

Back Home I'm Bartlett

by Robin Fowler

BACK HOME IN BARTLETT

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To Bob -- He asked me to write it
and to Jane -- Through her helpful criticism, certain passages
were deleted. It was she who pointed out rough spots, and it
was she who typed it, page after careful page.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: In clothing my characters and setting my stage,
I have relied on memory, not imagination. I have resisted the
temptation to borrow. All the stories told here are true.

THE PERSONS INVOLVED IN THESE PROCEEDINGS ARE:

Daddy	Thompson Ernest Fowler	"Tom" to his friends
Mother	Abbie Augusta Johnson Fowler	"Gus" to Daddy
Nana	Mildred Maria Kuykendall Fowler	My paternal grandmother
My Sister	Gene, eldest of the children	
My Brother	Tom, second in line	"The Boy"
Me	Robin, the baby	"The Muchacho"
Daddy's older brother, Uncle Eugene		
Uncle Eugene's wife, Aunt Minnie		

P R O L O G U E

I have always found family history rather dry going, so I am not a good authority on the subject; but the following is correct as far as I have been able to gather from conversations I have overheard, and from some reading I have done on the subject. So, let's get on with the begats.

The Fowlers, who came to this country, landed in Jamestown. One branch eventually went North and, thus becoming Yankees, deserve no further consideration. My branch, drifting in waves of migration, lived at various times in Tennessee, Missouri, Ohio and, finally, in Texas. There were several Fowlers who owned and captained river boats on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Their home base was on the Ohio.

A family story which I always found amusing had to do with one of these early Fowlers. He was a wealthy man who lived in Tennessee. When he came to his last illness, his family and in-laws, having a natural curiosity as to how his will would divide the boodle, gathered from near and far. It was the practice in those dear days for families to visit each other, and stay for long periods of time. So, this was a wonderful opportunity for them to get together for a good time, with the added sauce of an expected popper at the end. The menfolk swapped stories in the shade of the trees, while their women prepared vast quantities of food and exchanged gossip inside. The dying old man lingered on in a coma. Things seemed to be at a stalemate. One day, one of the girls, skylarking in the kitchen, dropped a great stack of plates. At the unexpected crash, the old man started up in his bed, and cried out in anguish, "My God; Don't break my dishes!" and fell back, dead.

Using Thompson Fletcher Fowler (usually known as "T. F."), as a starting point, the family history becomes more exact. His father was probably named Levi. My grandfather was born March 22, 1836, in Missouri. He probably came to Texas with his father-in-law, Noah Smithwick. Noah's daughter, T. F.'s first wife, was named Martha. The reason I give for a stay in Texas, was that their first son, Charles Louis, was born there April 6, 1860. From Texas, they

all took a herd of cattle to California, where Noah remained. It was in California that T. F.'s second son, Wiley, was born, October 5, 1863. Some time after that, Martha died, and T. F. returned to Texas. It was here that he married Mildred Maria Kuykendall, born October 30, 1847. She may have been born in Moody, Texas.

T. F. must have been a stern husband. Nana, my grandmother, told me a story of her honeymoon. When lunchtime came, during this train trip, she had her nose buried in a book, and her husband ate alone from a generously packed wicker basket. When she arrived at a suitable stopping place, about two o'clock in the afternoon, she shyly asked her new husband to please reach down the basket. He informed her that lunchtime had passed, and next meal to come out of the basket would be supper. And she was such a little thing!

It was about this time that T.F. drove a second herd of cattle to California, and lived there for some years. His third son, Eugene George, was born there, September 12, 1870. I believe this took place in Sacramento as Nana had told me that had been their home. They then returned to Texas, where Daddy, Thompson Ernest, was born July 11, 1874, near Davilla.

In 1873, at first in partnership with his brother, Tillman, T. F. started buying land in Milan County. By 1884, he owned about 9,000 acres near Davilla, for which he had paid over \$24,000.00.

Davilla was named for the Davilla family which had originally owned it under an old Spanish land grant. Before the railroads came through that part of Texas, it had been a cultural and business center. There were two seminaries there at one time, but the railroads missed Davilla, and it went down hill.

On T. F.'s death, his holdings were divided as follows: Uncle Charles, money; Uncle Wiley, cattle; and Daddy and Uncle Eugene, land. At this time, the four brothers went in different directions, except for Daddy and Uncle Eugene, each to die in widely separated places: Uncle Charley, May 22, 1931, in Nogales, Arizona; Uncle Wiley, unknown, as will be explained; Uncle Eugene, June 8, 1931, Bartlett, Texas; and Daddy, April 11, 1917, Temple Texas.

A B O U T M E

I was born -- to outdo Dickens, I hasten to add -- on September 25, 1903, on our ranch near Davilla, Texas. Delivery was by Dr. Scott of the famous hospital of Scott and White, Temple, Texas. Dr. Scott liked to hunt birds and he often came down to our place for bird shoots, hence the favor to us. Since he was a renowned surgeon, not a gynecologist, I would probably have done as well with a midwife; but in any event, I suffered no ill effects.

Solid facts on early memories are hard to come by. How much is a pot-pourri of half-remembered dreams, and how much is reality? I know where the stairs were, and there was a striking clock located somewhere in the house, but I cannot picture it. There was something to do with the front door, but what I cannot say. It has been my experience that front doors of ranch and farm houses were seldom used. So, why remember our front door?

However, I am on firm ground when it comes to the cinnamon red-hots. They were enclosed in a little glass locomotive which stood on the mantel in the living room of our ranch house. They were got at by unscrewing the metal cap atop the smoke stack, and were sold for a quarter by butcher-boys on trains. I remember standing in front of the mantel and wishing I were tall enough to reach them. I wonder what those locomotives would be worth as collectors' items today. This cinnamon red-hot episode took place before I was two, for when I was that age, Gene was old enough to go to school, and we moved to Bartlett permanently.

The ranch house was a big, three-story affair, with a glass sided cupola, like a river boat wheel house, perched on top. The lumber for its construction had come by wagon from Taylor, about thirty miles away. That was the closest rail point at the time. The house must have taken a train-load of lumber. Nana once told me that when Daddy was a little boy, on tasting ice cream for the first time, he exclaimed, "Gosh, Ma, it's hot." He was born in that same house.

When we moved away, Daddy sold the house and part of the land, and the new owner turned the running of it over to a tenant farmer. This farmer cut down the shade trees for firewood, and ripped up the porches for kindling. I was glad when the whole shebang went up in one of the most spectacular fires in county history.

Before leaving the ranch, although I do not remember the experience, I played the role of star in a little drama concocted by Gene and Tom. Gene was a precocious little girl. She had taught herself to read, and in so doing, had become fascinated by stories of the sufferings of the early Christians in the arenas of Rome. Desirous of seeing one of these spectacles at first hand, she and Tom had taken me down to one of the corrals and tied me to a snubbing post. Then they turned in the pigs. It is a known fact that a pig will eat anything, including its own farrow, so it is just as well that a ranch hand came by at that appropriate moment. Otherwise, these memoirs may never have been written. Before the reader finishes he may well wish the ranch hand had been otherwise occupied on that distant day.

Another early episode, one I do remember, took place during a stroll we three children took through a cow pasture. It was the time of year when the fruit of prickly pear was glowing warmly red. Gene had heard that they were good to eat when properly baked, and was anxious to test the rumor. The problem was transportation. These fruits are covered with thorns ranging from microscopic to truly impressive. As she ruminated, her eye lit upon me, dressed as I was in blouse, tied with a drawstring at the waist. Voila, the problem was solved. The pears were gingerly broken off with the aid of a pair of short sticks, and down the neck of my blouse they went to bulge securely above the drawstring. Before I was as lumpy as a sack-full of apples, I was filling the air with lamentations. It was to no avail. Long into the night, Nana, who was a very religious woman, was praying the Lord to give her patience as she wielded a pair of tweezers. In the turmoil, the experiment was never carried to fruition. Does anyone know if prickly pear is good

to eat when baked.

Before leaving this subject, I should like to mention a scientific experiment in which I was the principal actor. It happened when my mother took Tom and me to visit her brother, Bob, who lived on the outskirts of Fort Worth. One day Tom was discussing flying with D. R., the oldest son of this branch of the family, and the upshot of the talk was to put theory to the test. They found a wooden box, nailed a flat plank across its top, and carried it, and me, to the ridge of the barn in the back yard. I was crammed into the contraption like Marat in his French bathtub, and launched down the barn roof. It was a failure. I plummeted.. Had the take-off been more normal it might have had a better chance of success. To add insult to injury, they sent me off back end to.

After moving to Bartlett, I am on firmer ground. There are grave responsibilities associated with growing up. I well remember when I was grown up enough to be sent to the post office alone for the first time. We had no mail delivery in those days, and the post office was on the other side of where the M. K. & T. cut a 300-foot wide swath through the center of town. Duty bound by my mother's admonition to exercise extreme care in crossing the tracks, I flattened my body against the brick wall of the building adjoining the tracks, and edged my head around the corner far enough to expose one eye to the possibility of a train's existence. Nothing there. Moving nothing except my head, owl-wise, I scrutinized the terrain in the other direction. Again, nothing. Reassured, I moved boldly out onto the sidewalk, and again checked my first impression. Again, all was tranquil. It was a case of now or never. Faculties at the alert, and with the drive of a sprinter, I was safely across in jiffytime, and one of life's firsts had been accomplished with elan.

The post office was the theatre of another of those little vignettes of early life. Again, I had gone for the mail. A saloon stood next door but one to the post office entrance. As I was passing, a very drunk, very fat

man, with a look of complete concentration on his face, came lurching out to support himself by a stanchion. His torso was covered only by an undershirt. There had been an altercation inside, and he had been cut to ribbons. The red globules of blood, especially vivid against the released bulges of white fat, were trickling to fall quite audibly onto the sidewalk. He just stood there, motionless. The entire action could not have taken over two seconds, but I have been afraid of a knife all my life. Give me a good, clean gunshot wound any time.

There is a great deal of trial and error in growing up. Take Grape Nuts, for example. We, like other people of that time, had prepared breakfast foods, together with our bacon and eggs. One of the first I remember was called Manna, but it was taken off the market when people complained of the name. Now, I liked Grape Nuts, and we had a grape vine in our back yard. I concluded I would make my own. I experimented by collecting the seeds at various times of the year. I dried them in the sun; I dried them in the oven; I cracked them before drying; I soaked them before cracking; I aged them, I fermented them. They just didn't taste the same. I never consciously gave up on them, I just gradually drifted to other activities and forgot them.

One of these activities was collecting bottle horses. Our town dump was a rich mine for all kinds of good stuff. Bottles in those days were not so stereotyped as they are now. So, on various trips to the dump, I brought back with me not only many bottles, but many kinds and shapes of bottles. Judgment had to be exercised. They had to lend themselves to practical use. By this I mean they had to be put into string stables, and they had to be of a shape which would take string harness. This was farm country, and I was putting into practice, on a large scale, the farm life I saw around me. Before I got through, I must have covered a couple of hundred square feet with my inanimate, miniature draft animals, all harnessed for instant use, and neatly housed in a roofless, imaginary building. My bemused parents must have looked on this endeavor with awe, but neither of them ever spoke of it to me. This was before

the days of TV, or even radio. We made our own fun.

At a slightly later date, kites were big. There was always plenty of wood, newspaper and flour paste, and a big ball of twine cost a nickel. By tying one end of a ball to the next, I could get out, under ideal conditions, what seemed like a mile of string. It, alone, would be so heavy that it lay along the ground for some distance. A delicate touch had to be used with trees and telephone lines (our telephone number, by the way, was 135). Fripperies such as parachutes, could be made of paper or cloth, and supported below the line by means of a bent pin. They could be sent slithering along the line, to be released at a desired height by a twang of the line. Some boys designed and made elaborate reels to wind in the string. I thought this effete, and not in keeping with the noble sport of kite flying. Instead, I favored a stick held firmly in the left hand. Through a rapid alternating motion with this hand, coordinated to an equally rapid figure eight motion on the part of the right hand, the twine was neatly rove in. It had the advantage of being faster the nearer the kite came.

My life was not all action. At about this time, I went through a long period of nightmares. It was always the same dream. I was alone on a country road. There was a small, rail-less, wooden bridge some ten feet before me. It was neither night nor day. It had rained but there was no mud. My feet were powerless to move, and there was something behind me so awful I dared not turn my head to look. The terror was unbearable, and as a release, I woke up. Each night I knew I would have the dream when I went to bed, and I asked mother to pray that I would not have another, and she did, but I did. Finally, it just stopped.

I once had a dream about going to heaven. I was being drawn up a circular ramp, like a helix, in a car. It was a mythical car, not an automobile. The structure was a gigantic Tower of Babel with its top piercing through a cloud formation. I was surrounded by angels and cherubims, all dressed in flowing white robes and with extended white wings, and over everything was

playing a pearly, pulsating light from no perceivable source. Also, from no source, I could hear ethereal music without notes, measure, or recognizable instruments, but blended with a mighty chorus of voices. As I ascended the music and light became louder and stronger until it was unendurable, and the dream gradually faded away.

Our neighbors, the Fitzgeralds had started a chicken hatchery. As they were showing me through the incubator section, a barrel in the corner of the room caught my attention. I was told it contained bone meal, a part of the chickens' diet. The idea of an animal's bones ground up, as a part of the food of another animal seemed to be gruesome to me. How much "I'll grind his bones to make my bread" had to do with it, I don't know, but that night I dreamed myself to be in our back yard when suddenly, flying low over the buildings, came clouds of locusts. Only these were not locusts. They were clouds of bone meal, and they were homing in on me. I ran to the screen porch and managed to close its door just in time. As my hand held the door closed, the first soft splat of the alien material touched the screen and clung there. Soon the entire wire wall was covered. It did not fall to the ground. It only waited in arrested flight, as patient as nature itself, to reach its target. I was the magnet of attraction, and there was nothing I could do about it.

Nights weren't always for dreaming. Mocking birds have the most beautiful and varied songs of all birds. Many Spring nights, when they were courting in the full moonlight, I have lain and listened to mocking birds as they poured out music more beautiful than even Beethoven could have dreamed of; or have listened to the wild honking of geese as they migrated high overhead in flight to distant and lonely places, and these sounds gave me, in my snug bed, a wonderful feeling of security.

As a little boy, caught in a sudden thunderstorm, I was running barefoot from the shelter of home through sheets of rain. I had gotten half way across our street, when there was an awful crash of lightning and thunder. I lay in the mud, where I had been thrown, for some time before I was able to get to my

feet and resume my flight. Into the house, and under the bed I went. Naturally, I knew that death was certain, and probably imminent. This was the Bible Belt, and I knew that I was in no state to meet my Maker. Our next door neighbor, no relation but called "cousin," had recently been reading to me a series of children's Bible stories. The thought came to me, she was my hope of salvation. Did I have time to make it? I could but try. Even if I did not last long enough, God would understand my intent, and this would weigh at my judgment. Out I went into the rain again. Even before I reached her screen door, I was calling out, "Cousin Molly, read me about the blood running out of Jesus."

I was satisfied that Daddy was the finest man in the world. He was greater than George Washington. He was greater, even, than Robert E. Lee. He knew everyone from everywhere, but even I was surprised, the first time we took a trip in a Pullman Car, that he knew the porter. The man was a complete stranger to me, but Daddy knew him, and called him by his first name. He used it several times, and always got it right. The porter's name was George.

When I was very young, our town had a Fourth of July parade. It started at the school house, wound through the business section, and ended at the tabernacle. This latter was a massive wooden structure. Inside there was a wide balcony around three sides, and it was here that high school plays, concerts by visiting trombonists, and shows by magicians were held. This was the place where Woodie Rountree, a waiter in a school play, dropped his tray, and then dropped it again to show he had done it intentionally in the first place. And, this was the place, where I, acting in a later school play, being nervous, forgot to say the key line: that a certain person was to travel by way of the river road. Subsequent happenings made no sense at all, and the audience left completely mystified.

Sam Dillard had a goat. I had a little Sears Roebuck wagon, an exact replica of a full size wagon, complete with tail gate and spring seat. Sam

Sometimes we are presented with a spectacle so beautiful our words fail in their descriptive powers. I was presented with such a one when I was eight or nine years old. It happened during our morning recess period in school that on looking up I was dumfounded to see the the bright sky obscured by a scintilating, shimmering nebulous of silky strands. I knew they were strands because some of the lower ones were discernible as being just that. In penetrating the depth of the sky, strand obfuscated strand until the mass of them made it possible to look almost directly into the sun itself. It was as if the earth were wrapped into a package of glistening floss. There ^{WERE} millions of these little filaments floating free in the gentle wind. I didn't know until years later that riding each of these ethereal space ships was a tiny spider. What trigger of nature had released this marvel to my wondering eye? I never saw its like again.

The strange part of this story is that there was no particular excitement from my fellow townsmen. Perhaps we were so accustomed to remarkable things, living so close to nature as we did, that we accepted them as being a part of our daily lives.

volunteered his goat for the parade, so we gilded its horns, decked out the wagon in bunting, and I dressed up as Uncle Sam. I had a real good time, and won the red ribbon. When he was a bigger boy, in high school, Sam opened up a hamburger stand in a narrow space about six feet wide. It prospered, and he opened another, and another. Soon he had six stands in little towns around us, and one could often see Sam bouncing along the roads in his Model T Ford, supervising the operation. His roadster had a wheel-cover over the spare tire on its rear, and on this he had lettered "Sam Dillard - The Hamburger King." He probably wound up a rich man.

I wonder how many people remember their first movie. With me, who lived through so many firsts (first radio, first airplane, first TV, first man on the moon) it is easy.

The first movie to come to our town was a kind of tent show. There weren't many suitable theatres then, so the man who owned the show carried his own tent and chairs. He pitched his tent under the town water tower. The show had to be run at night, when it was dark.

One of Sam's cousins was a boy named Jim Bob. Jim Bob was the absolute and positive apple of his mother's eye. Mrs. Dillard was a fat and foolish woman who adored not only constantly talking about Jim Bob, but in doing things to please him. So, that first night, she arrived at the tent early, Jim Bob in hand, to insure a front row, aisle seat. The tent filled up as darkness fell, and everyone was a-flutter with anticipation. Soon the spotlight came on the screen, and the show began. It was a picture, head-on, of a steam locomotive, and was completely believable to those unprejudiced eyes. Beginning small, it came rushing up the rails toward the projector, and soon it loomed menacingly, and there was a nervous shifting in seats, and a clearing of throats. Mrs. Dillard, seated as she was in the most exposed seat, was under great tension. Now, as the monster filled the entire screen, Mrs. Dillard, child in arms, with a wild scream of "God save little Jim Bob," charged through the tent wall, scattering camp chairs and tent pegs in her wake.

By the time World War I came along, Mrs. Dillard had almost no reason left. Jim Bob had gone to war, and Texas, as was also true in World War II, was sinking under the weight of young men being turned into soldiers. Troop trains were constantly coming through our town, and when they stopped, Mrs. Dillard wandered along the track speaking to the soldiers through the open car windows. "Do you know Jim Bob? Have you seen Jim Bob?" she would ask. Many of them seemed to sense the situation and were real nice to her.

Later, a man bought a building in the business section, put in benches in stairsteps, and opened a permanent movie house. He had six films, one for each day of the week (there was no Sunday movie), and ran them in succession. As one entered the lights were on and the fire screen was down. In its center was painted a woodland scene, tastefully done, and around that were signs for local merchants. I remember one was "Pullman Loaf Bread" at Lawrence Brothers. The whole was entwined in Rococco scroll work, and was interesting to look at while waiting for the show to start. At last the owner rolled up the screen on a kind of curtain pole, walked back to the projector, and "Ladies will please remove their hats" was flashed on the screen. I never minded that I had seen it all before, and I guess nobody else did, for he always had a pretty good turn-out. One of his films had been made as a serious project, but had turned out to be so awful that someone in trying to salvage something from the mess, had added just under the caption: "This is a Drammer -- Honest."

