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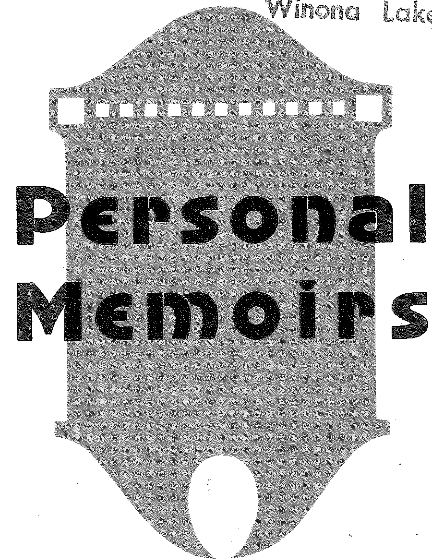

Chas. H. Gabriel

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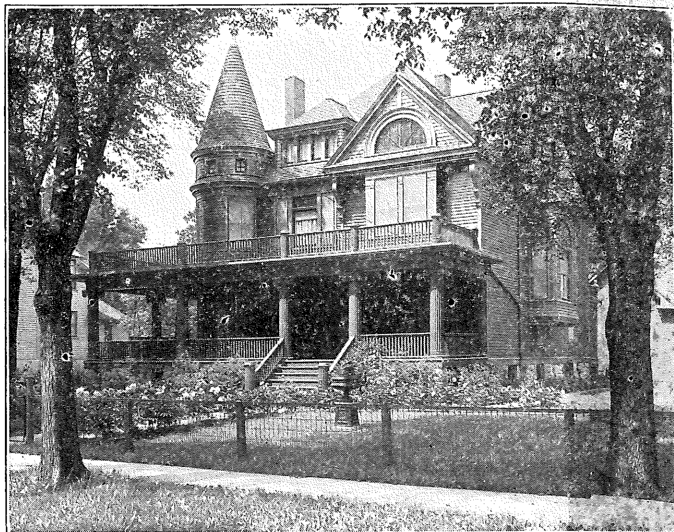


House.
133 Keystone Ave., River Forest, Ill.

— C.H.G. —
Comps. of M.A.Brown

After sixty years,
With their smiles and tears,
With their songs and sighs.
Greetings and goodbyes,
I have read the page ~
Yellow now with age,
Which records the name
Of each child that came
To cheer the lives
Of the dear old folk.
Of the eight names, mine
Is the fourth in line,
Written, now I know,
Three score years ago.
*To look **up the grade,***
I've a day's march made;
*But if **down the hill,***
It is noon-day still,
And time gone by
Seems almost a joke.

Years do not -- all told,
Make a man grow old;
Neither's wealth the guage
Of our youth or age
*But if **deeds** we do,*
If our life rings true,
And for others' good
We live as we should,
We shall have reward
When the sun goes down.
That's my hope to-day!
And for you I pray:~
May The Hand That Led
And The Grace That Fed
Me From Day To Day
Be Your Guide And Stay;
May Your Years Increase,
Till In Perfect Peace
You Change Your Cross
For The Victor's Crown.

accept or deny the request.

129

HOUR BY HOUR.

Words and Music by Charlie G.

1. Hour by hour the time is go - ing, Hour by hour draws near the night; Be it sooner, or the
2. Hour by hour our friends are go - ing, Hour by hour they cross the tide, To a land beyond the

la - ter, Death will take us in his flight; Hour by hour the time is com ing, When we'll
riv - er, Where our loved ones, dear, a - bide, There we hope to find them hap - py, Where our

lay these bod - ies down, 'Neath the turf to rest in silence, Till the gos-pel trump shall sound.
Lord is Prince and King; Hour by hour the time is coming, When in heav'n with them we'll sing.

My first published song, 1874.

INTRODUCTION

I AM most grateful that we had the privilege of publishing, in the Sunday School Times, a digest of Mr. Gabriel's personal reminiscences of his own life. It is an impressive story of God's guidance and leading; and ought to challenge every young person to push on ahead into whatever God directs, no matter what difficulties and obstacles seem to be in the way.

C G Trumbull

I HAVE just read your story in the Sunday School Times with great interest. It is one of the most interesting personal narratives I ever read. It will be gladly received by your multitude of friends, and will do much good in giving encouragement and inspiration to others. I believe it ought to have all the publicity that can be given it, for the great good it will do.

Elijah P. Brown

accept or deny the request.

I Certify that Cleopatra Cotton has by her Good Attention to the instruction of her Teacher excelled all others in the school in learning to spell And read I also recommend her for Good behaviour

Nov 26th 1836

David P. Johnson
Island Creek
Ohio

for Teacher

A certificate given to my mother.

PERSONAL MEMOIRS

My grandfather, on my mother's side, was born in the north of Ireland, and came to the United States when a child.

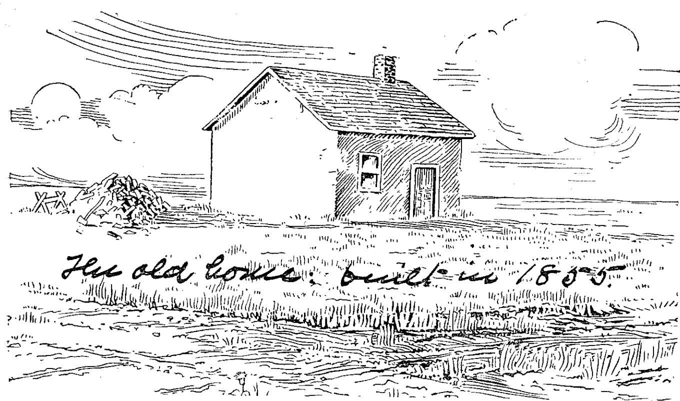
My great-great-grandfather, on my father's side, was of Franco-Germanic origin, and came to America in the early part of the eighteenth century. Of his descendants little is known until the third generation thereafter.

