

MEMORIES OF A COMMONPLACE LIFE

by

Lucy F. Smith

"A commonplace life, we say, and we sigh
But why should we sigh as we say?
The commonplace sun in the commonplace sky
Makes up the commonplace day.
The moon and the stars are commonplace things
And the flower that blooms and the bird that sings
But dark were the world and sad our lot,
If the flowers failed and the sun shone not.
And God, who knoweth each separate soul,
Out of commonplace lives makes His beautiful whole."

SUSAN COOLIDGE

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For a long time I cherished a vague idea that sometime I would write some account of my life for the sake of my grandchildren, but the idea can to fruition because of the persistency of my son, Harry. And it was his interest and encouragement that kept me at it, till the story of my girlhood was completed.

The rest was written much later and at different times and I know lacks coherence and smoothness. It is really a resume of the busy years from my marriage till the family scattered, and it would never have been put into book form but for Edity, who most cheerfully arranged all the details.

My birthplace was Gilead, Connecticut, where my father preached for thirty years. Gilead is in the town of Hebron which is the southern town in Tolland county. We used to say that Gilead was five miles from everywhere. Bolton, five miles away, was next to the north; Andover, where we went to "take the cars, was five miles to the east; Columbia the same distance southeast and Marlborough five miles to the west. Hebron, where we could but a few groceries and perhaps a spool of thread, was three miles to the south; but most of our supplies were purchased in Hartford, sixteen miles away.

Gilead is in a hilly region. To get anywhere, long, long hills must be crossed. Up and down, up and down, the roads lead, with seldom a bit of level ground. Gilead had three long parallel streets about a mile apart, each lying along the ridge of a hill. These were generally known as "Gilead Street", the "East Street" and the "West Street". The greater part of the people lived on the three streets, and more on "Gilead Street" than on any other. There the houses were rather frequent. They were for the most part painted white with green blinds and were neat and well kept. The street was wide with grass on either side of the wagon road which was narrow and not very smooth. On this street and fairly in the center of things stood the little white church - or "Meeting-house" as we always called it. It could literally be said of it that it was the house "whither the tribes went up." It had a belfry and a bell and could be seen for miles around. Back of it were horsesheds and all around it grew green grass.

There were not many trees on the street when I was a little girl, but a fine row of large maples shaded our walk to the church. These were just back of a stone wall which fenced in a large field. Our house stood quite far back from the street, and our front yard - separated from the street by a picket fence - was, for those days, unusually gay with flowers and shrubs.

In this old house in the quiet country village I was born April 19, 1842. I was the fifth child of my parents. Their first, Julia, died when only two years old. Then there was Julius, who was eleven when I was born, Laura, nine and Martha six. My father's mother, Freelove Hull, also lived with us so that at that time we were a family of seven.

I have been told that when I was born my sister Martha was just reading with great pleasure some of the "Rollo and Lucy" books, and that it was her wish that I should be called Lucy. That was the name given me at baptism; but when I was quite young I wanted a "middle" name. I was told that I might choose my own and I chose, "Freelove", my grandmother's name, and Lucy Freelove I have been ever since.

Our house was originally a gambrel roofed house, two and a half stories high, with two rooms and a hall-way on each floor. Later someone had added two or three rooms on the back of the house, and when I was a little girl my brother altered and added to this addition. One of the down stairs rooms in the upright part of the house was our parlor. This was usually kept closed unless there was a party or something out of the ordinary. On the north side of the hall was Grandma's room, and a pleasant room it was, cool in summer and kept warm in winter by a brisk wood fire in a small stove. This was really a remarkable room, for overhead across the ceiling was a broad wooden beam on which was carved a vine with leaves, flowers and fruit. Also there were carved corner pieces to the room and a corner cupboard with red shelves, which I suppose had once had glass doors and been used for choice china and glass ware, but which Grandma used for many ordinary things.

The halls were long and narrow and the stairs straight and easy. Over Grandma's room was our guest room, breezy and pleasant in summer, but cold and forbidding in winter.

Across the hall and over the parlor was my father's study where he usually went each day about nine and spent the time till noon, studying and preparing his sermons. Into this room no one ever intruded during his study hours unless on some very necessary errand. But when he was away I loved to go to the closet where were kept a few geometrical blocks which were the only building blocks I had. There were some other interesting things there also, - an orrery, which father sometimes used to show the motions of the planets, and a counting frame which I liked very much. I also used to go to his bookcase and take down book after book in the vain hope of finding something that I would like to read. Some of the books however had strange pictures in them and were better than nothing. I remember one in particular - a history of the Hindoos and their religion, whose pictures of dreadful ceremonies fascinated me. My father had a writing chair in this room, an arm chair painted green, with a broad leaf fastened to the right arm on which he put his paper when writing. There was a Franklin stove there also and I remember this study as being warm and comfortable. When I was quite small my father used to have a school in that room in the winter, of which I may speak later.

A second flight of stairs led to the attic, where were also two rooms. In the north room we used to keep corn on the ear, and I remember laboring up the two flights, carrying baskets full of it. Other things were stored there, also. And on the walls hung great bundles of religious newspapers. Reading matter was scarce in those days and not to be thrown away lightly. So when the year was over, the weekly papers, which had been carefully saved, were put in order and sewed together and hung on the wall. I do not believe that even then they were often referred to, but they were there in case any one ever did wish to read them. I used to try them once in a while, placing a bundle on the floor and lying face downward to explore them. Once in a great while I would find some little story to reward my search. But success was rare.

The south room of the attic was used as a sleeping-room, and during my childhood it was occupied by my brother Julius when he was at home.

Going back down stairs and through the hall we would come to a room that in summer was used for our dining-room and living-room. It had a fire-place and southern exposure and was a pleasant room. When the cold weather came the cooking stove was set up here and the room became not only dining and living-room but kitchen as well. North of this room were two small bedrooms into which the sun never shone, and which I remember with a shiver, I used to be so cold in one of them on winter nights. My father and mother occupied a small bed-room east of the large room; and there was also a back kitchen with a fireplace, a sink and a pump. This opened into a shed with which the wood-house and wagon-house were connected, and which led to a grape arbor. Just beyond this was the garden gate. Entering the garden we found a narrow walk bordered by narrow flower beds in which grew many kinds of annuals. These were the especial care of my grandmother. The garden was large and much of it was surrounded by currant bushes and raspberry vines. Many kinds of vegetables would be found there in their season, and at the foot of the garden was a large strawberry bed that yielded many delicious berries.

South of the house was a walk to the street, and beyond that a cultivated field, separated by a stone wall from the village "burying ground". There were no houses on our side of the street for quite a long distance, but a number on the other side.

My father, Rev. Charles Nichols, was born in Derby, Connecticut, in 1798. He was the second son of Silas and Freelove Chidsey Nichols. His father, who was a sea captain, died when my father was about thirteen years old, leaving his wife and three young sons, and little or no money. Of my father's experiences when he was a boy, of his struggles for an education, he has told in his autobiography, and I do not need to repeat the story. He was forty-four years old at the time of my birth, a man of medium height, rather slender, with grey eyes, a smoothly shaven face and a quick, alert step.

I remember him as a stern, rather severe man: a father whom I feared more than loved. But I know now as I look back from these wiser days that he was a man of very strong affections, sternly repressed, according to the old New England ideas of what was right and fitting for a man, and especially for a minister. I have no recollection of his ever playing with me, of my ever sitting on his knee or of any caresses between us. When I was fifteen years old I went away for a visit of some weeks, and I remember that he kissed me good bye. Probably he had kissed me before, but I do not remember it and I know that his kiss at that time seemed a novel experience. He suffered much from sleeplessness and other nervous troubles, and we children were trained to be very careful not to disturb him by noisy play during his study hours, or at any other time if he had not slept. And if he had endured several sleepless nights, as sometimes happened, everything in the household would be arranged to make things as easy as possible for him, and we all lived almost with bated breath till he should sleep again. He could not sleep if he heard the ticking of a clock, and I remember times when our kitchen clock would be stopped every night. His watch must be put where he could not hear its ticking, and when away from home so that he must have it in the room with him, he used to wrap it in his stocking and tuck it into his boot.

I remember him well dressed for Sundays, all in black, with standing collar, black or white neckerchief, and, during my childhood, clean-shaven, though in later years he had side whiskers. He was straight, energetic, critical, a real student; and his sermons were well thought out and logical.

It was very common in those days for the minister to own his house and more or less land, and to eke out his very slender salary by his crops. My father owned the house and about twenty acres of land. He was a good farmer and by the aid of what he raised he supported his family on a salary of \$450 a year. He always kept a horse, one or two cows, pigs and hens. He used to raise his own corn, rye, oats, potatoes, apples and hay, and have an abundance of summer vegetables and small fruits. He did most of the work himself, hiring help for plowing, haying and other heavy work. It was his habit to rise early in the summer and work in the garden or the field until time for him to go to his study, pausing for breakfast and family prayers. He was a busy and hard-working man, and had little patience with laziness or thriftlessness.

My mother's name before marriage was Louisa West. She was the daughter of Dr. Jeremiah and Martha Williams West and was born in Tolland, Connecticut in 1802. Her mother died when she was but a baby, and her father a few years later. He was at one time a surgeon in the War of the Revolution. I know little about these grandparents. After their death mother's married half-sister Mrs. Laura Abbot, took mother to her home in Ellington, and cared for her. Aunt Abbot, the wife of a rich farmer, was most kind to my mother, and did much for her. They lived in comfort, even luxury for those times; but Aunt, who was childless, was very precise and particular, and I fancy had little appreciation of the real needs of a growing girl; so that I think mother's life as a girl was lonely and repressed. She was never self-assertive, and I think that she never fully recovered from the effects of constant repression through her childhood and youth.

While rather young she married a Mr. Post and went to Gilead to live. After a few months he died, and some time later she married my father, then the young pastor of Gilead Church. They hardly knew, so mother told me, how to arrange a wedding to please all the people, or at least so as to offend none. But some meeting being held in the church on a week-day afternoon, my father secured the services of a neighboring clergyman to preach, and after the sermon he and mother stepped out before the congregation and were married. Of course it was known beforehand that this was to be done, so that whoever chose could witness the ceremony.

Mother was not quite so tall as Father and was rather slender in form. She had a face that was both sweet and strong; curly hair, a Roman nose, and blue eyes, one of which turned out (wall-eyed as it is termed), and was of very little use to her. Her hair she wore in a braid secured by a comb on the top of her head, with two dear little curls on each side of her face.

During my early life my mother was a very hard-working woman. There was a family of seven, soon increased to eight by the coming to us of my father's young nephew, Joseph Nichols, whose father had died. All this family was to be fed and cared for in every way. Washing, ironing, making and mending clothes: all must be done, and largely by her own hands. The large house must be kept in order, many visitors entertained and endless household cares attended to. Then besides, she was expected to attend and help in all the parish functions, - though of course those were not many, - and in cases of severe sickness she was often called on to help by night-watching and in other ways. Few babies were born in Gilead without her attendance, and when death came to a household her presence to aid the family was expected.

I look back at her life with wonder and reverence. She had much to bear from my father's nervous sufferings, which often made him unreasonable and hard to please; but I very rarely saw her show signs of vexation or annoyance. She was an excellent nurse, quiet and efficient, - a Bible student, a lover of God and of her fellows. She was truly a wonderful woman; but so self-effacing, so modest, so retiring, that one needed to know her well to half appreciate her. She was oppressed by her many and great responsibilities and never seemed light-hearted and really glad to be alive. Life was to her a thing to be taken seriously, and I hardly knew that she could joke until the time came when, from increasing feebleness, she was obliged to drop care and responsibility. Then I found that she had quite a keen sense of humor. I did not fear her as I did my father, but she never was my "chum". I never doubted her love for me but I never felt close to her. And I see now that this was in part my own fault. I always called my parents Pa and Ma.

