all of whom were almost equally gifted - in singing popular songs of the day, which made my stay at their house very agreeable.

I taught here six weeks, yet this period stands out still, as the most delightful and satisfactory of my teaching experiences. For these reasons I was very loath to give it up (for now my brother, whose illness proved of longer duration and more serious character than was at first anticipated, had been compelled to relinquish the school and return to Ohio). I was strongly urged by the board to finish the term - they graciously offering me, as an inducement, seventy-five dollars per month. However, I could not do so honorably, and therefore declined.

CHAPTER XIX.

TEACHING AGAIN.
PECULIARITIES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

Those who taught in country schools more than a half-century ago, and, for that matter, those who may have done so since, and who received for their chief reward the meager wage agreed upon, derived far less benefit than they were entitled to.

In this connection, I am reminded also that perhaps few parents - and they are in the truest sense but teachers of their children - receive and impart the full measure of profit and pleasure that can and ought be derived and bestowed during the continuance of this, the most natural, sacred and important relationship of human life. And but a little less so is the proper and best relationship between public teachers and their scholars.

At the beginning of the term in this unpromising district, I little thought I was about to learn this great truth; for, so far as I could read the future, it held out no alluring prospects. In advance of signing the contract, I was informed by the board that for many years previously it had been the custom, at the close of the holiday vacation, for the scholars to take possession of the schoolhouse and keep the teacher out until he treated them with candy, nuts and such other delicacies as they demanded. The previous winter, this had resulted in such a neighborhood disturbance as to cause the discharge of the teacher and the discontinuance of the school for the term.

While the board did not, in terms, approve of this practice, they but mildly deprecated it, and, by indirection at least, suggested it should not be taken too seriously by the teacher. But they very gravely warned me that several of the larger boys who would attend were really incorrigible and looked upon the relationship between themselves and the teacher as a contest for mastership,- the victory being theirs when

the school was broken up and the teacher discharged. They earnestly assured me, however, that they had resolved, if these boys gave me any trouble, they would, at my suggestion, turn them out and exclude them from further attendance; for, they said, they were determined no longer to suffer the school to stop and other children thus deprived of a chance to learn because of these few ruffians.

I thanked them for their assurances but secretly concluded such action upon my part would be really a confession of inability to manage the school, and that, after making every effort possible, rather than follow this course, I would surrender and quit.

In many ways, also, was this neighborhood a bleak and uninviting prospect; for it was so nearly flat as to make it impossible, with the unaided eye, to determine in which direction the water usually ran. Indeed, it did not - only during exceptional downpours - run at all, but remained where it fell until it gradually sank into the ground. Neither did a tidy, thrifty looking home break the monotony of the unpainted and usually small and often dilapidated structures in which the people lived. Occasionally a small orchard, a few berry bushes - but seldom flowers, bluegrass or well kept paths - changed the flat surface surrounding any habitation from the dreary, monotonous landscape pervading the neighborhood.

As typical of these, I might here describe the home of one of the school directors, with whom I roomed and boarded for the final six months of my teaching in this district: The house was fourteen by twenty-four feet, one-story, with weather boarding on the exterior, but was neither ceiled nor plastered within - its rafters, studding and joists all being exposed. It stood lang-way east and west, fronting to the north upon the highway, in a yard absolutely barren of trees, shrubs or flowers, in which the original prairie grass was still bravely struggling for existence. On the other side, it was separated from stable, cattle and hog lots by a board fence, over which a single stile afforded the only passageway - thus preventing trespassing animals in the barnyard from coming in.

The space within the house was divided by board partitions, reaching to the joists, into three rooms. The one in the east end, being twelve by fourteen feet.

served as kitchen, dining room, sitting room and parlor. In this stood, for cooking during the year and for heat in the winter, the only stove. There were also a table, a half-dozen chairs and a dish-cupboard; while there pended from nails driven into studding, rafters and joists, here and there about the room - and especially so, convenient to the stove - skillets, pans, pots and other cooking utensils; and from rafters and ceiling joists there hung hams, shoulders, strips of bacon and dried beef.

The remainder of the house was divided into two equal parts, each being seven by ten, used as bedrooms, one of which was occupied by the family,- a wife, husband and two small children - the other, by myself. Each of these was lighted by a single window, but the larger room had three, and two doors.

Neither paint nor other coloring had ever changed the appearance of any part of the material, in or out of the house, from its original color, although time, weather and usage had gradually removed every trace of its original newness. However tightly were doors or windows closed, an abundance of air entered through cracks and crevices here and there, and especially so under the eaves. I vividly recall evidence of this during every snow storm, for the wind, seeking entrance every where, carried with it tiny, fleecy particles of snow, depositing them upon and covering the floor, stand, chairs and even the top of the bed, forming a coating of white, beautiful to look upon but rather disenchanting to stand in while one was dressing.

My ablutions of face and hands were always carried on, except during inclement weather, in a washpan sitting upon a bench outside the house, which in turn was also used by others of the family for the same purpose. This general usage extended also to the soap and towels as well. To keep myself in a respectable condition, I went every week to a barber shop in a neighboring town, taking a bath and getting a shave. The lack of better facilities was doubtless due the fact that the mother, because of her other manifold duties, apparently somewhat neglected her children, whose tangled hair and lack of cleanliness was often in evidence; although she was seemingly much more careful about her own appearance.

Her husband was peculiar in many ways and entirely so regarding his indifference to his personal appearance. His hair was seldom if ever combed, his beard always unkempt, while his taciturnity was almost as marked as if he were deaf and dumb. That he respected and loved his wife and children was evidenced beyond doubt in many undemonstrative ways; and that they reciprocated it was equally apparent in a much more appreciative and demonstrative manner; yet day after day went by without a word from him. He never asked questions nor could anything, however exciting, occur in the neighborhood incite him to do so; and more often he answered by a nod or shake of the head than by word.

Sometimes his wife, whose loquacity was almost as marked as his silence, would in her desperation good naturedly rail at him, but it never moved him to speech, although occasionally (I always thought to relieve me from any embarrassment), he would slyly and knowingly nod and wink at me.

I don't think I ever knew a father fonder of his children, or children who loved a father more. Every evening they sat on his lap, each occupying a knee, chatting to each other and their mother like magpies, sometimes pulling his nose or hair and otherwise playing with him as they might a good natured house dog, until they drowsed to sleep, when he would tenderly bear them to their bed.

He always kept coal in a box near the stove and, arising early each morning, built a fire, brought in a bucket of fresh water and then went out to feed and care for the stock.