My father was born in Virginia and moved to Ohio in his boyhood. In 1850 he married Miss Cleopatra Cotton, my mother. In 1854, with two children, an infant in arms, a handful of furniture and five hundred dollars in gold which my father carried about his waist in a buckskin belt—(and that belt, minus the gold, is still in the family)—they landed in Davenport, Iowa, in search of a home on the prairies of the West.

After a few months spent in Davenport, during which time my father worked as a carpenter, they continued their journey. Davenport being the railroad terminus at that time, they proceeded by stage coach to Mt. Vernon, Iowa, where they rented a farm and remained for one year.

As near as I can learn, my father never owed a man a dollar. He endured great hardships, suffered unnecessary privations and inconveniences, rather than ask for credit, which he could have secured. For this reason, not having the ready money to pay for a farm near Mt. Vernon, he went about twenty miles southeast of that village—farther out upon the prairie—and bought a quarter of a section of unbroken land at six dollars per acre, built the little shack, shanty or "home," into which he moved his family in the latter part of 1855 or the Spring of 1856, where I was born, and where he died in 1873. My mother survived him sixteen years, and went to her reward in August, 1889.

* * * * * * * * *



CHAPTER ONE

My birthplace was a prairie farm in the eastern part of Iowa, in a little one-room house, (14x16 feet) which was originally "planked up and down," but afterwards was plastered both outside and in.

Everyone has a faint, far-away memory of certain incidents or objects of their earliest years. My first, broken remembrances are of what seemed vast stretches of prairie, and terrible snow storms. I remember, too, how wonderfully large seemed the quarter-section of land, the home-farm; I can recall the two-ox team my father owned, and remember that one time, while hitched to a plough the team became unmanageable, ran away, and one of them got its foot cut so badly that it had to be killed.

I remember, when but a child my grandfather taking me to the field where they were planting corn. They "dropped" it—that is, one man with a horse, or an ox, and a single-shovel plough made a furrow, while another walked behind him and dropped the kernels in "hills." Following, a third man covered the grain with a hoe. The seed, usually kept in a grain sack, would be placed at one side of the field and the "dropper" would carry only enough to suffice for planting across the field and back. I was playing about this sack of grain, and, during the absence of the men, threw large handfuls over the ground. For this diversion I was called to account and sent back to the house, half a mile distant—but a thousand miles to-day is not so dreadful to think of going alone as was that half-mile at that time.

It was a new country and the farm-houses were not so near one another as they are today. Our nearest neighbor was one mile away. There was built, soon after, a district schoolhouse three-quarters of a mile west, where my two sisters and older brother attended. The

teacher boarded at our house, and taught me my "A. B. C's." It was she, who, when I was old enough to attend school, caught me playing truant, called me into the school-room, picked me up, stood me on top of her desk, and, before all the pupils, took her ruler, and, suiting the action to the word, said: "I'll mark you here, and here, and here!" Realizing that I would get more "markings" when I returned home, if she proved communicative, I remember that I was immediately very affectionate, as she always led me by the hand to and from school. God bless her! She is still living.

It was she, also, who protected me from what I thought was the wrath of a neighbor-woman into whose garret the larger boys hoisted me, with orders to throw down to them the hazel-nuts the lady had stored for winter use, and which I dutifully did, not realizing the wrong nor knowing that they would place the blame on me. This they did, although I did not get a single hazel-nut,—but—I told the teacher when I got home—and—she "licked" me, though I could never understand why.

I remember some incidents connected with the beginning of the Civil War. They said: "Fort Sumter has been fired on!", although the startling announcement had no meaning for me. Davenport, Iowa, thirty miles away, was the Mecca for news which traveled slowly in those days.

My father was a recruiting officer for the Federal Army. I remember the cap he wore, and how I "played" soldier when I could get possession of it. We had a flag-pole in the yard. My, how tall it seemed! It must have been, as I now recall it, only about fifteen feet in the air. My father was also a Justice of the Peace and a carpenter. He exercised both vocations, and, further, attended to the neighborhood calls in sickness, as well as officiating at weddings. We possessed the only clock in that section of the country, and, being present at almost every death in the immediate vicinity, he, by estimating the time that elapsed from the death until he reached home, established the approximate hour of decease.

A "parlor," 12x14 feet, two bedrooms, each 8x12, and a pantry, 4x8, had been added to the original house of one room by this time. Our family having been enlarged by an aunt and a cousin who came to us from Ohio, consisted now of these two, father, mother, six children and the school teacher; how we all were accommodated in those four small rooms, is more than I have been able to deduce, except by taking into consideration the fact that in those days necessity accomplished all but the impossible.

My cousin enlisted and went to the front with the Twenty-fourth Iowa Infantry, was wounded in the battle of Cedar Creek, and sent home on furlough. Beside the wound of the bullet that passed entirely through his head, he had contracted "sore-eyes" and other "company" that almost drove my mother to distraction. Of course the first thing I did was to put on his leather collar and soldier cap, promptly contracting his affliction which nearly blinded me. The cousin recovered from the wound, returned to the front, served until the close of the war, and is still living.