Eventually his trade began to fall off, and he sold out to a man who had started a chain and had movie houses in Georgetown, Granger and Bartlett. The flavor went out of it with this change, and after that we had good movies just like any other town.

CHRISTMAS AND HOLIDAYS

I'm afraid modern kids, accustomed as they are to having every whim, be it bicycle, car, or separate pad, instantly granted by the magic genie, miss a great deal in Christmas. With us it was a time of great excitement. With it came the once-a-year oranges at the toes of stockings by the fire. Also, to us boys, and also in stockings, came the finest knife I have ever known. Marked "Office Knife" it could be whetted to a razor edge for cutting sticks and fingers, and fitted just right into one's pocket for handy reference until it was lost through the hole it inevitably wore. Christmas was the time for wooden tubs of jelly beans, and gum drops, and nigger babies, and gift-wrapped five-pound boxes of Whitman Chocolates, each box with a diagram to show where each delicious piece lay, to permit the salivary glands to anticipate, and to avoid surprises. There were whistles, there was clothing, there were toys, and there were the Ingersol dollar watches, with black faces and luminous hands and numbers. Oh, for the hours spent in the darkness under bed clothes the better to observe the mystery of the passage of time.

Sometimes, those who thought they knew all were given their comeuppance. One year, Nana made Tom a most magnificent wool bathrobe in navy blue. Its edges were piped, it had two generous pockets, and it had a broad belt. Long hours went into it while he was out of the house, and I watched it grow. With it grew my desire. Desire was followed by broad hints, and hints by an outright request that Tom be given another present. I would like the bathrobe. Nana was a woman of principle. She had promised herself that the robe was for Tom, and to Tom it would go. Come Christmas, there were two equally bulky packages for the boys. My bathrobe proved to be much the handsomer of the two. It was a rich Burgundy.

There was the time we drove down to Austin. As it was shortly before Christmas, we were each given a dollar and turned loose. With much caution to avoid being overseen, I went through Mr. S. H. Kress's store and made my

selections. For Tom, a wind-up tug boat. It was provided with a propeller and a rudder. It was a twenty-five cent, and worth every penny of it. After some days, I decided to try it out in the bathtub. It proved to be a real beauty, and I spent many happy hours in seclusion with the bathroom door locked. Mother must have thought I was getting rid of dirty scaberosis. When finally our presents were exchanged, I found I had received a beautiful S. H. Kress, twenty-five cent tug boat from Tom. The one trouble was that its spring, to my accustomed fingers, was woefully weak, and gave only a modest turn of speed; while Tom, in no uncertain terms, told me I had beat most of the paint off his boat. So, we exchanged and all was well.

My most memorable Christmas took place when I was very young, probably three or four. The sliding doors had been pushed back, and we had entered our parlor. (We had our Christmas presents on Christmas Eve). A large Christmas tree was set in the center of a heavy oilcloth circle. On this circle was a color imprint of Santa Claus, seated in his sleigh and being pulled by eight reindeer, also in a circle so that Donner and Blitzen were jumping at the rear of the sleigh. This drop cloth was a necessity as the tree was lighted by a multitude of small candles, set in tin holders, and these were clamped to branches of the tree. The tree was trimmed with tinsel, heavy German Christmas balls (I still have a mid-night blue one and a gold one), and with a bright star to top it off.

I had rehearsed "God Rest ye Merry Gentlemen," and performed on cue, but paid little attention to the congratulations as I had my eyes riveted on a real toy electric train which was circling the base of the tree. We all seated ourselves while Daddy, dressed in mufti, was playing Santa Claus. The first tag he took was out of the engine of the train, and looking at it, he announced: "For the Boy." Tom, being older, was "the Boy," while I was "the Muchacho." Rapidly alternating my weight on the cheeks of my buttocks, I worked my way to the front of the chair, and so, reached the floor.

Advancing, I announced direct to Daddy, "I's the Bye, Daddy." Everything fell apart instantly, but he stuck to his guns. I don't even remember what I got.

The next year things worked out better. Daddy and Uncle Eugene had built a school house, and hired a teacher, for the tenant children who lived on their adjoining farms. Every year they gave a Christmas party for the community, and everyone got a present. This year, cruising among the presents before the festivities started, I saw my name protruding from the stack of a real, miniature, steam water pump. When the presents were read out, the card actually said, "For Robin and Tom." Well, anyway, I came first.

We went back to Uncle Eugene's house, where, as it was Christmas, and cold, there was a blazing fire made of mesquite stumps. We charged our boiler, filled a bucket for our suction pump, and proceeded to put out the fire while Uncle Eugene sat quietly beaming.

It was about this time that I bought a beautiful Christmas present for Uncle Eugene. It was a pipe rack. He had never smoked in his life, but he received the gift in the spirit in which it was given, and put it in a place of honor. The ceilings in his house were very high because of the hot climate, and the fireplace mantel in his living room was a double-decker. It was on the top shelf of this mantel that my pipe rack was placed together with a cocoanut shell husk which had been carved into a face. The last time I saw Uncle Eugene, many years later, he was seated in his livingroom beside an oval marble top Victorian table. He loved music and had the best Edison phonograph available. Edison records at that time were as thick as waffles and he had hundreds of them. The Edison people in Austin sent him each new catalog as it was printed. He had everything from Pretty Little Red Wing to grand opera. That night, as he was listening to some music, the table beside him was crowded with kerosene lamps. With his poor eyesight he could not read with anything less. As I sat there quietly watching him,

I chanced to look up, and there, in its usual place, was my pipe rack.

Christmas was not the only time of excitement for us. The Fourth of July was something to look forward to. Several days before that date, the express man would deliver a big, wooden box to us. Its top was securely screwed down, and it was as carefully finished as a good piece of cabinet work. Once opened, a beautiful and bountiful array of Japanese fireworks was exposed. We just stood there for a time, not touching anything. There were packages of sparklers, sky rockets, Roman candles, pin wheels, Egyptian snakes, torpedoes, giant firecrackers, and at the bottom of all, were folded paper balloons. There wasn't just one of a kind. There were many of them, and the whole had been so cunningly packed that the big box hadn't an inch of waste space. The pieces were all of the biggest size. The Roman candles, for example, were thirty-two shot affairs. They had much greater velocity for Tom and me to shoot at each other than the puny eight or sixteen shot variety, and they made excellent guide sticks to use when running with the iron rims of buggy wheels.

Only Daddy was permitted to handle certain fireworks. This was just as well. I remember once a giant cracker hung fire. By the time I was convinced it really had caught it was too late to throw it properly and it exploded near my right ear. Not only was my hand numb, but I was deaf in that ear for a week. Naturally I did not mention the episode.

When night fell, between our touching off pin wheels and fire crackers, it was Daddy who set off the sky rockets. He propped them against a water hydrant for lighting, and with a swoosh they would go rushing up to explode in a shower of stars against the night sky.

When all else was gone, the paper balloons were carefully lifted out, and with a delicate touch, expanded to the approximate size they would be when filled with hot air. At the bottom opening was a cross piece of wire, and at its center was a metal cup containing an absorbent material. This cup was filled with kerosene and carefully lit. Then the whole was held by

the bottom until it was fully rounded and buoyant. When released, it would go soaring up in the air to float off in the wind, its colored sides clearly visible from the light of the burning kerosene within. One after another we sent them up and watched them for miles in the night sky as they went their way, probably to set some farmer's corn field afire -- but we never thought of that.

A N I M A L S

We had lots of animals around our place. There were horses for riding and for pulling our buggy and surrey. The best, by far, was Dolly, our thoroughbred mare. She liked her water fresh and she learned to turn on the faucet at the watering trough with her teeth. As she never bothered to turn it off, we frequently found our barnyard flooded. She became a fire horse, and when the town fire bell rang, she started kicking her stall to pieces. It happened this way: Next to Daddy's gin was the town cotton seed oil plant where cotton seed was turned into oil, cake and linters. The manager was a crook and we refused to sell our seed to him, shipping instead to a mill in Granger, six miles away. He tried to get rid of us by burning us out. One time it would be the cotton house, another the seed house, the office, the engine house, or even the gin itself. It got so no insurance company would carry a policy on us and the losses incurred were large and complete. These fires were always in the dead of night. The 'phone would ring, there would be a hurried saddling of Dolly, and there would be a dead run down to the gin. Dolly loved it. Daddy finally came to sleeping in the seed house with a loaded shot gun. One night he caught the culprit, torch in hand. The man plead for leniency because of his wife and children; so Daddy gave him one day to get out of town. No one ever heard of him again.

Then, there was our pig. He was a cute little Poland China when he came to us, and we children promptly adopted him for a pet. We saw to it that he ate heavily, and that he had his sides scratched with a corn cob, paradise to a pig. We prepared sanitary mud puddles for him to loll in, and then brought him inside for washings in our bath tub, to emerge pink and sweet smelling. Time brought changes. A four hundred pound hog doesn't exactly lend itself to being brought into a house for washings in anyone's bath tub. We gave it up as an impossible situation, but the hog was used to the better things of life. He thought nothing of heaving his weight

through a screen door for a cooling siesta indoors. He was a positive nuisance. One day I heard a commotion and went into the dining room to find the hog circling the dining table with the cook, broom in hand, belaboring his behind. The whole house shook. With each blow she was muttering, "Come in the house! Make yourself to home! Go in and play a chune on Miss Gussie's piano!"

We were all glad when our problem was solved by winter. It was cold enough for hog slaughtering time, so up came a butcher, and our hog was no more. Even so, he had one last crack at us. There is no meat that I know of which is more delicious than back strap. This is the strip lying along either side of the backbone. It is frightfully uneconomical, and, I believe, unobtainable in a butcher shop. So, we were looking forward to our meal of back strap.

When the platter of smoking, savory meat was finally placed before Daddy for serving, the cook announced, "Mr. Tom, you ain't gonna be able to eat that meat. That's bo meat." And so it was. We had to throw the whole carcass away. The hog had never been castrated. It was a boar.

Our cats were numerous. Among the more outstanding were Smoke Bellew, Willie Pathene (a name which seemed to suit the animal), and Little Sister. Little Sister was head and shoulders above the rest. What she lacked in appearance, being grey and muddy, she more than made up for in character. She was a sex maniac. If nature had permitted, she would have had kittens weekly. It was she who introduced me to the biological facts of life. I had a habit of letting her sleep with me on cold nights as she was warm to my feet. Mother had suggested to me that she thought it wise for me to forego the practice for a time. I had noticed that Little Sister had become somewhat paunchy, but laid it to too many mice. That is how I woke up one morning with a bedfull of kittens.

Little Sister liked to have her kittens in Mother's picture hats. After her confinement, she would parade them by us, firmly clenched in her teeth

by the scruff of the neck. It scared the daylights out of me the first time. I thought she was cannibalizing them. Uncle Eugene was the chief beneficiary of this one-man cat factory. At one time, he had twenty-two of her descendants on his farm.

Little Sister's chief claim to the unusual was her tail. It had been repeatedly broken and rebroken, and kinked about in a most unexpected fashion. Little Sister had one faculty which was at once both smart and dumb. She was smart enough to give the screen door a good strong push, causing it to swing open. Then, she was dumb enough to stroll through and stop to see what had happened to the wide world since the last time she'd been out. The door, on a spring, would swing closed to catch her tail where she had left it inside. It got so, if I were in the house and heard the door squeak, I would stop what I was doing and listen. If I heard a sudden, agonized meow, I knew that the next time I saw Little Sister, she would have a new direction to her rudder.

D A L L A S -- O R B I G " D "

Dallas was our cultural center. It was here that we heard Madam Schumann-Heink on one of her numerous come-out-of-retirement concerts. It was here that we saw Maude Adams in Peter Pan. And, it was here that we saw Ben Hur, the most exciting play ever produced. It had gone on in a routine manner for a time, and then the stage was blacked out. In the darkness, we could hear muted noises and the stamping of horses' feet, and then began a ponderous building of sound. As it grew louder and fuller, excitement built in proportion. The whole big theatre was pulsating. When we could stand it no longer, the stage lights suddenly flashed on full, and there were eight magnificent horses, leaning far over in a dead run. Behind them were two chariots with chariooteers. There wasn't a backbone in the audience which wasn't stiff from the electric charges which were surging up and down them. My God, what a sight! If the contraption had come to a sudden stop, the whole mass of straining muscle would have catapulted itself into the audience. After Ben Hur, there is nothing!

North and Southbound trains arrived in Bartlett at two o'clock; two in the afternoon and two in the morning. We arrived home at two in the morning. I, of course, was sound asleep. Daddy carried me three blocks and set me down to walk. I remember the square on the sidewalk where I blissfully placed my cheek for further slumber. It was still warm from the sun and it actually felt soft.

We went often to the Dallas Fair. The first time, I remember Mother taking me in the ladies' rest room. I was somewhat overwhelmed, but by keeping my eyes mostly on the floor, I managed to get through it.

I understood the Fair management had a standing offer of \$10,000 to anyone who could eat a quail per day for thirty days. One could have it served up any way he liked. It could be fried, broiled, stuffed, fricasseed, even raw if he liked. The first three weeks were said to be clear sailing, and then the gamy taste began to get to a person. Nobody ever won. They

just couldn't gag down the last three or four. I'd have liked to try it anyway.

I liked the amusement section best. That is where they had the three-legged chicken and the rubber skin man. They fought the Battle of Manila there with little grey painted wooden boats, stationary in a tank of water. White rubber tubing connected them to the operator, and he made lights go on to simulate gunfire, and made boats sink. That was where they kept the octopus. The sign outside showed a sea monster dragging a ship down to its doom. Inside, an attendant, in uniform, put his hand into a bucket of formaldehyde and pulled out a limp squid about 18 inches long.

It was in the amusement section that I pulled a terrible trick on Mother. She had almost worn herself out in keeping up with me, and was complaining that her feet were killing her. I had discovered, on my own, that the roller-coaster was a hair-raiser, and I thought it would be fun to give her a surprise. So, with guile, I seduced her to the loading platform and maneuvered her into the front seat of the little car for a restful ride. With a clanking, we rose through a covered way, up and up. Suddenly, without warning, we emerged from the tunnel to plunge straight down a hundred feet. It was a real Thunderbolt. Ever since, I have been thankful that the man seated behind Mother was strong enough to keep her from self-destruction.

There were more sedate expositions at the Dallas Fair. The best, to my thinking, was a perfect six-foot model of a Cunard liner. It was in a glass case, and it showed, in miniature, every stanchion, every porthole, every rivet, or so it seemed. I spent hours looking at it, and I thought to myself that one day when I was grown up, and rich, I would have its twin in my living room where I could admire it at my leisure.

There was also the cultural appeal. Mother, no doubt wanting to plant in me an appreciation of music, took me to a concert. It was held in an open-air amphitheatre. There were several musical renditions, and then the curtain came up to show several burly men, dressed as blacksmiths, standing

by an equal number of big wagon wheels. They were armed with heavy blacksmith hammers. They started making motions as though they were fashioning the already fashioned wheels. They were making striking motions, and before I knew it they were really hitting the spokes of the wheels. Although I did not know the name at the time, the wheels were really xylophones, and they were pounding out the Anvil Chorus. Was that audience surprised?

Another time I was in Dallas with Mother. She had wanted to hear a famous tenor, whose name meant nothing to me. We were seated in the front row, left mezzanine. After the regular program, the tenor asked for requests from the audience. Mother was a shy person, so I was not prepared when she stood up and asked for The Teakettle Song, and he sang it. I guess he could see, even at that distance, how pretty she was.

N E G R O E S

The first airplane I ever saw was an old pusher-type biplane with the pilot sitting out front. It was probably a Curtis. It wasn't quite so primitive as the Wright Brothers' invention, but it was a double-cousin. After all, the Wrights got off the ground the same year I was born. The pilot was the famous Lincoln Beachey, who was later killed when his plane crashed into San Francisco Bay. He was following the railroad track as a guide. I believe this was a common practice in those days. The whole town had been buzzing over the impending event. To get a better view, I had climbed to the top of our house, and in the process had put a splinter of monumental size through my bare foot.

My second sighting of airplanes was a flight of three military planes, and that took place just before the beginning of World War I. Perhaps this is a good place to say that Bartlett was bounded on the North by a cluster of negro houses called Salt Lake City, and on the South by another called Happy Hollow. One of the better known citizens of Salt Lake City was old Aunt Charity, a negro woman of great age. She wandered around the business section of Bartlett with a gunny sack over her shoulder into which she thrust whatever took her fancy. There were always a few sticks of wood pushed in its top. She was the object of affectionate, and often ribald, exchanges with the white men she encountered. To get back to the three army planes; we had been hearing tales of "German Atrocities," and when the three planes came over, following the railroad tracks again, word rapidly spread that The Germans were Coming. The entire black population took to the tulies. Word came back that Aunt Charity was working in the lead, and that she hadn't spilled a gallon.

When Aunt Charity died, the whole town closed down. We gave her a very full life time bur. Everybody went. The negro cemetery was beside the railroad line, South of Bartlett. Many of the graves in the negro section were mounded with pieces of broken colored glass. The effect was really

pleasing. We had a system which I can recommend to other towns, including the big ones. Anyone who was unable to pay town taxes worked it out in the cemetery. You never saw a neater one in your life.

My knowledge of negroes was picked up through a form of osmosis. One fact was that to be bitten by a "blue gum" was fatal. On encountering strange negroes, I often waited for them to open their mouths for quick inspection before close approach. Another known fact was that negroes were subject to an abnormal thickness of the skull. It was the shin that was their weakness.

Mattie Mae was the little daughter of a cook we had at one time. She was always neat as a pin, her short hair was tied up into thread-held squares on her scalp, and her dresses were starched. She loved being with Tom and me, and followed us around constantly. She carried with her a little wooden box which had contained soap. She promptly sat down upon this box when we came to a standstill. She could talk a little, but the words she used mostly were "Bunya bunya." We boys decided we would put the thick skull theory to the test. It consisted of holding a tack hammer vertically in the palm of the hand, permitting it to fall upon the crown of her head, and observing the result. That is, would it hurt a black head as much as it would a white head? The result would be tears in the eyes, a hand would rub the affected spot, an inquiring look would appear on her face, and she would ask, "Bunya bunya?" We, for our part, would put our hands on top of our heads, say "Bunya bunya," and smile. Whereupon, she, too, would smile. We finally stole her soap box for a bird house.

Mother told me her mother had a heart to heart talk about Mattie Mae in which she said, "Miss Gussie, that child she cry and she cr y, and I whips her and I whips her, but it don't do no good. She wants so bad to be white."

One time we had a negro maid named Donie. Donie had a roommate who did not work for us, but ate in our kitchen, slept in our bed, and was sheltered by our roof. One day Donie didn't appear for work, but her room-

mate stepped in and things went smoothly. Gene idly asked what had happened to Donie, and was told Donie had been "stabbbed." Gene went running through the house calling out, "Donie's stabbed. Donie's stabbed." It developed that Donie had been unfaithful to her boy friend, and he had "stabbed" her with an axe. She recovered.

Our cooks came and went. One of them had a habit of serving biscuit which was not thoroughly cooked. Since we had biscuit with every meal, proper done-ness was important. Daddy spoke to her a couple of times about the matter. No result. One day, just as she set a plate of food on the table, she sensed that something ominous was in the air, and scurried for the safety of her kitchen. Just as she ducked through the door, a wad of half-done biscuit dough smacked against the door jam, head-high. It stayed there a couple of days before she summoned enough courage to take it down. Thereafter, we were served properly cooked biscuit.