I remember also that, although his fingers and hands were rough and seemingly very bony and stiff, he wrote an exceptionally good hand, which was evidenced each month when he gave me an order for my wages, for he was clerk of the school board. Neither of the other members could do this, - one because afflicted with rheumatism, and the other because he could neither read nor write.

Another practice, strange to me, in this family was that nothing but hot bread - invariably biscuit - was ever served at meals. Almost as invariably was

pork in some form, cooked - the fryings from which largely taking the place of butter. Potatoes and beans - the latter cooked with dried corn, forming a sort of succotash - largely completed the daily menu; although apple butter and sorghum molasses invariably were served and added much toward making the hot biscuits palatable. The constant use of pork - almost invariably fresh in the winter - was doubtless the cause of the almost continuous eruptions appearing on the faces of the two children.

But I must not further extend this by reminiscences of the life of this kindly-disposed family, which I shall always recall with interest and pleasure; nor by adding, as I might, almost ad infinitum, recollections of other characters whom I met in this locality - many of whom I came to know and very greatly respect before I left the neighborhood.

The schoolhouse, if possible, was more depressing than any other structure in the neighborhood. It stood, fronting south, at a crossroads corner, in a yard comprising perhaps a half acre of land, aboslutely barren of any trees, bushes or vegetation except a thick growth of weeds indigenous to the locality. It was twenty-four by forty feet in size, one story, with gabled ends to the north and south, unpainted, gray and weather beaten. The highway bounded it on the east and south, and a great cornfield upon the other sides. In the center of the southern gable was its only door, on either side of which, exactly dividing the space between it and the respective corners, was a window, the top of each being slightly higher than that of the door. Above each of these, and slightly protruding outward and beyond its sides, was a crude attempt at ornamentation, unmistakably suggesting eye-brows to an imaginative person approaching it from the south - the entire southern exposure forming a somewhat ludicrous appearance of an exaggerated human face.

The only other openings were six windows, three on either side, each being exactly opposite a corresponding one on the other side. Neither shutters, shades nor curtains restrained the sun from beating pitilessly upon the scholars whose seats were in the daily pathway of its rays; although the dust, rain, snow and sleet, dashed upon the outer surface of their many panes during storms and constant prairie winds of past years, had somewhat dulled and dimmed their outer surface,- so much so, indeed,

that in looking at the sunlight cast upon the desks or floor, one could unmistakably detect where any of the originals had been replaced by new ones because of the brighter light coming through.

A rusty coal stove, bulging in the middle, reared itself some four feet high from the center of the floor. About its base was a four-sided, wooden frame, some four feet square, resting upon the floor and made of four-inch boards, which was filled with ashes and soil to protect the floor from being burned. From the top of the stove, a dusty stovepipe led upward 'til within a foot of the ceiling, where it made an elbow-turn, clinging to the ceiling by means of wire wrapped about it and fastened to hooks in the ceiling as it extended to and entered a hole in the brick chimney on the north end, which was supported by brackets nailed to the wall. After receiving the pipe, the chimney went on up through ceiling, attic and roof, ending three feet above the latter in what had been originally intended as an ornamental top.

Across the north end of the school room was a blackboard, and a little in front of this stood the master's chair and desk. On the east and west sides were two rows of stationary desks fronting the center, between the ends of which were narrow passageways giving ingress and egress for the scholars occupying the rear ones. The room was wainscotted up to the bottom of the windows; but the walls above this had been originally plastered, but now showed many evidences of ill usage and age in the numerous white splotches appearing where repairs had been made; and perhaps there were equally as many gaping holes awaiting similar attention. On its walls were also many chalk and pencil marks, some in colors, where artful, if not artistic, pupils had attempted caricatures or essayed poetry or platitudes, to which were occasionally underscribed the author's name - perhaps his only chance for enduring fame.

The ceiling, beyond the convenient reach of young hopefuls, in addition to some discolored spots caused by a leaky roof, bore many blotches of dried paper pulp, the accumulation perhaps of many years, during which the scholars, having properly masticated paper, had then thrown it upon the ceiling when the master's back was turned.

A narrow band of wood, running along the top of the blackboard, was fitted between the window frames, ending at the edge of the front door jambs, and was studded with hooks, provided for hanging wraps and hats of scholars; and, above this, in either front corner, was a substantial, wider board, upon which the pupils' dinner baskets and pails were deposited. Much of the furniture was marred by ink, chalk, pencil and often by knives. A broom, coal scuttle and poker, water pail and tin cup, and an extra chair completes a list of the contents of the room.

In this neighborhood corn was king and fat hogs and cattle seemed the chief aim and goal of everyone. For this, from year to year, men strived. No sooner was the last crop fed in the fields or gathered and piled into high, open rail pens, to be marketed or fed, than would work begin again in preparation for the ensuing season.

After the first rain of winter, followed by freezing weather, when the old stocks were stiffly frozen and easily broken down, two horses - one at either end - were hitched to a long railroad iron, which was then dragged sideways back and forth over the old cornfields, breaking the stocks off at the ground. Later, when no snow was on the ground, these were raked into great rows and, later still, when dry, were burned. This was usually in the early spring, and these fires were visible in every direction, illuminating the sky at night and filling it with smoke by day.

After this, plowing, planting and cultivation went on again; and this continued from one year to another, during which men strived, from dark of the early morning to the darkness of the evening, always to raise more corn to feed more hogs and cattle - thus following relentlessly, self-imposed destiny. The mothers, wives and daughters of these men, beginning equally as early each morning, cooked, milked the cows, made butter, cared for the poultry, washed, mended, made clothes, and in almost countless ways spent their time slaving and saving throughout their monotonous existence, helping in paying for the farm - hoping sooner or later to be able to have an organ in the house and perhaps more presentable furniture and, sometime, a creditable carpet in their best room.

By reason of the time it required during the busy season on the farm, schooling was regarded apparently with but little favor for boys, and often so for girls, who could be useful at home; and therefore, in summer and in early fall and late spring, none but small children attended. Indeed, all home duties seemed more important than going to school. Perhaps, therefore, it was not to be wondered that, generally speaking, no serious interest was taken in school, nor that the larger boys regarded baiting the teacher, in winter, a legitimate sport.

From my experience in teaching in this and other country schools at that early time, I have not the slightest doubt but that, by adding a very little fictional coloring to actual facts, the occurrences in many of the country schools of that period would prove as fascinatingly interesting as was the story told by Dr. Eggleston in his book, published some ten years before the time of which I write, called "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," which I read as a boy.

CHAPTER XX..

SCHOOL BEGINS.