My father's mother, Freelove Hull, lived with him for many years. When I was born she was seventy years old, and was beginning to feel the infirmities of age, although she was still active and capable. She was a very small woman with keen, gray eyes, and always, after I knew her, wore spectacles. Her hair, only slightly grey, she combed back from her face and, after the fashion of the day for old ladies, covered with a white lace cap ruffled about the face and tied under the chin. She was very particular about her caps, making them herself and always, as long as she was able attending to their laundering. She was very skilful with her needle, and, indeed, skilful in many ways.

I well remember how fond she was of spinning wool, and I dearly loved to watch her. She first carded the wool into long, soft, white rolls. Then the big wheel would be set up, and Grandma, taking one of the rolls in her hand, would in some way fasten it to the spindle. Then would come a twirl of the wheel set in motion by a wooden peg or pin held in the right hand, while she quickly stepped three or four steps backward and drew out the wool held lightly between the thumb and forefinger of her left hand, as the humming wheel twisted it into yarn. Then a twirl in the opposite direction and some brisk steps forward, and the twisted yarn would be wound on the spindle. Over and over the process would be repeated, new rolls being added as needed until the spindle was full. Then the reel would be brought near and the yarn wound into skeins. There were, of course, other processes to follow: "doubling and twisting", dyeing and winding. Grandma loved it all and it was great fun to watch her graceful and rapid work.

After the yarn was all ready, came the knitting of the family stockings and mittens in which business Grandma also excelled. "Boughten" stockings were almost unknown in those days. All the women folk knitted, but few could knit so smoothly and evenly as Grandma Hull; she knew it and was justly proud of the beautiful stockings and mittens of her own spinning and knitting. We had a flax spinning wheel, also, and I always understood that Grandma was very expert in the use of that, too, though I think I never saw her use it. I ought to tell how she came to be Grandma "Hull". After my Grandfather Nichols' death she had remained a widow for some time, but finally married Captain Hull, a man a good deal older than herself and who died a few years after their marriage. He was the father of Commodore Isaac Hull of the "Constitution" of naval fame. For some reason I do not remember what it was, Grandma for a number of years had a small pension, I think of a hundred dollars a year. I remember that it used to come to her in twenty-dollar gold pieces, which were wonderful and beautiful to behold.

Grandma always in my day suffered much from a dreadful cough, especially in the morning, so that she would be greatly exhausted by breakfast time. I think she was rather frequently severely ill, but she possessed a remarkable elasticity of temperament and a great rallying power so that she would recover more quickly than often seemed possible. She was very fond of good company and was a favorite among the young people. But owing in part at least to her health, she was subject to moods of great depression, as well as to very happy times. She was a fervent lover and an intense hater, and had strong prejudices, and a keen sense of humor. She loved flowers and birds and the beautiful, everywhere. Doubtless her love of out-door life, her care of her flower-beds, her excursions to the fields after berries and the like added years to her life and much to her happiness. She dearly loved her grandchildren and we were all very fond of her. She lived to be eighty-seven and her body was laid in the cemetery at Higganum, when I was seventeen years old.

I remember my brother Julius as a tall, strong, young man. I do not much remember him as a boy, though he was only eleven at the time of my birth. But I fancy that he grew rapidly, and he early had to work hard and regularly, so that he probably seemed to my childish thought older than he really was. He could have been only a boy at the time of my earliest memory of him. I suppose that he and my sister Martha had been wrangling over me, for some unknown reason. At any rate Julius picked me up, and putting me on his shoulder ran out of the house. Martha followed for a few steps and then went back to tell my mother who, I judge, said that he must bring me in. It must have been winter and I was bare-headed, though I probably had some wrap on. Julius put his red bandana over my head and ran toward the barn - Martha running after and calling to him. He began making queer noises and instructed me to do the same so as not to hear her. The chase continued until at least he ran out on a sheet of ice where Martha dared not follow. She returned, much vexed, to the house where we soon followed; and I have never forgotten the severe reproof which Julius received from my father. Perhaps it was deserved, but it seemed to me then - little unreasoning child - very harsh. The whole incident is connected with nothing else in my mind it just stands out alone and I do not know when it was, only of course I must have been small.

Julius was ingenious and fond of tools, and considering that he had received very little teaching he used them remarkably well. When he was eighteen or nineteen he did most of the carpenter work on an addition to our house, and it was well done. In a back chamber of this addition he had a work-shop well provided with carpenter's tools. Here he also had a turning-lathe and I remember he made

mother some clothespins by its means. He was strong and ambitious, and I recall a piece of stone wall which he laid to which father used to point with pride. I remember seeing him grafting trees and caring for the bees, and working in the hay field with other mowers.

He was very fond of music and had a sweet, tenor voice. Aunt Abbott gave him a violin and he greatly enjoyed using it. I presume it was a cheap violin and that he was a poor player; but I supposed both the violin and the player fine and loved to hear him and some of his friends play. He was fond of animals, and I remember that a black cat that we had, though utterly refusing to sit with any one else, would always come to him when he was home and jump on his knee and sit or lie there contentedly.

Julius must have felt the need of ready money, and he tried various kinds of employment. Once he worked for a few weeks in a factory in Rockville, but I think he developed no love for factory life. One winter when he was probably not more than seventeen he taught a district school in Bolton, "boarding around" and going through a good deal of discomfort in the process.

A year or two later a travelling artist came to Gilead, and stayed a few weeks, taking daguerreotypes. It was quite an affair then to get your picture taken. No "snap shots" at that time, but a four minute exposure was necessary to secure a picture. One of our neighbors gave my father five dollars for him to use in getting the picture of my sisters and myself on one plate; and I remember sitting over and over - I between my sisters with an arm of each over my shoulder - four minutes at a time. Some one of the three, usually myself, was sure to move and then we would have to try again. But at last the picture was secured, and queer enough it looks now. But Julius was very much interested in the whole matter and when Mr. Richmond left Gilead for a new field he went with him and spent some weeks studying his methods. I still have a picture of my father which Julius took.

He came home in the Spring, or early Summer, and hired out to a neighboring farmer for the season. But in July he was taken ill, and after a four weeks' struggle with typhoid fever he died, Aug. 26, 1851. He must have been an unusual boy to have accomplished all that he did in his short life of twenty years.

My sisters, Laura Abbott and Martha Williams, were about three years apart in age, but they were usually together, and although very unlike were very happy with each other. Laura was never very strong; Martha had abounding health. Laura was slow to decide and timid in action; Martha was somewhat impulsive, made up her mind quickly, and was eager to "start in". Laura liked to follow, Martha to lead. Laura was morbidly conscientious, very religious, much given to introspection and self-examination and to puzzling over difficult problems of theology and doctrine. Martha was healthily happy, sang like a bird at her work (she had a clear, beautiful soprano voice), had tiffs with her brother and sisters, and altogether was delightfully human. They were both dear girls, but Martha was my favorite. She petted me as no one else did, called me her "little sister", even after I was nearly as tall as herself, and when I was passing through the "awkward age" and as my father used to remark, "looked like a bean-pole with clothes on", it was Martha more than any one else who saw to it that I was not too badly dressed. The girls at school used to say "Martha has come home: I know because your hair is done differently." I never was skilful in arranging my hair. Mother was too busy to do anything more than comb out the tangles and braid it in the simplest manner. But Martha had deft fingers and would try one arrangement after another until she was satisfied; and I used to feel proud of the broad braids looped about my head more skilfully than those of any other

girl in school. But alas, with her going away again, the lovely braids would be gone too, for I could never do them myself.

The year after my brother's death my Aunt Abbot died, leaving much of her property to my father and mother. For those times it was a competence, and we were able, after that, to live much more easily. So my sisters were sent away to school. They spent a year at the academy at Westfield, Massachusetts, and the following year, when I was thirteen, they were admitted to Mount Holyoke Seminary. They were nearly through with their three years' course when the school was visited with an epidemic of scarlet fever and Martha died, after less than a week's illness.

Laura never returned to school after Martha's death, but lived at home until she was married.

I have been trying to imagine how I used to look when a child; but I only know that you would all think me a very queer looking little girl if you could see me as I used to be. I know that until I was ten I was small for my age, and that then I began to grow very fast so that at thirteen I was as tall as now. I remember people used to speak of my blue eyes, though they are by no means blue now. I know that my straight hair was cut short, parted in the middle and tucked behind my ears. Sometimes I had a long round comb to help hold it in place. Many of the girls wore their hair drawn back from their foreheads and held in place by their combs, but that style was always very unbecoming to me and I was not allowed to wear it that way.

New dresses were almost an unknown luxury. With two older sisters there was always something to be made over for the little girl, and I remember how glad I was when at thirteen I was actually taller than either sister and could no longer wear their cast off dresses. I always wore woolen dresses in winter and of course calico or gingham in summer. Little girls' dresses were made much longer then than now, and we wore pantalets that came to our shoe tops. Mine were usually white, unless I had a new calico dress, when my pantalets would be made of the same cloth. Some little girls wore nankeen pantalets. Nankeen was a tan colored cotton cloth, often used for boys' suits. Our best white pantalets would be trimmed with lace or embroidery, and I well remember showing the lace on a new pair to a seat-mate at Sunday School and her scornfully remarking that she had a night-cap trimmed with just such lace; whereat I felt greatly humiliated.

We all wore sunbonnets of some kind in summer and hoods in winter. My sunbonnets were usually made of blue or green checked gingham, and corded. When stiffly starched they would stand out from the head and were not so very uncomfortable. But when the starch was out, as it was sure to be soon, the bonnet would limply flap about the face in very disagreeable fashion. I hated sun-bonnets and mine was usually swung in the hand by one string or worn on the back of the neck instead of over my face as was intended. As a consequence I was sun-burned, freckled and tanned, but I cared little for that. One simply could not run fast wearing a sun-bonnet. In order to win a race, to properly play tag, or hump-stump, or thornaway, one really had to carry one's bonnet by the string! And in comparison, what did one care for a few freckles?

When I was perhaps twelve years old I yearned for a "flat", as the low-crowned, wide-brimmed hats of that time were called. None of the girls had them and I do not know if I had ever seen one; but I know I wrote to Martha of my desire, and when she came home on her vacation she brought me one. It was trimmed with a band of plain, green ribbon with long ends which streamed delightfully in the wind. It tied under the chin by more green ribbon and the wide flapping brim was held so as to shade the face by a very narrow green ribbon, which could be held in the hand or fastened to the tie at the chin. A very proud maiden I was when I appeared before my mates in this beautiful head-gear.

Our hoods were made to fit the head closely and were padded and quilted so that our ears were kept nice and warm. If one had a piece of silk left from a dress, that might be used for a hood, but they were usually made of less expensive material, such as remnants of woolen goods. In my early teens I learned to knit hoods and I made a good many that way for myself and others.

Our Sunday bonnets were real bonnets. You can find pictures of the style in fashion magazines of the period.

My shoes were often made by the village shoemaker, Mr. Edwin Strong, and were coarse and clumsy and tied with leather strings. I had better one for Sunday wear, which my father used to buy for me in Hartford. Almost all the little girls of the neighborhood used to go barefoot in the summer, but I had to wear shoes, though not stockings every day. I would sometimes get permission to go barefoot for a little while; but my feet unaccustomed to such freedom, were tender and easily hurt, and I would be glad to return to shoes. Shoes were difficult to get, living so far from market; and, as now, they were an expensive part of our outfit. I remember Deacon Talcott's family who lived two miles from church used, some of them, to walk to church, coming cross-lots part of the way and over rough roads all the way. They used to wear their everyday shoes until they reached a certain rock in a field where they would put on their best shoes, which they had brought with them, - hiding the others until their return, when they would again change.