The best cook we ever had was named Jess. He was a light skinned negro who had been a chef at the Hotel Galves in Galveston. He had had a serious illness which had made it impossible for him to cope with the pressure of hotel work, but he could cook for a private family. Such dishes, such sauces, we had never dreamed of. After many months, he regained his strength. When he announced his departure, we tried by every means to get him to stay on. It was to no avail.

One of our cooks told Gene hearts would make her pretty, so she ate fried chicken hearts, swallowed whole. By George, they worked. She was a beautiful girl.

"Toting" was a common practice. Negroes who didn't "sleep in" carried food away for friends and family. It was, in a way, part of their wages and nobody gave it a thought.

We had a colored maid, Suzy, who wasn't quite all there. Her feet were amazingly big that she was forced to wear men's shoes. She felt that if she could only get her feet into women's shoes, her social life would take

a turn for the better. Long deliberation led her to the conclusion that to achieve this happy state she must cut off her big toes. Her instruments were an eye hoe and a chopping block. An eye hoe, to the uninitiated, is a distant relative to the ordinary chopping hoe. It has a deep blade, and is of very heavy construction. It is used to get through the stems of heavy, woody plants. Suzy sharpened the hoe, put her toe on the block, and took a crack at it. At the last split second, she lost her nerve and tried to draw back. It was too late. The momentum was in the heavy hoe head. Down it came. But, her stay of hand had taken just enough steam out to leave the toe hanging by a thread of skin. Dr. Sutton was, as usual, equal to the occasion. He sewed her toe back, and in time it functioned normally.

I am sure I brushed against two negroes who were practitioners of voodoo. The first was an old crone of unknown but obviously advanced age. She got fresh blood from the slaughter house, and bringing it home, drank it clotted from the container. The other negroes were deathly afraid of her. The other constantly muttered words which certainly were not English. Apparently she practiced her cult, for she received money from the other negroes.

Sometimes we boys and girls drove across the B & W tracks to a building in Happy Hollow. We parked where we could get a good view of the proceedings inside through open windows. This was where the black Holy Rollers held services. The congregation would work itself up through exhortation, chanting and singing to the point where members began rolling about on the floor and talking in the "Unknown Tongue." Once, I saw a very fat negress, in the throes of her fervor, firmly wedge herself inside the legs and stretchers of an oak table which was used as a pulpit. They left her there until the service was over, at which time a leg had to be broken off to free her.

Our work week consisted of five and one-half days, and Saturday noon saw the beginning of the gathering of negroes from all over. Those or females came by wagon, mule and foot. Their costumes were not dictated by fashion, but by precedent, and they were unbelievably colorful. Birthdays and funerals

were big events, but the biggest, by far, was "Juneteenth," the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Negroes were supposed to be lacking in drive. This was not true of Rich. He was light skinned, and wonderfully quick and skilled in his work. He charged \$5.00 per day, an unheard of sum, and was well worth it. In fact he had a waiting list. His specialty was what might most easily be called Spring Housecleaning; only with him it went throughout the year. When I was a boy, we put down straw matting on the bedroom floors. It went down in the Fall and came up in the Spring. It was made in China, and came in rolls about two feet wide. The floors were completely covered by it. Adjoining edges were held down by U-shaped tacks. It insulated bare feet from cold floors, and was resilient underfoot. Rich could lay or take up all our floors in one day, and he left everything spotlessly clean. Of course, this was before the day of the vacuum cleaner.

We had a yard man named Jerome. One day he agreed to make an outdoor fireplace for Tom and me from some bricks which had been delivered for some purpose. After he had loaded the wheelbarrow with brick, we boys wanted to ride on top of the load. Unfortunately, there was room for only one, and Tom, being stronger, climbed aboard. Our route took us through a gate, and it was here that the drama unfolded. Jerome said he was doing the work, and saw no reason why he should open the gate. I said I was having no fun, and saw no point in my opening the gate. That left it up to Tom, and as he climbed down, I climbed up. Almost at once, the discussion turned into combat. Daddy never whipped us for anything except fighting. In our preoccupation, he arrived unnoticed, and promptly took us to the barn. Daddy was so strong he didn't realize how much he hurt us, and we two were really letting the world know of our misery.

Mother, hearing the uproar coming from the barn, naturally assumed we were fighting, and called to Jerome, who was still standing by the gate, that she wanted to see us immediately. Jerome was a yard man by day, but on

Sundays he was a preacher. He loved big words and practiced them on us constantly. So, he replied in his best ministerial manner, "Yes, Miss Gussie, but they's engaged with their father just at present."

Everybody in our town knew Miss Wacker. She was a rather plump, white-haired little lady, and had taught first grade ever since there had been a first grade. She was a second mother to practically everybody in town over the age of seven. When the time came to fit me into the system of education, Mother took me in on opening day of school and introduced me to Miss Wacker. Of course I already knew her, but that was the way things were done. Then Mother departed and I was left to my own devices. With idle time on my hands, I looked about for something to do and noticed a strange boy dressed up in his best clothes. He had on a cap, knickerbockers, vest and an open coat. What caught my attention was the watch chain which stretched across his chest. Dangling from it was some kind of medallion. I asked him about it, but apparently he couldn't speak English. At any rate he offered no reply. Using the loud voice one adopts with the deaf and for those with language barriers, I approached him, and to further zero in on the object of my interest, took the medallion in hand. The result was a quick slap on my wrist which broke the chain and sent the medallion flying. I have developed a system to cushion myself against some of the shocks of life. In case of a nightmare, I wake up. In this case, I went home. The result was a gap of several days in my early education.

When I returned, I soon settled down to C-A-T and R-A-T. I learned how to be "excused." We were instructed to hold up an arm with one or two fingers extended. Two fingers meant the more serious business of being excused, and, I suppose, gave Miss Wacher the opportunity of deciding whether the child might need some help. We learned how to draw a box, in three dimensions, with lid erect, and B-O-X neatly lettered on the lid.

The child I remember best was Sarah. She was an ethereal little blonde. Her hair was silky and almost white. She was quiet. She was an inside-her-self little girl. From her speech, she probably had a slightly cleft palate. One day I heard of something which really set her apart. Her heart wasn't like ours. It was on the right side. After that, as I sat doing my C-A-T and R-A-T routine, I would look at her as a transparent lady, and picture

to myself what a heart looked like located, as was hers, on the wrong side. I'm afraid something happened to little Sarah, for I never saw her again after the first grade, but is surprising that I still think of her from time to time.

Ours was not a big school. The graduating class of 1917 consisted of eleven boys and girls. With that few students, we were hard put to it to field teams for athletic competition. Lightweight that I was, they were glad to have me for a basketball forward, and for a high jumper and long distance runner in track. I could jump as high as my eye with no trouble at all. I started on my left foot, a stride on the right, and take-off from the left, with my tail tucked up I could sail over anything, be it bar or picket fence. There was no attempt at finesse. I sometimes wonder what those skinny legs of mine might have done with modern training. Our baseball teams were phenomenal. We played the biggest cities in the state, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Waco, and gave them a good run for their money. One year we were second in standing, and Texas is a big state. The town backed us solidly. Every store in town was closed for a home game. When World Series time came around, a telegraph ticker and blackboard were set up in front of the First National Bank. Plays were clicked off and recorded as they happened. The street in front would be filled with people standing from curb to curb.

Our best pitcher, and star athlete, was my good friend, Majie. He had a fireball which fairly blinded the opposition. Majie was a great athlete, but he was afraid of animals, and they knew it.

One week-end a group of us had gone down to one of the river bottoms for some fishing. After setting up a tent, and getting generally settled, Majie and I seined over a shallow, rock-bottomed part of the river for minnows to use as bait. There were several bunches of water grass showing above the surface, and from one of these a fat water moccasin, disturbed by our activities, slithered into the deep pool below. Neither of us mentioned it

at the time, but I tucked it away in my memory. We were fishing with a trot line. A trot line, for the uninitiated, is a stout cord tied to trees on either side of a stream. Hanging from it, at regular intervals, are baited hooks. The line is "run" at intervals, when the fish are removed and bait renewed. As night progressed, we passed the time playing pitch and other card games by lantern light. Our turn to run the line came about two in the morning. Lacking a boat we swam. Majie was handling the fish and hooks, while I strung caught fish on a line. When we reached the near bank and were standing shoulder deep in water, I managed to be on the upstream side. I let the string of fish drift down upon him, and at the same time casually wondered what had happened to the water moccasin we had seen earlier in the day. With the touch of the fish, Majie, with one magnificent leap, jumped from almost complete immersion to an erect position on dry land. I'm surprised he didn't leave his skin behind.

We had never heard of John Dewey in those days, and only a passing mark in all subjects made it possible to advance to the next grade. To Majie, algebra was a complete mystery. Having failed it two times, and having been kept back two times, the principal extracted from Majie a solemn promise not to use his marks for college entrance; and so he was graduated. Majie kept his promise and went into business. The results were not spectacular. At last his family bought for him some poor land in Colorado and he became a goat rancher. After this came World War II and the atomic bomb, and prospectors fanned out over the West, and guess what -- the grand-daddy of all uranium deposits was found on that ranch. It must be nice to have one's own pilot, always at the ready to fly one's four-motor plane wherever fancy calls.

If I may be permitted to skip ahead for a few years, I eventually graduated from high school, and went on to an institution of higher learning. Scholastically, the only high point here was a hundred in trigonometry; but watching human nature in action was another matter. One boy had a habit

of stealing red phosphorous from the chemistry laboratory, running up the stairs to the top of Mood Hall, the boys' dormitory, and tossing it into the hollow square around which the building was constructed. He found the following explosion gratifying, but not the one which happened when he tripped on the stairs, phosphorous in pocket, on his last bombing run.

The son of the college rector, Red, by nickname, had unusually high feet. He frequently dropped in to visit with me in my ground-floor corner room. To reach my door, the corridor ran at an angle for some ten feet. Red had discovered that if he got up a good head of steam, he could run along the wall for a certain distance before gravity took over and returned him to an upright position. One day, miscalculating his velocity, his leg crashed through the wall. It must have been quite a surprise to my neighbor as he lay on his bed studying for an examination to have his glasses neatly removed by a size 13 shoe. I had to extract Red like an impacted wisdom tooth.

One night four of us students decided to pull what is known as a College Prank. First we ran a wooden wheelbarrow up the flag pole in front of the Administration Building. We had developed an ingenious slip-knot. This knot made it possible for us to get the barrow up the pole, but prevented its being brought down again. They had to get a steeple-jack to undo that job.

The second prank was more ambitious. It was to steal a horse and buggy, and to put them in the auditorium on the third floor of this same building. A survey had located these two items in negro-town that same day. The theft was without mishap. The buggy presented no problem, the stairs being broad, and we set it in the exact center of the stage. The horse was something else again. The stairs turned four times to the floor, and the noise he made on those wooden steps as he positioned himself, and slipped and floundered in the dark, made me glad I was not a Southern spy sneaking my trusty steed through Northern lines by that route. We made it without being detected, and tied him among the seats by a long tether.

What we didn't know, was that being springtime, the horse had been on a diet of green grass, and his bowels were unpredictable. We couldn't hold chapel for three days. I understand they had to blindfold the horse before he could be led down the stairs.

H O S P I T A L S

I became an expert on hospitals. My first lesson on the subject came about through a tonsilectomy. Doctors, at that time, looked on tonsils in the same way a gardener looks on ragweed. They were to be eradicated. Gene and I went the tonsil route together, and after the operation we were placed in the same room, she, in her bed next to the floor-length window, and I in a corner. Things went quietly until early in the evening. I was probably drowsing. Then I became aware that the nurse in attendance, in bending over Gene, suddenly turned her bed light on full, then hurriedly left the room. She returned almost at once with a doctor in tow. He did something to Gene and, dissatisfied with the result, sent the nurse for assistance. Before long, Dr. Scott and Dr. White were both there, and the room was full of doctors and nurses. All the lights were on, and they had cranked up her bed so she was sitting almost upright. They had cut her mouth open to make room for what looked like a hundred butterfly forceps. Her long blond hair was clotted with blood, and her night clothes and bed-cover were soaking. Bloody cloths lay about on the floor. Something had gone wrong, and they were trying desperately to staunch the flow of blood. I took a good long look at the scene, turned my face to the wall, and lay motionless all night. Naturally, I assumed this was a delayed part of the operation, and my turn would come as soon as they finished with Gene. With the coming of dawn, the voices quieted and the people drifted away one by one. I was safe; and I was grateful they had forgotten me.

My next experience really consisted of two operations. We had stopped by the Fitzgeralds, and I was using a pole belonging to their boy, Nealand, to vault up on their porch. On the third or fourth go, the pole broke, and I fell, to be impaled on a flower stake. Unable to rise, Nealand rolled me over to break off the stake, and I walked into the house with a piece of wood protruding from my back. Dr. Sutton, our regular doctor, was out of town, so a Dr. Blair was summoned. The operation was performed on my bed.

Gene, who was probably about fifteen at the time, gave the anaesthetic. She did a good job too. She knocked me out cold. Let me pause here to say that chloroform, which was used in this case, produces a nausea which is impossible to describe. Ether produces gas pains equally impossible to describe. Anyway, Dr. Blair took out a short piece of wood and was about to sew me up when Gene observed that he hadn't got it all. Tapping the remaining piece with his scalpel, Dr. Blair said this was a tendon. Some six months later, my back, on the right side, started to swell. Poultices were tried, but the swelling continued to grow. One night, when it was about six inches in diameter, it burst, showing, roselike, layer upon layer of folded back flesh. There, at the bottom of the crater, lay the remainder of the stick.

So, it was up to Temple again. I had to wait about a week for a room. I hypnotized myself. I did not think about the day a week hence. I thought of today. But, at last, the time came when, with a grip packed by Mother, we all got in the car. It was just another ride. As time went on, we were going nowhere. I concentrated on the rows of cotton as they flashed by. When Temple hove itself above the horizon, it wasn't Temple. It was just a town. But, atlast, reality had to be faced, as it always does. We had stopped. We were walking up to the South portal of the hospital. The admitting doctor put his fingers on my wrist and reached for a hypodermic of cocaine. He told Mother he had never counted a more rapid pulse. I was almost literally, frightened to death.

As I was wheeled into the operating room, I could see tall white metal cabinets against the walls. They were filled with an unbelievable assortment of wierd instruments. The operating table was made of extremely heavy dark wood, like stained oak, above it was a cluster of bright lights, and above that, a window where operations could be observed. I was transferred to the operating table and an attendant began to tie me down with heavy straps at chest and thigh. I begged them to undo the straps, and they did. Then a cone was put over my face and I could smell ether. I was suddenly in orbit

like a miniature moon around a miniature earth, coming out of nowhere into where, accelerating, and with an increase of sound, to end with a boom and pop, as I went into nowhere again. This speeded up until I was flashing around in a very tiring fashion, and, exhausted, I floated off into sleep. I'm afraid they started a little too soon, for my last sensation was that of being transfixated through the back by a meat hook, and being hung up in a butcher shop.

My first post-operative dressing was something clearly etched in my memory. An intern came to my room with his little cart of bandages, instruments, adhesive tape, and the like. Perhaps I should first explain that the surgeon had cut out quite a crater of flesh, and had created a tunnel to another opening in my back. Now, this intern selected one of his larger forceps, firmly locked it in the center of the gauze packing the surgeon had used, and with one heave, yanked out the whole bloody, congealed mass -- crater, tunnel and all. Daddy was absolutely livid. That intern never came near me again.

I was flat on my stomach for months, and after that came a long period in a wheel chair, and after that, learning to walk again. I made many friends adventuring about in my wheel chair. I knew all the doctors and nurses. I was privy to the secret recesses known only to the staff. I played with the hospital guinea pigs. I knew many of the patients, and paid them visits. That part of the hospital stay wasn't bad at all. And, besides, I got a very interesting back. It looked something like a relief map of Colorado.

Another time, Mother's dentist advised her that all her teeth must come out. So she made an appointment with Scott and White, and one fine morning the whole lot was pulled. The job was finished just before noon, and the two of us walked to the Busy Bee Cafe for lunch. As she looked at the menu, Mother observed that she would take soup. I remember her spooning it into her poor ruined mouth, meanwhile shielding it from public view with

her left hand. Then, we walked to the station and took a train home. It is a wonder any of us survived those barbaric days.

stuffed olives, and fancy fruits in glass. This was a regular working ranch, but it was also known for its polo ponies. A special breed of horses had been developed for this trade. They were named for famous whiskeys.

It was here that I got my two front teeth kicked out. Fortunately for me, they were milk teeth. Daddy liked guns, and he kept a collection on the ranch as well as at home. One of them was a beautiful 303 Savage automatic rifle. I had been after him to let me shoot it for some time. I was not strong enough to hold it, so one day he set the barrel in the crotch of a tree, saw that no animal was in the range of fire, and turned me loose. I lined up the sights with my face behind the butt, and pulled off the trigger. Naturally, unrestrained, the rifle kicked like a mule, and it took my teeth out as clean as a dentist could. This gun was one in which the breech remained open when the last shell had been fired. I pulled the puckered face act until I noticed the open breech. Thinking I had blown up the infernal contraption, I cheered up immediately.

While there, we went to a barbecue on a neighboring ranch. This ranch was owned by an Englishman. He had built a square ranch house with an un-roofed veranda all around. At one of its corners, an elevated wooden walk-way lead to a flight of shallow steps which climbed to a circular platform built into the branches of a giant live oak tree. This platform was surrounded, except for the opening, by a high backed bench. The Englishman, who was a little hard to understand, told me he liked to come here in the heat of the day as it was usually breezy and shady from its crown of leaves. The barbecue was of kid. Big chunks of meat lay on chicken wire over glowing coals of mesquite wood. The meat was turned from time to time, and basted with a sauce by means of a big rag tied on the end of a long stick. When we ate, at long last, the meat was tender and delicious.

We also went to a real roundup on the Kickapoo Ranch. This was quite a famous ranch, and was a large one. The cowboys were cutting out young cattle

for branding, cutting (castrating) and dehorning. It was very dusty. At noon, the chuckwagon cook called everybody to eat. We sat on the ground, or on saddles, and ate off tin plates. I thought the food tasted funny, perhaps from the seasoning, and I ate very little. There was a spring here with the water coming out of a bank of earth. It had been walled up, back and sides, and there was a turtle in it.

That night we ate at the ranch house. There was a big round table in the dining room, and on it was a lazy susan, the first one I had ever seen. I couldn't get enough of turning it to help myself to dishes and condiments. The circular dining room was in the base of a stone tower, which, from the outside, looked like it belonged to Merlin's castle. There was a circular stair leading up to its roof and from it I could see for miles.

Coming here was the real purpose of our trip. I never knew what that reason was, but it might have been that Daddy was thinking of buying the ranch. That was the way he made his living. The only piece of real estate he never traded was our home farm. Otherwise, he was always buying and selling farms, houses, city property, and the like.

Probably the biggest deal he ever took under consideration was a huge tract of land in either Chihuahua or Coahuila, Mexico. He was gone for days on that trip, and when he came back he brought with him some panoche (crude, unrefined sugar shaped in cones like the top of a sombrero), and a miniature mosaic, which I still have. He told me this Mexican ranch had the biggest windmill he had ever seen and that it was used for irrigation. It had a crankshaft as thick through as I was tall, he told me. Imagine the size of a wind wheel to drive a shaft of that diameter! The deal didn't go through because of the unsettled political situation in Mexico at that time. Perhaps if it had, I would be writing this in Spanish.

It was on this trip to the Baugh Ranch that I started my personal road map collection. After setting up my compass points, I made long straight lines for long straight roads, short ones for short distances, the whole connected by turnings in the proper direction. I had Central and West Texas

pretty well plotted before I dropped the practice. What Rand McNally would have given for the lot had they known of their existance!