For the reasons previously mentioned, none of the larger boys and girls were in attendance when the term began. This gave me time for careful consideration as to the best way to proceed when they did come.

While enrolling those present, none of whom were over fourteen, I made especial inquiry of the scholars in each family as to whether there were other brothers and sisters to come, and if so, their names and ages. By this I was pre-advised of things I was anxious to learn. Those in attendance were as tractable as could be expected or desired, although none seemed especially interested in their studies. Their attendance appeared entirely perfunctory and none were advanced beyond the fourth reader, - this being the manner in which grades were formed.

After thoroughly considering the past history of the school, so far as I had learned it, I determined to casually call upon the parents of each family and if possible meet the scholars who were to come later. Therefore, each evening after closing school, I took a walk of perhaps a mile or more, stopping in at several homes on the way, - introducing myself to those I had not previously met, briefly talking about their children in attendance and learning, if possible, their attitude toward the school and whether they evinced any concern for the progress their children might make. If an elder daughter or son were to come later, I usually met and briefly talked with her or him, and sometimes went to the place where a son was working, introducing myself and, in order not to stop his work, would walk along as he snapped the corn, occasionally assisting so that he might not lose any time.

While many things were done differently in Illinois at that time from the way they were in Ohio, I felt quite at home in talking crop and farm duties, and thus I hoped to put myself on a friendly basis with the farmers.

These evening calls gave me much useful information as well as an insight into the neighborhood family life - enabling me to comprehend the outlook of the boys and to some extent, also, the girls. To summarize, I was thus convinced by the process of elimination that whatever trouble was in store for me in the school would be the product of the brains of not more than three boys or, rather, young men, ranging in age from seventeen to twenty - two of these being in one family,- assisted by two young women; not because the latter were naturally so inclined perhaps, but for the reason that one was the sister of the two brothers and the other, the sweetheart of the other boy.

The family containing the two brothers and one sister was German, the father and mother having been born in that country - coming to the United States soon after their marriage. They spoke English quite brokenly. After a friendly call and chat, and I was preparing to go, they both followed me into the yard and to the front gate, and there they frankly told me the trouble of the previous year was largely due to their youngest son, Steven by name, then about seventeen. After it was started, their other son and daughter took sides with their brother, as did other scholars. They assured me, however, he was not a bad boy naturally, but was almost uncontrollably full of life and mischief, but not vicious. They seemed very anxious that their children should learn and told me they would do everything possible to assist in making the school a success, but accompanied these assurances with the further information that if at any time Steven became unmanageable and his attendance a menace, if I would quietly let them know, they would keep him out.

The sincerity and honesty of this father and mother moved me deeply, and I determined that only a desperate and last resort would cause me to appeal to them to carry out their promises.

From other sources, the statement of Steven's father and mother was amply supported, and to my surprise I was forced to the conclusion that this Dutch boy was really the dominant spirit among the young people who would attend; and, curiously, nearly every one liked him, regardless of his questionable reputation.

I did not meet him for some days after this, but on my second call, being informed he was at work, I went directly to the field and found him there with his brother. When I started these visits, I made up my mind neither to encourage nor comment upon any stories about the past troubles in the district, and above all things not in any way to speak of or suggest what course I intended to follow. Indeed, I did not then know, and therefore I listened attentively to everything I could not courteously decline to hear, without remark, and never made inquiry nor repeated to others anything I thus learned.

Steven and his brother - some three years his senior - were husking corn, so I went directly to the field and introduced myself, shaking hands with the larger one, who was about my own size and age, and then with Steven. Knowing they must be anxious to complete their load before dark, I insisted upon their continuing their work, and began husking the down-row behind the wagon while they took care of the rows on either side. We talked entirely of farm work, - how soon they would be through, what kind of a yield they were getting - but nothing about school. Thus I met Steven, the bane of past teachers, a confessed incorrigible by his own father and mother, - the active if not the leading spirit in all the neighborhood's minor derelictions, and upon whose will and actions seemed to depend the success or failure of the winter school term as well as my own reputation.

He was perhaps five feet eight inches tall, stout and muscular, quick of movement and restless almost to nervousness. His face was round, his forehead broad, below which appeared his twinkling brown eyes, set wide apart, separated by rather a nondescript nose, beneath which, and equally indescribable, was a mouth always ready to turn up into a smile or down into a frown at its owner's will. His hair was quite light in color and shocky in appearance, its ends persistently peeping from beneath his hat, whose front brim was jauntily turned upward.

He had a remarkable knowledge of farm husbandry as then practiced and how to manage and care for the stock, to prognosticate the weather by clouds, wind and the conduct of domestic and wild life about him.

And yet, a few weeks later, I discovered he was pitiably lacking in book knowledge for a lad of his age. This, however, was the common condition among those attending school and was not an invidious distinction, although it was really a lamentable fact.

Each time I met him thereafter, before he came to school, as I did with all others of the large scholars, I shook hands in a friendly, cordial way, but not patronizingly, for I felt he could be neither cajoled nor deceived by speciousness. In the meantime, I had worked very earnestly to incite the scholars then in attendance to a keen interest in their studies, for I knew studiousness was an antedote for idleness and mischief, and that to be so, they must be interested.

In the latter part of November, winter having come on in earnest, all farm activities, except the care of stock, automatically ceased and the elder pupils started to school. There were perhaps fifteen of them, the majority being boys, and it took several days to properly classify and get them started. Within a week, however, the active, irrespressible spirit of Steven began to manifest itself, and I knew that unless this could be changed, serious trouble must ensue. Nothing he did was malicious, but its effect was, perhaps for this very reason, more disturbing than if it were. The difficulty was to keep him interested and busy, for when idle he disturbed the whole school and from day to day the average deportment was perceptibly growing worse. He was really the quickest to learn his lessons of any, and after doing so became a sort of free lance, disturbing every one about him.

It is painfully distressing, even now, for me to contemplate the first few weeks he was in school, for really he was the sole cause of my trouble, and I became so depressed and desperate that I thought I would soon have to quit myself, or, what seemed equally distressing, ask his parents to keep him out or the directors to forbid him further attendance.

In the meantime, I had changed my boarding place, having been invited by one of the directors to board and lodge with his family after my brother removed from the neighborhood. They lived about a fourth of a mile from the schoolhouse, and therefore I walked for my noon meals. One day, when Steven had been unusually

mischievous, and almost boldly so, and my patience was quite beyond control, a boy sitting in front of him suddenly slid off his seat, and cried, "Ouch!" I turned toward the boy, who was now getting back on the seat, and inquired the trouble. He blurted out, "Steven pricked me with a pin," which brought forth a titter from the school. I looked at Steven, who returned my gaze in a half-regretful and defiant way, for up to this time I had spoken to him only in the kindliest way and had been patient beyond reason - and I feared beyond prudence; but as it was noon, I decided to dismiss the school without further inquiry and without a word to Steven, did so, and started for my dinner.