CHAPTER TWO

I remember the Jew peddlers who made periodical trips among the farmers in those days, and can realize how the early trader charmed the Indians with glass beads, cheap jewelry and flashy trinkets, for to this day I can live over the treat that it was to have the peddler undo his pack and expatiate upon the value of his goods. The size of the packs carried by those peddlers would surprise one of today as one in that day would have been amazed to see a limousine being driven thirty-five miles per hour down the country road. Those peddlers were walking department stores, carrying almost everything from pins and needles to calicoes and silks. In those dark days, while our country was in the throes of war, provisions of all kinds were high priced and labor was scarce. The women—as ever in history—came to the rescue and worked in the field. Calico brought as high as 38c per yard; coffee 60c per pound; sugar 15c and other things in proportion. The farmer sold his wheat at from $1.75 to $3.00 per bushel; oats, 75c; corn, $1.00. Laborers received from $1.50 to $2.50 per day, when they could be had. These figures are taken from my father's account book, kept through those days.

Fire wood was very scarce in that region of Iowa. The only supply grew along a small stream, three miles away—a stretch of timber we called "the woods." The growth consisted chiefly of black-oak, jack-oak and hickory which the farmers bought, chopped and hauled home in the winter time on sleds—(when they could get through the snow) for the year's consumption.

The snowfall was tremendous. After a severe storm the farmers would join to "break" the roads. Often the drifts were so high that the trail would lead over the tops of the fences, the snow being dense enough to bear the weight of horses and sleds. Snow would blow and drift around the houses, some times all but covering them entirely. It was not uncommon to wake up in the morning after a storm and

be obliged to tunnel out for fuel and to care for the domestic animals. Chickens, roosting unprotected from the cold, would freeze fast to their perches; and I have seen many of them afterward hobbling about upon the stumps of their feet—the toes having dropped off.

They did not have barns in those days—only "stables" which were constructed of a frame work, over and around which straw was piled and stacked, making a warmer shelter than the house in which the farmer and his family dwelt.

Rattle snakes were not uncommon to the prairies of Iowa in those days. My oldest brother and two sisters used the top of our stable as their play-house in summer, and strange and improbable as it may seem, had one of these poisonous reptiles as a "visitor" day after day. They did not attempt to handle the creature, but would sit and watch it come from its hiding place, crawl among them and disappear. Speaking of their "snake visitor" one day, my father investigated their story and killed the serpent, which proved to be fourteen years old.

These stables would also be some times almost covered by the snowfall and it required hours of shoveling to open their doors. From our house to the first school we attended was three-quarters of a mile west; and I can distinctly remember that practically the entire way the lane was drifted full to and above the fence posts. It was the custom of my father to escort his children to school, during unusually cold weather, he walking in front of them holding a blanket extended over his outstretched arms, behind which they walked, sheltered from the biting, blistering winter winds. It must be remembered that there were no trees to break the onward course of the storm which swept mile after mile across the rolling prairies; and where the fences antagonized it, the snow piled up in the wake of the wind—the like of which we do not see now-a-days. The snow season usually started in November, affording good sleighing until March or April.

Prairie wolves were still quite common in the late fifties; deer were occasionally seen;

prairie chickens were plentiful in the winter season. My father had brought West with him an old-fashioned ball and cap rifle, the barrel of which seemed as I saw it then, six feet in length. He moulded his own bullets (in fancy I can see him yet). His powder horn he slung by a strap over his left shoulder and under the right arm. His "patches" were carried on a string, his cap and bullets in a bag, and he could bring down a prairie chicken on the wing almost every shot at fifty or sixty yards. These chickens hatched their young on the prairies, and it was a joy unspeakable to find a nest of eggs hidden in the grass, while hunting and driving home the cows. Every farmer had a "bell cow" with his herd, and we could distinguish ours from others, at a distance, by the sound of the bell.

I remember the year of the wild-pigeon plague. They came in seeding time in flocks of tens of thousands. Lighting on the edge of a grain field, the birds in the rear would fly over over those in front, thus crossing the entire field and picking up every grain that had been sown, which was indeed a serious matter to the average farmer who had no reserve seed, nor the money with which to buy it; thus, in many cases the entire crop was lost. When these thousands of birds arose together in flight, they made an uncanny sort of roaring noise; and, if they flew between one and the sun, it was like the passing of a storm-cloud, so dense was the flock.

When I was two years old they told me a stork, in flying over our prairie home, became weary with the burden of a little girl baby and left her on our doorstep; I don't recall the incident, but I can yet see the home-made trundle-bed that in the daytime was kept pushed under the "big bed," and drawn out at bed-time. It was religiously supplied with two occupants. With the advent of the new baby, I become a trundle-bed artist, which distinction I held until I, in the course of regular events, was promoted.

Two years later, that same stork (or perhaps some other one—for it may be storks do not live so long) presented my parents with the sixth heir, a brother. His "nose was broken" after two more years by another sister. I think someone must have shot that stork before it had time to make a record of this transaction, for it took five years for the next and last long-legged, pouch-billed carrier to find our home and leave the fifth sister, the eighth and last child. But that sister was a genius. She never "crept" but, sitting erect, she, by the use of her feet, would propel herself across the floor with the speed of a jack rabbit pursued by a greyhound. The folk had given away all the baby furniture, so, when an infant, her cradle was our only rocking chair. Coming into the house one day, I sat down—but my weight did not even wake the sleeping sister, for mother had me before I "got" the baby. When she grew older and bothered me I would say to her: "I wish I *had* set on you!" which would terminate the quarrel for she would immediately go and "tell Ma"—and—well, why linger over an unpleasant subject.