I was just a child when Mother and I went to Galveston to visit the Waltons. They had taken a house on a magnolia-lined street for the Summer. The magnolias were in bloom and their sweet odor was everywhere. Mrs. Walton's nephew, Harry Rucker, was spending the Summer there too. He was just a grown boy, but to me, he was a man. One morning he took me to see the sights. When we had walked to the business section, he suggested that we have a soda. It had not occurred to me to take any money along, so I sat on a stool by his side, but I refused the soda.

Afterward, we walked along the breakwater. It was made of massive blocks of Texas granite set there to prevent a recurrence of the tidal flood of 1900, when storm-driven sea water had washed across the entire island resulting in 5,000 deaths.

By the time we had finished this project, lunchtime was upon us. I'm sure Harry thought it very strange when I again sat by his side to watch as he ate his hearty lunch. I explained away my lack of appetite by saying I had eaten just before starting on our expedition. My stomach was an angry knot of protest. Then we took a boat excursion, poking up to the causeway to the mainland, and nosing into slips and around liners. I saw a man on a pierhead fishing for shrimp. He dangled a piece of meat on the end of a string, and from time to time pulled it up to find a shrimp clinging tightly. He had quite a catch. I kept my mind off my midriff by watching our little vertical steam engine busily pumping away.

Poor Harry was wonderfully thoughtful to me that day. When he was twenty-two, he became totally deaf. He was a musician. He blew his brains out.

That night we went to the Galves for dinner. The table cloth was real linen, stiff with starch, and touched the floor. I was starving, and was crying from hunger pains. My problem was recognized, not by my adults, but by the mind-reading colored waiter. He silently brought me a basket of Kaiser rolls and a dish of butter balls. Sweet butter. Tearing the rolls apart with the

help of a knee for leverage, I ate them, one by one.

The dining room opened, through French doors, onto a wide brick terrace, and the whole was exposed to the breaking waves of the Gulf of Mexico. The doors were covered with Austrian drapes and had real crystal door knobs. I had never known Kaiser rolls, sweet butter balls, Austrian drapes, nor crystal door knobs. It was the most opulent hotel I had ever seen. I'll bet it cost five dollars a day to stay there.

If Bartlett was in the Bible Belt it was also in the Circus Belt. We had the Dog and Pony Show, Sells-Floto, Barnum and Bailey, and others. Barnum and Bailey was the biggest circus in the United States, and probably the biggest in the world. It was a three-ring circus, and when it came to Temple every year, people flocked in from miles away. Entrance was by way of the menagerie tent. There were lions, giraffes, leopards, elephants, all the animals I had previously known only through pictures. Once inside the main tent, the hawkers came around renting cushions, and selling cotton candy, peanuts and popcorn. They also sold little whips. These latter came wrapped with shiny colored strips of a cellophane-like material. They were very fragile as I found out to my sorrow. Comfortably settled down with a whip in one hand, and the other free for candy and peanuts, we three children lined up like blackbirds on a fence. I found it impossible to take in all that was happening in three rings. It was better when everything was concentrated on one act, like the high-wire trapeze artists, or the contortionist. He, the contortionist, was a young man who had been born with more joints than is normal, and he performed on a narrow elevated platform. He wore a costume of skin-tight shining green scales, and he wove himself into unbelievable positions. He was as supple as a snake, and he moved slowly, like a snake. He gave me the creeps.

Always, just before the show began, a boy was brought in on a stretcher. He was placed just in front of the seats by the center ring, and his parents sat just behind him. Mother told me he was "turning to stone." Despite the general activity of the circus, I paid quite a bit of attention to him. I would wonder just how far the stone formation had progressed. From my knowledge

of stones, I wondered how much he would weigh if the formation had progressed to, say, mid-thigh. I would imagine myself, a medical authority, palpating his flesh with knowing fingers, and what it would feel like to run from living flesh to solid granite. One year we went to the circus and the boy wasn't there. He never came again. I imagined that the advancing stones had finally hit a vital spot. The heart, no doubt.

We did many things as groups of families in those days. Shortly after school vacation began, the negroes would load up wagons with camping gear and drive off to a pre-selected site on a river bottom to set up camp. The following day, the families would settle in. The wives and children would spend the Summer, and the husbands would come weekends, and would alternate vacations so there were always grown men to take on responsibilities.

One such place was a crossing of the San Gabriel River, near Georgetown, about twenty miles from home. A natural roadway came down an easy wooded gradient, notched into a bluff on the near side of the river. Here the San Gabriel flowed over a wide solid rock bed. At the far side the land lay flat.

The days flowed lazily on, one after another, while I swam and fished and explored. There had been a mill here at one time, but all that remained was part of a foundation and the mill race. I looked many times but could never find anything to give a clue as to what it did. The women sat mostly in the shade talking. There was no work to be done. Negroes did it all. The women wore sunbonnets to protect their complexions against the hot sun. The men went leisurely about their business, mostly fishing. The rest of us occupied ourselves, each according to his taste. Fatty Lawrence, a moon-faced youngster, played Idiot's Delight all day long. He only stopped playing when the dinner bell rang. He didn't shuffle the cards as other people did. He put them face-down and shuffled them like dominoes with wide circular motions of his hands. Before long, his cards were thick, soggy, amorphous plaques, something like a bride's pancakes.

There were many German families in Central Texas, and for them we had an alfresco beer garden. A big hole was dug in the ground. Into it went a load

of hay and big cakes of ice just as they came from the ice house. In the center of this was sunk a hogshead filled with, as I remember, two hundred bottles of Anheuser-Busch beer. Throughout the Summer, as needed, additional ice and beer were added. The top of the hogshead was crowned with a circular wooden cover. Anyone who wanted to cool off, helped himself. A bottle opener hung conveniently from an overhead branch by a cord.

I made trips to a nearby village, named Thrall, to buy plugs of licorice. It was put up like chewing tobacco, and cost a penny. Each plug had a metal oval imbedded in one corner, and there was a selection of red or yellow. The licorice, in either case, tasted the same. In those days, I saved everything, but I soon discovered that the prongs on those metal ovals had a way of sneaking up and puncturing me at unexpected moments, so I discarded them immediately.

One of the mysteries of life is the varient, known as the rubber mile, which, I suppose, could be represented as $v=d/a$, or varient equals distance over age. It took me most of the morning to get to Thrall and back. I am sure I could make it today in no time flat, but perhaps in another fifteen years, it would again take most of the morning. The moral in this, if there is one, is never go back.

As I have described it, this was a natural ford across the river. It must have been used for this purpose since the beginning of time, by animals, Indians and early settlers. As a result, there were many arrow heads about waiting for the keen eye. One day, in digging near a spring, some of us children uncovered a skeleton. We took the skull back to camp, where it caused considerable speculation on the part of the grown ups. There was no hole in it from settler's bullet or Indian tomahawk, so they came to the conclusion it was that of an Indian who had died of natural causes. After leaving it on a tree stump for a few days, we took it back and buried it where we had found it, and the spirit, be it red or white, must have rested easier.

Tom and I were observing an undeclared truce. There was no fighting that Summer. In fact, we slept outdoors together, protected by a tarp. On fine nights we could watch the stars as they wheeled overhead, and when it rained,

one had only to pull the tarp flap over one's head to remain dry. It was delicious to hear the rain drops splatting against the canvas, almost in one's face, and to feel so secure. I never sense the combined smell of canvas and fumes from a kerosene lantern without being taken back to those days. How good these Halcyon days were, and yet I wonder if in today's high speed, nervous civilization, a group of people could be found who could endure such a summer.

Another time, a caravan of cars from Bartlett had arrived in the Texas Panhandle. We had been camping out along the way for there were no facilities worth mentioning for travelers. For that matter, there were no roads worth mentioning. One night we camped near a farmer's field of young cane. The next morning it was a case of where to go. The land was flat, with no hollows for seclusion. No tree, no boulder, no bush. So, the field, with a stand of cane two to three feet high, was peppered with crouching grownups, all heads tilted above the horizon as though searching for a flight of birds.

It had rained recently and the land was too level to allow much runoff. For mile upon mile, as we drove, we could see many shallow lakes. I, who had never seen a buffalo wallow in my life, was looking at buffalo wallows. They were slight depressions where buffalo had come to roll in the mud against the pestiferous fly. As they walked away, they carried the earth with them. These were the last evidences of this large animal which had at one time swarmed here in such numbers.

Another camping-fishing trip took place at Ft. McKavett. For some reason Daddy was without a car at this time, so he rented a Model T belonging to our town barber, and hired the man as driver. John Lawrence, one of two brothers who owned Lawrence Brothers, groceries and dry goods, came with us.. We were met there by George Baugh of Eldorado. Ft. McKavett was one of a chain of forts established by the government during the Indian fighting days. The town buildings were made of naturally fractured stone so regular in shape they looked as if they had been hand made. It was here I came upon my first hydraulic ram. I heard it pumping away, followed the sound, and watching, fathomed the mys-

tery of its operation. The pipe from it lead to a knoll of land, and on this, sited for a view of the lake, was a beautifully proportioned stone house. It had been burned out. From the weathering of the interior, this must have happened years before. It had been abandoned. The thought of the inanimate machine still faithfully supplying water to this shell of what had been someone's home seemed so unnatural that I left soft-footed.

The lake where we camped was like a big hand with three fingers. The weather was perfect, the fish were biting, and we had a good time. Mr. Baugh was the oldest one there. He was probably about sixty years old, and his legs had a touch of rheumatism, particularly first thing in the morning. John Lawrence had been brought up to be polite to older people, and he made a point of being very polite to Mr. Baugh. He brought a cup of coffee to help Mr. Baugh out of his bed roll in the morning, and after Mr. Baugh had seated himself on a log, he brought his breakfast on a plate and a second cup of coffee. Mr. Baugh obviously enjoyed this attention, and began acting in a very dignified manner. John settled into his role and everything was functioning smoothly. But John, for all his good points, had one weakness. To put it bluntly, he was goosey. All a person had to do to make him climb a wall was to make a puckered mouth insucking of air sound. One morning, Mr. Baugh, benignly sitting on his log, was being offered his second cup of coffee by John. As usual, John was about to say, "Mr. Baugh, won't you have a cup of coffee?" Just as he got to the "won't you," the barber, passing behind, touched him on a vital spot. John concluded explosively, "Take your God damned coffee," and hurled the scalding liquid in Mr. Baugh's face. After that they went through the usual courtious routine, but the heart had gone out of it. They were both too wary.

It was probably on the first trip that I ever took with Daddy that the two of us arrived in a rain, at night, on a spot on the Llano River. Everything was wet so we bedded down in a one-room school house which was standing there. Its door was unlocked. All doors were unlocked in those days. We might have had a key to our house, but I never saw one. That night, Daddy

made my bed by turning two school desks seat to seat, and I slept between the backs. Yousee, I was pretty small. The next day the Baugh family arrived, and we camped and fished for several days.

The river here widened out to a high stone bluff on the opposite side. Slightly below the top of this bluff was a cave, with a tree growing out of its mouth. The Baugh boys managed to get into the cave by means of the tree, but found no evidence that it had ever been used by human beings.

A high spot for me was the finding of a beautiful little green snake. Mr. Baugh smoked cigars which came in a square metal container. The four small holes punched in its bottom made perfect breathe holes. So, I used one for my snake, and to make doubly sure, I covered the box top with a square piece of cloth, tightly secured with a piece of string. I took my snake everywhere and I was generous in permitting everyone to share it with me. One morning, uncovering my treasure, I found my snake gone. It was suggested that it had probably escaped through one of the holes, but I doubted this. I suspected Mrs. Baugh or one of the Baugh girls. Women are finicky about snakes.

Once, as a grown man, I was traveling a strange road in West Texas when I suddenly realized I had been here before. I stopped to look. The river was there, as was the cliff. The cave had a surprisingly large tree growing from its mouth; but the school house was gone, Daddy was dead, Mr. Baugh and his wife, Lolly, were dead, as were most of their children. I wondered if any of the descendants of my green snake were about. As I sat there, I went back over those old days in my mind, completely lost in my thoughts. But time was passing, and I had a long way to go before rest, so at last I traveled on.

Another time saw us down on Devil's River. The excuse for this trip was to buy a carload of cedar posts for some fencing. The real reason was that Daddy wanted to go fishing. We had stopped by the ranch for a couple of the boys, and the four of us went on together. Juno, on Devil's River, was a town ten miles long with ten houses. It had a little general store, and it

was here Daddy bought me a bottle of pop. It came in a green, snake-necked bottle, and the stopper was a rubber gasketed piece of ceramic, held down by a wire bail. It was pure poison. Before we had gone a mile, I became as limp as a piece of cooked spaghetti, and traveled the rest of the way to camp with my head in Daddy's lap.

The way those things work out, I caught all the fish. Daddy could drop his line in the middle of a school but the fish would come and affix themselves to my hook. The boys started to hurraw Daddy about it, and he tried everything to change his luck. Once he picked a dead bumble bee off a bush and ran his hook through its back. The bumble bee wasn't dead after all, and it popped him under the thumb nail. Things were pretty lively around there for a while.

On the way back to the ranch, the boys were still giving Daddy a bad time about my catching all the fish. He replied that his forte was hunting, not fishing. Actually, he was a poor hunter. He went deer hunting every Fall, and only got a deer once. To demonstrate his ability as a shot, steering the car with his left hand, with his right he pulled the rifle out of its boot strapped to the car. This was a right-hand drive car. In motion, and holding the rifle with one hand, he let off a shot at a buzzard soaring above us. The bird plummeted to the ground. I know such a shot is impossible, but I saw it happen, and it effectively silenced the voices from the back seat.

T R A I N S

Mother taught me some important things about trains. One of the important ones was about germs. At that time, coaches were provided with drinking water from a cooler in a corner of the car. It sat on a pedestal and contained a piece of ice. Chained to the spigot was a drinking cup. Mother taught me to drink as close to the handle as possible. Fewer people drank here, hence fewer germs. She also said it was all right to use public soap. As the soap was used up, it always presented a new surface. The same principle applied to ice.

Butcher Boys weren't boys at all. They were grown men. They carried their wares through the train in split wood baskets. Possibly this is where the name came from, though why a basket had anything to do with a butcher, I don't know. Between trips through the train, they sat and displayed their merchandise in the two facing seats at the end of the car. I have mentioned cinnamon red-hots in a glass locomotive as my earliest remembrance. Butcher boys also had them for sale in glass pistols, Colt 45 style, and in small versions of brakemen's lanterns. They sold bananas, apples and oranges. On alternate trips, they offered newspapers and magazines. In addition to fruit, they sold candy and cough drops. I remember one called Frog in your Throat, which was square, but with each corner clipped off, so it was, in reality, an octagon. They also sold chewing gum. In addition to Wrigley's, they had an unsweetened variety. It looked like two pencils stuck together, and was scored so it could be broken into bite sizes. Being unsweetened and unflavored, it didn't taste like much. Even so, it was better than chewing tar, which to my way of thinking, wasn't really worth chewing at all. Something much better was sugar cane. At certain times of the year, we could get stalks at five cents each, and it was sweeter than sugar. A person had to be careful in peeling it for it could give a cut which was really nasty.

Crack trains were the very peak of traveling in style. They had an atmosphere which regular trains lacked. Their Pullman cars were made up of cubicles with facing seats. These seats and their backs were covered in plush.

Depending on the system, the colors were usually red or green. At night, the white-jacketed porter slid wooden partitions into a locked position on top of each seat back; let down the hinged sloping ceiling to form an upper berth, and pulled heavy curtains to make two enclosed sleeping compartments of each cubicle. He carried a little ladder for the non-muscular upper berth sleepers. A small mesh netting stretched along the wall of each berth to hold clothing. Shoes were placed in the aisle to be polished during the night. It took an agile person to undress in that confined space. While the compartment was being made up, the two sexes repaired to spaces marked Ladies and Gentlemen. Each Pullman had a state room, which was entered from the corridor. It represented the peak of luxury. It had its own lavatory, berths, sofa and a chair. I sure loved state rooms!

We understood the Pullman Company employed a woman whose sole responsibility was the naming of their cars. Some of the names were obvious, but many of them sounded like race horses to me.

Dining cars were attached to all crack trains, except on the Santa Fe system, which relied on Harvey Houses. In the dining cars the linen was starched, the silver was clean, and the food and service were good. Entering without a coat and tie was unheard of. I found I always sat a little straighter in a diner. The kitchen was a cramped, elongated space beside the entrance corridor. Cooking was done on charcoal grills, and it was hot in there. What those cooks could accomplish was unbelievable!

Window screens were of close-woven copper mesh to keep out cinders from the coal-fired engines. They were not very effective. Windows were always open except in Winter. No air conditioning, remember. The last car had a brass enclosed platform at the rear. Here, one could sit and observe the landscape as it went, diminishing to the rear. What a place to sport a Malacca cane and a thin panatella cigar. The name trains had a circular, lighted sign mounted on the rail. It told the darkness that this was the Sunset Limited or the Chief. Travel in those days was marked by class, not by high speed.

The Texas Special on the M.K.&T was so fast that soup plates could be only

partially filled. It stopped in Texas at Dallas, Waco, Austin and San Antonio. Imagine a train stopping in only four places in a state the size of Texas! It went through Bartlett so fast it was a blur. But once there was an exception. That was when Tom came home the first time from Annapolis. It seemed half the town was there to greet him. I must say he made quite a picture in his Annapolis uniform as he stopped, for effect, half-way down the steps. We were an inland town, and most of our men went into the Army.

Trains always fascinated me. They were the link from the ordinary here to all the mysterious places I would some day see. On long trips I would lie in the subdued dark at night, feel the gentle motion, sense the muted sound. It was an alien world with unknown territory just beyond the steel skin of the coach. Then I would hear the beautiful sound of the steam whistle from the engine up ahead, as it signaled for a crossing, and I would have the comfortable feeling I was in safe hands, and I would go back to sleep.

It was on a train, the first time I ever saw snow. Mother and I were on our way to visit her parents in Hereford. We were traveling in a state room. When I went to sleep, we were moving. When I woke up there was just a streak of dawn in the sky. The car was motionless and soundless. Even the sleeping passengers made no sound. We had been put on a siding at Amarillo, a division point, to await the train taking us to our destination. I edged up one corner of the curtain in its track, and there it was, the first snow of my life. What a sight!

A person would think of our part of Texas as being flat. In fact, it was a slightly rolling land. In those days there was no long-distance trucking. Everything went by railroad. The freight trains came through pretty often. They were long trains made up of a hundred cars, and even longer. There were many more rail systems then, and it was a great game to read the names of the freight cars as they went rolling by. Rare names were a treat. At night, awake in my bed, I could hear those trains as they came rushing through to get up momentum for the long pull south of town. The eye might be unaware of the grade, but the ear could hear the slowing down of the engine, and the roar of

steam through the smoke stack became individual chuffs. Soon these chuffs would be so far apart that I would find myself straining in unconscious co-operation. Just as I was about prepared for a stall, the engine would go over the divide, gravity would take over, and the tempo would pick up.

When I was in the second grade of grammar school, there was a bad freight wreck about four miles north of town. A Train, putting on speed for the next rise, had hit a bad rail or something. A group of us had walked the track after school, and we found the wreck alive with men ripping and pulling, and steam cranes lifting box cars bodily to put them back on the rails. The locomotive had plowed up a long stretch of earth, coming to rest on its left side. In turning over, it had ruptured its steam lines, and the fireman had been scalded to death. I noticed Nealand, a schoolmate, pick up a sodden shoe, pull out the wet sock which was still in it, and plunge his hand into the latter. Upon a question from me, he said he was looking for toe nails.