I was discouraged and despondent, for there seemed but one course to pursue,- let Steven go. Therefore, I concluded to go that evening to his parents and frankly tell them so. Happily, I said nothing about it during dinner, and by the time I was on my way back, I had become calmer and more thoughtful, and I wondered whether I had really done everything possible to help Steven. I felt that he had great possibilities and, in spite of his mischievousness, I really liked him. Should I dismiss him, the consequences might almost ruin his life. Therefore, I resolved to make another trial, although I did not then know how.

There was an air of expectancy among the scholars when school was called in the afternoon, for my face must have shown great distress and disappointment when the disturbance took place; but I went about my duties as usual, hoping some way would be provided that might enable me to take a proper course. Steven, also, was less exuberant than ordinarily and gave perfuctory attention to his lessons, but I felt that unless some radical change came, he would soon break forth again.

Imperceptibly, I cast an occasional glance in his direction and was surprised to note the genuine effort he was making to restrain himself. Perhaps three quarters of an hour went by before he began to again get uncontrollably restless, and I was quite sure unless something could soon be done to divert his attention to school work, he would assuredly lapse. Then a happy thought came to me, that if I could furnish him with some work involving a friendly contest, to give it zest, and requiring painstaking care, it might engross his attention.

The boy whom he had stuck with the pin was about his age and both were in long division in number work, although Steven was the quicker and brighter but not so studious, and as each was involved in the disturbance of the morning, I decided to give each as large example in long division as could be worked out upon his slate, and when each had worked it, I would exchange slates and permit them to check up each other.

With this in mind, I walked to Steven's desk and laid my hand, gently and in the most friendly way, upon his shoulder, and said, "Steven, it is pretty tiresome for a boy to sit quietly without something to do. I want to give you an example in long division on your slate, if you will let me have it; and I will give Silas another on his. And when each has worked it out, I will exchange slates and see whether either can find any errors in the other's work." He looked at me in a somewhat doubtful and quizzical way, as if to read my real thoughts and intention, and then handed me his slate. I turned it lengthwise so that the divisor and dividend would be as large as possible and put it down and handed it back. Then I went to Silas and gave him one equally long, warning both to be careful and accurate, and went on with the regular school work.

Each immediately became deeply absorbed in the solution of these merciless examples and were as oblivious of the rest of the scholars as if they did not exist.

When recess came, instead of Steven being the first joyous, boisterous pupil on the playground, as always before, he still sat, entirely unmindful of the recess period, although he was the only pupil left in the room. One minute passed, then another, then a third, but still he did not move. I could stand it no longer, so I went to him and affectionately placed my hand upon him again, and said, "Steven, it is recess and no one will have any fun unless you are in the yard."

"But," said he, "I want to finish this sum first."

Then I continued, "Let me tell you something, Steven: It is almost as bad to disappoint the pupils by not playing with them at recess, when it is play time, as it is to disturb them by playing in school when everybody should study."

He sort of closed one eye, wrinkled his nose slightly as if digesting this thought, and then said, "By George, that's so!" And pushing his slate into his desk, went out of the door with a whoop.

That was the only reference made to his action of the forenoon, and yet I somehow felt, intuitively, that Steven and I understood each other better than before.

The next morning I had just opened the schoolhouse when Steven appeared. He seemed somewhat shy and timid, until I said, "Why, Steven! I am certainly glad to see you, and hope nothing is wrong."

"N-n-no," he stammered, "but I just thought I would like to help you a little about the schoolhouse this morning."

Every morning after this, Steven was with me before any of the other scholars came, to assist. We talked of many things interesting to both. He had always lived on this flat prairie and was keenly interested in the rolling, wooded country in Ohio where I had lived, with its pen-like, little fields, enclosed by crooked rail fences, in which stood stumps, large and small, evincing the great forest that covered the country there before it was reduced to cultivation.

But I must not dwell upon our pleasant morning chats, during which each learned something from the other and which both keenly enjoyed; for I have in mind two other incidents of this school term which explain more convincingly than anything I might otherwise relate my obligation to Steven and the beneficent influence he thereafter exerted upon the other scholars.

CHAPTER XXI.

The winter holidays were at hand, and while everything had gone smoothly and happily up to this time, I could not quite get out of mind the custom previously obtaining in this and other schools of the neighborhood of locking the teacher out and which was looked upon indulgently, if not with approval, by the school boards and patrons; and therefore I had some concern as to what might happen,- not so much because of the actual occurrence itself as what the after effect might be.

I had been invited to spend my vacation at the home of my brother, Dr. Robert P. Jennings, at Delavan, Illinois, some sixty miles distant, and at the close of my visit had started back in plenty of time to reach my boarding place the evening before the beginning of school; but a heavy snow having fallen delayed trains, so that only by walking some four miles across country from the depot was I able to reach the neighborhood about ten o'clock. When near enough to see the top of the schoolhouse, I noticed that from the chimney poured the smoke of a brisk fire, for it was quite cold. From this, I imagined that possession might be taken by the scholars and I would find myself locked out; but as I turned the corner of a big cornfield, the children playing about it came in view, and in a few moments my appearance was discovered, as was evidenced by their shouts; but instead of retreating to the shoolhouse, as I thought they might, they came boisterously running toward me,- Steven in the lead, his beaming face expressing a welcome that no words could emphasize, and I intuitively knew I was being amply rewarded for my patience and forbearance to him.

The second incident I wish to recall happened later: It was then the general custom in the country districts to occasionally hold a spelling school, to which the adjoining schools were invited. This was always closed by a spelling match, in which everybody, young and old, who desired, participated. I put it

off as long as possible, for my district was notoriously destitute of good spellers. The best one was a timid yet sutdious young girl of sixteen.

In one of the adjoining schools resided a tall, angular woman of perhaps thirty-five, a so-called old maid, who made a specialty of spelling schools, and who, it was said, could spell every word in the spelling book by rote and without pronunciation. Her victories were numerous, and to enjoy her conquests, members of her family usually accompanied her. Among these were two brothers several years her junior and yet grown men quite beyond school age.

The clamor for a spelling school became so insistent that I finally consented, and due notice of the time was forwarded to all the neighboring schools some two weeks in advance of the occasion.