I cannot remember ever having seen my mother really angry or unreasonable. She ruled her eight children as few mothers do, but not with a rod. Always patient, always attentive to the eight times many little daily calls; always the same pleasant half-smiling face; always the kindly spoken word of praise or blame that made each heart happy or pierced it with an arrow of convicting sorrow for something done or left undone. Was any one of us ill or indisposed, she knew it as soon as we did. The stone-bruise or the cut finger was bound up with many sympathetic words and assurances. Was the little brow hot with fever, no matter how pressing her household duties she always found time to bind on cooling applications. Our tears were her sorrows; our joys were her delight; our hopes her wish; our wants her concern; our future her prayer.

She is in heaven now, and while earth never knew a better, heaven never received a purer, nobler, sweeter woman than my mother.

accept or deny the request.

CHAPTER THREE

I have said my father took the place of the physician in our neighborhood, yet he was not, nor did he presume to be a Doctor of Medicine—but simply a good nurse. He was opposed to medicines as given in those days, as well as against the practice of "blood-letting" which was then on the wane. His hobby was the cold water cure, with which he obtained what seemed marvelous results.

When I was about three years of age, my parents made a visit to Ohio, leaving me in the care of the school teacher, before mentioned; for, after my place with my mother had been taken by the "next," she had become a second mother to me. I became ill with pneumonia and the folks were summoned home. Arriving at the farm about noon of a day the watches despaired of my recovery, my father, preparing buckets of cold water, took me from my bed, held me in his arms while Miss C., the school teacher, poured the water over my fever-heated head until a normal temperature returned, and, in his wisdom, my Father said: "That will do," and again laid me down. Although I was there, and one of the leading actors in the caste, I do not remember the circumstances of that cold bath, but a short time ago my faithful teacher assured me that the above is true in every detail, adding that so complete was my recovery, that the next day I sat at the dinner-table with the other members of the family. Many a time since then I have wondered why I was not allowed to go to Heaven when the way was clear, and I had an undisputed right of entry by virtue of innocence. Many times since then, when discouraged with the many obstacles, trials and vicissitudes of life, that incident has come to mind, and as I have looked back over the way and realized what little I have accomplished of what I once hoped I might; when I have tried to penetrate the future, to see the mark or goal of my early ambitions still gleaming in the dim distance, and realized the utter impossibility of my ever reaching it, again I have wondered why.

Another incident equally as wonderful to me, is vouched for. I was, perhaps, four years of age, when an aunt, newly married took me home with her for company during the long day while her husband, my mother's brother, would be absent in the field. There were no children about the home, and, having just completed a well and walled it with rock, it was left uncovered. There was not much water in it; enough, however, to drown a child. They had a large dog, as most farmers had; we had none, and, boy like, I loved a dog. As I chased him in play, I discovered this well, and stooped over to look in. The dog, playfully ran against me, and, in I went. My aunt happened to be watching at that special moment and saw me disappear. As she told it afterward, the fact that she was alone, with no one to help her, caused her to forget the impossible, and with a cry she rushed to the well, and, climbing down the wall from stone to stone, she reached, rescued and carried me back to the surface—a feat almost beyond belief. The dog stood looking down the well, barking; and, as she gained the surface with her little human burden, the faithful animal caught my clothes and dragged me to safety while she, also clinging to me, was assisted from her perilous position. On awakening from a consequent fainting spell, the dog still stood watch and guard over both of us, barking and licking her hand.

In traveling through the agricultural districts today, it is very noticeable that there are more good barns than houses. The farmer is very thoughtful of his animals and machinery—as a rule. If he cannot afford both an up-to-date house and a spacious barn, the latter takes preference, and rightly so, provided his home and family are comfortable. The luxuries of his home depends upon the condition of his animals, tools and machinery for tilling the soil. Without these he can have no home; therefore, he very wisely provides first for the source of his living.

It was so in the early days of which I am writing. I have said my father was a carpenter. The time came when he could buy lumber to build a barn. He and a neighbor each decided to do so. The lumber must be hauled

by sled from Davenport during the winter season. It was a long haul—sixty miles the round trip—and dangerous at that season of the year, on account of the snow storms and blizzards that came up so suddenly and so unmercifully swept those prairies. Neighbor helped neighbor, and those long trips were made by from two to five teams in company. The driver, when it was very cold, would walk by the side of his team or sled, to keep warm.

The inevitable happened. On one of their trips, an unusually severe blizzard struck them while still about twenty miles from home. Wind, sleet and snow cutting, stinging, blinding and chilling both horses and drivers. There was no shelter for man or beast. They must get home or perish. The neighbor in the lead was a large, powerful man accustomed to hardships; the second in line was a German, my father being in the rear. It was noticed that the German got upon the top of his load of lumber. After a little time the leader, becoming uneasy, called to him, but got no answer. He then shouted back to my father to fasten his reins, let his team follow and come to him. As he ran to the front team, F—— said: "I believe Henry is freezing! You drive my team while I take him off his sled." His fears were verified, but he was not too late. Pulling the German from his seat, the powerful man literally dragged the poor fellow for more than a mile, before he was able to use his limbs to any degree of certainty. They finally reached home, men and horses all but exhausted. My memory of the incident is like the recalling of a dream—how my mother anxiously watched and waited as the hours went by and they came not; how her heart thrilled with fear as a sudden blast of the terrible storm shook, rattled the windows and shrieked around the little shanty, perched there on the prairie where even the cross-roads were only trails; of her joy when she caught the first sight of the little caravan through the falling snow, creeping homeward, impelled by that never-give-up spirit of determination displayed only by those hardy early-day settlers; how she rekindled the fire and rushed out to meet them; how she helped stable the horses, from whose dumb lips hung

great icicles; how she ministered to the three drivers whose mouths were frozen over by the ice on their beards, whose clothes were frozen so that walking had become all but impossible—in fact, a few miles more, and neither horses nor drivers would have reached home. In times afterward, as they rehearsed that experience, it fixed itself in my mind so vividly that I have often almost lived through it myself.