I do not remember anything about my cloaks, though I must have had warm things to wear. I remember when I was very small wearing a flannel blanket pinned about my neck, and I think I must have worn something of that kind a good deal. I remember that a green blanket a yard and a half long by a yard wide used to be a kind of common property for anyone who wanted to go to the barn or the like; but I do not recall the better wraps of the young people. My father and mother wore cloaks: one a dark blue "camel" cloak made of very stiff, coarse material and lined with blue flannel. The other was black broad-cloth and was considered a very handsome garment. This latter was a gift from his parishioners. Shawls were much worn then and I remember that my father bought one for me when I was not more than twelve or thirteen. It was a soft, warm shawl of rather mixed colors and very pretty.

Of toys I had very few. I have spoken of the geometrical blocks in my father's closet. These were blocks made to show various geometrical forms, as a cube, a rhomboid, a cylinder, and so on. There were perhaps a dozen of these and I played with them now and then; but they were not much like the building blocks that children have now. Corn-cobs were often available and did very well for "log" houses. All the spools were saved and made pretty good "nine-pins", and I spent many an hour in our long hall in company with Johnie Gilbert "knocking down spools".

I suppose I had rag dolls though I do not remember them; but when I was seven or eight years old father visited a cousin in New York, and when he came home he brought me a real doll, which his cousin had sent to me. It was about fifteen inches long, pretty, but easily broken. So she must be handled with great care; but it was a great thing to have so beautiful a doll and I prized her highly, though I had little real love for her. She was kept carefully in a bureau drawer until some one had time to make her some clothes, after which I played with her more or less. I was careful enough of her so that I gave her away unbroken when I was too old to care for her longer. Julius made her a cradle and I valued that more than the doll.

I think I usually had some kind of a ball, though I only remember one in particular. My father gave it to me with the charge to be careful and not lose it. Foolishly I took it to the barn and played with it on the hay-mow. Then I thought it would be fun to hide it in the hay and see if I could find it. After doing this successfully once or twice I hid it too well and all my efforts to find it were in vain, so that I had to acknowledge that it was really lost. But I did not dare to tell father how I lost it; so I told him some story of its having slipped from my hand when I was on the hay, and disappeared. I presume he reproved me for my carelessness, but I only remember how my conscience reproved me for my untruthfulness. I stood it as long as I could, but at last was compelled to go to father and confess. I think he was very kind and the matter soon dropped; but I never forgot it. I suppose the ball was found again, but I do not know.

I had a sled made of three boards: two narrow ones carved for runners, and a wide one nailed to them. Instead of being dragged by a rope it had a wooden handle or "neap". Why, I do not know; perhaps the maker thought it would steer more easily. My best friend, Anna Gilbert, had a large sled with real runners made of bent wood and a rope to draw it with; but I thought mine much better. Our hills were not very steep and we never thought of sliding in the road; but some of our lots were hilly, and when there was a good crust we could slide well enough on our homemade sleds.

There was sometimes in the yard a pile of pickets from some old picket fence, and picket houses were fun. Built like log houses, leaving an opening for a door and made as high as the number of pickets would allow - what was the need for a roof? We could make seats of the pickets, and shelves for our dishes and then, if allowed, we could go to the woods and get beautiful moss cushions and long evergreen vines for decorations. True, our dishes were only pieces of broken crockery, but it was easy to "pretend".

I have no recollection of learning to read nor of any time when I could not read - though I have a vague memory of sitting in some one's lap and naming the Capital letters at the beginning of Psalms in a big Bible. Books for children were scarce in those days and "something to read" was a constant, and, to a great extent, an unsatisfied desire with me. I remember two reading books: "The Child's Guide" and "Easy Lessons". I do not recall any thing in the first except a poem beginning:

"What Phoebe! are you come so soon?
Where are your berries, child?"

and I am sorry that I have forgotten why she had come so soon and what had become of her berries. In "Easy Lessons" I remember, were stories of contrasted boys: the saving boy and the thriftless one, the idle and the industrious, etc. I think they were tales by Maria Edgeworth, but I am not sure.

We had some tiny books - or booklets - with blue paper covers, probably published by the Tract Society, which we called, "the little blue books" and which told the stories of Moses and of Joseph as well as of some more modern children. "Peep of Day" was a book of which I was fond and which I often read - Bible stories in most simple language. I think we did not own any of the "Rollo Books", but I read all of them that I could borrow, with great delight.

Among father's books I did find some that I enjoyed after a fashion. "Pilgrim's Progress" of course I read over and over, usually skipping the conversations, which did not appeal to me. Another book which I read in very desultory fashion was, "Coelebs in Search of a Wife". It tells at great length of the difficulty which the hero, who was a model of all the virtues, had in finding a lady good enough to be his life companion. I skipped everything but what looked interesting. Then there was "Opie's Illustrations of Lying", a book full of stories of the different kinds of lies - lies of convenience, lies of fear, etc. As I grew older I used to dabble in the various books of poetry: Cowper's "Task", Miss Mitford's "Blanche", some of Henry Kirke White's poems etc. I suppose that before I was ten I had read a little of all of these.

A dozen or so Temperance Almanacs had been saved and sewed together making quite a bulky volume over which I often pored, reading the stories and shivering over the pictures, till at last this valuable book was left on the shelf of the picket house and ruined by a rain storm.

There was in those days a small Sunday School Library, which was the joy of my heart. There were none of the early death types of stories in it, so far as my memory serves, and I think that there had already been a reaction from that sort. But the books that I remember were simple stories of boy and girl life. I thought them delightful then. Probably now I should think them stilted and unreal.

But the book that was most dear to my heart was "Swiss Family Robinson". We had a small edition of "Robinson Crusoe", but for me it did not compare in interest with the other. I never tired of the wonderful adventures of the Swiss family though I read them many, many times. Brave Fritz, thoughtful Ernest, impulsive Jack and dear little Francis - I knew and loved them all. The story as told in our edition ended before the coming of the girl to the Island, and I like it better that way. I still have the dear old book. Deacon Talcott's family owned, "Masterman Ready" and the two books were often exchanged.

It could not have been long after its publication that a copy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was brought to our house. I was just ten years old, and I devoured the book in a very short time. Even though it had to be laid aside over Sunday as "too secular" reading. I think that I began it on Saturday and finished it on Monday. At about the same period the "Wide, Wide World" came into my hands and how I did love it! And with what real sympathy did I weep over Ellen's trials.

I think very little attempt was made to direct my reading though once in a while some book would be forbidden. I remember that some one gave to Anna Gilbert a book called "Alonzo and Melissa". Of course I borrowed it, but mother made me return it unread. However, some of the other girls read it, and one day when a number of us were berrying together Clara Way told the story to the rest of us. It was a lurid tale of abductions, secret passages, hidden vaults, mysterious and blood-curdling sights and sounds and all the rest, and the audience was duly impressed; so that when we saw the door of a near-by house open and the colored man who lived there come out, we were panic-stricken; and although we had never heard any ill of him we fled through rough fields, over fences and stone walls as though the Evil One himself was after us.

I think it was probably the winter after I was eleven that I began reading aloud as an evening occupation. My sisters were away at school and my father, not being able to use his eyes freely, found the long evening difficult. Either they seemed very dull or his mind would not stop working, and bed-time would find him wakeful and tense. So he suggested that I should read aloud and choose my own reading matter. Of course I chose mostly stories, taken, I think, from "The Youth's Library", so-called - a small library from which one was allowed to draw books once in three weeks, paying so much a year for the privilege. I remember the names of but two of the books that I read, both by Miss Sedgwick: "Live and Let Live" and "The Poor Rich Man and the Rich Poor Man". The stories themselves I have entirely forgotten. I am sure the books that I selected could not have been very interesting to my father, but they probably interested him sufficiently to keep his mind off other matters and so served their purpose. The reading was excellent practice for me and helped much to make me a good reader. Father was a good critic and insisted on clear articulation and correct inflections.

I suffered much in those days from chilblains on my hands as well as on my feet, and many evening I had a bowl of cold water on the table in which I would immerse first one hand and then the other as I read, and so relieve the intolerable itching and burning.

When I was perhaps sixteen I heard Rev. Dr. Burton of Hartford lecture on, "Thought, the King". He quoted several passages from Tennyson's "Maud", and I was immediately filled with the desire to read the rest. I took the first opportunity of buying a blue and gold copy of Tennyson's poems and expected a feast. But there seemed little in the book that I could understand. "Maud" was far beyond me and on the whole Tennyson was at that time a dreary disappointment. A paper-covered edition of Longfellow's earlier poems suited me much better.

I began taking the "Youth's Companion" when I was ten or eleven and continued to be a subscriber for a good many years. Some books I obtained as premiums for getting new subscribers. I always enjoyed the paper very much. Father took the Hartford Courant weekly as long ago as I can remember, and for many years there was a fortnightly "Supplement" which gave us stories, poetry and miscellaneous reading. My brother took Goday's Lady's Book for a year or two before his death. I think he must have taken it especially for the pictures - steel engravings - which were especially good for those times, when pictures of any kind were scarce and mostly poor.

I have spoken of my father as a teacher. He had been a very successful teacher before he became a minister, and not long after his ordination he began teaching a few pupils who came to him for their lessons. This led to his opening a school in his house winters for the older boys and girls, who wished more education than the district schools afforded. There was no High School nor Academy near, and few parents sent their children away to school. Father had his school in his study and I remember running in and out at recess and at noon time, when I was a very little girl. The big girls would sometimes seat me on the leaf of my father's writing chair and get me to sing to them, or ply me with questions to hear my childish replies.

By the time that I was seven or eight years old I could read and spell as well as many of the pupils and was allowed to take my turn at those exercises with the rest. I well remember reading from the "National Preceptor" the poem about Beth Gelert and his hound, and crying bitterly over it. Indeed I cried so hard that I had to leave the room and I remember that I hid under the bed in the guest-room to finish my weeping. Tears came easily at that time.

After my brother's death father never re-opened his school. He and mother taught me at home, however, for two or three years longer. Under their tuition I became a good reader and speller, had some acquaintance with geography, could recite the rules in Smith's English Grammar and parse difficult sentences, had a thorough knowledge of Arithmetic tables, fractions, etc. and had studied a good deal of Latin before I went to school. I wanted to go - I longed to be with other children; but for some reason I was not allowed. But the summer after I was twelve I began going to the district school. The schoolhouse for our district was half a mile south from our house. It was built of brick and was, I think, better than the average country school-house at that time. It was small and low and utterly without shade so that the summer sun beating down upon it made it at times almost unbearably hot; but the seats and desks were not uncomfortable and the room was fairly neat. There were two entrances - one for boys and the other for girls. To enter the school room you went in at one of these doors and passed through an "entry" where there were shelves and hooks, where you laid or hung your bonnet or cap and wraps. The teacher's desk was on a low platform between the two entry doors. In the middle of the room was a box stove, and a long bench ran across the whole back side of the room. This was called the recitation bench, and classes sat there for recitation.

There were about twenty or twenty-five pupils, all girls in the summer, except some little boys. There were quite a number of girls of about my own age and we constituted the "first class". They were nice girls and we had good times.

My first teacher was Miss Warner. I think she was as good as the average, but there was nothing especially inspiring about her and at this distance of time I remember very little about her. I hardly think that big girls do much running now even in the country, but our games were mostly running games; and one day Miss Warner told us that she heard a man who was passing say to his companion, "See those girls, big enough to be young ladies, running like wild horses." I do not remember that she actually reproved us for running, but she evidently thought it would be better if we did not. But we girls were not pleased, and I reported the matter at home and was delighted that my father said he was glad we did run and he hoped we would "keep it up". Of course, with that authority we did keep it up.

The other thing that I specially remember about Miss Warner is that she offered a prize for the best composition on the Life of Joseph. When the compositions were brought in she found it difficult to decide between mine and Mary Chappell's and no prize came to either of us.

Almost all the scholars had whooping cough that summer, and the school-room was a noisy place when we came in from our active games. I coughed with the rest, good and hard; but as I never succeeded in "whooping" it did not seem very well worth while.