It never seemed quite fair to me that a phenomenal prodigy, such as the woman above mentioned, should go about gloatingly gathering new laurels at the expense of humiliating others, and I tried to devise some plan by which my school could escape. At first this seemed impossible, but finally I thought out a plan which it seemed might succeed - the ethics of which I shall not here attempt to defend, although it was not technically against the established rules observed in these affairs, but leave it to such condemnation as readers may care to bestow.

None of my scholars being consulted, therefore, they in no way aided or abetted the scheme, and were entirely innocent.

Knowing the limitations of my scholars, I began drilling them in spelling for a few moments each evening before closing, using the speller then in use to pronounce from. Without their knowledge, however, I had selected perhaps a dozen words from the dictionary not found in the speller,- usually of foreign derivation, many of them, when adopted, still retaining the pronunciation in the original tongue. Each evening, after covering as wide range in the speller as my best scholars could safely undertake, I would occasionally pronounce one of the selected words, without intimation to them that it was thus selected, or was not in the book. Of course, they missed because the pronunciation gave little guide to their spelling, but in a

half-dozen trials, several scholars had gotten their pronunciation and spelling perfectly in mind.

The night the spelling school came the room was crowded and of course the spelling prodigy, with her two brothers, was present. The time consumed in one of these affairs was usually divided into three parts,- first, spelling for perhaps three-quarters of an hour, then an intermission of perhaps a half hour. This being followed by the choosing of sides and the final spelling match. There were two other teachers present, and as was the custom, I invited each to pronounce - dividing the first period into two equal parts, giving each one-half the time. Then came the recess, when pandemonium sounded from the yard and a babel of voices filled the room, everybody seeming to talk at once.

It is impossible for one to accurately or adequately portray the recess period in an old fashioned, country spelling school. The timid approach to their sweethearts by bashful swains; the feigned indifference of the favored girl; the crude jokes and homely repartee; the pairing off at the door as the crowds went out,- all vividly recalled but impossible to describe.

Now, recess being over, all are again assembled for the closing match. Having satisfied the demands of courtesy to other teachers, I took charge myself for the remainder of the evening and appointed two leaders,- each familiar with those in attendance,- to choose sides, who drew outs for first choice.

In fifteen minutes the human mass was standing, half on one and half on the other side, and spelling began. For some moments, to give all a brief respite, the range was among rather easy words, then gradually to more difficult ones, so, in some twenty minutes, perhaps not a third of the spellers still were standing. Then, when within a half-dozen of where my own best speller stood, I used one of these selected words, which mowed down all until it came to her and she spelled it. A couple of rounds later, when but a half-dozen were still standing, including the phenomenal speller, and just after I had passed my only hope of success, I pronounced another, which turned every one down until it reached the prodigy. "Next," I called, as steadily as possible, but she hesitated, then said, "Please pronounce the word again." "Ong-wee," I very

deliberately called. She tried and failed, and sat down, while a murmur of surprise was heard; then the next and the next and the next was called, until it came to the little girl of our own school, who spelled it, and the match was at an end.

Several present, including the two teachers, went to the large dictionary on my desk to look for the word, and confessed it was correctly pronounced although it seemed somewhat new and strange to them.

I was glad it was over, and the scholars of my school were exuberantly happy and proud of the result; while the prodigy and her friends were correspondingly despondent and chagrined.

I said before I would offer no argument in favor of the ethics of my action, and neither shall I, and I therefore take upon myself all the approbrium it deserves; but I had a gallant defender of my conduct in Steven. As the last were leaving the house, loud, angry words resounded in the yard, followed by blows. I ran swiftly towards the combatants, and in the light shed through one of the schoolhouse windows, I saw Steven, astride one of the prodigy's big brothers, pounding him unmercifully and demanding he "take it back," while others held the older brother from interferring. Just as I reached the place, the big fellow abjectly took it back and cried "enough," and when released, this great six-footer, much older in years, a half-head taller and much heavier than Steven, sullenly walked away. Later, I learned that the fellow had spoken disrespectfully of me in Steven's presence. The charge was sufficient to fire my impulsive little friend to action, for <u>he</u> at least was sincere and entirely blameless, and fought for his ideals.

I cannot leave Steven without some further words: No scholar worked so hard or progressed so fast as he. From long division, he went on so rapidly that, before the winter term ended, he had mastered all the subjects treated in Ray's Arithmetic. He became also one of the most fluent and expressive readers in the school, although in the beginning it was really pitiful to hear him. He had learned the uses and importance of all punctuation and inflection marks, spelled well and knew much of

geography, and, with all, was a favorite with everyone. I shall always continue to love him and revere his memory.

When the closing day of the winter term came, many parents were present, among them Steven's father and mother. These two, elderly German people, with trembling lips and swimming eyes, thanked me for the change they had observed in Steven. Whether any credit was justly due me, I am not quite sure, although of one thing I am very certain,- he rewarded me many times for whatever I may have done for him and, perhaps as much as myself, was instrumental in making this school one of the most happy and successful I have ever taught.

Whenever I returned to this neighborhood - which I did several times in the next three years - Steven came to see me and our visits were mutually delightful.

CHAPTER XXII.

COLLEGE AGAIN.

At the close of my engagement in this unpromising school, I withstood the urgent importunities of its board of directors and patrons to teach another year, for I had decided to go home and again enter college.

My accumulated savings were now - although I kept no accurate account of them - perhaps between three and four hundred dollars, which I believed would provide books, clothes and incidentals for at least two years. Thus, by boarding at home and working on the farm in vacation and mornings and evenings, as compensation, I hoped to complete my college course.

Upon entering, I found myself more than a year behind my former classmates, but thought by close application and taking extra studies some of this could be made up. However, the long hours required to carry the regulars and the two others greatly depleted me physically; and in the winter I became a victim of quinsy and narrowly escaped brain fever,- thus losing two weeks entirely, and was compelled thereafter to drop the extras. So, while I finished the year with a satisfactory standing, I made little of the gain I had hoped.

Now harvest was again on, so I went directly to work on the farm. With the help of one man,- I cradling and he binding - we cut, shocked and later stacked twelve acres of wheat, and cut with a mowing machine and hauled to the barn the hay from thirty acres of meadow. After harvest, we hauled out the accumulated manure about the barnyard, and then I plowed the ground and seeded the fall wheat before starting to college. The physical activities of the summer put me in superb condition and I was eager to begin. Profiting by the previous year's experience, I undertook but one extra and proceeded very satisfactorily with the fall term's work.

Then, again, one of those unexpected evidences of a Divinity that shapes human lives broke in upon my college work:

The school board of the Millville district, where I had taught before going to Kansas, had been unfortunate since with teachers employed, and came to induce me to teach the following winter term of four months.