The materials were finally on the ground, and my father began his work. Today a barn will spring up in a day, built of lumber and nails, but the old-time carpenter did not build so. There were no nails used except to nail fast the shingles and outside boards. The heavy 12 x 12 sills, the inside beams, in fact the entire framework, was put together by mortise and tenon, and fastened with oak pins. All this work my father did for the two barns. Then came the "raising bee." All the neighbors were invited. How vividly it all comes back to me. J——'s barn, one mile away, was raised in the morning and ours in the afternoon. They had not the machinery of today to assist them, but it was done by human strength alone. Every piece of timber fitted where it belonged, so accurately had it been made, and was fastened by the oak pin instead of a steel rivet. The framework being in place, then came the feast! Of that I cannot write, as we little folk were hustled off to bed, as all good children should be—at "early candle-light."

What wonderful barns those were—the *only* ones in the neighborhood at that time. They seemed so tall and so large, capable of holding such great quantities of hay and grain, and so many horses! When the hay was put in, what fun it was to play hide-and-go-seek when the neighbor boys would come to see the barn. Those barns are still in use. Recently, after more than fifty years, I saw them, and it almost destroyed my faith in memory, childhood, truth and veracity—they are so small, compared with the structures of the modern farmer.

CHAPTER FOUR

I cannot remember when I learned to "read notes." My parents were both musically inclined, and I can recall them singing in the old Fa-Sol-La system. They had a goodly number of the old Woodbury, Funk, Mason and other church music publications of their day. They always sang a new song "by note" first. My mother would sometimes sing the part known in her girlhood days as "high tenor," which was, practically, a tenor, as we have it, sung by a soprano. To me she was a divine singer, and the memory of her voice is no less beautiful as it is wafted back to me from the long ago. I still can see myself seated at the old kitchen table the evening I learned the seven "shape notes" and feel the pride I felt when I sang them, much to her surprise and pleasure. Memory fails to name the time I learned to sing the scale—do-re-mi, etc., or when I was able to read and sing at sight any of the ordinary church tunes or easy glees.

On Sunday, throughout the Summer, we attended Sunday School, which was held in the old church-school building before spoken of.

It was in this same church-school house where the annual "protracted meetin'" was held. These services very nearly outrivaled the old-time Negro revivals of the South in uniqueness and originality. People came from a radius of twenty miles to witness the unusual ceremonies.

They had the old-time mourner's bench, and it seemed that the one who could pound the bench hardest and shout "Hallelujah!" the loudest was the most soundly converted. As the meetings would "warm up" the song leader would begin chanting some weird melody, and, as enthusiasm grew, he would improvise verses to meet the momentary developments; these songs would, at times, last over an hour.

Women and men would rush up and down the aisle singing, shouting, crying, laughing, and kissing friends and acquaintances, while others would "go into a trance," fall and lie flat on the floor until the "spell" wore away.

In the neighborhood was a young man whose religious tenacity was not such as was pos-

sessed by the patriarchs of old. Every season his Mecca was the aforementioned mourners' bench, and his "decision" was the signal for special attention. It usually took him from two to three nights to pound his way through that piece of furniture, but he always "stuck"—and, when the supreme moment came, the "Glory!" that escaped his lips would have driven a Comanche Indian to suicide. He would invariably make a rush for old "Uncle Dave," as we called him—(a good old pillar of the church). They would grab "catch-as-catch-can," and the wrestling bout that always followed never ended until the heels of one or the other crashed through the window sash, and the vanquished went down underneath the victor.

It was not uncommon for this popular convert to be seen drunk two weeks after the revival ended. Many of the good people who participated in those meetings still live, and if these lines should come to their notice I hope they will not conclude they were written in a spirit of irreverence or mockery—I only state facts.

They had no musical instrument, for many church people of that day and place believed firmly that all such contrivances were of the devil. Someone would "histe the tune," and away we would go, singing as naturally as crickets in a wheat stack or katy-dids in the trees. I don't remember that any one had a song book, but the young followed and learned from the old, who sang from memory. As time went by we obtained song books, which were worth their weight in gold to me. I may say this now, because at that time I would not have known what gold was had I found it in the field. We had the 3, 5, 10 and 25-cent as well as other pieces of paper money, but I saw so little of these that they did not interest me as much as a green apple hanging to a tree in a neighbor's orchard; but in a music book I recognized the sum total of all that was priceless to me.

I never saw a musical instrument until I was about nine years old, and to this day I couldn't tell the name of that one, as nothing like it has ever come under my observation since. For use, it was placed upon a table, as a dulcimer. It had a bellows which the performer pumped

with his right elbow while, with the fingers of both hands he played keys something like those of a concertina. The fellow who owned this wonderful (to me) instrument was as proud of it and himself as Mark Twain's Indian was when he donned his raiment of plug hat and suspenders, and were he on earth today with that marvelous invention he would be a prize to any circus or a "first liner" in vaudeville, for the whirlwind jigs and "all-run-away-swing-on-the-corners" tunes he could play, were to the farmer boys what Svengali was to Trilby—they could not, it seemed, stop a floor-bruising double-shuffle until he ceased playing, except when they fell down exhausted or unconscious.