At that time there were only two terms in the school year. The winter term would begin about the first of November, I think, and would last till March. Then would come a vacation of a month, perhaps, followed by the summer term, which would probably close in September. That gave the pupils a chance to be home and aid in the harvesting of crops and fruit - a busy season. There was often a "whortleberry vacation" when for a week or a fortnight almost everybody spent their days picking berries. And the big boys rarely began school till after Thanksgiving. I was never allowed to go to school in winter, so in due time I resumed my home studies.

The next summer I began going to school again. The teacher was Miss Cheeseborough, and we girls soon discovered that she was neither much older nor much wiser than ourselves: - also, what was much more to the point, we became aware that she was utterly at sea in her efforts to manage us. School had been in session but a few days before nearly every big girl was spending most of her time in making and dressing paper dolls. We cut them out of foolscap paper, kindly provided by some of the girls, colored their faces with water colors and made most elaborate wardrobes for them, using scissors, pencils and water colors freely in their manufacture. When they were finished I think they were given to the little girls in the A.B.C. class - of whom there were several. After this had gone on for two or three weeks my mother suddenly found that she needed my help at home, and I had to leave school. However, I really did not feel very sorry, for I was not especially fond of paper dolls and had no great skill in their manufacture. Of course I studied at home again and I rather think that it was then that my father suggested that as my sisters in their far-away school were reading Cicero's "De Amicitia" and "De Senectute" I should undertake the same and see if I could not keep up with them; and I could and did.

The summer after I was fourteen found me at school again with Miss Sanford as teacher. She had come to Gilead fresh from the Normal School, full of enthusiasm and expecting to succeed.

I am not able now to understand just what gave her the wonderful power that she had over me. All the girls were very fond of her, but I believe I nearly worshipped her, and I am sure that in some ways she influenced me more than almost any one else. I suppose it was her unquenchable enthusiasm, mixed with what, for want of a better name may be called "personal magnetism". Besides I led a lonely life, and was the more ready to fall in love with one who showed a genuine interest in me and my welfare.

She was a very earnest Christian and did all she could to lead her pupils into the Christian life. I never hear nor read the twenty-ninth Psalm, but that it calls up the picture of the old school-house one sultry day when a thunder-storm was so nearly upon us at the close of school that most of us stayed till it should be over. It was a fearful storm, black and terrifying, with most vivid lightning and constant growling, interspersed by deafening thunder peals. We were all frightened and gathered close about Miss Sanford as if she could protect us. Presently she reached for her Bible and read that twenty-ninth Psalm. It helped to soothe and quiet us, and for at least one of the group it became a life-long memory.

I have spoken of our "running games". I remember them well. "Thornaway" was I think, the same thing that my children called "Run-across". The girl who was "It" took her stand by the middle one of three trees and the rest of us stood by the other two trees. Then "It" called out,

"Thornaway, thornaway, three times three
If you don't come now I'll catch you where you be,"

which was the signal for a general scramble to change our places while "It" did her best to capture some one or more before we could reach the other tree. Of course many false starts were made and there was much dodging, getting in each other's way; and we all made as much noise as possible. As fast as we were caught we joined the catchers so that the chances for escape grew smaller and fewer as the game progressed, till all were caught.

"Hump Stump" was a similar game, in which one corner of the school-house was the goal and the place for "It" to stand at the beginning of the game, while the rest of us stood one corner away.

And on wet days when we could not go out we played "Go to School Cross Lots" in the school room. In that delightful game we all took our stand on the recitation bench at the back of the school room, except "It" who occupied the teacher's platform. Then at the signal we would try to reach that platform or get back to our original position without being caught. It was a wild game with great possibilities of dodging back and forth between the desks and around the stove, and growing wilder as one after another was captured and added to the catchers. It was much like, "The Meeting of the Rivers", described in "What Katy Did," and like that game was played only in the teacher's absence. Of course we played "House" and "Gipsy" and the like - but it is these three games that I especially remember.

When I was about twelve my father and mother came to feel that it would be a good plan for them to take some little orphan boy into the family to bring up and possibly adopt. Perhaps the idea came to them through reading the "Advocate and Guardian", which was the organ of the "Home for the Friendless" in New York, and which my mother took regularly for many years.

At any rate they were talking seriously of going to New York to look for a child when a poor, ignorant Irish woman was brought to Gilead to care for a sick pauper. With her was her little two year old boy, - at least she guessed he was two years old; and as she said he was born when apple trees were in blossom we judged that his birthday was in May. My father was attracted by the little white-haired fellow, and persuaded his mother to give him up. He was a poor, homesick child for a time and I remember how over and over again he would wail, "When Ann come see Johnny? When Ann come see Johnny?" - Ann being the name by which he called his mother. But after a few days he became wonted and was usually a happy boy.

I think it was an unwise thing for my father to assume the care of a little boy at his time of life and in his state of health. Neither he nor my mother found it easy to adapt themselves to the new conditions and they were both oppressed with a feeling of great responsibility. However they kept John, and tried to do their best for him till after my marriage, when he came to us for a time. He was always weak in his nature and easily led; and after leaving us he pretty soon married a woman who was not helpful to him. She fancied herself an invalid (perhaps was really one), and things went badly with them. A few years ago he died - partly at least, from having weakened his constitution by drink. My good mother never lost interest in him and as long as she lived she tried to help him, - talking with him, writing to him, putting a little money in the bank for him now and then and never failing to pray for him. I think he had a very sincere affection for her, but he was born with a weak will and perhaps with an inherited appetite for drink and could not stand against the temptations around him on every side.

Of course these memories are far from being consecutive or in any chronological order. As I remember events I write them down and often I cannot date them at all. But during part of the years 1849 and 1850 I kept a journal. I did not do this because I wanted to, but because my father insisted upon it. This journal written on paper of various sizes, much of it ruled with a pencil sewed together and covered with coarse brown paper, I have always preserved: not because of its excellence - for the writing is cramped, childish and much of it hardly legible, with many blots and erasures marring the pages, nor for the interesting items recorded. For the entries usually read like this: "Today is pleasant. Anna came over here and I went to see her," or this: "I got my lessons early and began to knit when Anna G. came to visit me. We played singing-school, and school and meeting. Another rainy afternoon." Interspersed among such thrilling items are others equally thrilling, such as "Julius has gone over to Mr. Strong's to get some trees." "Pa and Julius are planting corn." "Julius and Joseph finished hoeing the corn today." "Today the bees swarmed." Such statements are varied by Sundays when I usually record that "We all went to meeting. Pa preached. His morning text was - and his afternoon was -." Usually the place of the texts is given; but sometimes, I regret to say, a blank has been left that should have been filled; evidently my memory did not hold the passage and I failed to get the needed information from some other member of the family.

The first entry in the little book is dated March 19, 1849, and reads: "I went out and heard the birds sing. Mrs. Hutchinson was here in the afternoon." The last one bears date July 15, 1850, and is as follows: "Today is pleasant. I went over to see A." Why so sudden an end came to my journal I do not at all remember; but I fancy that my father decided that not enough good came from my writing to outweigh the bother of keeping me at it.

But in contrast with all the rest of the book is an account of a visit to Ellington, to my Aunt Abbot's, which I will transcribe just as I wrote it those long years ago - reserving explanations till later and only prefacing that Ellington was about twenty miles from Gilead and the trip was taken in our heavy two-seated carriage behind my father's white horse. The date is May 29, 1849.

Tuesday 22. Ma, Julius, Laura, Martha and I went to Ellington. I saw some blue violets different from any I have ever seen before. Wednesday, 23. Today is pleasant. I saw two peacocks. I wished I could see their tails spread. They had brown and yellow wings, blue necks and beautiful tails. Coming home we stopped at Mrs. Kneeland's. Emily was gone to school, but Mrs. Kneeland brought me Emily's books and the things that she marked and her dolls. It was rather showery, but I had a pleasant ride. We came near the railroad when there was a boy in the road with his oxen. He said, "I should have geed out if I hadn't known you was coming." We past on and he hollared after us, "There going to be a blast." Julius said "I guess you'll make me believe that." Soon the horn blew and Julius had to turn. When that was over we went along and there was another blast."

I remember a good deal about this ride and visit. The railroad of which I speak was what used to be known as the Hartford Providence and Fishkill road: now a part of the Eastern division of the New York, New Haven and Hartford. At that time the road was being built and we crossed it - or rode near it - a Bolton and Vernon. By the side of the road were the shanties in which the Irish workmen and their families lived. It was the Irishmen that did the rough work in those days. Indded they were almost the only foreigners in this part of the country. I remember a dirty little urchin running out of the shanties and chasing a butterfly and when it thundered he called out, "A bast! A bast!" (A blast.) The carrying of the road through Bolton Notch was for those days a wonderful feat of engineering, and Julius was greatly interested in it. At Vernon he left the carriage and climbed what seemed to me then an enormous embankment.

The incident of the boy and the oxen comes very vividly to my mind. The boy was half lying by the side of the road, which at that point was narrow and which was completely blocked by the cart and oxen standing diagonally across it. To my brother's demand that he make way for us he gave the reply that I have noted; but as Julius persisted he reluctantly drove his cattle to one side, but called after us that there was soon to be a blast. And unbelieving Julius still going on was chagrined to hear the warning horn and to be obliged to turn back. I do not remember whether the boy was still there as we retraced our steps - but I think he must have gone - or he would have hooted at us, and that would probably have remained in my memory. (This was before the days of dynamite. The blasting was done by drilling holes in the rock and filling them with gunpowder and wadding and then lighting an attached fuse.)

I think it must have been during this visit to Ellington that I first saw a piano. A young lady neighbor of my aunt owned it and my sisters and I went to see and hear it. She played and sang for us "Nelly Bly" and something else which I do not now recall. But I have rarely heard Nelly Bly without its bringing to mind that first sight of a piano and my visit to Ellington. I think this was also my last visit there. Laura spent several months with my aunt during the next year and attended school in Ellington; but Aunt Abbot was growing old and feeble and probably my mother thought a child in the house would be a trouble to her. At any rate I have no recollection of later visits, and three years later my aunt died.

In all the fifteen years of my life in Gilead I think I attended but two weddings. The first was when I was seven years old and evidently did not make any lasting impression on me; and I find these simple entries about it in my journal: "Tuesday, June 4, 1849. Today is pleasant. Julius went in the evening to pick flowers. Wednesday, 6th. We all but Joseph went to the wedding of Miss E. Hutchinson." I remember Julius bringing home a quantity of wild flowers and that they were for the wedding; but of the company and the ceremony itself I have only the vaguest recollection.

But some years later I attended a wedding, some thing about which I do well remember. It was in a distant part of the parish and for some reason my mother could not go, so she sent me with my father. It was winter and I think we went in the sleigh. When we knocked at the outer door we were admitted by a daughter of the family, who carried a lighted tallow candle without a candlestick. She conducted me up stairs to the room where the guests took off their things, placed the candle in a cup evidently provided for it, and left me to my own devices. Naturally I was awkward and embarrassed, but I managed to find my way down stairs and into the parlor where the guests - a practically strangers to me - were assembled. In due time the groom and bride appeared, - she dark and plain, dressed in a bright blue silk with a stiff wreath of white artificial flowers on her head and he wearing a blue necktie - or bow - so wide that it seemed to force him to raise his head and lift his eyebrows. Certainly he did both - but perhaps it was not because of the bow. I remember nothing about the ceremony, and I think we left as soon as it was over without waiting for refreshments; but I can still see the bride with her most unbecoming dress and her husband with his extraordinary neck-gear.

There were of course many other weddings during those fifteen years, but I believe that I witnessed none of them. I remember my father's laughing over once being told that if it stormed he need not go to marry a couple who had asked for his services. Also I recall my mother's amusement over the many tears shed at one wedding where the bride and groom had always been near neighbors and he was simply bringing her to his home.