While the going wage was but forty per month generally in country school districts in our part of Ohio, they offered me fifty,- the highest ever paid in their locality. This being no more than I had gotten in Illinois was not so alluring as they doubtless hoped. There was, however, a compliment in their offer and more particularly in their insistence that strongly appealed to me. Father and mother also were pleased, doubtless for the same reason, and he, I noticed, was particularly anxious I should accept. It may have been his attitude that turned the scales, for after several visits by members of the board, I finally accepted.

How much this action affected my after life, of course can not be known, but it eventuated in terminating my attendance in a literary college at the close of that college year.

I had an interesting, pleasant and very profitable experience in carrying out my engagement. The knowledge previously gained in this district and in Illinois gave me an assurance and poise that can only come from actual experience, and I felt a happy consciousness at the close that it had been highly satisfactory to the board and profitable in a mental way to the pupils.

The term ended in time to let me enter the spring term in college. I found myself behind in Latin and Greek, as well as in mathematics, but what I lacked in the two former, I believed I could make up. In the latter, thanks to my fondness for mathematics and previous high standing, the professor consented, regardless of the fact that I had not taken trigonometry, which was in the course while I was teaching, that I might enter the general geometry class without condition upon the implied understanding that whatever knowledge of trigonometry might be necessary to carry on the work I would make up. This I did without serious effort and I passed my sophomore year, standing near the head of the class.

During this year, at the solicitation of its membership committee, I joined one of the college literary societies. This resulted in my being placed upon the weekly program a short time later for a declamation.

From early childhood, appearing in public to recite was almost unbelievably distasteful, and therefore was always avoided by me. Now that I was a grown man and had become a member, I felt I must comply, however embarrassing it might prove.

Although ample time was given to select and prepare, the very thought of it made me unbelievably nervous, sleepless and very unhappy. Doubtless because that kind of oratory especially appeals to most young men, I selected Mark Antony's famous oration to his countrymen and set diligently to the task of committing it.

This I knew must be done so completely and thoroughly that during its delivery it would automatically come to mind, thus leaving me entirely free to give proper inflection and emphasis to its stirring words. Certainly, hundreds of times did I repeat the text,- several times each evening and morning while in bed; many times through the day while walking the two miles from home to college - until the words seemed branded upon my weary brain. But still I could not feel quite certain, and to forget while delivering it, to hesitate even, to become confused, to be prompted, and finally to fail, lashed me pitilessly to almost unbelievable repetitions.

At last the evening came and I proceeded to the society's hall in a sort of dazed and most unhappy state, and there did I sit in the same unfortunate condition until I was called to the rostrum. How I got through it I do not know, only that I did not hesitate nor need prompting, and that it was over! I literally staggered to my seat, where I sat with twitching muscles and throbbing temples. The applause was generous and appeared sincere, but this gave me little comfort for I believed it to be wholly sympathetic.

This effort may have appeared more promising to others than to me; for soon thereafter I had my first and only experience in being "rushed" for membership in one of the Greek letter fraternities, having chapters in the college. I was entirely too unsophisticated to properly interpret the meaning of the friendly intimacy with which certain upper-classmen began to accost me. Occasionally one would put his arm familiarly through mine and call me by my first name and be most pleasantly chummy. Finally I was directly approached, and

before the year ended had become a member of Phi Gamma Delta.

At that time, Charles Fairbanks, afterwards United States Senator from Indiana, and later twice Vice-President of the United States, was a member, but as he graduated the same year I joined, I had no special knowledge of him, other than that I recall him as a tall, angular and somewhat ungainly looking man. He was raised, and at the time he attended college resided, in or near Marysville, the county seat of the county adjoining Delaware.

Another member of this fraternity at the time, and a classmate with whom I was quite intimate, was Frank W. Gonsaulis, who later became a very noted preacher, lecturer and educator. I recall that, while he, a fellow-classman by the name of Parsons, and myself were throwing and catching ball on the Commons near which they roomed, he was struck on the end of a finger by a swift ball thrown by me, seriously laming it for some time.

I never met him after leaving college, although at long intervals we exchanged friendly notes and upon two occasions he sent me, as mementos of our former friendship, autographed copies of some of his works,- one, a small volume of poems, and the other his novel, "The Monk and Knight."

As a student he was not very high in standing; but even then, he evinced a discriminating taste and extreme fondness for literary work, and to satisfy this bent, somewhat neglected the less congenial subjects in the course.

In his writing then, and even in conversation, he affected a somewhat florid style considered rather out of place by his classmates. At that time his fraternity stood for and prided itself upon the high standing of its brothers in college studies, and particularly in literary work; and it was the custom for its members to submit their own compositions to their brothers for criticism before they were delivered. At one of these meetings I attended, Gonsaulis read an essay for this purpose, and was rather mercilessly chaffed by other members for its extravagant phraseology.

It was at this meeting I last met him, and for some reason there lingered with me a serious doubt of his future success; which shows how very little may be safely prognosticated about the life of an ambitious, persevering young man.

His remarkable growth in public esteem, as a minister, lecturer and, later, as head of Armours Institute in Chicago, was unquestionably but the natural fulfillment of his early, ambitious dreams.

At the close of the college year, I had not only completed the sophomore year but had some credits as a junior. However, as I was now two years beyond my majority and as it would require substantially two years more to obtain a degree, I gave serious consideration as to what I ought do.

In those days, but a small per cent of the lawyers and doctors, in Ohio and farther west, were college graduates, many not even having the advantage of a high school course. So far as I was able to judge, many of these were apparently as successful as those who were college graduates. If one expected to follow teaching or to become a minister, a degree was, if not absolutely necessary, at least very desirable. I had, however, practically eliminated each of these from serious consideration and was becoming strongly inclined to the law.

There was something about the contests in a court room that especially appealed to me,- the examination of witnesses, the verbal tilts between counsel, the arguments to the judge or jury, etc. My father was often in attendance at court as a juror and occasionally as a witness, when I was a boy, and I spent more or less time observing these things while awaiting his discharge, to take him home. During these observations, I interestedly noted court proceedings, and in a boyish way classified the lawyers engaged,- some as good, others indifferent, and others apparently so little gifted in open court contest that I wondered why any one employed them. I did not then know that some of the ablest and most successful lawyers are little given to speech; but whose profound knowledge of law and exceptional judgment in applying it to a given statement of facts, gave them a standing in the business world far beyond that of their more loquacious fellows, who, to an inexperienced onlooker at trials, are supposed to be the leaders of their profession.