The next musical instrument I saw was a melodeon of that day and style. It stood on four legs, and the reeds were blown by a bellows which was pumped with one foot, as we now use the pedal of a piano. I rode ten miles to see and hear it, and no music since then has sounded to me more divine. I heard it as I plowed in the field; it sang in my ears as I did my "chores;" in my dreams it floated over the hills of weariness down into the valley of rest, where I lay asleep.

I never took a music lesson in my life. All the song books had a "rudimental department" and none of them contained information that escaped me. I naturally conceived the plan of the four part harmonies. I studied the arrangement of the different parts—soprano, alto, tenor and bass, as written by different authors, and in some of the books I yet possess may still be found the *changes* I thought should be made, and today I understand fully that my youthful judgment was correct. Untaught, I taught myself, because there were no teachers of music out on those prairies, save God, nature, the birds and wild flowers. We had no musical instrument then, but after the "new house" was built, the folks began to talk about a reed organ. In Sunday School I had heard the words of the Master: "What went ye out for to see, a reed shaken by the wind?" and I imagined—oh, I was an innocent creature—a reed organ was made of the stems of certain plants. I had often made a whistle from a pumpkin vine.

CHAPTER FIVE

By and by five neighbors clubbed together and bought five Prince organs, and one of them was ours. The scene of the unpacking of that organ is as vivid to me now as it was that night, fifty years ago. My, but it was beautiful. Polished until we could see our faces reflected almost as well as we could from the one little old square mirror the folks had brought from Ohio, and it was *ours!*

To be demonstrative or outwardly enthusiastic was a characteristics wholly foreign to my make-up. In my youth, mine was a peculiar nature. No matter how strongly I was impressed with a desire or ambition for or to accomplish an end, I said very little. Perhaps it was because of an innate feeling that if the attaining of such meant an outlay of money, it was as far removed from me as the East is from the West—but the yearning was there, deep in my heart, and kept alive by the hope that sometime, somewhere, somehow I should realize the full fruition of my silent dreams.

My oldest sister was, in a few days, able to play "all four parts" of the old church tune "Martyn"—a wonderful achievement.

I had heard them talk of "absolute pitch," and silently wondered what was meant. Of evenings when a few of the neighbor folk came in to sing, as they often did, my father, who was the recognized leader, would, with the aid of a tuning fork, obtain the correct "Do-o-o, Sol, Mi, Do-o-o," and together they would "sound the chord" before beginning to sing—always *first* by do, re, mi, etc. "Middle C" was a term as vague to me as an Egyptian hieroglyphic, but somehow the moment I knew the keys of that organ (don't remember how I learned them) all was as clear as noonday. The thought came to me: "Why, the added line below the staff means *this key*, and it sounds a certain pitch that is always the same." Thus, imperfectly told, was my correct conception of absolute pitch. It was not long until,

untaught, I could associate and assimilate printed music with the keys of the organ.

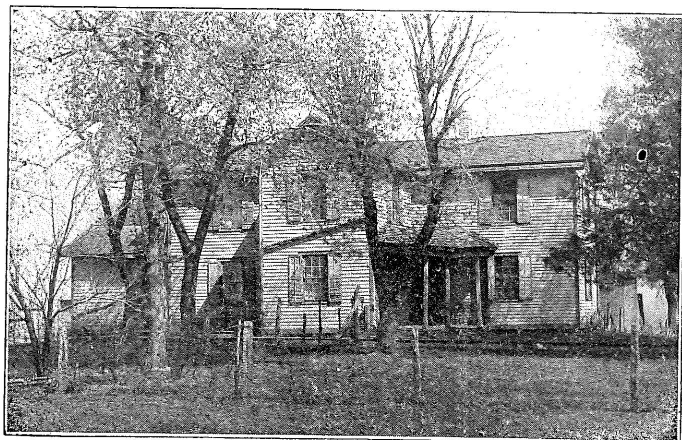
About the year 1864 the folks sold the farm, intending to go to the State of Missouri, but after an extended home-seeking trip, they concluded the old Hawkeye State was good enough, and bought another farm seven miles South of the old one. This farm was about one mile and a half from the railroad village. One day my mother wanted some thread; so, dressing me in my Sunday clothes, she gave me a basket of two dozen eggs and sent me in to the store to get it for her; allowing me, as a reward, the privilege of spending the surplus money for candy. I started to market with the ambition of a Wall Street broker. To shorten the distance, I crossed a meadow, through which ran a small stream of water. About the middle of this meadow, I came upon a flock of tame geese. Now, I had never seen a goose; they don't grow on the prairie. As I approached them, an old gander came toward me with lowered head, hissing like a serpent. I never saw that gander again, nor was it possible for him to get a good view of me, for the way I "hit the grit" for the main road must have made even those geese honk as they never did before. When I got to the store, there were six of my eggs broken and I got no candy, the remaining eighteen only being enough to pay for my purchase. I returned home all the way by the wagon road.