Gravel was a problem in our location. There wasn't any. The Katy had tried a substitute for its roadbed. They had bought some land south of town, piled train-loads of used ties in long rows, covered the lot with earth and fired it in the hope of producing a vitreous material. It hadn't worked. The automobile road crossed the track and ran beside this project for perhaps a mile before it crossed over again. One day we were driving this stretch of road when a passenger train, traveling in the same direction, passed by. Just as it pulled well in front, the whole train, with the exception of the engine and tender, turned over on its side. It all happened in such slow motion, I thought it would never end. I think the engineer, sensing what was happening, had maintained steam against the automatic setting of the air brakes, thus using the couplings as a cushioning factor. Anyway, it seemed to take for ever. We stopped the car, but nobody was hurt.

It was in this same place, some years later, that a passenger, a prisoner being transferred, handcuffed to a sheriff, had pulled a hidden knife and killed his guard. Unlocking the handcuffs, he pulled the brake cord and escaped. In a couple of hours the place was swarming with officers. He was picked up before

The first long train trip I took alone was in 1917. I was on my way to visit Cene, who was married, and lived in Phoenix. That was the year of 46¢ cotton, and money was plentiful. Just before leaving home, Mother had put my bankroll in my pants pocket and anchored it by means of a safety pin, inside. The only way I could get at it was by taking my pants down.

Railroad tickets came in long strips covered with writing. There were blanks here and there for towns of arrival and departure, dates, times and railroad systems. The whole was then pasted together. The ticket for a trip from Bartlett to Phoenix was two or three yards long. As the trip progressed, various conductors detached that portion pertaining to their sections. Thus, the longer the trip, the long ticket shrank as I neared my destination. I was going by way of the Santa Fe. Shortly after leaving Lubbock, a man strolled in from the car behind. I noticed that he hesitated and then came to seat himself by my side. I would say he was about thirty years old. He was slight, had blond hair parted in the middle, and had a gap between his front teeth. He struck up a conversation and, as I had had no one to talk to for some time, I joined in gladly. Eventually, the talk slowed, and he suggested a card game to pass the time. My response negative, and he next asked if I might enjoy hearing some music. Naturally I replied in the affirmative. The two of us went to his car, the next behind mine, and he uncased an alto saxophone. We went to the car vestibule where he played several pieces for my entertainment. I was surprised when he proposed selling the saxophone to me at a reasonable price. Not having any idea of what to do with a saxophone, I again refused.

"Somehow," we arrived back in my car, and "somehow," two of my possessions were laid out beside us; one was a camera which took good pictures, and the other was a collapsible sterling silver drinking cup. This cup was gold plated inside and nestled in a hand-sewn leather case. It had two swivel handles which swung open for gripping in drinking, and closed for packing. Just at this time we pulled into Clovis, New Mexico, where we were to stop for lunch at the Harvey House.

My new friend, not wanting to leave his saxophone exposed, returned to his car, and by impulse, picked up my camera and cup as well, to put them out of sight. We were to meet in the dining room. Lunch consisted of fresh salmon and ripe figs in heavy cream. I was disturbed at the non-appearance of the friendly stranger, but I finished my meal before returning to the train. When the train had gone some distance and he had not returned, I went looking for him. His car was gone. I hunted out the conductor and he told me that that car had been cut out at Clovis, and was now enroute to Roswell. Before we could reach a telegraph point, it had arrived at its destination, and our bird had flown.

A U T O M O B I L E S

I had many adventures in automobiles. One time, Daddy and I had come to a bridge over a river in West Texas. These bridges can be high as they get mighty big floods at times. The trouble was that a section of flooring had been removed from this one. Daddy laid some of the heavy floor boards along the skeleton steel work, and we crept across. Just as we reached the other side, a guard rushed up to tell us we couldn't do it. If you are curious as to why the bridge wasn't properly barricaded, remember there were almost no cars then. Daddy's license plate was a leather one with three big brass numbers which he had simply made up himself. One was a 3, another an 8, and I have forgotten the third. I've known us to buy gas in a drug store, and most repairs were done in a blacksmith shop. Tires were not on removable rims. Changes had to be made on the wheel, and very important pieces of equipment were leaves from broken springs. They were the best tool for tire changes. Daddy had a thing on cars. He had as many as three at one time. None of the rest of us drove. He would have been the same today on airplanes. I remember a banker from Dallas who dropped in on us. We had had our dinner, but we took him out to the kitchen, and all sat around while Daddy grilled a ham steak on a corn stick pan for him. This banker had just bought an airplane, and I remember the enthusiastic conversation Daddy had with him about flying. But, by this time Daddy was a very sick man.

I have been asked when I first drove a car. The answer is that I really don't know. We had a Buick at one time. I believe it was a 1906 model. The front seat was of tufted black leather, and behind that was another single seat, set in the middle of the car. I expect the design was inspired by old coaching days. One could almost expect its occupant to have a long brass horn in hand. These were the days of linen duster, goggles and long gauntlets. Daddy did not affect the first, but he used the second two. This car had big brass headlights and a right-hand drive. Gears were shifted through an H-shaped gate by means of a brass lever with a button on top. This button had to be pressed down to permit shifting. Outside of this was the emergency brake. At its bottom

was an arc of close-set teeth into which a pawl engaged. This lever, too, was of brass. It was unlocked by squeezing a short handle set in its top.

One day, as the car was sitting in front of the house, I was playing automobile in it with my little friend Watterson. He asked me if I could drive. Through observation, I knew how this was done, so I replied that if he could crank it, I could drive it. So he did, and I did. We were fine until we came to the first corner. I had not anticipated how much strength would be required for the maneuver, and before I knew it, we were in the ditch. Neither of us had any experience to cover this situation, so we walked away and left it. It never occurred to me to report my action, and no one ever mentioned it in my presence.

Cars, being new, loomed large in our lives. Very few people could afford to own one. Until Mr. Ford produced his transportation revolution, a good car could cost \$3,500 or more. This was the time of work at a dollar-a-day. A man earning \$35.00 per week could, with care, send a son through college. The following ad, appearing in the 1917 Cotton Bowl, our school annual, gives some idea of the purchasing power of money: "Dress Your Boy in Palm Beach. Let him enjoy the comfort the Palm Beach suits bring. The styles that boys like best at the prices parents want to pay are here. Clever Norfolk models, plain belted models, and box coats comprise the styles. In shades you can choose from natural colors or fancy colors. Price \$3.50 to \$6.50. Lawrence Brothers."

The first car Daddy had was a Moon. It had acetylene headlights in front, and kerosene side and tail lights. Warning was by means of a rubber bulb horn. Many accessories came and went. One was a set of four quick-lift jacks. When a car was in the garage overnight, they lifted the four wheels off the ground to give the tires longer life. Another was a massive coil spring, contained in a drum, which was fixed over the opening for the crank. The spring, wound up by a hired man, would, when actuated by a rod reaching up into the driving compartment, turn over the motor. Cars came with elaborate sets of tools.

A familiar sight in Bartlett was the Williams family. It consisted of a husband and wife. There were no children. Mr. Williams owned a Cleveland, a long narrow car. We often saw them taking an afternoon ride, grave and speechless. Mr. Williams, who was fat, overflowed the front seat, and Mrs. Williams, equally fat, overflowed the back. The car, overloaded as it was, rode smoothly on its springs.

It was a common practice to take a ride just for the pleasure of it. One day Mother was taking a ride with Mrs. Walton when they came upon a wreck. Gene Allen, Tom Allen's younger brother, had crashed a car in a ditch, and in so doing had gone through the windshield. He had dragged himself to where they found him, seated, leaning against a tree. As he sat there, blood was pulsing from a severed artery. None of them knew how to apply a tourniquet. All Mother could do was to lean solitously over him for what comfort he could get from that kindly gesture. The scene must have made a lasting impression for she spoke of it repeatedly over the years. What Gene had said was, "Mrs. Fowler, I always thought when the time came for me to die, I would feel its importance. But, you know, I don't feel anything at all." No help came, and he did die.

Early automobiles were simple in construction. I have helped take one down to the very cotter pins and gears. After washing the bits and pieces in a bucket of kerosene, I helped put it together again, and the car ran. I wouldn't even adjust a carburetor today. For all their simplicity, they were prone to breakage. The science of metallurgy must have been practically non-existent. Several times Daddy came home from trips with a broken spring. If a block of wood were wedged into place and securely tied with a rope, or a length of barbed wire cut from a convenient fence, one could continue, but the ride would be bumpy.

Tires cost \$40 to \$50 each, which might not seem exorbitant for that time, but they were short lived. For long trips, tires were strapped on wherever possible. I remember once we encountered a stretch of crushed stone. It was only about ten miles long, but before we reached its end, we had gone through

one set of tires, and were well down to the carcass on the second. Driving a car was not for a poor man.

With the motor running, anyone monkeying with the ignition system during those magneto spark days, had a surprise coming. It would practically take his arm off.

Speaking of kicks, I remember driving out to the farm with Daddy. Just as we passed a team of mules, Daddy suddenly landed in my lap, and as he did a headlight whistled through the space lately occupied by his head. The near mule, kicking, had neatly plucked out the light from its bracket between the hood and fender and had sent it flying. Fortunately the windshield was folded down.

While automobiles caused animals to run away, the animals often showed great curiosity when at a safe distance. I have seen mules, restrained by a roadside wire fence, run alongside for considerable distances the while looking us over in a most curious manner.

Cars had weak headlights. Even at their slow speeds, collisions with animals did take place at night. It was considered axiomatic by the enlightened that one should never hit a pig, and should use any evasive tactic, however drastic, to avoid a pig. Solid and low-slung, they wrought havoc.

T O M

My brother and I had a fight every day. Sometimes we had two or three a day. I was the aggressor, and I don't know why I started them. I didn't hate Tom, and I didn't like to fight other boys. In fact, I avoided all other fights if I could with honor. But with Tom, it was a daily ritual. Some of the fights were fairly serious. Once he choked me unconscious. Being older and stronger, he always won, but I was eager for the next affair, and at its end, bloody but unbowed, would inform him that one of these days I'd beat the tar out of him.

One day we had a good one going out doors, and in the proceedings he tossed me quite a distance. I realized I had landed with my head doubled under me in an unnatural position. Always one to seize the opportunity, I hung out my tongue, walled up my eyes, and held my breath. Tom started to walk away from a job well done. Stopped. Froze. Then fell upon my body with a heart-broken cry of, "My God. I've killed my little brother." Naturally, I had a good laugh. I don't like to think of what happened to me then.

I was a great one for reading. I read everything I could get my hands on. One day, in the advertising pages of a pulp magazine, among the "Atlas Can Make a Man of You," and "Avoid Surgery. Use Dr. Pratt's Trusses," there was a message from kind providence aimed directly at me. It read, "This Water Pistol Guaranteed to Stop the Most Savage Man or Beast."

Here, at last, was something to take over where I had failed. I promptly mailed my 25¢. My attitude toward Tom changed instantly. No more fights. I was actually nice to him.. I was at peace. To say he was startled was an understatement. He became suspicious. When I began dropping veiled hints that he was soon to receive a surprise of an unpleasant nature, he became positively worried. He felt there was something ominous in the air. He actually fished for information.

Finally the big day arrived. The pistol was here. Hand under jacket, I sought sanctuary to examine my weapon. I must admit that, under scrutiny,

the pistol didn't look very lethal. It was made of lead, about two inches overall, with a little white bulb at one end like that on a lady's small atomizer, and a hair-size hole for the liquid to come through at the other end. The accompanying instruction sheet said to load with water, or for maximum effect, with ammonia. After all, I wasn't out for permanent injury, so I selected water, loaded up, and went looking for my brother. He was suspicious of the return to our natural relationship, and I had to go to some lengths to provoke him, but eventually he forgot himself and charged. I whipped out my avenger, and let him have it right in the eye. Alas, I should have tested my weapon first. A puny jet of water curved weakly down to sprinkle his shirt front. I really got it! Looking back, I think it wasn't the wetting that made him react so drastically, I think it was relief.

As time went on, our fighting gradually stopped. He grew up, went away to Annapolis, and turned into a sea-dog. Just before he died, he came to visit me. He was an old toothless lion. Too many hours walking steel decks had ruined his legs. Too many big guns had ruined his ears, and he could barely see through bottle-glass thick lenses. He was practically deaf, blind and halt. As we sat talking, I suddenly leaned near his ear to roar, "Tom, I think the time has come when I can take you."

G R A N D P A J O H N S O N

Grandpa Johnson, Mother's daddy, after being mustered out of the Confederate Army, had taken a two-year course at Tulane University to obtain a degree to practice medicine. He was married, and poor, so it must have taken a lot of fortitude to get through those two years. As a student, he lived in a boarding-rooming house. The stories he told me of poor fare included the serving of rancid butter which the students flipped up with their knives to stick on the ceiling.

One day, as he was leaving the dissecting room, his instructor asked him in a low voice if he would return at a certain hour that evening. At the appointed time, he tapped on the closed door. He was admitted to find the instructor and two other students standing beside the dissecting table, and upon it lay the body of a young lady. Apparently he was much impressed with her beauty. He described her as being about twenty, unmarked by any ravages of severe illness and with waist-long blonde hair. Just as they were beginning the night's work, a heavy pounding sounded on the door. The group hastily slid the girl into the lime pit, and substituted an ordinary cadaver. When the door was then opened it disclosed a group of police. The latter found nothing out of the ordinary and left. Although he asked questions, my grandpa never got to the bottom of the story of the mysterious girl.

He was irreverent, peppery, and had little respect for his patients. I remember his telling of a delivery he had recently made. The father-to-be had met him at the roadside and conducted him as far as the front door, the while exhorting him, "Do your dooty, Doc. Do your dooty." My grandpa would laugh and mimic the nervous man's voice in the tellin_.

He had first set up practice in the Arkansas mountains, and many of his house calls were made by horseback. One cold, rainy night he had traveled miles by horseback to reach a one-room cabin. The room was overheated by a large fireplace. His patient, a woman, was lying on the one bed the room contained. She obviously was very sick, and he made his investigation as rapidly

as possible. His movements were observed by the anxious husband and a number of children gathered about the bed. Having just come in from the cold, Grandpa's nose had a tendency to drip, and he found it necessary to take a swipe at it with his handkerchief at intervals. A time came when both hands were occupied, and the next drop hung pendulous. One bright eyed youngster looked at him a moment and then helpfully remarked, "It's comin' again Mister."

Perhaps this is a good place to tell of my grandfather's experience with a ghost. He was just a boy in his 'teens, but had married my grandmother, and after setting up a housekeeping establishment in Arkansas, had gone away to the Civil War. The house in which they lived was situated on a corner. The soil was sandy and, as a result of the prevailing wind, the side gate was usually drifted shut. Arriving home on furlough, and one evening being thirsty, he had stepped out on the back porch where a bucket of water was kept. Gazing out over the moonlit landscape, dipper in hand, he saw his favorite cousin open the side gate and come walking toward the house. His first thought was that during his absence the side gate must have been cleared of sand. A glad cry of welcome brought no response, and when the cousin reached the end of the porch, instead of walking around to a set of steps located in the rear, he simply floated up to the porch, a matter of three or four feet. My grandpa leapt inside the house and slammed the door shut. Days later he learned that this cousin had been killed at that same time in the Battle of Shilo, some hundreds of miles distant.

When he had reached semi-retirement, Grandpa often played checkers with a fellow townsman in a Hereford hardware store. Their friendship would probably have been closer except for the fact that the other man had fought on the side of the North. The Civil War was still very much in our consciousness. After all, this most terrible of all our wars had come to its pathetic end only thirty-eight years before my birth. Through habit, Grandpa always carried his black medicine bag with him. One day the companion had a run of luck and won game after game. To add salt to the wound, he remarked each time, "That's the way we took you at Gettysburg," and, "That's the way we took you at Appomattox."

In following his profession of doctoring, Grandpa lived in a number of small towns, both in Arkansas and in northern Texas. At one time, in one of these towns, he had a neighbor who owned a number of ducks. These ducks were great foragers - in Grandpa's vegetable garden. A routine became established: Predatory ducks, complaint to the neighbor, promises, no action. And so it went, over and over.

One morning, on arising, the neighbor looked out his window. What greeted his startled view was his ducks, precisely spaced, each headed in the same direction as though on military review, each foot tacked through its webbing to a straight plank. This spectacle, courtesy of Grandpa, had been quietly arranged just before dawn.

Apparently nothing was said about the matter by either party, but afterward the ducks stayed home.

At the third allusion to a successful Yankee victory, Grandpa reached behind him to pick up a sledge handle, and with it laid open his tormentor's skull. Before the man came around, my grandpa cooled off and sewed up his rival's scalp.

I have seen him entertain an entire congregation at church with his anecdotes. He cleaned them up considerably for this audience, of course.

UNCLE EUGENE

Uncle Eugene was a tall gaunt man. He was a hummer. This hum consisted of a long high note, followed by a long lower note, and then three short notes. I once saw him fall out of a second story window of his gin to land flat on his back. He picked himself up and, without a word, walked off going Huummmmm, Huummmmm, Hmm, Hmm, Hmm. He had one vanity. He was proud of his small feet. Although he was 6'2" tall, he wore a size 5-1/2 shoe. This was possible not only because he really did have small feet, but also because he did not lace up his shoes, but walked about with their tongues hanging out.

Something was wrong with his left eye, and he wore eyeglasses. He bought them through a peddler who came to the store twice a year. This man carried a stiff black case, which, when opened in the middle, exposed slotted racks containing rows of steel-rimmed glasses. Uncle Eugene took each pair out, and one by one tried them on. The ones he could see through, he put aside. When he had finished the lot, he paid the reckoning, and the peddler left. Uncle Eugene then pushed each left eyeglass out of its frame with his thumb. He was very rough on glasses, and before the glasses man returned, he would be down to his last pair, and it would likely be hanging on with a loop of string over one ear, the bridge would be composed mostly of adhesive tape, and there would be a crack through the one lens. There must have been a code number for the glasses he could see through, and I used to wonder why he didn't find out what it was and order a dozen or so glasses at a time. I finally decided they worked it this way because he represented a big order to the peddler, and he enjoyed searching through the pack.

If he was rough on glasses, he was murder on automobiles. If one lasted him nine months it was a miracle. The only thing he paid any attention to was fuel. He carried a bottle of gasoline to start the engine, but his cars regularly ran on kerosene out of the back room of his store. This was before the time when he installed a gas pump. As for water, oil and grease, he ignored them. If anything broke, it stayed broke. Once, I remember, when he broke the gear shift lever on his Buick, he took the top off the transmission, and

shifted gears with a sawed-off broom stick handle. When all the grease was thrown out of the gear box, he ran it dry. Under way, broom handle at the ready, looking through his one good eye for high gear, he presented something of a traffic hazard in a town the size of Austin.

The story was told of him that once he had picked up a hitchhiking tramp. They had proceeded a short distance when the tramp asked him to stop. There was a clump of trees nearby, and Uncle Eugene assumed he was answering a call of nature. After he had crossed a ditch, and was on the other side of a wire fence, the tramp informed Uncle Eugene that given a choice of riding in that car and walking, he would take walking.

Another time, unable with his eyesight to see a ditch which had been dug across the road, his front wheels fell into it in full flight. All he got out of that were some sore ribs. The wheels were so tightly wedged he had to find a long pole to pry them out.

I was present when Mother, enroute to Belton, and nervous at his driving, remarked that the car was running well. He replied that the car, a Kissel and a very sporty car, ran well when he could keep the wheels on it. After that her lips moved steadily, and I learned later that she was praying for safe delivery, and it worked. After we reached home intact, Uncle Eugene, on his way out to the farm did indeed lose a right rear wheel.