I have mentioned my inordinate aversion to declaiming or speaking in public, yet curiously, this seemed not to affect me greatly in controversial contests. For several years during my early, adult life, and even while attending college and high school, there was, in winter, a debating society organized in our school district, and I often took part in the discussion of the mooted questions contested. If I had carefully considered the subject under discussion and could control my stage fright when I took the floor until I forgot it in my speech, I usually did fairly well. This fact, perhaps, more than anything else, decided me to study law.

CHAPTER XXIII.

With my earnings left over from teaching in Illinois, added to by those of the preceding winter's term of school in Ohio, left me at this time with a little more than $300, and therefore I concluded to enter a law office, if possible, study during the summer and enter the University of Michigan Law School that fall.

My choice of that college as an Alma Mater came about in rather a curious and simple way: All the previous knowledge I had of it was derived through references to it found in Dr. Chase's Receipt Book, which was then quite a favorite of my mother and from which she felt she got many valuable hints and remedies in treating the common ailments of childhood. It was published in Ann Arbor, which was also the home of the author, and had a favorable standing and large circulation in the middle states,- Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, etc., especially with the rural population. I doubt not but that others of the alumni of this university may have been influenced in their choice in the same way.

The law firm of Hipple & Joy granted me permission to study in their office. Jackson Hipple, familiarly called Jack, the senior member, was of diminutive stature, weighing perhaps not to exceed 110 pounds. He was, however, well liked and generally trusted, but was quiet and somewhat diffident; yet when pressed by an aggressive opponent, was entirely able to protect himself and his client. Merrick Joy, the other member, perhaps ten years younger than Hipple, was a large, sandy-complexioned, handsome man, a scion of one of the best known families of that county; at that time he was also Justice of the Peace. Mr. Joy was always tastily and almost meticulously dressed and was most fastidious in his manner and intercourse with others. I soon came to appreciate and admire both. Here I began reading Blackstone, and

in connection with this I read also a text book especially applicable to Ohio, and, as I now recall it, was really a sort of guide for peace officers.

I learned also much about the inside workings of a not too busy law firm; how its members met and discussed with clients the different problems brought for advice upon. Indeed, the four months I was with them gave me many general ideas of how their business was transacted and some of how I believed they might improve upon it.

Having written to my brother Robert at Delavan, Illinois, of my intention of going to Michigan that fall, I received a letter in return, advising me that a young man by the name of Buckman, who had just graduated from the Delavan High School, had signified his intention of going also. So my brother arranged that we should meet at Ann Arbor and, if agreeable to both, room together, which we very pleasantly and profitably did.

The law term began in October and ended the last of March. The matriculation fee, as I now recall it, was $40, and in addition to this there was an annual tuition which was remarkably low and especially so to residents of Michigan.

Room and board, as compared with the present time, was unbelievably low. Board, in student clubs of from eight to sixteen, ranged only from one dollar to the top price of five dollars per week per man; the steward of the club getting his board for organizing and conducting it. Rooms were equally low, averaging weekly, when two occupied a room together, about one dollar each. The cheapest rooms were somewhat indifferent, but the board was abundant and was well cooked and served. The first year, we paid $1.50 a week for board, and the second, $1.75. Practically everything eaten in these clubs was bought from farmers, consisting of all kinds of vegetables, fruits,- fresh, dried and canned,- butter, eggs, honey, maple syrup, sorghum, as well as milk.

If the cost of living continues to advance, the above list of prices may seem untrue, but they are certainly not.

The law course was conducted entirely by lectures and by afternoon quizzes of the seniors, which the juniors

were permitted to attend. Two judges, Cooley and Campbell, both of them on the Michigan Supreme bench, and Mr. Kent and Mr. Wells, each a prominent member of the Detroit Bar, comprised the law faculty.

Each student had free access to the University law library and also the general library. The former contained thousands of text books, old and new, the most generally used being many times duplicated, while the English, Federal, State and Territorial Reports made it a great reference library. All reading, however, had to be done in the library. The result of this was that many students who could afford it bought standard text books - such as they thought they might later need in their law libraries - for the convenience of studying in their rooms.

Buckman and I did this, and at the end had perhaps a score, none being duplicates, which formed the nucleus of our law library.

All students took notes from the lectures, and after each lecture, Buckman and I compared ours, which aided us materially in fastening the main points in each lecture in our minds. During the first year - for that matter, during both years - I do not remember that there was any roll call. From this I take it that each student who had qualified and paid the matriculation fee and tuition was supposed to be sufficiently interested to make the most of his time; and, personally, I know this was so in most instances.

The senior year quizzes took place in the afternoon, the juniors being permitted to attend, and unless students were present to answer when called upon at these quizzes, they had perhaps little chance of a diploma.

However loosely the course may seem to have been then conducted, it is quite remarkable what a general knowledge of the law any student, of ordinary understanding and application, acquired in the two years if he applied himself at all.

The last year, each applicant for a diploma was called upon to argue, before a member of the faculty, a moot case - two students appointed on either side. During both years, many moot courts were organized among the students, the men usually grouping themselves from a

particular state - if not the state from which they came, then the state to which they expected to go when their practice began.

Taking it all in all, I am sure that it would be quite impossible for a student, in a law office, to acquire so general a knowledge of law in the same time as was done in this two-year course. They might, however, get a better idea of the proper manner of conducting a first-class law office, and other practical knowledge.

CHAPTER XXIV..

Near the end of the first year, I received a letter from my brother Harvey, who was conducting a grocery store at Saybrook, Illinois, near where I had taught in that state, advising me that the school board of this same district was anxious to secure my services for the summer term, and asking me to come directly there from college, which I did.

Since last seeing my brother, his wife had died and their little baby daughter had been taken by its maternal grandparents to raise. He still occupied his former home, which was partially furnished, but boarded at the village hotel. He made me very welcome and comfortable while waiting to see the school board.

He had a very prosperous and rapidly growing business, in which he was absorbingly interested. I watched his careful management and tactful treatment of customers who were attracted to his store because he bought and sold only for cash and therefore much lower than any of his competitors. With his customers, he was always "Harvey," and with him it was always "Uncle" or "Aunt" So-and-So, as everybody was addressed by their first names. He graciously took their butter and eggs in exchange for groceries - occasionally slipping a piece of candy to some fatigued and peevish child, and carefully gathered and kept, for the use of the many housewives who came to his store, the latest receipts; and for such as used it, he kept a free box of smoking tobacco open to all. But above everything, he was cheerfully obliging and helpful to every one.