Wedding fees never made my father rich. One or two dollars was the usual fee. Five was princely. My father used his own marriage service and it was extremely simple. I think he never used a ring in marrying a couple. Indeed wedding rings were not at all commonly worn.

It was the custom in Gilead as in other New England towns to announce a death by the tolling of the bell. First it would be tolled slowly for some time; then it would be struck a certain number of times to indicate the sex. I think it was six times for a male and nine for a female. Then would follow as many strokes as the person was years old, and then again for a time the slow tolling. It was very impressive and to me a dreadful sound.

Funerals were always held in the church and a funeral sermon was preached. As the time of the funeral drew near, the sexton took his place in the belfry of the church from which point of vantage he could see for many miles around. When the funeral procession came into view he would begin tolling the bell and continue till the church was reached. After the exercises at the church were over the bell would again be tolled during the short journey to the graveyard and till the coffin had been lowered into the grave.

Nothing was done in those days to make death seem less terrible, but everything was made as gloomy and dreadful as possible. No flowers were used unless possibly one bud or blossom in the hand of a child. The body was dressed in a shroud and laid in a plain coffin. The looking glass and all the pictures were covered in the room where the body lay - all was grim and terrifying, especially to an impressionably child; and terrible indeed it all seemed to me. I remember once when I was a little being sent to the Post Office which was opposite the church. As I came in sight of the church I saw that the doors were open and at once inferred that some one had died and that the sexton was about to toll the bell. Forgetting my errand I turned and fled homeward as fast as possible, that I might be among friends when it should toll. It proved to be a false alarm however, as the doors were open for sweeping the church. But it was a very real terror that sent me scurrying home in such fashion. I think I must have been more easily frightened than most children - at least more afraid of death; for the other girls never seemed troubled by such things. Perhaps they were, and like me kept it to themselves.

I had a great fear that my heart would stop beating and I used often to sit up in bed feeling of my pulse. And once Elize Talcott came to our house to spend the night and we were to have the pleasure of sleeping together. She dropped off to sleep very soon, as a child should; but I lay awake listening to be sure that she kept breathing. She slept so very quietly that I grew more and more alarmed lest her breath should stop, and at last I called my mother and begged to sleep with one of my sisters as usual. Why I was more afraid that my guest would suddenly die than that my sister should do so I do not know; but the fact remained.

I always liked to have Sunday come. It was different from other days and I do not remember ever dreading it, though it sometimes seemed long and I was always glad when the sun went down and I might run and play again. Sunday began at sunset Saturday night, and in my home it was very strictly kept. Everything possible was done Saturday to get ready for it - the house was put in order, clean clothes were laid out for the next morning, the family boots and shoes were polished - (that was often my work and I was proud to make my father's boots shine) - and everything was prepared so that Sunday's meals could be quickly and easily gotten.

Then the out-door chores as well as the in-door were finished as early as possible so that when the sun set, the family were ready to spend a quiet evening reading, studying Sunday School lessons, etc. It was a good preparation for Sunday and tended to make it a peaceful day.

Sunday morning was always different from other mornings. I used to think that even the crowing of the roosters was different. And even now the birds seem to me to sing more sweetly on Sunday mornings than on other days. We never indulged in later naps on that day. Indeed I think we rose a little earlier than usual for there were of course many necessary things to be done before church time. But nothing unnecessary was done and all was finished as quickly as possible.

Then the house was very quiet. Father went to his study and the rest of us read or perhaps walked in the garden. Farther than that we were not allowed to go and there must be no running, no laughing, no picking flowers. We were allowed to pick caraway or fennel and to carry some to church to nibble during sermon time, but for the most part we were supposed to sit still in the house. No "secular" books could be read, no letters written, but there was always something to read, and I was happy. And pretty soon the "first bell" would ring and it was time to "go to meeting." I loved to hear the ringing of the bell. I loved to be dressed in my best and to walk along the shaded street with the rest of the family to the meeting-house. Usually we all went: and it was pleasant to see the people coming from all directions - men, women and children - on foot or in country wagons, with now and then a more pretentious vehicle. I liked the awesomeness of the church and I enjoyed watching the people come in and take their regular seats. I can see them now - many of them - and recall where they used to sit and how they looked.

It sometimes seems strange to me that after so many years I can so vividly recall that meeting-house and the faces and general appearance of so many of those that used to frequent it. There were two old men - brothers, who used to sit near us whose looks made a great impression on me. Their names were Ezekiel and Joel Webster. Both used to wear coats of heavy blue cloth cut by an antique pattern and trimmed with big brass buttons. These coats were said to have been their wedding garments - worn ever since for best. The men were bald on top of their heads, but their hair was combed up from the back and braided for a little way and then spread over the bald places. With one of these men came his daughter, who when you said to her "How do you do?" always replied, "Usually well" in a tone and with an inflection that implied that usually her health was far from good.

The meeting-house was of course small. The pulpit was painted white like the rest of the wood-work, and the choir gallery was opposite the pulpit, over the vestibule. Warmth was provided in cold weather by two stoves with stove pipes running the full length of the church. Some people - of whom Grandma Hull was one - needed more warmth than these stoves supplied and indeed all of us found the floor very cold. So foot-stoves were much used. These were cage-like tin boxes about a foot square, set in a wooden frame with a bail for carrying. Into a little door at one side of this box was set a small coverless iron box filled with live coals. These would keep hot a long time. We always carried a foot-stove to church for Grandma in cold weather. Others of the family sometimes carried hot bricks and later hot soap-stones.

The pew next the door on each side of the church was reserved for colored people - the "nigger pews" they were often called - but they were not much used in my day. I remember one colored woman and one half-Indian who sometimes sat there.

The service was essentially the same as our present Congregational service, only there was less singing and the sermons and prayers were longer. At the close of the morning service we had Sunday School. At least we had in summer, but it was dropped in winter - I suppose because the children could not so well come in cold weather.

The Sunday School was for children, and adults, unless they were teachers, stayed away. Each class had a different lesson. There were no quarterlies nor "lesson helps", but we had various "question books", - usually made up of questions with Scripture references as answers. We were supposed to study our lessons at home, look up the references, and be prepared to answer the questions in the class. But in fact, the teacher usually asked the questions to the pupils in turn, giving the reference after each question, and the pupil would find the reference and read it. The lessons were short and as there was no discussion nor explanation they were soon over and we had time for chatting and looking over our library books. I think we did not sing or have any general exercises except an opening prayer and sometimes remarks by the Superintendent or possibly by some visitor. I remember one Superintendent, who often made remarks to the school in a solemn manner and sometimes using the work "me-thinks" which is the only word of all that he spoke that remains in my memory.

The three Sunday School teachers that I recall during my Gilead days were all good women, but they did not teach and I got little from them. Still, I liked Sunday School and was always glad when it was "organized" in the spring.

The Sunday School could not hold a very long session, because at one o'clock there came a second preaching service. Many people brought a little lunch, but on pleasant days I always went home for a bite. On stormy Sundays I sometimes carried something to eat and stayed through the nooning. On such occasions Mrs. Ford, a pleasant old lady, sometimes gave me a seed-cooky or a soda-cracker which I thought very nice.

During the noon hour a number of men and women who did not go to Sunday School used to go to our house and hold a prayer meeting in the kitchen and I often attended for a few minutes if I finished my lunch in time. I remember distinctly some of those who were in the habit of attending - Mr. Eleaser Strong, Mr. Aaron Mack and their wives and others. Mr. Mack was a very good man, a real saint, my father used to think him, but with very little education and a hard-working farmer. I remember his telling my father of his trials in endeavoring to keep awake in church. He said something like this: "I stand up and move about, I prick myself and pinch myself and do everything I can think of, and the first I know I am waking up." Mr. Strong used often to start the singing in the prayer meeting, and often sang to the tune of Bridgewater, the verse,

"How long, dear Saviour, O how long
Shall that bright hour delay?
Fly swifter round ye wheels of time
And bring the welcome day."

As he was an old man with a shaky nasal voice and most of the other singers were past middle life and some of them snuff-takers, the singing lacked sweetness.

Snuff taking was not uncommon among the older women, and some men took snuff - though more of them chewed tobacco. The snuff would be kept in a small round wooden or metal box which was carried in the pocket. The user would take the box and give it two or three sharp taps - then open it and taking a pinch of the snuff with thumb and finger put it first to one nostril and then to the other and inhale it. Then the box would be passed to other snuff-takers if such were sitting near and then returned to the picket. I was always interested in watching the process, but never felt any desire to join in the performance. At one o'clock the bell would ring and the people assemble for a second preaching service. That would be over by half past two, and by three we would be home. Then would come our Sunday dinner - dinner and supper in one - usually some simple dish like creamed dried beef or codfish, followed probably by pie baked on Saturday. Our Sunday breakfast was often baked beans and brown bread which had been all night in the big brick oven.

After dinner the time passed rather slowly unless my library book was interesting and by time for the sun to set I was quite ready to watch for his disappearance. Then we were supposed to still wait a few minutes before beginning to play and even then we were not to be noisy. But we might run and jump and work off some of the surplus energy that had accumulated during the quiet day. In the evening mother would take her knitting, neighbors would call and things would resume their every day aspect.

In telling of the old time Sunday, I am reminded of the ministers of neighboring churches with whom father used occasionally to "exchange" - he preaching in Andover or Hebron or elsewhere as the case might be, and the pastor of that church coming to Gilead and preaching. It seems to me now that almost every one of them had some peculiarity - certainly more than any group of ministers that I have known for many years. There was Rev. Lavies Hyde of Bolton, a man along in years, very grave faced and with a solemn manner, who used to "salute" my mother in apostolic fashion "with a holy kiss". He and his wife were both hymn writers and many of their hymns were in the hymn book from which we used to sing at prayer meetings. His wife woke one morning to find him lying dead beside her, and by a strange coincidence, she too was found dead in the morning exactly seven years later.

In Marlborough was Rev. Mr. Bill, the father of several very mischievous children, one or more of whom usually accompanied him when he came to Gilead to preach. It was said that he brought them with him because their mother could not manage them. For the same reason he sometimes took one of his boys into his own pulpit during the service and it used to be told that the boy would "cut-up" behind his father - drawing the attention of the congregation upon himself. Once he amused himself by repeatedly putting on his father's silk hat while sitting on the pulpit sofa. Mr. Bell was an inveterate tobacco user and the pulpit must be provided with a spittoon on the Sundays that he was to preach.

Rev. Edgar Doolittle came from Hebron. He was a very slender delicate looking man who had a nervous twitching of the face which was often accompanied by a kind of hiccough. I have the impression that he was a good preacher but far from well. He preached the funeral sermon for my brother Julius.

Then there was Rev. Mr. Jewett from Westchester. That town was some ten miles from Gilead and the ride to and from there was taken on Saturday and Monday. He used to sway backward and forward during prayer and I used to watch him interestedly as we knelt for family worship. But in church the interest became fascination, for he would grasp the big pulpit Bible with both hands, and as he swung back and forth the book would slide on the pulpit cushion till it would seem almost sure that the next time it would fall with a bang. And although the expected never happened, I am sure that for me there was no spirit of worship or devotion while he prayed.

There sometimes preached for my father a minister by the name of Judson, who had great facility for shedding tears in the pulpit. It used to be said (probably untruly) that on the margins of his sermons, opposite certain paragraphs was written, "Here cry". He once preached for my father in Higganum and father learning that one of the most constant church goers was not in his pew in the afternoon, called to see if he was ill. "No," said Mr. Usher, "but I was not going to sit there and see that man make up faces the second time."

But not all the ministers of the time or of the neighborhood were "queer" and those of whom I have written were doubtless good men and true. There were others more agreeable, real Christian gentlemen, whom I remember with respect and love.

"Ministers' meetings" were held several times a year, at which times the clergymen of a certain group would gather at the house of one of the number in time for a dinner together. There would be a sermon read or preached during the afternoon, followed by discussion and criticism. A number of the ministers would spend the night, dispersing the next forenoon. It was at one such meeting held at our house, that we used at dinner for the first time a set of new plain white crockery, instead of the blue that we had always used, and I wrote to my sisters of the event saying that the table looked very nice.