The first car he owned was a Ford. These cars were, on occasion, hard to start. Sometimes jacking up one rear wheel and leaving the car in gear, facilitated things. Having encountered this difficulty, Uncle Eugene jacked up a rear wheel and went in front to crank. The car, anticipating the fate of its fellows to follow, started with a roar, vibrated off its jack, and ran over him.

Uncle Eugene fell in love with Minnie, the daughter of his storekeeper, a Mr. Adams. When she was old enough, he sent her to Trinity University, and then they were married. Aunt Minnie had a mare named Myrtle. This mare hated buggies. She had a trick, when harnessed for a start in a buggy, of not going forward as expected, but of suddenly going backward in a tight circle, thus

breaking out the shafts. But she liked being ridden, and it was a common sight to see Aunt Minnie, bareback, astride Myrtle, galloping about over the fields and hurdling ditches, the while crying out "Sweetness," her pet name for Uncle Eugene. What made the sight more memorable was that she habitually wore bathing suits against the summer heat -- flesh colored ones. Astride her horse, from a distance of twenty feet, the only way you could tell her from Lady Godiva was by the length of her hair.

Uncle Eugene was impatient of delay. One day he was going to Austin to order supplies for the gin from Walter Tipps. Aunt Minnie was slow off the mark, and Uncle Eugene started without her. He had to back out of the driveway, and by the time we had started forward, Aunt Minnie, clad in bathing suit, but with city clothes in hand, clambered aboard. As we drove, Aunt Minnie stripped down to the buff, and then dressed herself properly for public view. That performance would cause a stir today on a super highway.

I remember Aunt Minnie's brother, drover, very well. He farmed a section of land near the store. He habitually wore bib overalls, and carried a bulge of tobacco in his cheek. To show how busy he was, he always walked with short quick steps. This produced lots of action, but not much forward motion. He, too, constantly hummed, something he, do doubt, had picked up from Uncle Eugene. Ready for any emergency, he carried a big monkey wrench in his hip pocket. In those loose overalls, with every one of those quick short steps, that wrench gave him a bang in the butt.

Another favorite of mine was Wilbur Price, son of one of the farmers. Uncle Eugene had two big barns, one for hay and the other for corn. He needed them for all the stock he kept. These barns were not only full of mule feed, they were also full of yellow jacket nests. If we got near a nest, the wasps started walking around stiff-legged. A little nearer, and we got it like being shot with a poison bullet.

Tom and I had a little game we played with Wilbur. We would start by talking about how brave he was, and wind up by saying we wouldn't be surprised if he had nerve enough to push down a yellow jacket nest with a corn cob. He

would promptly march off, push down a yellow jacket nest, and get thoroughly stung. We would bring him back to the house, plaster him with a paste made of baking soda and blueing, a sovereign remedy at such times, and let him cool off. Shortly, we would begin to wonder if such a feat could be managed with half a corn cob, and Wilbur would demonstrate that it could. This called for more baking soda and blueing, and more cooling off. And then would come the ultimate limit: Could it be done with one's finger alone? Of course, it made no difference to the wasp if he got poked with a cob or a finger, but this was our way of working up to a climax.

It was on Uncle Eugene's farm that my path crossed that of Uncle Wiley. Wiley had presented something of a problem to his parents. As a young boy, he had discovered that the Donahue Creek, which was on their land, emptied into the Alligator, the Alligator into Little River, Little River into the Brazos, and that sullen river into the Gulf of Mexico. His intent was to run away from home and follow the life of a sailor, and this route seemed to him to be the easiest one. So he made a raft and let nature take its course. When found, several days later, he was well on his way.

Much later, when my grandfather died, Wiley's share of the estate consisted of cattle. Together with some of his pals, he started north with the herd. Unfortunately for all concerned, their bedrolls and saddle bags were loaded with whiskey, and when a cow strayed, which one will do as a matter of course, it was too much trouble to haze it into the herd again. So he lost his cattle by ones and twos and regal dozens. By the time they reached Waco, some sixty miles away, they were all in a happy daze but without a single cow. Wiley helped finish up the booze, and came home broke.

After that, Uncle Wiley dropped out of sight. There was a story that he had been working in the oil fields. A heavy piece of equipment had broken, he had been hit on the head by it, had spent several months in a hospital, and afterward was "not quite right in the head."

When we met, Uncle Wiley was spending a summer with Uncle Eugene. Uncle Wiley and I viewed each other with suspicion, I, because he was "not quite right

in the head," and he, because I was a boy. Crawfish can be found along the stream beds almost anywhere in that part of Texas. I came upon him once cooking crawfish tails in an old tin can. He was eating the cooked tails, and he offered me some. No doubt they were good, but I didn't try any. After that summer, nothing for sure was ever heard of him again. He was supposed to be trapping somewhere in West Texas, but he never wrote. No one knows where or when he was buried.

One of my earliest memories had to do with Uncle Eugene's house. I had some kind of fever, and had been sick with it for some time. Whoever our doctor was had put me on a water-free diet, and I craved water. My black nurse, Mariah, would hold me on her lap and dole out water by the drop. I had a little silver drinking cup, tapering inward toward the top. It had a disproportionately large Fleur de Lis on one side. The petals were in red, white and blue enamel. Mariah could get me through a whole day with just enough water to cover its bottom. She was very fat, and I would lie across her lap, not hanging over at either end. What solid comfort it was!

This farmhouse had a disquieting characteristic. It was located at the top of a slope of land, and any breeze set up vibrations in its wide eaves. I was told the resultant moaning was made by lost souls. I would listen to the moaning of the wind and think of all those poor people with no place to go and I felt desperately sorry for them.

DOWN ON THE FARM

I really had my roots in the farm. It was on this land that I was born, as was my daddy before me. By the time I came along, Daddy had 1500 acres under cultivation; Uncle Eugene, 2000; and Nana, 200. Daddy worked his land through tenant farmers, but Uncle Eugene farmed his 2000 himself. He used twenty-two mules to do the work.

Located in the center of this block of land, on a T of roads, was the postal address of Althea. Where the name came from, I have no idea. Probably some one just thought it a pretty name. The family couldn't use the name, Fowler, as it had already been used elsewhere. Althea consisted of a blacksmith shop, a gin, a store, a house, and up the road a bit, a school house. The store, owned by Uncle Eugene, was the most interesting building.

Entrance to the store was by way of a double door which was locked at night with a heavy brass padlock. Just inside, suspended from the ceiling, was a circular rack and from it hung buggy whips. On either side of this display were axes, pitchforks, mauls, and such tools. Two flat tables stood behind holding overalls, work gloves, work socks and underwear. Groceries were to the right. There were two glass-enclosed cases containing candies which could stand hot weather for long periods of time and, behind them, another case which held chewing tobacco, snuff, smoking tobacco and cigarette papers. Still further to the rear was a flat table with a scale, a wheel of cheddar cheese, and a tobacco plug slicer. It was an excellent place to sit while loafing. There were no chairs and no pot-bellied stove. To the rear of all were barrels of soda crackers and lard. Against the wall were shelves of canned goods, dried beans, and other staples.

The other side of the store was given over to dry goods. The two front cases held stuff for ladies. Not being interested in such things, I can't say too much about what was there. Shelves against the wall contained assorted dry goods. A disproportionate amount of space was given over to boxes of men's hats. The contents were changed, but the boxes, never. There was another flat table to the rear and on it was a glass case containing spools of thread. These

came in every conceivable color. It was a pleasure to absorb their beauty. There was also a small stock of patent medicines. This was where the office was located. There was an Oliver typewriter, a big glass-sided adding machine, and a safe. The store was robbed once. The thieves climbed through a small window, set high up in the back, and blew the safe. It could just as well have been left open. All it contained were books. Practically everything was handled by barter or credit. The thieves never came back. To the rear, through a wide door, was a big dark room. It held slow-moving things such as axle grease, horse collars, molasses and kerosene. The only way to light it was be opening the back unloading door, so things there were usually done by feel. When I went there, I usually wound up against the molasses barrel and got sticky, a state which I detested.

Bills were paid once a year when the cotton crop came in. That was our money crop. It was not unusual for debtors to move their possessions out by wagon between dark and dawn. Nobody ever tried to trace them down. Because of this, and poor business practices, the store lost money steadily. Uncle Eugene experimented with various projects to increase business. He added an insulated room and stocked ice; he added soda pop; he put in a gas pump. Each move simply meant he lost more money.

Barter was mostly in eggs. As they came in, they were placed in a big double-ended wooden crate which, when filled, was shipped to a jobber. It was never shipped until full, which might take a long time. These eggs were fertile and unrefrigerated.

Most people on the farm still stuck to buggies. Proper form was to drive with one foot jauntily hanging out the buggy's bed. Of course, in bad weather, the occupant rode with the top up and a rain screen hanging down in front. Glass insets permitted visibility, and the reins came through slits provided for the purpose. Somehow this gave little protection and the driver found himself pretty well soaked within a mile or two.

Farm machinery was not highly mechanized. Cotton planting was done with a mule-drawn contraption consisting of a large canister, at the bottom of which

was a slotted revolving wheel. Seeds were dropped, one by one, down a spout. A narrow plow opened the ground in front of the spout, and two narrow ones behind closed the furrow. Cultivating was done with a two-wheeled machine also mule-powered. Two interlocking beams were suspended by chains in such a way that they could be swung from side to side by the operator's feet, placed in stirrups on the beams. There were two plows on each beam. Properly adjusted, the cultivator turned over the ground to aerate the soil and to kill weeds and grass, leaving the growing cotton untouched. Cultivation was done two or three times a year.

There were none of the public services we take for granted today. We had our own telephone line running out to the farm. The poles used were flues out of our old boilers. The line ended at the store. Farmers, who lived between the store and town could tap in if they liked. It only worked intermittently.

We maintained our own roads, too. Gravel was more clay than gravel, and soon worked its way into nowhere. The best we could get came from near Davilla, and we brought it in by wagon. Gravel is surprisingly heavy. We had to put six or eight mules to the wagon to move it. Driving such a team, strung out as it was, two by two, required putting the lead team in the off side ditch before making a turn. It gave quite a feeling of responsibility to handle so many mules. The wagon bed was made up of 2 x 4's, laid tight. There were handles at each end, and to dump the load, two men turned the boards on edge. The largest bridge on the road was a Howe truss steel bridge about fifty feet long. Daddy was the engineer for it.

I remember one Summer vacation, Tom and I were working on Uncle Eugene's farm. Tom Allen, a friend of ours, was spending the Summer doing the same thing. One day we were working a field some distance from the house when the two Toms entered into an argument as to which had the faster team of mules. They decided to settle the matter with a race. I was the starter and judge. The two Toms cut long sticks to encourage the mules, and I stationed myself at the far side of the field, some two or three hundred yards away. At my

signal, the dropping of a bandanna handkerchief, each applied his stick and urged on his team. Each had forgotten to lift his plows in the excitement. I half expected to see a Whirling Dervish emerge from the resultant cloud of boiling dust; all that came out of it were loud cries of encouragement and the serious faces of four straining mules.

A mechanical chopper was put on the market, but it was a failure. Its fault was that cotton was not planted with precision, and it took out more plants than it left. So, this work had to be done by hand. Stalks were left one hoe-head apart. Later, when the plants were sturdier, each alternate stalk was taken out. We grew mostly cotton, and some corn and oats for feed. Barley was a good strength-giving grain, but it had beards which got caught in the mules' inner cheeks and gums. The only way to get them out was by hand, a nasty, slimy business, so we settled on oats.

Threshing was by means of a steam tractor and combine, which worked its way North with the season. In operation, the tractor was placed quite a distance from the combine, for fire prevention, and power was supplied through a long leather belt. Shocks of oats were brought by wagon and fed into a hopper at one end of the machine. Chaff was blown out through an elevated pipe to form a mound, and grain was bagged for future use. It seemed threshing time meant hot weather. The workmen were always wet from sweat and the chaff, which filled the air, worked its way into and under their clothing. It was a most uncomfortable job.

Land sold for about two hundred dollars an acre, and a yield of a half-bale to the acre was considered good. Some land produced a bale to the acre, and even more, but this was exceptional. No fertilizer was used, but there was some crop rotation and contour plowing was coming into practice. There were two pickings of cotton per year, and pickers got a cent a pound. Cotton brought around 8¢ a pound, and if it went to 10¢, the farmers were in clover. Once, during World War I, it went to 46¢, and there was joy in the land.

Tom and I had a little experience with oats on one of these Summer vacation

jobs. Again, we were on Uncle Eugene's farm. A field of oats had been put up in shocks, when a prolonged wet spell set in. When this passed, the oats had been cut long enough to permit the building of wasp nests in the grain. We knew nothing of this at the time. As we worked, one of us drove the wagon, while the other threw up the shocks on a pitchfork. The throwing up was the hardest work, so we alternated from time to time. I was throwing up and Tom was stacking, when my fork threw an angry settlement of yellow jackets at his feet. He was instantly covered with them. Instinctively, he kicked the bundle out over the mules, and they ran away. He was thrown to the ground, and the wagon ran over him. Fortunately, the load was light.

Today, we are aware that we are living in history. The assassination of a president is recognized as history. The findings of the Supreme Court change our lives in a way which is immediately noticeable. However, we lived in an age with no news over the air. Our newspaper was a weekly, and contained only news of local import. One day merged into another with no jolt; but Halley's Comet came as a jolt. Night after night, after supper, we drove out to the farm to share the sight with Uncle Eugene and Aunt Minnie. His farmhouse faced West. Broad steps led down to a walkway which led to a gate in a picket fence surrounding his house. We all sat on these steps to view the comet as it stretched across the sky. It was the biggest thing I had ever seen. With its tail reaching out some hundred million miles, it filled the horizon. I was not aware of any stars. This might have resulted from the brightness of the comet, or I might not have seen them because of my concentration. Somehow, I expected some noise from such a huge spectacle. What I remember most clearly was the absolute silence. There wasn't a sound. No one spoke, no cricket chirped, there was no breathing of the night.

I worked one Summer at Nana's place. It was run by a Mr. Huskey. The house was new and he had finished everything in shiny varnish. Floors, wood-work and furniture were all varnished. It made me uncomfortable at first, then I wasn't aware of it any more. Mrs. Huskey was a plump motherly woman. I'm sure she took pleasure in cooking things which would please a boy. She soon

learned that I liked cake, and she saw to it that there were always two kinds sitting on her sideboard. She made them of devil's food, orange flavor, cocoanut, chocolate frosted. She encouraged me to help myself, and I not only ate thick slices at mealtime, but broke my fast morning and afternoon with a slice of cake and a glass of milk. One day, half-way through a piece, I encountered a long grey hair. That ended it. I never ate another piece. She taxed herself to invent new, more exotic taste ticklers. I never told her what I had found.

There comes a time in life when one crosses the invisible boundary from boy-boy to man-boy. It is an emotional transition, not a physical one, and comes about through a testing of one's responsibility to one's self. As a youngster it is possible to evade responsibility and suffer no ill effects; but there comes a time when such an act can cause grave damage to an entire future life.

My own testing took place on the Huskey farm, and, as I outline it in words, the reader may think it a small thing. To me it was the beginning of the establishment of the values by which I live.

The break in our week's work took place at noon on Saturday. Mr. and Mrs. Huskey had left early for a trip in to Bartlett. Mr. Huskey had told me that when I had finished cultivating the little cotton patch near the road, I could leave too. This section, consisted of about an acre and should normally have seen me finished in about an hour. So, here I was, alone on the farm.

We had gone through a long rainy spell, and this little plot of land was foul with grass and weeds. Added to this, it was still too wet to plow properly. The day was very hot, and the humidity was around the 100 percent mark. Flies were making the mules restive and they were lunging about in their harness. Worst of all, for me, were the gnats. The air was solid with them. When they were this bad, I had a habit of encasing my head in a curtain made from my bandanna. My straw hat held the contraption in place. A narrow slit in front permitted limited vision, and the whale, touching my shoulders, acted as a

barrier and protected my neck. The technic with this rig was a constant oscillation of the head to confuse the gnats on the puzzle of entry. Even so, they did find their way in. Gnats in the nose, ears and mouth were endurable, but gnats in the eyes were another matter. My eyesight was such that I could spot a bug at a mile, but a cinder in someone else's eye would bring tears to mine in sympathy. So, a gnat in my eye was a painful experience. It called for the removal of the whole elaborate rig, and then a rearrangement.

The earth, still wet, clung to the cultivator plows. In not breaking free, it caused the weeds to build up across the central opening and drag the young cotton out of the ground. So, it was a case of ratcheting the beams holding the plows out of the ground, one at a time, and freeing them of their entanglements. This had to be done while holding the tormented mules in check, and suffering my own miseries. And, all this had to be gone through every four feet or so. Once, in sheer aggravation, I dragged out at least fifty feet of cotton before getting a grip on the situation again. Within twenty minutes, I was crying from self-pity and anger. Then came that cross-over point of which I spoke. This job could be done, and I was doggedly determined to do it. I kept at it until dark. I lifted those plows every four or five feet; when one eye got closed by a gnat, I kept at it until the other went out of commission; and I kept those mules from running away. And, by God, I plowed it clean!

Ever since that time, when I am confronted with a mean, unpleasant situation, I remember that afternoon. If I could do it as a boy, I can do it as a man. It was a true turning-point in my life.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

I might as well start with the story of Tom Talbot and Ned Bartlett. They were both good friends of Daddy's, and I like to think they were my good friends, too.

Tom Talbot had found Bartlett a little too civilized for his taste, and had traded his farm for a ranch near Ft. McKavett. Several hundred acres of this ranch were under cultivation. This land was irrigated with water from the lake which was part of the San Saba River. He grew alfalfa. That first Summer, his family lived in a number of tents strung along the lake bank, under the trees. He lived there while his ranch house was being built. When he moved in, it consisted of a large central room, with fireplace. On one side were two bedrooms; one for Tom and his wife, Moot, and the other for their five daughters. On the other side was located a bath and kitchen.

Tom had a gift. He could grunt like a pig. He could make every sound a pig ever dreamed of. I was fascinated, and practiced faithfully. The fact that I lacked jewels might have been the key to it; whatever the cause, I never acquired the talent. Tom also knew every tree in the forest. I started a collection of leaves as he taught me their names.

I spent this first Summer with them. Their move to the house took place just before I returned home, so my memory of that time was mostly of camp life. This was the first time I had ever been away from Home for any length of time and I was home sick. I mean, I was actually sick for a few days. Then the rhythm of things took over and I was all right again.

Tom had a great capacity for enjoying life, and I am sure he liked fording the San Saba as much as we children did. This ford was located at the foot of the lake, and we used it to cross over in going to town. Loaded into his Model T, we would hit the water, to use modern parlance, flat out. Anything less, except for a crawl, and we got drenched, but wide open, with a holler from me and squeals from the girls, and we were across, reasonably dry, in a big ball of flying water. One day something went wrong, and when we reached the far side, we found the tube had popped out of the tire in one section.

This was in the time of the high-pressure tire and there was a lot of air in that little section of rubber. We had to take the tire off, rearrange the tube, and pump it up again. We all took turns pumping, laughing the whole time.

Speaking of automobiles, Daddy liked Stearns Knights at the time, and he had bought one under unusual circumstances. One of the Astors had ordered a custom-made Stearns, but before it could be delivered, he had gone down in the Titanic. When the car was delivered, his estate had put it up for sale. The Stearns agency in Austin, had let Daddy know it was available, and he had bought it. He had the Astor monogram painted out, and his own substituted. In those days we called our cars by their colors, and this became the Big Yellow Car. Shortly after, Daddy sold it to Tom Talbot, and he took the engine out to pump water for irrigation. It worked there for many years. Those Knight sleeve valve motors really stood up. Long after, I lived in a Vincent Astor house in New York. I often thought of writing Mr. Astor to pass along this bit of family trivia, but I never did.