After the store was closed at night, he was very lonely and homesick, for he had loved and enjoyed his family; and now, to go to the cheerless rooms of his house, where he was wont to be met by a glad wife and sweet child, to an oppressive and forbidding silence, was very discouraging. It must have been the third night I was with him, and the school board was to meet me the coming Saturday - but a day or two off - to close

with me, and as we reached his rooms, he said, "Frank, what is the matter with you clerking and staying with me for this summer instead of teaching? I will pay you as much as the school board, and I think it will be more enjoyable to both of us."

"But, Harvey," I protested, in surprise, "I don't believe I can ever be able to wait upon and treat your customers as you do, although it would certainly be fine to be with you."

"Yes you can, after a little experience," he said; and then proceeding, as if the matter was quite settled, he said, "I will notify the board and arrange to that effect at once." And so he did, and I passed one of the most enjoyable periods of my early life that summer with him.

It afforded me, also, opportunity to study and become familiar with the general public in a personal and quite intimate way, which was of much value through life. Surprising as it may seem, in perhaps six weeks, I had become so familiar with prices and the location of the goods in the store that I could quite satisfactorily wait upon my share of the customers, even on Saturdays - the busiest day of each week.

Some sixty days later, my brother took a vacation for thirty days, going to Chicago and other points where he bought goods, to meet his wholesale friends, and then went on to the East, and on his way back visited father and mother at Delaware. While at the latter place, he found I had a standing measure with the local tailor for suits, and he selected the cloth and ordered one, presenting it to me when he returned home. The business and associations were so congenial that I almost dreaded to stop and leave for college again.

CHAPTER XXV.

The second and final year of my law course was but a repetition of the first, except that we came in for senior quizzes and must also try a moot case before a member of the faculty. It befell Buckman and myself to appear on one side of a case before Judge Cooley, and it was our misfortune also to lose it - not, I feel justified in claiming, because we were less prepared or possibly presented our side less forcefully, but because, in the mind of Judge Cooley, the law was against us.

However, after thoroughly re-examining all the authorities, I still thought our contention was right and should have prevailed; and, later, I submitted the same question and authorities to Judge Campbell, who a few days later advised me that he thought our contention was right.

These two men were very able and distinguished jurists, both lovers of justice, and beyond all question of doubt rendered their decisions without prejudice or favor; and yet, upon an identical state of facts and influenced by the same decisions, they disagreed as to what the judgment ought be.

From this I learned that upon the application of law to a given statement of facts, however learned judges might be, they might honestly differ in their decision, and therefore no careful lawyer ought content himself without laying before a judge, presiding in any case he might be engaged in, not only such decisions as might have bearing upon it, but also urge every fair argument that his reason suggested. More particularly is this true in nisi prius courts, where the presiding judge often has not the time, and some not even the inclination, to look up and properly digest decisions.

As an incident to this closing year at Law School, perhaps I may be excused for referring to a somewhat

flattering and unexpected offer from the Millville school board, where I had previously taught. They again went to father and advised him that, because of trouble in their school the winter previous, they were quite anxious to engage me to teach the ensuing winter's term. All of this he advised me of at their request, and wanted to know if I would consider it. Their offer was exceptional in that they were willing to pay $75 per month, if necessary, to secure my services.

It was somewhat tempting and certainly beyond any desert my former teaching merited, but I felt I could not accept it; as, doing so, might result, as did my engagement in this same district three years before with my literary course, in terminating my law course also.

Fearing that some readers may think I attach much importance to the apparent success I had in teaching, I wish, as a final reference to it, to say that I have recited only the plain facts; and I, too, share in the opinion of any others who may, like me, believe that there is nothing remarkable or particularly commendable in it. It shows, however, I think, that mediocrity may make a fair success if backed by a purposeful determination and fair common sense.

I also made the discovery that scholars, from the oldest to the youngest, were readily responsive to any unflagging endeavor to help them; and that the respect of scholars for a teacher was greatly enhanced by a belief in his fairness,- that is, that he had no favorites, whether rich or poor, bright or dull, but sympathetically tried to assist every one.

The paramount benefit I derived from teaching was perhaps a much wider knowledge and keener interest in ordinary human beings, including myself, and the fact that I finished with fair credit gave me a future confidence and courage which served me well in after life.

The honors of the graduating year were chiefly two,- class president and class orator. In a body so large as the 280 that comprised the class the first year, and something over 200 for the second, and which met but an hour a day for five days each week, in the forenoon for lectures, and occasionally an hour in the afternoon, when senior quizzes were held, there was little opportunity for a student becoming at all generally acquainted with the entire class.

The moot courts increased the more intimate relationship of each student by perhaps forty, and thus the students were gathered intimately only in small groups and very few had such marked qualities in appearance or standing as to attract conspicuous attention.

The result was that, in selecting men for these two chief class honors, things happened rather than took place because of merit. This may be better understood when I state that even my name was suggested for each of these honors without my having any knowledge or intimation that this might be done. Indeed, during the counting of the votes, when I heard my name mentioned I was almost speechless with consternation for fear I might, by some unfortunate chance, be selected. Happily, however, I was but one of the four highest in the votes for class orator and second in those for president, and therefore became, ipso facto, vice-president - a position in which I was never called upon for service.

The above remarks I beg may not be construed as coming from a desire to exaggerate my fitness for either of these honors, for such presumption is entirely groundless, and should I have been selected as class orator, I am quite sure I would have rejected the honor, as I had never prepared or delivered a set address in my life, my only experience being such as I have hereinbefore related.

At the close of the senior year, with what books I had bought, a graduation suit and other special demands, I ran out of money and was compelled to borrow fifty dollars from my father. One item of extra expense this year was the cost of a trip to Delavan, Illinois, in November, to attend the funeral of brother Robert's wife, who suddenly passed away leaving a family of five small children. I was especially fond of her because of the sisterly interest she evinced in me during the winter vacation I passed in their house several years before. I was advised of the sad news by telegram from my brother, which simply said, "Flora is dead." All the weary way out in the train, these words rang in my ears. When I arrived I found a most pitiful sight to behold. The funeral was taking place and, surrounding her coffined form, were gathered her husband and little ones,- the least a babe in arms, the oldest but then twelve. My regret was that I could say or do nothing to comfort or lessen their grief, although I hope my presence alone gave them some solace.

In March 1876, while the ground was still thickly covered with the winter snow, we graduated and received our diplomas. The ceremony was simple. The class assembled at a given point, marched in double columns to the large auditorium in the main University building, where, after an address from Judge Cooley, he gave us our diplomas, conferring upon us the degree of Bachelor of Law. And thus ended the law course of 200 fledglings, who were to go forth in life to practice their profession.