I think it was at the same meeting that I distinguished myself - or thought I did - in a way that made me feel hot every time I thought of it for years. It was in the evening and the ministers were gathered in the parlor telling stories of their varied experiences. I suppose I really should not have been in the room, but I was there, sitting in the corner and listening eagerly to the conversation. Presently one of the men said, "Well, after all, I think the life of a minister is the happiest of any," - and I from my corner, and my vast experience impulsively exclaimed, "I always thought so." Of course everybody laughed and I was greatly mortified. I presume no one else remembered the incident long, but I could never forget it.

Besides these neighboring ministers there were the "agents" who went from place to place telling of the work of the various societies - the Tract Society, the Bible Society, the Sunday School Society, etc. - and asking for money for these different causes. Of course they always stayed with the minister over the Sundays on which they spoke at his church. And as they travelled about the country with their own teams and there were no hotels nor boarding houses in small country places, it often happened that an agent, and sometimes his wife and one or two children would stop at our home in the middle of the week for one or two meals and perhaps a night's lodging. Father and mother kept open house and were very hospitable, but I know that mother sometimes chafed under the necessity of getting dinner for six people when she had only planned for three, and I have heard my father say that he was willing to entertain a man and his wife, but when it came to a span of horses also he felt imposed upon. I

remember one agent who did actually come with his wife and child, and two horses and camp down upon us for two or three days. And I remember another who was apt to happen along with his wife and obstreperous boy just at dinner time, - or just at bed time. Minister's wives of today miss some of the experiences of their predecessors.

From my earliest recollection I have been very fond of music. My mother often told me that I sang correctly the air of "Long, Long Ago", when only a year and a half old, before I could talk. She also used to tell how when still younger I would refuse to go to sleep to any other music than a certain tune that was sung to the words "Hush my dear, lie still and slumber." My sisters, upon whom often devolved the task of rocking the cradle and singing me to sleep (this was in "the good old days" when that was supposed to be the proper procedure), sometimes varied of the one tune and would try something else. But I would show my displeasure and the same old strain would be resumed.

As I grew older I was regarded as something of a musical prodigy - so easy was it for me to learn a tune and so fond was I of singing. My brother and two sisters were in the choir and I longed to be there also. Of course we had only a volunteer choir, made up of both old and young singers and led by two violins and a small bass viol. Still I was so very young and small that I wonder my father was reckless enough to say that the next time a singing school was held in Gilead I might attend and learn to sing by note and then I might sit in the choir. My impression is that he did not anticipate a singing school for a good while, but it was only a few months before I was able to claim his promise.

The singing school was held in the meeting house one evening each week and was taught by Mr. Sylvester Gilbert of Habron, a distant cousin of my friend Anna. All the members of the choir attended as well as beginners. We would spend part of the evening in practising "exercises" for the sake of learning to read music readily, and the rest of the time in learning new tunes. It was thought necessary to have a new singing book whenever a singing school was held, and to learn new tunes for Sunday singing.

The choir did all the singing in the church service, while the congregation listened, some of them standing and turning around so as to face the singers. The minister always read the hymn before it was sung. Each singer had both a hymn book and a tune book or singing book as it was called. These singing books had sometimes fanciful names. The last one that I remember was called "The Harp of Judah". It gave one a feeling of importance to stand up holding the two books and to look from one to the other fitting the words to the music. Our hymn books were thick and clumsy and our singing books were broader than they were long. Usually two singers looked over in one book which made the holding easier. I greatly enjoyed the singing school and was much pleased to sing in the choir and although I was so small that it was absurd that I should be there, I fancy that I read music more readily than many of the older singers. I could not have been more than eight years old when I joined the choir, and I sang in some choir always till I was married. A year or two after me Anna Gilbert also came into the choir making it yet more enjoyable.

At singing school the singers occupied the pews in the center of the church - the men and boys on one side and the women and girls on the other. One evening some of the men complained that two men who were in the habit of attending occupied singers' seats but never sang. Thereupon the teacher asked these two men to change their seats, which they refused to do. He then appointed a committee to wait on them out of the seats, but they still refused to move. So all the rest of the male singers marched to another part of the church leaving the two silent ones along in their glory. I remember with what excitement I hurried home at the close of the evening to tell my father all about it. I do not remember any sequel, but I presume that the whole thing was but part of a long standing feud.

Two or three years later a notice was read from the pulpit one Sunday that this same Mr. Sylvester Gilbert was about to open a Juvenile singing school in Hebron. It would be free to all and would be followed by a paid concert and it was hoped that some of the Gilead children would attend. It sounded most delightful and on the way home from Sunday School Anna and I discussed possibilities and probabilities. Neither of us thought it very probable that our fathers would think it worth while to take us weekly the three long miles to Hebron - and yet! So we each promised the other that if either of our fathers should propose to take his daughter, she would certainly get an invitation for the other one.

The days went by and my father remained silent on the great subject, and though I fancy that I did some hinting I did not dare ask him outright to take me, though of course that would have meant nothing worse than a refusal. When the day came I found some errand in the morning to take me to Anna's house. Greatly to my delight she told me that her grandfather, - "Esquire" Gilbert as he was called, - had promised to take her to the singing school and of course I could go too. Highly elated I rushed home, but when my father heard the story and learned of the promise between Anna and myself, he at once said I could not go. I had begged an invitation and Esquire Gilbert felt obliged to invite me. It was no way to do, and I could not go.

I verily thought my heart was broken. Upstairs I went into the attic bedroom and threw myself upon the bed where I cried and sobbed and cried some more till my eyes were red and swollen and my head ached. At that juncture Martha came to the room and told me that I could go after all. It seemed that I would have been invited anyway, for Esquire Gilbert was intending to go in his big wagon and take all the girls in the neighborhood who wished to go. And some way would be provided to get them there every week. That put another face on the matter and all my tears had been for naught. As soon as I could possibly get ready I joined the other girls - headachy and I think dinnerless, but intensely happy. The rest of that season to me spelt singing school. It was the thing I thought about, talked about, lived for. The ride every week with five or six other girls was of itself a great pleasure, but the singing school was happiness.

In reality, what we learned of music was of but slight value. A little cantata - learned wholly by rote, - in which a Fairy Queen was crowned, etc., and a number of taking songs, - but what of that? And then the concert! When our teacher told me that he wanted me to crown the queen, singing as I did so, I was certainly proud. But I told him I did not think I could be at the concert, for my father was not well and very rarely went out in the evening, and I had no idea that he would think of taking that three mile drive in the chill of a winter evening, and I felt very sure that he would not allow me to go without him. But Mr. Gilbert urged me at least to ask him, and great was my surprised joy when father said that he and mother would both go.

Then came the question of dress. All the girls who had solo parts were to wear white dresses - but I had no white dress nor did there seem to be any way of getting one for me. But my mother thought perhaps she could borrow one, and succeeded in doing so. It was too large and too long, but taken in seams and taken up tucks fixed it so that I imagine it looked fairly well. Another requirement was that we should each wear a wreath of flowers. Here was another difficulty. No one in those days would think of wearing natural flowers in the winter. Indeed they were not to be had unless by wealthy city dwellers, and our boxes of case off millinery yielded no decent flowers. But mother thought that in Deacon Talcott's family some one might have flowers that I could borrow for so grand an occasion. So I gladly tramped the two miles and back, being rewarded with a wreath of pink roses - which after all I did not wear as the lady who helped me dress for the concert did not like them and found something that she preferred in her own supply.

The concert went off finely and it was wonderful to me to stand up in front of footlights and to see my own father and mother looking on while I sang my little song and placed the crown on the head of the lovely queen.

But oh! the dulness of the days immediately succeeding this whirl of excitement! I remember it seemed as if all good times were over, and I think that mother had need of extra patience for a few days.

About this time Anna was given a melodeon and went to Hebron each week for lessons. I greatly envied her, but had to be content with the promise that if we ever lived where I could take lessons at home, I too might have a melodeon. At that time there seemed no probability of our leaving Gilead, but in a few years we went to Higganum to live and my father fulfilled his promise. While we were still in Gilead - probably about the time that I was ten years old, I had the present of a small accordeon, which I soon learned to play and in the use of which I spent many happy hours.

Although we were all singers and fond of music I do not remember much family singing in my childhood. Perhaps it was too much a matter of course to make much impression on me, or more probably we were too busy a family to take the time for it. And I think that after Julius' death it was some time before my father felt like singing. In later years we sang at family prayers and even after the children had all left the home my father and mother continued the custom. And only an hour or two before my father so suddenly fell asleep, he and my mother had sung their evening hymn.

I think my birthday was usually celebrated by some little gift, and once I had a real party. This was probably when I was nine years old. I imagine that Martha conceived the idea, and she invited the guests. In order to give no cause for offence, all the little girls on the street of suitable age were invited and I think all came. There were Clara, Ida and Maria Way, Alice Brown Jane and Jeanette Hyde, Sarah Strong, Elizabeth and Ellen Ticknor, Ann Eliza Post, Sarah Matson and of course my special friend Anna Gilbert. The day was cloudy and cold but we played out of doors for a time and then Martha helped us play games in the house. Then came refreshments of which I only remember the two loaves of cake, with lovely soft frosting, ornamented with bright red partridge berries. We had a jolly time and all enjoyed it.

When my tenth birthday came my father was recovering from lung fever as it was then called -pneumonia now. He had been very ill and was finding convalescence slow and tedious. If he had been a woman he would have found pleasure in knitting or patchwork or some other such occupation, but being a man such things were not for him. But in some way he procured some splints and succeeded in making some very presentable baskets, one of which he gave Grandma to hold her knitting. Then he had us hunt up pieces of cardboard and colored paper and turned his attention to making boxes. Of course they were rather clumsy, for his material was poor and he was without experience. The colored paper was mostly covers of various pamphlets, and I can't imagine where the cardboard came from. But boxes of any kind were scarce in those days, and these were very acceptable. I can testify that they were strong for I have two of them still after more than seventy years. One he gave me on this tenth birthday has the following inscription on the bottom in my father's clear handwriting "Lucy F. Nichols. Made by her father when recovering from sickness and presented to her on her tenth birthday."

I have always been choice of this and kept it in a little red wooden trunk that used to belong to Julius, and that I begged for my own after his death. Various things of no value to any one but myself have found their place in this box, one thing being a tiny lock of the finest baby hair that was cut from the head of John Gilbert, Anna's younger brother. It used to be the fashion to exchange locks of hair with your friends and I used to have quite a collection in my box, and this still remains because I have a kind of sentiment about it that never let me destroy it.

One thing that I have kept in this birthday box since Mother's death is a much smaller box, once white but now yellowed with age, which was among her things. Evidently it was dropping to pieces but mother had carefully sewed it together again. It has on the cover in my mother's handwriting these words: "This box contains a few little things that were placed there by sweet little Julia, the last of her childish acts. August 1830." Inside this box are a bit of calico and a spool with a quill stuck in it, evidently in imitation of a quill pen in an ink stand.

Father had promised me that when I was ten years old I might go to Hartford, so when he was able to do so he took me there with him. We rode with our horse and juggy to Andover and from there went by train. This was my first train ride and I must confess that I did not enjoy it. I was very much afraid that some dreadful thing would happen, especially in going through Bolton Notch, where the rocks tower up about the cars, or where there are sometimes rocks on one side and a deep gorge on the other. I really suffered from fear. Nor did I greatly enjoy Hartford. Of course father had many errands and could not devote much time to me and a good deal of my time had to be spent just waiting for him. So I was

very glad when we were safely home at night, notwithstanding the splitting headache that for many years was the inevitable result of every such excitement or journey.