A few miles downstream was another irrigation project. This one was powered by a steam engine. The rig had been a steam tractor with the engine mounted on the boiler. The wheels had been removed for greater stability. It was log-fired, and a beauty to watch in operation.

Tom always had a big cud of tobacco in his cheek. The day Daddy arrived to take me home was a cool one, and there was a fire going in the fireplace. Daddy had arrived a day earlier than planned, so he could have a longer visit; and Tom, who had just come into the house, was so excited at the unexpected pleasure that he threw his hat in the fire and spit in the chair.

Ned Bartlett was a descendent of the founder of the town of Bartlett. He was probably about thirty-five at this time. He had done everything, and had been everywhere. I don't know by what mysterious grapevine he was found, but he was asked to do the most outlandish things.

Just a few years before the time of which I write, he had headed up a crew of men which was delivering three steam tractors to a big estate in the middle

of Argentina. As they went, they cut wood for fuel, shot cattle and animals for food, and when they encountered a river, which was always a surprise as they had no map and were traveling by compass, they forded it if possible. If it were too deep, they tied down the safety valves, built up a big head of steam, pulled the fires, and went across like wheeled submarines.

He was a sleepwalker. He went off a moving train one night while in this state. Hitting limp saved his life. Ned was a bachelor. He was a great friend and made many trips with us. He was inordinately fond of lemon pie. I have known him to eat two and a half lemon pies in a restaurant at one sitting. The last time I saw Ned, I had gone home for a visit. There was a big tie-up at the railroad crossing caused by a freight train cutting out cars. As I sat waiting, I recognized one of the figures clambering about over the cars and uncoupling couplings. It was Ned, helping out. When things cleared up, Ned, walking back to his car, saw me and sat down with me for a talk. We must have visited in this way for more than an hour.

We had some unusual people in our town. One was a negro who worked for us. I doubt if he had ever been to school, but he was a genius for all that. He could do the most complicated arithmetical problems in his head, including fractions. He could not explain how he did it, but he sure got the right answers. I wonder how far he could have gone with some schooling.

Another character was an English cotton buyer. Bartlett was the center of a big production area, and as such it was important to an English cotton firm to have an agent in residence. It was an alien world to him, and he must have felt he was in hell. Because of the belt-back loose English slacks he affected, we kids called him "Satchel Ass."

We had a weekly newspaper, The Bartlett Tribune, edited by R. F. Cates. Its news was almost all local in flavor. Such items as, "Miss Ollie Knight entertained a select group of friends last Tuesday with an afternoon of bridge. The house was tastefully decorated with snapdragons from her own garden...." Mr. Cates' family consisted of a wife, daughter and son. The womenfolk almost never went out, but the son, Herb, was usually on display, leaning against

some downtown store front. He wore peg pants, two-tone shoes and a straw boater hat. He was a real sharp dude. He never went near the newspaper office, and he did no work. Occasionally, he vanished for a few days. When he returned he darkly hinted at some sordid escapade too worldly for our rural sensitivities. The innuendoes were so far off the mark that they never made any sense to me. I think Mr. Cates, having no social contact with his fellow Bartlettonians, lead a sad life. His paper was put to bed on Friday, and it was said that he got drunk on Saturday night.. It was reported that, to spare his family, he went to Holland, our next town to the North, to whoop up and down the streets. The Bartlett Tribune was sometimes called the Holland Holler.

Then, there was the Donovan family, husband, wife and daughter. Mr. Donovan had come down from Chicago as superintendant of the Bartlett & Western, the little 30-mile-long railroad owned by Daddy, Uncle Eugene and Uncle Billy Jackson. This family lived in an apartment on the second floor of a commercial building. There was nothing on the first floor. Nobody ever saw the inside of their home. Nobody was ever invited to do so. The daughter was in her thirties, an old maid, and a talented artist. She was commissioned to do a portrait of "Ma" Ferguson, and was reportedly paid a fee of \$10,000, which was a great deal of money in those days. Jim Ferguson had been Governor of Texas, and had been caught with his hand in the cookie jar. From the size of the figures mentioned, perhaps I should say he got caught with his hand in the bank vault. Before Jim was impeached, he saw to it that his wife, "Ma," was put in to run things to the advantage of the Fergusons. When election time rolled around again, Jim ran, and was re-elected handily.

From the street, when the Donovan livingroom was lighted at night, one could see, at an angle, the daughter's paintings hanging on the wall. One of them was an abnormality for that time and place. It was a life-size nude.

It was across the street from the Donovan's that I heard my first radio broadcast. This was at the Fairchild Lumber Company. The office, which held the radio, and the space around it, were so cluttered with people that it was

impossible to see what the set looked like. From where I stood, outside and pretty well back in the crowd, I could only see a man bustling about, and a lot of scratchy sound coming forth. Then there was a voice saying something. It was so broken with static, I could get no continuity and lost interest. I was more impressed with the excitement of the crowd, which was almost electric, than I was by the performance of the radio.

The lumber yard adjoined the railroad track, and it was on the wide ramp leading to the crossing that Tom had his first automobile accident. He hit and overturned the town gasoline truck. This truck consisted of an ordinary flat bed on which gasoline was carried in five-gallon milk cans. At the impact, the cans went flying and so did the gasoline. There was no fire. That night our cook regaled us with her version of the scene of Tom's arrival home after the accident:

"Mr. Tom, he comes home, he always pulls up them pants legs 'fore he come up them steps. He keep the creases in that way. This time, he come home, he come a-runnin' up them steps. He don't bother 'bout no creases in no pants leg. He come a-runnin' and a'hollerin'. He holler, 'Nana, I needs you.' Miss Nana, she come a-runnin' and she say, 'What you done, honey? Whatever you done, yore Nana's right behind you.'"

Two blocks up Main Street from the lumber yard was the home of T. B. Benson. His father was the president of one of Bartlett's three banks, and had the reputation of being the only man in town who regularly drank a quart of whiskey before breakfast. I never smelled whiskey on his breath, so I can't authenticate this statement. T. B. was an unflappable little boy, who went about in open-legged, knee-length pants, held up by way of a wide leather belt. One of his father's friends gave T. B. a small alligator. The whole town got into the act, and it was the generally held opinion that the alligator would grow up and eat T. B. T. B. had a habit of walking around town with the alligator hung down his right pants leg, the head protruding from the bottom, and the tail caught firmly under his leather belt. At night he slept with it. T. B. literally killed the animal with love. Several years later, his daddy

bought T. B. a Pierce Arrow roadster. One night, drunk, and in his new car, T. B. was barreling through the streets of Waco. Running a red light, he hit a broken-down old car broadside. The family in it went to the hospital. It cost his daddy a thousand dollars to get him out of that one it was reported.

Still further up Main Street, lived Johnny and Harry Bartlett. Their father had furnished them with a swing in the back yard. Things come big in Texas, and the uprights for the swing were no exception. They were old power line poles, and they must have protruded from the ground a good sixty or seventy feet.

Every day, after lunch, Harry had a habit of taking a good swing. One day, just before Harry was due to take his constitutional, Johnny shinnied up one of the poles, butcher knife in teeth, and lay down on the cross-piece. Harry appeared on schedule, leisurely surveyed the landscape, climbed into the swing, and pumped himself higher and higher until he was dropping slightly at the top of each arc. He could go no higher. Timed with precision, just as Harry reached that part of his path to give greatest trajectory, Johnny slashed the rope. Harry sailed away majestically. After a time, lying prone and gathering his faculties, Harry located his brother on the cross-piece. He gasped out, "What are you tryin' to do, Johnny? Kill me?"

Mrs. Whitlow, who lived on a side street, had a heavy lisp. Her son's name, Sambo, came out of her mouth as "Thambo," and for no particular reason she called her husband, whose name was Dimmit, "Dammit." I never tired of listening to her talk. She was capable of true linguistic gems.

Sambo abused his mother but she never weakened in her maternal affection. He took a delight in locking her in their outhouse. She would wait patiently to be released, the while calling in sweet reason through the locked door, "Thambo, honey, let mama out." Sometimes he kept her there for an hour or more. It happened so regularly I was surprised she never prepared an alternate escape route.

They had an old well in their back yard. It was a pre-city-water relic,

and was covered with some aging planks. One day Sambo, trusting his increasing weight to them once too often, went through. His frantic mother rushed to the telephone to summon her husband to the rescue. That surprised gentleman received this message: "Oh, Dod, Dammit, Thambo' th fell in the well!"

When World War I came along, we lost our young Dr. Sutton. He was sent to a base hospital in England, and soon established the reputation of being one of the fastest and most skilled surgeons in the Army. When the war was over, he had offers from Johns Hopkins, Mayo Brothers and Scott and White. As far as I know, these were the three most outstanding medical centers in the United States at the time. However, he liked the tempo of our town, so he returned home. When he was an intern, he had met and fallen in love with a nurse. Now, feeling free to plan a future, he married the girl. It was a mistake. She became deaf. Being unable to hear or understand, she became suspicious of night calls and telephone conversations. Unable to hear, she developed a habit of conversing in the loudest tones possible. Neighbors heard many angry outbursts coming from their home. Late one night, there was the usual altercation, but this one was punctuated by the sound of a gun shot, and then silence. Dr. Sutton said he hadn't done it, and the grand jury found Mrs. Sutton had died from a gun shot wound by the hand of person or persons unknown.

After Daddy died, Dr. Sutton became a sort of distant second father to me. He was a crusty, direct man, but underneath this shell was a need to be liked. Whether this need applied to me alone, or to the entire community, I did not presume to find out. It was enough to me to know that I had a kind of bond with him, and I let it go at that. Being a farm boy, I knew the facts of life up to a point, but there were lots of dark corners which I found needed illumination. I would question him on any of these matters, and he would turn in his high-backed chair, run his hand along rows of medical books, extract one, mark a page, and hand it to me. I was directed to read the indicated section and, if I still had any questions, to let him know.

Many years later, I was in Bartlett again when my young nephew, Tom Jr.,

barefoot, stepped on a nail in a barnyard. Upon calling Dr. Sutton, I was instructed to bring in the youngster, stopping enroute at the drug store for a phial of antitetanus serum. When we reached his office, he placed my nephew on the metal operating table, stripped to the waist, for a supposed examination. Then he turned his back, did something, and again faced the boy with his right hand doubled up in a fist. Making a casual remark about having done some amateur boxing at one time, he demonstrated by striking the boy a firm but not painful blow on the right breast. That was it. The hypodermic was hidden in his hand, the needle protruding between his fingers. The injection had been made while the patient was in ignorance that anything had happened. We then settled down for a comfortable talk about old times. When I left, although I did not know it at the time, it was really a case of good bye.

I remember an episode which I shared with Watterson Laughlin. He had been laid up with a boil. When I went to visit him in his sick room, he described to me what a miserable time he had been going through, and he rolled over on his stomach to expose for my inspection a very large boil on the right cheek of his buttocks. The core had come out the night before, leaving a crater into which I could have inserted the end of my little finger. I had been sucking a lemon, and it was pure reflex which made me fill the crater with lemon juice. The result was instantaneous. Watterson lept from his bed and circled the room, hurdling the bed at each revolution. This was no mean feat as the bed was large and the room small. At the same time there emitted from him loud cries, unpunctuated by pause for breath. He was so indignant with me that I went home. Later in the day, Mr. Laughlin called on Mother and demanded that I be given a whipping. Bless her heart, she refused.

We had a number of gamblers in Bartlett. Some were big time, others were just punks. One of the latter was the son of our town's scavenger, the man who went through our alleys at night, in his two wheeled car, to empty privies. This son carried a large roll of bills in his pants pocket. They were all singles except for the outside bill, which was a twenty. Once I saw a hundred dollar bill there, but only once.

A big time gambler was George Ware. He was a handsome young man, married to a friendly little brunette. They had a daughter. Everyone liked them. He didn't wear a string tie. He was just an average, nice young man. Once he had a run of bad luck and our neighbor, Mrs. Walton, told me he came to her for a loan. He had already borrowed from everyone he could think of. Later, I asked her if he had paid her back, and she answered that he had, and everyone else as well. George's credit was A. O. K. in our town.

Another big gambler was Joe Knight. He would gamble on anything and with anything up to, and including, a farm. I admired him tremendously. He was a marvelous host and one of the best story tellers I have ever known. Once at his house, I had dinner consisting of turkey and vegetables. The turkey he had shot, and the vegetables came from his farm. He was too broke to buy from a store. The next time I saw him, he had just bought three Packards, one for each member of the family. Then he began the biggest gamble of all, oil leases. In drilling on one of his holdings, oil was struck, but the well caught fire and he was burned to death. It left his family rich, but we all missed him. I certainly did.

My first faint tingling of romance was directed toward a girl named Nell Hemple. She had come down from Temple to visit the Haubers. I think they were related in some way. She was a delightful little blonde, and she was a new face, and so, intriguing. I knew every piece of clothing owned by my peers, so she was, to me, a fashion plate. I was particularly taken by a hound's tooth cloak and a pair of Scotch plaid socks she owned. So, on the day of her return to Temple, I made a date to call upon her. The awaited time arrived, and in a Saxon borrowed from an older friend, I drove up to her house. We then went for a long ride. Whether it was nervousness, I have no idea, but I developed some kind of throat condition which left me voiceless except for a whisper. When we returned to her house, dusk had almost turned into dark. Her parents were seated on their front porch entertaining friends. Being German, they had been drinking beer, and the empty bottles had been placed on the floor beside their chairs. I had been properly brought up, and I knew my

manners. Not only this, I wanted to make a good impression on Nell. So, as I was introduced to each in turn, I made a point of shaking hands with the gentlemen, and bowing to the ladies, the while whispering my pleasure at making their acquaintance. As I moved to clasp the last hand, I stepped on a bottle unseen in the dark, and found myself flying over the rail to the lawn below. I then did what I always did in emergencies. I went home.

The Waltons were probably our best friends. Their first child, Julia, had died when she was just at the doll-playing age. They had built for her a two-room doll house, and when she died, they never had the heart to tear it down. It remained just as she had left it, containing her dolls and their furniture. It was no surprise that when their son, Billy, was born, they smothered him with affection.

Mrs. Walton had been a Rucker, and her father was a doctor. Dr. Rucker had pushed himself too hard in the service of his patients. In trying to get a little more out of the old machine, he had taken dope at times of stress. He miscalculated, and became what we used to call a "dope fiend." Unable to work any more, he lay all day on his bed in his downstairs bedroom. On "bad days" he would shoot up through the ceiling with his old horse pistol. Colored servants were leary about doing any work over his head, but he never got one.

Mrs. Walton's house was full of glass cases, all stuffed with every conceivable thing which had ever caught her magpie-eye. She had everything from a phial of water from the River Jordan to a stuffed pheasant. I expect it took a full-time maid just to dust the lot.

We usually shared their Christmas, which they had on Christmas Day. There would be a jingling of sleigh bells, and then Mr. Walton would enter in his Santa Claus suit, which was generously stuffed with pillows. Dropping his voice to its lowest register, which was his Santa Claus voice, and fooled no one except his son, he would ask if Billy had been a good boy during the year, and Billy, scared stiff, would whisper that he had. I was surprised that everything didn't turn into switches and ashes for Billy was a stinker.

Once, at dinner, Mrs. Walton served brandied peaches for dessert. Nana,

who had never tasted anything alcoholic in her life, was delighted with them, and passed her plate for seconds. Everyone at the table was amused; even I, who had never tasted anything alcoholic either, could recognize liquor when it bumped into me.

Mr. Walton was bald, and resented it. He had bought an aluminum dome which was supposed to help in such matters. Tightly fitted over a bald skull, and with a partial vacuum within, hair follicles were supposed to be pulled through the recalcitrant scalp. I was not so accustomed to wierd costumes as I am today, and an unexpected sight of him, wearing a shiny dome with a valve on top, always gave me a start.

I once encountered him in another headdress. It consisted of a heavy Turkish towel, knotted under his chin, and holding some large object in place on top of his head. I could see some greasy substance emanating from the object, to ooze down over his forehead. On my inquiry, he explained that he had heard that a partly roasted chicken stimulated hair growth. If anyone is interested in testing this theory, I can report although I made a point of careful scrutiny over the next two or three weeks, I could find no evidence of new fuzz.

ET CETERA

As the chapter heading implies, the following is a random remembrance of things as they were when I was a little boy.

One of my early memories was of the town watering cart used to lay the dust. It was a wooden tank on a wagon bed, with a perforated iron pipe in back. It was pulled by a team of mules. Later, when Main Street was paved with brick, the cart was put away. Another mule-pulled vehicle was the ice wagon. It had a broad step, which was just the right height for a hot boy to climb upon to reach for ice slivers.

Our paved street was officially named Clarke Street, but we called it Main. After all it was the main street of the town. Side streets had no names that I ever heard, and houses had no numbers. We had no mail delivery, and we needed no directional help. We knew where everyone lived.

Our fire department consisted of one piece of equipment. It was a big reel of hose mounted on two wheels. The contraption was drawn by a handle on the end of a tongue. It was housed in a small building on railroad property. On top of this building was a little slotted cupola containing the fire bell. The whole wasn't over twelve feet high. What we lacked in equipment, we made up in water pressure. I've seen it knock shingles off a roof like leaves before a storm.

Some things seemed to stick out in my memory of our town. One of them was the Bull Durham sign at the South edge of town. It was not so big as road signs are today, but it was a big sign just the same. Bull Durham was a dry, flaky cigarette tobacco which was very popular. This sign was changed periodically, but the one I remember best was of a bull and cow. The bull was a magnificent beast with flashing eyes, massive shoulders, and a ponderous scrotum which almost reached the ground. The cow, on a much smaller scale, was standing on the other side of a partially broken wooden fence. She was looking at him with love-misted eyes. The caption read: "Her Hero."

Prohibition put Bartlett on the map. Our part of the country went dry by public option, and the time came when Bartlett was the Northernmost wet

town in Texas. The line between Bell and Williamson Counties slanted through the south business section of Main Street. It was here the operators moved in to open saloons. The bar was simply an excuse for being, and occupied as little space as possible. Customers were served, but not encouraged. The remainder of the space was stacked high with cases of liquor, warehouse fashion. Individuals and bootleggers came from all over. It was not unusual to see license plates from as far away as Illinois, and they were attached to everything up to, and including, Rolls Royces. Bartlett was like a frontier town, full of strangers manhandling cases of whiskey across sidewalks. When Bell County went dry, the operators moved bars to the backs of the stores, which were in Williamson County, and went right on selling. At last, Williamson County went dry too, and Bartlett went back to sleep again.

We had extremes in weather, some of it violent. As a youngster, I was caught down in a creek bottom by a heavy hail storm. After it was over, I walked home, barefoot, over a carpet of rounded pieces of ice. I found Mother frantic about my safety. Imagine that! Even a fool would have found an old shed for shelter, as I had done.

I have mentioned the sinking of the Titanic. The night of the day she went down, we were kept awake by a lashing storm. We had plenty of sleet and hail, but I remember only two snow storms. Tom and I would hurriedly saw 2x4's with slanted ends and nail on boards for sleds. Usually, before we could finish, the snow had turned to slush. It was during one of these snow storms that Bill Adams was killed. He had dropped out of high school to work at Fred Deering's Ford agency. Billy was driving along Main Street in his Model T. At intersections, he cramped his front wheel and at the same time locked his brakes. (The brakes only worked on the back wheels). The result, in that high short-coupled car, was to make it spin in dizzying circles. But, he did it once too often. The whirling car struck the curb, Billy was thrown out, and his neck was broken.

We had no weather reporting service, and radical changes could hit us with no warning at all. When Northerners came down out of Canada, as they frequently

did, there could be a breath-taking drop in temperature between two puffs of wind.