My oldest brother was different from some brothers nowadays. He would always take me with him wherever he went, if it was possible. He, when a young man, went so far to the extreme as to take me with him to "see his girl," which did not appeal to me with any degree of enthusiasm. One evening, he took me with him to town, after the day's work, to get the war news. By following the banks of the stream of goose fame, the distance was but a mile; this route he always took. When we got to town it seemed everybody was there; and everybody talking excitedly. The news had just arrived that Lincoln had been assassinated—shot to death, and Seward murdered with a knife. Every man had a version of how the dastardly work had been done; some even essayed to re-enact the tragedy to give those of a less vivid

imagination a clearer vision. In later years as I have stood in the room where our martyred President died, the memory of that night has come back to me—of my nervousness returning home; how I clung to my brother in the darker places, fearing—I knew not what. I had been taught to almost reverence the name of Abraham Lincoln, and the thought that such a man could be murdered I could not comprehend.

For some reason, my parents were not satisfied with this second farm, and after one year they succeeded in selling it and buying back the old place where I was born. How well I remember the moving day. Playthings were scarce in my play-days, and such as I had would probably not appeal to the boy of this twentieth century, yet they were just as dear to my heart as the expensive ones are to him. It is not necessary to enumerate them—suffice it to say the whole combination did not represent the outlay of the price of a soda water, but had been "collected." I always did have a nail, an old bolt, nut or piece of iron in my pocket. These, of course, were heavy and worthless, from a monetary standpoint, but it was a serious matter to me when I saw them taken out of the wagon, where I had carefully placed them, and left behind. Several trips were made back and forth between the two farms transferring grain or machinery. On one of these trips I succeeded in getting permission to go, hoping I could, in some way, rescue my valuables—but I never saw them again. On this trip home, I, for the first time, heard a whip-poor-will. It was the dusk of evening and we were slowly driving through a strip of woods. I had never even heard of such a bird, and its peculiar "song" has never been forgotten.

Soon after arriving back on the original farm, my parents concluded the old shanty had served its purpose. The facts were, "the nest was too small for the birds," so they decided that a new and larger house must be built. This—a two-story frame house of nine rooms—was built immediately adjacent to the old one, which, when the new one was completed, was sold, moved, reconstructed and served other families as a dwelling until a few years thereafter it caught fire and was burned to the ground.



The "New" House

CHAPTER SIX

I was now a sturdy, healthy, strong farmer's boy. My older brother and I did all the tilling of the soil. At harvest time a reaping machine called a "Dropper" was used to cut the grain. The platform of this machine was a lattice construction, held at a certain angle by the foot of the driver; as the sickle cut the grain, a "reel" threw it back upon this platform; when enough was collected for a "sheaf," the driver, by raising his foot, would drop it in the wake of the machine. The distance around the field would be divided into from three to five "stations" and an equal number of men would start in, one at each station, and "bind" around to where the other had begun. By this time the reaper would be at his heels, and he would start in again. So the work would proceed all the long, hot harvest day. To bind a sheaf, the binder would take a handful of the grain, spit it, and by a dexterous twist, would make a "band" twice the length of the grain. With this in his hand he woud pick up the sheaf, tie it tightly into a bundle, or "sheaf," and toss it to one side out of the way of the reaper. These would be gathered by a "shocker," who would stand about twelve of them up on end in a bunch, or "shock" and, taking two other sheaves, he would "break" them and lay them crosswise over the top of each shock to keep the sun from bleaching the grain, and protect it from rain that was liable to fall before stacking time. It was my pride to "bind a station" in this manner with full grown men; I could also "cock" hay in haying season, or pitch sheaves of grain in stacking or thrashing time with any of the adults. A chum of mine, though much older than I, was my ideal. He was an orphan boy, and had had nothing but hard knocks from infancy, yet I never heard him swear or tell a vulgar story, which were very common among farm hands of that day. He worked hard and saved his money until he had two hundred dollars, which he loaned to a sharper who gave him a note of promise to pay "*on or after*" such a date. Poor fellow, he is

accept or deny the request.

dead now, but that note was one of his assets at death.

Numerous families had, by this time, bought land, built houses and moved into the country. So rapidly had the increase been that very little unbroken prairie was left. We had neighbors within a quarter of a mile; a new school house was built one mile away, and a church had been erected on the opposite corner of the cross-roads from our house. It was built for the Methodist denomination, yet, when it came to the christening, one of the "Pillars" insisted that it must be known as "Wesley Chapel *Methodist* Church"—and it was.

We had a Sunday School, which convened from May to November, presided over by an ambitious superintendent, who wore large, heavy, old-fashioned farmer's boots that squeaked with every step he took. Of course, there was no carpet on the aisles, and I can yet fancy I hear the incessant screech, screech, screech of those highly polished (sometimes with stove-blacking) Sunday stogies as he paced back and forth about the room overseeing the school he was so proud of, but I shall not live long enough to believe otherwise than that he also loved to hear those heart-searching screams of his beloved brogans.

How we did sing—we youngsters—away out there on the prairies. Once each month during the season our school gave a Sunday School concert. We had no "orchestra"—no musical instruments of any kind, except a small Estey organ—but we sang and sang well, as was attested by the crowds that came for miles around, in buggies, farm wagons, and on horseback, filling to overflowing the church we thought so large.

In every church, school, lodge or society are found a few "dog-in-the-manger" individuals, who, having no ability for improving the temporal welfare of a community, are ever on the alert to criticize, hinder and discourage the efforts of others for the upbuilding of that which is elevating to the spiritual, moral or intellectual advantage of both young and old. They flourished even as far back as the days of which I write, for on the morning of one of these Sunday concerts it was discovered that

someone had smeared axle grease over the pews, poured kerosene oil into the reed organ and committed other atrocious acts of vandalism. Not to be thwarted, however, the good people responded to the call for help and the pews were cleaned, the organ renovated and everything put into normal shape for the concert which, as always before, was a splendid success. Many who came a trifle late were unable to get into the church—among whom, as every one believed, was the skulking cur whose acts of desecration had failed of his intentions.