New England life in the first half of the nineteenth century did not abound in holidays. Indeed, the older people had as a rule rather of a scorn for such foolishness. Vacations? why yes for the schools, but I fancy largely because the people did not want to pay for schools for the whole year. But vacations for ministers and business men were unnecessary and foolish. At least so many good people felt - my father among them, and I think that during the forty years of his ministry he never took a vacation in any such sense as the clergy of today think their right and their duty.

Holidays of any kind were rare. Before my time I think unnecessary work was forbidden for Fast Day and Thanksgiving, but as sports were also forbidden and play was frowned upon, the days - especially Fast Day, could not be called holidays. The Fourth of July was often observed by holding patriotic gatherings, by processions, speeches, picnics, etc., but I never attended anything of the kind, if indeed any such thing was ever held in Gilead - which I doubt.

Some children had fire-crackers, but my father had a wholesome dislike to gunpowder in every form and he never allowed us to have any. I remember that on one Fourth of July, Anna and I were allowed a handful of old fashioned brimstone matches, with which we drew fiery pictures on the back of the stove.

Thanksgiving was the great New England day and in many families it was a joyful day - the day of re-unions, when all the family, children and grandchildren, would gather at the old homestead and have a feast and a delightful time. I used to envy my friend Anna for it seemed to me that innumerable aunts and uncles and cousins used to meet for the Thanksgiving celebration. But there was no one to come to our house. Even when my sisters were away at school it did not seem best for them to be at the expense of coming home for so short a time, and the day differed from other days mainly because we always went to church for an hour then had a great dinner - roast turkey or chicken with various vegetables followed by several kinds of pie - all very delicious. But it was a rather stupid day after all.

Christmas meant very little to me. In some way, either by my reading or by association with those misguided children who went to "church" instead of "meeting" - or possibly through Grandma Hull who had a prayer-book and perhaps a little leaning toward the Episcopal form of service, I knew something about the delightful ways in which some children kept Christmas. We were allowed to exchange Christmas greetings and I was permitted to hang up my stocking by the open fireplace, but I do not remember any Santa Clause tales - though I dare say I had read some. Once I found tied to my stocking a doll's cradle - made for me by Julius at times when, much to my perplexity I had been kept away from his workshop. That was long to be remembered; but usually a bunch of raisins, a lump of sugar or rarely an orange were all the gifts I received or expected.

But I longed for a Christmas tree. I had never seen one, but I could imagine its beauty and I pondered much over the possibility of having one. At last I had an inspiration. In Anna Gilbert's yard were two Norway spruces. Why could we not use one of them and have an out-of-door, growing tree? We could not expect presents, but both Anna and I could bring pretty things from our homes and hang them on the tree and have the pleasure of seeing them there. So we talked and

planned and at last proposed the plan to our parents. Strange to say, they did not approve. Their reasons were good - "it would be too cold" - "it would be too public" - "the ground would be cold" etc., etc. But my father seeing my eagerness and my disappointment promised to get me a tree if I would have good lessons till Christmas. It would not be for presents, but just for a show. He was my teacher and he would be my judge. When Christmas came his verdict was favorable and in due time I saw him bring home a little pine, which he firmly fastened to a block of wood so that it would stand securely. Then in some manner he fastened bits of candle to its branches and it was ready.

Evening came and with it came Anna and her father and mother. Together we had quite an array of pretty things. Little pincushions, needle-books, penknives, little boxes, little books, - things that a child of today would hardly look at, but some of which had been treasured for years and all of which we thought beautiful, were hung on the tree, and when the candles were lighted it had a very gay and festive appearance. Beneath it on the table was placed my precious little tea-set - an heirloom from a former generation. After feasting our eyes on the tree we ate and drank from the same little tea-set, and the evening was over. The next day we had the pleasure of picking the fruit from the tree and restoring the things to their places. I have helped trim many Christmas trees since that night but perhaps have never enjoyed one more truly.

In looking back to those far away days I do not see events in consecutive or chronological order. Days and seasons and years merge into one another with little to distinguish them. Here and there a scene stands out in the light, but its time and place is in the shadow.

As the snow disappeared in the rays of the March sunshine, and the softening ground began to send up a little greenness as a forerunner of spring, Anna and I could sometimes accompany her father to the sheep-barn. In going there we passed the big barn back of her house and through a wide gate entered a lane bounded by a rail fence on either side. Here in the corners of the fence would be patches of moss and little plants showing their first tender leaves - very delightful to see after the long frozen winter. From this lane we came out upon a hill-side which sloped rapidly down to a tiny brook, along the edges of which peppermint would grow later in the season, and which now so early showed along its course a margin of green grass. Crossing this brook on a plank we soon came to a little stile over a rail fence, by the side of which grew a big spice bush from which we would gather twigs of which to smell and taste. Here in a small enclosure was the sheep-barn, and about it in the sunshine would be huddled the sheep - all eager for the salt that Mr. Gilbert carried, and for the water with which he would fill their wooden trough by means of a queer, home-made wooden pump. Later in the spring the sheep would be let out into the pasture and little lambs would be frisking about them - a pretty sight.

As the spring advanced there were other walks - to Muddy Brook Lot, so called because of the brook, which at the upper end of the lot spread itself over a swamp that had to be carefully crossed on stepping stones. In this lot were many things to enjoy. Great trees with low, wide-spreading branches on which we could sit and swing; lovely hummocks of dry white moss, just the thing for cushions for our play-houses, and running ground pine with which to decorate them - an abundance of whortleberries in the summer and of chestnuts in the fall. With all these and other delights Muddy Brook Lot was a veritable treasure field. And just over the fence was the Fern Lot, where grew great quantities of sweet fern, and where I remember a fascinating bank of wild roses. These two lots adjoined my father's land and were of course very accessible.

The spring also brought out door work, plowing, planting, etc., and the delight of finding the first wild flowers, eyebrights, blue violets and anemones, that grew in our nowing lot. And the first we knew it would be summer, and the house would be thrown open to catch the wandering breezes, and we would be seeking for cool places and enjoying draughts of the deliciously cold water from the very bottom of our forty foot well, and the fresh fruit and vegetables from our own garden. And our garden and front yard would be gay with many colored blossoms, carefully tended by my grandmother, with an occasional weed pulled or plant transplanted by me.

I remember so well the big washings done by my mother with a very little help from me - in a little "wash-house" - a shed arrangement not far from the barn and very near a well of beautifully soft, clear, water. Here was a place where a fire could be made, and water heated in a large brass kettle.

Haying time was pleasanter to me than to my father I suppose, and meant more fun than work as I "raked behind" or trod down the hay as it was pitched upon the wagon, and then as I rode on the sweet-smelling load to the barn and climbed from it in at the little door that opened on the mow. And it was pleasant to carry the mid-afternoon lunch to the busy hay-makers and to see them throw themselves down under some tree to eat the doughnuts and drink the sweetened water that usually composed the lunch. The ringing of the scythes as the mowers whetted them was a delightful sound and it is sure that hay-making in these later days of mowing machines and all the rest, cannot at all compare for picturesqueness with that of the olden time.

In summer it was usually my duty to fetch home the cows from the woods lot where they were pastured. I think father usually drove them to pasture in the morning, probably before I was up. But as the sun was getting well into the west it was expected that I would go for them. The pasture was about a mile away and it was a rather lonely walk, as after crossing Gilead street there was but one house on the road, and that was so between the hills as not to be visible much of the way. But I do not remember that I was at all timid, unless as sometimes happed Mr. Hutchinson's oxen were in the same pasture and had to be driven with our cows. Then I was somewhat afraid, but nothing ever happened to harm me.

Usually the cows would be waiting at the bars, but once in a while one or both would seem to forget that it was time to go home and would have wandered off into the woods. That was very trying and would mean a search, sometimes successful and sometimes I would go home without the cows, for I never dared to venture far into the woods. In that case father would have to go and hunt them up.

Berrying was one of the summer occupations and pleasures. I was a slower picker than most of my mates, but I liked to go with them and generally got a fair supply. We knew nothing of canning, but we dried many berries which when soaked and cooked made good pies.

Summer also brought long walks with Anna to the homes of her various relatives of whom there were many in Gilead. Farthest away over the hills lived her uncle Champion Gilbert, whose wife was a lover of children and used to let us go all over her immaculate house, look into her closets and drawers and examine her treasures. Once she gave us each a few sheets of fancy note paper and some motto seals which I think I still have.

On the same road but not so far away was the home of another of Anna's aunts, whose husband had charge of a grist mill. Near the mill was a wonderful waterfall caused by a dam in the little brook that gave power to the mill. In this house lived Anna's cousin, Sarah Prentice, just her age, of whom I felt rather jealous as she and Anna sometimes had secrets which I was not permitted to share. However she was too far away to often come between us.

Still nearer home was a brook between two hills that we called the Halfway Brook, because it was about half way between Anna's home and her Uncle Champion's. It was only a tiny brook, but the water was clear and rippled over its pebbly bottom in a charming way. By it grew partridge berries and lovely green moss and I always imagined that if I should follow its course a long way I should find many wonderful things. I wonder as I look back why we did not do more exploring, but we seem to have been quite content with the familiar places. Perhaps we were too timid to hunt for anything new.

One summer day stands out in my memory when Anna and her mother invited me to go with them to visit her Aunt Harriet who lived half a mile away at the head of the street. Johnnie Gilbert was a sweet little blue-eyed two-year old, and when he was dressed in white and his beautiful yellow curls topped by a straw hat with straw colored ribbons we put him in his little wooden wagon with great delight. On our walk we passed a yard where many cinnamon roses had strayed into the street and we stopped and wreathed the little hat with the spicy blossoms. I well remember our pride in his beauty thus adorned.

Summer brought also thunder storms - the first distant rumble sending me scurrying home from wherever I might be, - my one thought being to get near my mother where I felt safer than anywhere else. When the thunder grew loud and the lightning sharp she would sit down and let me bury my head in her lap. Or if the shower came in the night, she would come and lie beside me, while my father would dress and sit up with a lighted candle till the shower was over.

But the summer would soon imperceptibly merge into autumn with corn to be husked and carried upstairs, apples to be picked, and stored in the cellar, potatoes to be dug, turnips pulled and much other work to be done in preparation for the long cold winter. In all the out of door work I had a part and in much of it I delighted. Even pulling turnips and picking up potatoes were not wholly unpleasant. I remember once when a very little girl, after an hour or more of picking up potatoes I ran into the house with dirty hands and face and clothing. And not seeing my mother I opened the door of the parlor where I found my mother talking with a strange gentleman. I think it was some agent, but his name and business are quite forgotten. But I well remember his greeting, "Oh, here is a little girl who has been dug out of a potato hill!" Greatly mortified and abashed I beat a hasty retreat, but after ablutions and a change of clothing I ventured again into the room. When he saw me he said, "Where is the little girl that was dug out of the potato hill?" Then he took me on his knee and taught me a little prayer for each finger.

I remember also one day when father and I worked together cutting the tops off the turnips. I enjoyed it and remember it because I told him about books that I liked and told him the story of Anna Ross - a Sunday School book that at that time I dearly loved. I think it was then that he promised me a book if I would knit him a pair of stockings - a promise which I claimed months later after many hours of distasteful work. I have forgotten the name of the book, but it was by Mrs. Phelps and was a book of short stories that I greatly enjoyed.

In the fall came also the pleasure of nutting, and I remember the delight of seeing the brown chestnuts rattle down upon the ground as my brother in the tree whipped and shook the branches. Then in the evening the little kettle would be hung on the crane over the open fire, and a part of the chestnuts would be boiled and the family would sit around the fire and feast upon them.

Chestnuts were not very marketable in those days, and we were free to gather them whenever we could, but with walnuts it was different. They had a money value and we had to get permission to gather them. I think they were generally gotten "on shares". But we usually had walnuts and butternuts for winter eating.

Two or three times during the fall we would have evenings of apple paring when the whole family would gather round the table with dishes and knives and pare and slice apples for drying. I never liked dried apple pies, but the getting ready for them was very pleasant.