The worst storm I ever experienced kept us up all night, brooms in hand, sweeping water from the second story down the back stair. The wind was so fierce, and was so loaded with water, that it drove the rain right through our cedar-shingled roof as if it were a sponge. We had a negro woman who came every Monday to do the wash. She put the clothes in a big cast-iron kettle and filled it with soap and water. This kettle stood on three legs in the back yard, and she built a fire under it to cause it to boil. The morning after the storm this kettle was filled with water. Granted it was a half-hemisphere in shape, some three feet in diameter, so it was not an ideal rain gage. What made it even more unreliable was the fact that it had overflowed. I never did learn what the actual rainfall was in that storm, but it must have been near to a record. Undoubtedly, we must have been in the path of a tropical hurricane, although none of us thought of it in that way. Next day, our teacher asked the class to report on unusual happenings. Among the tales of washed-out bridges, blown-over trees, and other storm damage, one youngster reported that their privy had gone over. Not only that, his little sister had been in it.

Personal honor was a very real thing in Bartlett at the time of which I write. Anyone who impugned the honor of another's family was, automatically, in for a fist fight, otherwise, a person was in disgrace.

I remember once when I was in the sixth grade, I set myself up for a bad beating. Naman Hair was older than I. What was more, he was on the baseball and football teams. He could eat me alive. I became aware that he was "picking on me," and invited him to meet me after school. This meant I would meet him in a certain alley where affairs of this kind were settled. As I approached the alley, with a second to hold my coat, I knew I would leave it in worse shape than when I went in. Naman was waiting for me at the entrance to the alley, and asked what this was all about. I was surprised and told him that he must have known that he had been giving me a bad time. His answer was that he had not

been aware of it, and why not call the whole thing off as it had been a mistake. So, we shook hands. Now, Naman knew as well as I did that this would have been no contest. Looking back, I realized that Naman was holding to a code too. Good guys don't beat up little kids.

Gene asked for, and got, the only whipping of her life to pay off a debt. Before we moved into town, she had been told not to ride a certain colt as it was too young; but she had ridden it anyway. When Daddy heard of it, he told her she had a whipping coming and to let him know when she was ready. Time passed. We moved to Bartlett. We had lived there a couple of years, perhaps, when one day she told Daddy she was ready. So he gave it to her, and the debt was retired.

Cheating in school meant automatic expulsion. Mart Leatherman had been using a pony for his Latin. Whether he admitted his guilt, or was found out, I don't know, but one day he was up in front of the entire school, pony in hand, confessing his sins. He went on at some length telling us how sorry he was. At last, he strode back to one of two big pot-bellied stoves located in the back of the auditorium. It was winter time and they were both going full blast. He opened the door of one, held the pony aloft for dramatic effect, threw it in, and slammed the door. As an epilogue, let me mention that I worked part time in the post office, and because of this, only Mart and I knew that two days before he had received a comparable book "in plain wrapper." Even Mart did not know that I knew.

Sometimes honor took unexpected turns. My name had been put up as Troop Leader in our Boy Scout group. Another boy, Oscar, had also been named. As it happened, the vote was equally divided, with Oscar voting for me, and I for Oscar. This happened two weeks running, and then Oscar simply absented himself. That is how he became Troop Leader for that year.

That we were river ranch stock showed in our diet. We ate liver when it was eat food, and brains appeared regularly on our table. I liked brains best in scrambled eggs. Speaking of eggs, Tom liked yolks and couldn't stand whites. With me, it was the reverse, so we swapped, and getting double por-

tions of our favorite parts, were happy. We enjoyed hominy and grits, both delicious with ham gravy, and we liked greens with real flavor. Collard greens were best. Okra grew semi-wild for us. It reseeded itself year after year with no help from Farmer Brown. I particularly liked its nut-like flavor when fried.

Our beef was slaughtered one day and sold the next. Cut thin, and fried dry, I hadn't the strength to cut it. To manage the business, I plunged my fork into it, and broke off pieces by twisting my knife against the fork. We needed good teeth to eat it. Oysters came in wooden kegs, already shucked. We bought them by the pint or the quart. The storekeeper didn't cheat on contents, they were packed solid. We ate them fried, or in stews, but we liked fried best.

Our entertainment consisted of reading aloud. Tom and I shared a bedroom adjoining that of Mother and Daddy. At night, when we were all comfortably a-bed, they took turns reading aloud to us. We were thus introduced to the works of good authors. We read all of Dickens, and Scott, and Prescott, and Mark Twain. Their choices were eclectic on individual books. I still consider The Virginian the best Western ever written. Mother often faltered as the monotony of her own voice lulled her to sleep. When we sensed her slipping off, we took her to task, and spurred awake, she struggled on until finally we took pity and let her stop for the night. Daddy, sturdy Trojan, never faltered. I read a great deal myself, and I venture to say that I am probably the only person, with the exception of Gene Sheppard, who knows that Old Meg was really a beautiful young debutante in disguise. (Who ever heard of the Grey Seal!) There was no library in town, nor one in the school if you except a set of the Britannica and a dictionary. Our town was too small for Mr. Carnegie to notice.

Before Daddy turned the ranch into farmland, he took a train-load of cattle to Chicago each year. He went with them in the caboose. It must have been a pleasant way to travel. Like a turtle, he carried his house with him. Certainly it was a much more pleasant way to travel than the way my grandfather took his cattle to market. He made at least two cattle drives to California.

On one of them, his first baby, My Uncle Charlie, had need of a wet-nurse. The only one available was an Indian squaw, so she joined the drive. I never heard how she got back home. When Daddy returned from his trips to Chicago, he always brought Mother a present, and it was always the same thing; a brooch. She had a drawer full of them. I used to enjoy taking them out and admiring them, but the piece of jewelry I liked best was a gold hat pin. One end swelled in a tulip-shaped bulb, and this was fitted with a little spring-lock hatch. Inside the bulb were a dozen little gold straight pins. She let me play with it, and I was always very careful that the count was right before I put it away.

Mother's cheek bones were just high enough to be interesting, but she preferred a more rounded face. She achieved this effect by putting thin cotton pads in her cheeks. She could play the piano after a fashion. I believe she played chords with her left hand and carried the tune with her right. Anyway, the effect was pleasing, and she played several popular songs well. Her best was Silver Threads Among the Gold. I couldn't stand it. I pictured her sitting there, a little, shriveled-up, white-haired, old woman, and I broke down each time she played it. She finally gave up and dropped that song from her repertoire.

Mother did some work on our flower beds and, as was common, she shielded her complexion against the burning sun with a sun bonnet. One year, she had one made of a nauseating pattern and color. Tom and I thought it something she should be ashamed of, and we hid it in some weeds in a corner of our yard, a place no one ever went. Mother looked high and low for it. We helped her look, too.

Mother's interior decorating was mostly done through a change in wallpaper. We had a paper hanger who came through town twice a year. On the first trip, he showed Mother patterns in three or four books which he brought with him. After Mother had made her selection, he would go away. On his next trip, he brought what she had ordered with him, and hung it. I remember the papers were put out by Thibaut of New York City. Not only walls were covered, but the ceilings as well. This latter was called oatmeal paper. He hung the ceiling paper

with a broom.

I was once abandoned. It happened the day we went to Schwertner for a swim. This was the first little town West of Bartlett on the B & W. Here someone had thrown a dam across a stream, and people came from the towns around to use the resultant pond. Although I did some paddling about with the help of "water wings," I was most interested in Mother's actions. She did not swim for pleasure, nor to get from one place to another. She apparently went into the water only to find out how high she could maintain her chin above its surface. This she did by beating the water into a fine flumery using her vigorous dog-paddle.

Becoming engrossed in the activities of the other swimmers, I suddenly became aware that my family was seated in our car, and was in the act of driving away. Being quite small, probably the reason I had been overlooked in the first place, I was not capable of great speed. Even so, I did my best to overtake them. When they had dwindled into the distance, I came to a halt and whimpered a bit. I had seven miles to cover, and it was getting late in the afternoon, so I struck out at a good pace. I did pretty well, too. By the time they reached home, counted noses, and returned for me, I had gone a good half-mile.

Gene liked to fool around with doggerel. One night she chanted to Daddy:

I wish I was a little log
a-lyin' in a holler

I wouldn't sleep,
I wouldn't eat,
I wouldn't even swaller.

and Daddy, after some thought came back with:

I wish I was a little rock
A-sittin' on a hill.

I wouldn't move all day long,
I'd just be sittin' still.

Another time, through our cook, we heard of a dispute between Miss Tilly, who ran a negro boarding house, and her cook. Miss Tilly claimed he had stolen a steak, and he said the cat had eaten it. The town constable had been called in on the case. Gene wrote a long poem on this subject, which ended:

Miss Tilly called in the constable
Who done his best to see
If the cat had et the meat,
Or if it had been me.

He punched me where my stomach was,
And done the cat the same,
And said the cat was far more fat,
As anyone could claim.

Daddy thought it a good idea for us to know how things worked. To this end we boys spent a part of our Summer vacations working on the farm and putting the gin in order. I learned how to time valves on a steam engine, how to pour a bearing, how to cut oil journals, how to bead new tubes in a boiler, how to lace a belt, how to pack a pump, how to sharpen saws. I've never used any of these skills since. Indirectly, I use them every day of my life.

I could not describe the town of Moody if my life depended upon it. Quite probably I have never been in the business section; but I certainly remember Aunt Ella's house, situated, as it was, in the residential section. Aunt Ella, a descendant of Nana's branch of the family, had been married to a doctor. In those benighted days, doctors joined that profession not for its unlimited money-making potential, but to render a service to mankind. As a result of their unstinted giving of self, they often died young, and they often died poor. This was the case with Aunt Ella's husband. He had left her a big house, and that was all. The only thing she knew was housekeeping, so she turned her home into a rooming-boarding house.

Her rates were low, and she just made out. As she learned the ropes, she found that codfish was both filling and cheap. So, cod became a standard

staple of their diet, so much so that one day one of her boarders, seating himself at her table, was heard to murmur, "Cod, my God! My God, Cod!"

Somewhere in the convolutions of her family, was a young girl who had been left an orphan with no close relatives, so Aunt Ella took her in and thus added one more mouth to feed. As year was added to year in Aunt Ella's uninteresting life, this child grew up in an existence as unromantic as that of Aunt Ella herself. It consisted of bed-making, dish-washing, and hand-me-down clothing. One day, when she was about fourteen, a "glamour" magazine fell into her hands. Therein she saw depicted mink coats, custom Locomobiles, and Society Night-Life. She mooned through it for several days and then, out of nowhere, whined, "Aunt Ella, I want to go to New York City." That good woman, knowing only grinding poverty, was speechless.

The inside of both of my hands is heavily scarred. This resulted from a childish game I played one day with Tom. We were playing "fire engine" with the lawn mower. We had turned it upside down. As he was pulling at a run, I pushed on the bottom plate. The rapidly revolving blades were a blur beneath my hands. Through a maladjustment in coordination, there was a joggle, and in the hands went. They were instantly cut to ribbons. Daddy arrived home just at that moment. He took in the situation at once, and walked me to the house to call the doctor. As we reached the front door, he did a very delicate and thoughtful thing. He took my two hands in one of his, and with the other, shook out his big white handkerchief as a covering. Mother never did see what he had hidden from her.

Nana was an abnormally religious person. I expect it was she who was responsible for our plague of preachers. It is said that hoboes put a mark, recognizable to their own kind, on the gateposts of friendly houses. Some such word must have gone out about our house. It became a haven for almost every breaker-down, lazy, inept preacher in the country. Almost before I knew it, our spare bedrooms were filled with them, two to the bed, with the overflow on cots. They crowded our table, and the conversation was full of

petty outbursts. "Brother Simpson, don't you think you're a little heavy handed with the white meat?" Or, "Brother Timkin, you have been sitting at Brother Tom's right the past three meals. I believe it's my turn."

In those days we went to the outhouse, which was situated against the alley in the back yard. Some of these preachers considered this too much trouble, and they used slop jars. Slop jars were often highly ornate affairs. We had a maiden lady, Miss Effie, some forty years of age, who had all the business she could handle in painting dinner plates and slop jars. She did a good job, too. Later, she married a hotel man and moved to Corpus Christi. So, these preachers used the slop jars and heaved the contents out the window onto the porch roof. It got so anyone walking by on a Summer day could actually smell our place.

I never knew what happened. Nobody ever said anything. But, one day there were no preachers, and they never came again.

Preachers weren't all bad. Some years later Brother McCarthy came to our town. He put a good taste back in my mouth. He loved sports, and often took school teams to nearby towns. The fact that his car had no brakes was of little importance. Our country was flat, sharp corners could be anticipated, sticky situations could be negotiated with the help of the horn which worked fine, and stops could be made by turning in a tight circle until momentum gave up. He never did have those brakes fixed.

Tom and I had a little game which we put into operation every six months or so. We had a sleeping porch on the rear of our house. It backed up to Brother McCarthy's parsonage. We would beat on one of our beds with a slat, or a broom, or anything which could produce a good solid thud. At the same time, one of us would cry out begging Mother for mercy, or at least to use a strap instead of a club on us. Mother, occupied somewhere in the depths of the house would be unaware of what was going on. The one of us not engaged in the strenuous exercise, and with eye to window, would see Brother McCarthy emerge from his house and stride purposefully round the corner, with the intention of lecturing Mother. We, there upon, would take ourselves to the top of

the stairs to view the proceedings. The routine was always the same. Brother McCarthy would press the doorbell, Mother would greet him and invite him to be seated. There would be a short discussion of the weather, the while Brother McCarthy would eye Mother's sweet innocent face, and listen to her soft dove-like voice. Then would come a pause, a clearing of his throat. He would manage a few false starts toward his intended lecture on the proper treatment of children, but his courage failed him. Then he would launch into a discussion of his elimination. He was on safe ground. His elimination was remarkable, almost perfect, in fact; and he spoke of it often and at length. Brother McCarthy was a happy man, and he made those around him happy. With his God in church, and his elimination elsewhere, he was never at a loss for an interesting topic of conversation.

DADDY

Daddy's hair had gone completely grey when he was about twenty-one years old. With his youthful face, he must have presented an unusual picture. I never knew him to tell a vulgar story, nor did he drink. He was a handsome man. His face belonged on a Greek coin. He was of medium height, and was one of the strongest men I have ever known. He was lithe. Even in repose, there was something vital about him. He dominated a group but he was never aggressive about it. People noticed when he came into a room. He was a quiet man. The only time I ever saw him lose his temper completely was when the interne brutalized me in the hospital. He was interested in all things, so everyone could find his own level in him. People were comfortable with him, and they trusted him.

His only blemish was a heavy scar on his third left finger. He liked gems and kept a chamois bag of them in a strong box in the First National Bank. When he was a young man, in roping a calf, a ring on this finger was caught in a bite of the rope. It almost tore his finger off. He worked the ring off and threw it away. That was the end of jewelry for him except for gold cuff-links, and a gold quartz stickpin which he wore occasionally. This latter had been made from a piece of quartz his father had been given in California.

Other than monogramed shirts, which were custom made for him, his dress was simple. His one hold-over from ranching days was the town Stetson he wore. This was the kind of hat Harry Truman wore. He did not own a pair of boots. I think, at heart, he was always a cowboy. Late one night, or it seemed late at night to me, we had just passed through a gate onto Baugh ranch land, when he threw back his head and hollered good and loud. I lay it to exuberance at being on ranch land again.

I heard him tell Mother once that he would rather be a big frog in a little puddle than a little frog in a big puddle. He could have been a big frog anywhere, but he did not belong in a city.

I have often wondered why it was that he took me with him on so many trips. Perhaps I reminded him of Mother, or, as I have been told by older

mutual friends that my speech and gestures reminded them of him, perhaps he saw in me a young mirror of himself. Whatever it was, we were great friends.

Daddy was a good man, but he kept it to himself. When he died, Mother found a locked steel box in his office. It was full of I.O.U.'s and past-due notes. She did what she thought he would want her to do. She burned the lot.

There was a giant black man named Boss Mitchell, who farmed a sandy patch of land near Davilla. Boss knew I loved watermelon, and he grew the best ones in the world. Every Summer he would draw up at our house with a huge watermelon sticking out the back of his buggy. It was his yearly way of saying "thank you" to Daddy. He had been a tenant farmer on our land, and Daddy had been impressed with him. He had helped Boss get a start with a place of his own. Incidentally, Boss was a narcotics addict, although none of us, including Boss, knew it. We just knew that he bought Paragoric by the twelve-bottle case through Uncle Eugene's store. The label didn't tell anyone that Paragoric was loaded with opium.

It wasn't until after I left home, and came back for visits, that people started telling me stories about Daddy. One of them was Jack Freeman, who had been the engineer for our gin. He once spent an afternoon talking to me about Daddy. Jack had been a drunk, down and out. Daddy had taken him in hand, had given him some money and a job. When the craving for liquor was strong, Daddy sat up nights with him as a sort of one-man, pre-existent A.A. This patient endeavor had worked, and Jack became his own man.

Another time, on vacation, I met a very pretty girl at a party. We had hardly gotten acquainted before she launched into her song of praise. It seemed that one time her family had been down on its luck and Daddy had paid their grocery bill until the next crop came in.

A person would think that when I left his territory, I would run out of stories of his kindness, but one of them followed me all the way to New York.

Vergie Bell, one of two daughters of a widow who lived in Bartlett, had moved to New York and had married the president of a topographers' union. One night I was having dinner with her, and she told me that Daddy had sent her and her sister through college.

But, none of us is perfect -- nor was Daddy. He said "fir" instead of "for."

Daddy was a brave man, but his nerve failed him once, and that failure killed him.

He had become a sick man, needing an operation, and naturally he went to Scott and White. The operation was scheduled for the following day. And then it happened! In the middle of the night, in his hospital gown, Daddy went to the home of a friend, borrowed some money and some clothes and came home. The next time he went to the hospital, he was on a stretcher.

It was at this time I got a picture of him which has remained with me throughout the years. It was a cool morning, and he was wearing a plaid lumber jacket. He had walked across the street and, just at the further curb, he had lit a cigarette. The puff of smoke, eddying around his back, hung there for an instant, before fading away.

During this time, he got his affairs in shape, and he had several talks with me. These took place out of doors as we walked about. He spoke to me in parables, and I did not really understand their intent until later. He was trying to give me guide-lines for my future life. As though I needed them, with the example of his life before me!

Cancer was not spoken of in open society then. Death from it was written on certificates by kindly doctors as being from other causes. I think now that Daddy died from cancer of the pancreas.

The last time I saw Daddy was in his hospital room. The operation was behind him. He was trying to roll a cigarette. He smoked Prince Albert in brown tobacco. He couldn't manage it. And then the nurse tried, and Mother tried, and Gene tried. They spilled the tobacco, and the resultant cigarettes belled out like trumpets at the end, or swelled into balloons in the middle.

At last, Daddy made a gesture which meant it wasn't worth the effort, and they stopped trying.

After a time, Mother saw he was tiring, and she lined up the three of us by his bedside, and he looked at Gene, and Tom, and me, each in turn. And I saw something I had never seen there before. There were tears in his eyes as he turned his head away.

We three left the room and stood in the corridor. For ventilation, an opening had been built into his room. It was too high to see in, but we could hear. We could hear his breathing, such unnatural breathing, and such long pauses between breaths. At last, Mother came out, and we left. That night he died.

The funeral service was held in our house. I was aware only of the heavyfootedness of the pallbearers as they carried out his grey metal casket. As we rode behind the hearse, I looked back from the last viewpoint, before a turning, to see the long line of his friends, who had come for this last farewell. In a slow-moving procession, it reached all the way back into town. I don't remember anything about the burial at all.

The night he died, Daddy was forty-two years old. I was fourteen. My world ended then. Of course, it started again, but it was never the same.