So the days with their recurring tasks and pleasures would come and go till some Sunday in late November, when my father would unfold in the pulpit a formidable looking document, and read the Thanksgiving Proclamation, "by his excellency the Governor of Connecticut". Then for a few days there would be hurrying to and fro, and a delicious smell of good things cooking would pervade the house. And then Thanksgiving would be over and it would be winter.

Early in the winter some cold day father would summon the butcher to come and slaughter the pig which had been carefully fed for months, and for days the kitchen would be a very busy place. Lard to be fried, sausages to be made, hams to be cured, a barrel of park to be salted, - it took us all to attend to the many details. And the home fattened fresh pork tasted better than any that we get now-a-days.

Grandma was in her element those days. It was she who would prepare the cases for sausages, and fill them with the meat that others had chopped, but she had seasoned. She must stand by my father as he cut up the sides of pork and arranged the pieces in the barrel first having tested the strength of the brine. She must attend to the curing of the hams. In all such work she was an adept, and most happy in the doing.

At about the same time a quarter of beef would be procured and salted for winter use. Then the beef tallow must be made into candles for our evening lights. Out would come our biggest kettle for the melting of the tallow. Then the candle rods would be brought out. These were smooth wooden rods rather larger than a good sized lead pencil and perhaps thirty inches long. A dozen or so pieces of candle wicking cut into lengths twice the length of a candle were hung double on one of these rods and each twisted on itself. There would be ten or a dozen rods each with its quota of wicking. Papers must be spread upon the floor to catch the drippings and two chairs set on the papers far enough apart to hold the rods. Then with the big kettle of hot tallow placed conveniently the work would begin. Taking one rod at a time Grandma would dip the suspended wicks into the melted tallow, raise them, shake off the drops and place the rod on the chairs so that the greasy wicks would hang clear. Then the next in order would receive the same treatment and so on through the lot. By the time the last one was done, the first would have hardened sufficiently to be dipped again. Over and over the process would be repeated - the candles growing a little with every dip, till at last they were large enough and would

be hung away in the cold till perfectly hard and then packed in a box and kept in a cool place to be used as needed. We had a candle mould and sometimes used it for a few candles, but Grandma thought the dipped ones far superior. At through the early years of my life we depended almost exclusively on tallow candles for our evening lights. The light was poor, the candles were always needing attention and we considered it a vast improvement when kerosene took their place. I never loved candles and think I never shall.

The winters were hard for country people with no modern conveniences, but of course never having known the comfort of electric lights or running water or furnace-warmed houses, we did not realize what we were missing. And I liked the snow-storms and the coasting and when I would come in from my plan crying with stinging fingers I loved to have Grandma pity me and wrap my aching hands in her apron warmed by the fire. And it was pleasant at night to snuggle down into the depths of a feather bed when mother had warmed it with the long handled warming pan as she sometimes did after she had first warmed Grandma's bed.

So the seasons came and went with little to distinguish one year from another till the fall after I was fourteen. Then things happened.

My father went away for a few days in September of that year and on his return found a letter awaiting him, which changed everything for us all, It was from a member of his church and said that in the judgment of the writer nine-tenths of his parishioners wished him to resign. It was a bolt from a clear sky and however intended it certainly seemed unkind. Father was not a man to hesitate in such circumstances. He received the letter on Friday, and the following Sunday he read his resignation, greatly to the surprise and apparent grief of his congregation.

The succeeding weeks were unhappy ones in many ways. Father was exceedingly hurt and felt that he had been unkindly treated, and Grandma sympathized with him so strongly that their conversation was almost wholly on the one theme. People come from all over the parish to cry over us and to express their more or less sincere indignation over the letter and grief over its effect. Father's health suffered and he became a victim of neuralgia and had many sleepless nights. Then where should we go? What should he try to do? - for at that time he thought he should give up preaching.

Then began trips here and there in search of a home. East Hartford, East Haven, Agawan, Norwich Town, - I remember discussions about all these and other places and the seeming likelihood that one of them would be chosen. Father was regularly dismissed in October and the fall was largely spent in home-hunting. But winter settled down upon us still at the old place in Gilead.

It was a hard winter, cold and bleak with frequent show-storms. Father was away nearly every Sunday, usually leaving home Saturday and returning Monday. My sisters were at Mt. Holyoke Seminary - expecting to graduate in June. Grandma was feeble and depressed, and mother had heavy burdens of responsibility and care. During father's absences not only the usual indoor cares came upon her, but the looking out for cow and hens and other out door chores. I could do some of the work, but she had the care.

Probably it was in February that father began preaching in Higganum with some regularity and that he agreed to become their "stated supply" as soon as the weather and the roads would permit him to bring his family and take possession of the parsonage. It was a great relief to us all that some definite conclusion had been reached and family life became more cheerful.

It was in February that my sisters came home for a fortnight's vacation. There had been heavy snow-storms just before their coming so that the road to Andover was still unbroken, and they were obliged to go by stage to Hebron and be met there. I think that the stage tipped over en-route. But it was good to have them home and the house took on a new cheerfulness.

One Saturday during their stay, father went to Higganum as usual, driving his old white horse and I think crossing the river on the ice. It seems to me that it began snowing that day. At any rate it snowed hard on Sunday and Sunday night and on Monday it not only snowed, but the wind blew a gale so that on our hill drifts were almost everywhere. It was a regular blizzard - the worst storm I ever remember except the blizzard. Of course father could not get home and I donned his rubber boots and struggled through the drifts to the barn and fed the animals. Probably mother also had to go to milk the cow but I am not sure.

Darkness came early with the wind still howling and the air thick with snow. John Rose was sent to bed and the rest of us - Grandma, Mother, Laura, Martha and I - gathered about the table in our kitchen-living-room, which was warmed by a big wood fire in the cooking stove, for a cozy evening of work and reading. Mother and my sisters were sewing by the light of a candle or two and I was reading aloud about volcanoes when we were startled by a sudden roar and looking up we saw flames blowing down over the windows.

It looked as if the roof was on fire and a very much frightened group we were. It was immediately evident that the accumulation of soot, etc., in the chimney had taken fire and with the wind made a great blaze. Mother threw salt into the stove, - one of my sisters closed the damper, sending a cloud of smoke into the room, - I tried to snuff the candle and succeeded in putting it out, while Grandma forgetful of her feebleness and cough, threw open the front door and called "fire" in a voice that could not have been heard many rods away at any time and which of course was utterly useless in such a gale and at our distance from neighbors or even from the street. But I, - being the youngest and strongest - caught a cloak from its hook and wrapping it around me started for Mr. Gilbert's. I shall never forget that walk. I had not been to the street that day and did not know at all the location of the drifts and in the storm and darkness I could not pick my way at all. Up to my waist I plunged at once, and up to my waist I waded almost the entire distance - now and then falling as some unevenness of the road tripped me. The short distance seemed endless, but at last almost exhausted I reached the friendly shelter and managed to tell my story and two able-bodied men at once set out with a ladder. They found the fire out and the house safe - the snow having prevented the roof from catching.

As for me - Mrs. Gilbert kept me till I was a little rested and then Mr. Gilbert helped me home. During all my difficult walk and my many falls I had unconsciously kept on my finger a thimble, which I had been idly putting off and on as I sat reading and which was a size too large for me.

There was little sleep for any of us that night. We had all been too thoroughly frightened and my mother moreover reproached herself for not having thawed out our pumps, both of which were frozen.

The next day the sun shone and the wind had gone down and about seven at night my father drove into the yard. He had started from Middle Haddam, thirteen miles away and had struggled with the drifts all day, - time and again having been obliged to get help to shovel him out. He was so completely tired out that much to my amazement and awe he burst into tears and cried like a child when he was fairly inside the home walls. However he rested that night and we reserved the story of our trials till later.

In a few days my sisters returned to school, and we at home gradually prepared for the spring moving. Having lived in one house for thirty-one years at a time when they were in the habit of saving everything that could by any possibility be of use in any way, my parents found a vast accumulation of stuff to be disposed of and we were all busy.

Although the winter had been so severe, spring came early and by the middle of March the roads were in such condition that father - who was in haste to be gone - planned to move about the 25th. Then work went on more rapidly. Carpets were taken up, beds taken down, trunks and boxes were packed and everything that could be spared from the daily routine of living was collected in the front room.

A short time before this, my sisters had written of two or three cases of scarlet fever in the school and of the death of one of the young ladies from the disease. Of course father and mother felt somewhat anxious, but Laura and Martha had both had scarlet fever in childhood and were thought to be safe. On the Friday before we planned to move their regular weekly letter brought the news that Martha had a sore throat and was feverish, but not very ill. Father went to Higganum as usual on Saturday and returned Monday. His first question on reaching home was whether we had heard again from Martha. But no news had been received and he resumed his work of preparing to move.

Just at night he and I were in the front room at work when a lady came to the door. Father recognized her at once as Miss Lyon, one of the Mt. Holyoke teachers and greeted her with the words "Martha is dead!" So it proved and as we were just then practically without a home, the next day father, mother and I went to South Hadley for the funeral and Martha's body was laid in the town cemetery beside two others who at different times had died in the Seminary. Laura came home with us and never returned to school.

The next week, a saddened family, we finished our packing and made our flitting. It was the last day of March that we finally moved and the ground was settled, the grass was greening and birds were singing merrily. It was doubtless a good thing for us all that so great a change in our lives came just then. It was very hard for my father and mother to leave their old friends just when their sympathy meant so much to them, but the necessity for getting settled and adjusted to new conditions and of becoming acquainted with new friends left little time for brooding over their sorrow and I believe the change did much for them. We made the journey in carriages, father, mother, Laura and John Rose together, and Grandma and I in another carriage with one of our neighbors as driver. Grandma and I stopped for an hour or two at a little hotel at Middle Haddam, where the backyard sloped down to the Connecticut River and I remember my delight at this first acquaintance with the beautiful stream.

Pages 55 - 112 are about life in Higganum, New Britain, East Hartford and Berlin.

Page 56 "I found my first hepaticas. None grew in Gilead so far as I ever knew."

Page 71 "One of the industries of Higganum at that time - indeed the industry was the manufacturing of hoes for the use of southern slaves. Naturally that tended to make men in the business unwilling that slavery should come to an end. My father was a strong anti-slavery man and some of his former staunch supporters left the church."

Page 82 "My father married us - not asking if I would obey, but if I would treat him in all things as the Bible directs."

Page 91 Laura was ill, "Ranker-rash" being the old name for scarlet fever".

Page 96 "Over the front door hung 'With thy blessing let the house be blast'. In Mr Smith's office the words chosen by Mr. Smith himself, 'For Jesus' sake.' Other mottoes elsewhere.

Page 97 W.C.T.U. and other groups formed - precursors of Y.M.C.A., Boys' Club, Loyal Legion.

Page 98 "Our home life at this time was a good deal governed by rule - as indeed I think it must be in so large a family if there is to be comfort." Bible verses and poems at breakfast. Bible reading and prayer after breakfast. Mr. Nichols died January 1878, Mrs. Nichols January 1890; Mr. Smith in 1905

At end of book ---

"And now, at eighty-four, I seem to myself an entirely different person from the little girl that played with her mates in Gilead, or the eager active girl in her teens who so loved the hills and the river view in Higganum. Yes, even from the busy wife and mother of East Hartford and New Britain. Certainly I am living in a very different world!

I am sometimes asked if I would like to live my life over again, and I say most emphatically NO - not if I must live it just as before. If I could take my present knowledge and wisdom born of hard experience, and all the present possibilities, - I don't know. It would certainly be an interesting experiment. Perhaps something like that may be my task in the next stage of my existence. Who knows?"

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(In my childhood there were hepaticas on Uncle John Randall's farm and I have understood from the Ellis family, who have owned it for many years, that hepaticas still grow there.) Annie Hutchinson Foote