THE KNOCKER

His feet are cloven, we are told;
His horns are sharp, he's subtle, cold
And heartless, cruel, brazen, bold!
He's on his job at morning light;
He works all day, and through the night;
He knows you're wrong, but he is right—
The knocker!

With robbers you've a fighting chance;
Th' assassin's bullets sometimes glance;
But he can make the LIAR dance!
He has the serpent's tooth of fame;
The adder's sting, to him, is tame;
He knows just how to find his "game"—
The knocker!

He's in the shop, he's in the store;
In Congress Hall he gets the floor;
In fact, he breaks through ev'ry door!
He's in the pew at church, they say,
And to the pulpit finds his way;
He's in the choir, his part to play—
The knocker!

He's on the surface car, the "L";
The Interurban knows him well;
He's in the Pullman and hotel!
He's suave and courteous to your face,
A miracle of truth and grace;
But wait! He'll find his chance and place—
The knocker!

You'll find him in the public school,
Designing, cunning, as a rule—
But he knows whom to call the fool!

accept or deny the request.

The editor has woes increased;
The "printer's devil" he has fleeced!
He hates the layman, hates the priest—
The knocker!

He stabs the living; spurns the dead;
The silent churchyard fears his tread;
Of Hades, even, he's the dread!
He is the one of whom 'tis said
Mephistopheles beholds with dread
Lest he be found among the dead—
The knocker!

A friend? He hasn't one on earth!
He jeers at virtue, frowns on mirth,
And hates the one who gave him birth!
Untiring, dev'lish, on he goes
With his great hammer, striking blows
That sting, and burn, and hurt, God knows—
The knocker!

Should we his ilk and tribe compare
To skunk or vermin, 'twere unfair,
For God made them—he comes from—where?
In that lost world of dark despair
Are posted placards everywhere
Forbidding him an entrance there—
This fiend,
The knocker!

CHAPTER SEVEN

There were two occasions of special interest during each year—Fourth of July, and the County Fair. We had Christmas, of course, but our prairie home was so far removed from Santa Claus' route that he was, to us, only the hero of a story. It may have been he did not know anyone lived out our way, or that the snow was too deep for his reindeer, or the winds too cold—I don't know. But weeks before "the Fourth" came around, it was the one topic of interest. The young people of the neigborhood would arrange to go in parties to some celebration. Seats would be arranged on the farm wagons after the style of country-town "busses" and five or six couples would make a load. There would be two or more of these wagons in a party. The young people would get started at an early hour, according to destination, which sometimes would be from ten to fifteen miles away, and what fun they had!

The younger children would be loaded into a wagon and taken at a less strenuous gait to a barbecue or other place of interest and speech-making, where "lemonade, made in the shade, and stirred with a spade," was distributed at 5 cents per glass—and it had real *ice* in it, too! Then, when hunger could no longer be tolerated, the picnic dinner was spread out upon the grass, and nothing since then has tasted so good.

Then, there was the glorious (?) brass band —my! how they did play—and such music—but, then, that was a new country, and one could not hope for better instrumentation than might be equaled by the "little German band" of the present Christmas day.

The County Fair was usually held in September. What wonderful pumpkins, cucumbers, beets and a thousand other vegetables were there displayed! Pigs, cattle, horses and even dogs were shown, some wearing a blue ribbon, some a red badge, while others received no decoration whatever.

The red lemonade flourished in all its circus beauty; the "merry-go-round" with its shrieking crank organ, turned by hand, was busy col-

lecting "shin plasters" for its proprietor; the "wheel-of-fortune" was merrily whirring before the country lads, inviting patronage, and, sometimes in a shielded spot a faro outfit would spring up; the little ball would continue to roll into the wrong number for the older farmer boys and men until a depleted pocket and vindictive temperament would cause the equipment to vanish as suddenly as it appeared, only to come into view in some other part of the ground.

All kinds of races were indulged—horse races, foot races, potato races, and others. One year a "tricycle" race was advertised; the next year followed with a "bicycle" race. Those machines were made of wood, and were remarkable pieces of mechanism when compared to the splendid wheel of later years.

After the fair came plowing; then cornhusking, which concluded the work of the year. The district school would then begin, ushering in the season of "spelling bees," sleigh rides and parties which continued until the returning sun melted the ice and snow, drew the frost from the ground and the warm South wind notified the farmer that is was time to again sow the seed.

Thus year followed year, and we grew older with the seasons, scarcely noticing that the prairie was being transformed into farms and that homes were springing up all about us. The war was over; slavery was only a memory; the blue and the grey were intermingled into one brotherhood; men with a wooden leg hobbled about everywhere; farmers with but a single arm drove their teams in the field, and peace brooded over the land. Improvement in all lines began to be manifest; farms were put into better condition; schools were reconstructed, and conditions of all kinds changed with the rapidity of time until I was fourteen years of age.

In the year 1870, Dr. H. R. Palmer held a "convention" in our county seat. I attended the closing concert, which was a revelation to me. P. P. Bliss came next, in our home town, with a five-day school. My memory of those five days will fade only with the last rays of life's setting sun. No words of mine can adequately express the joy of hope and ambition that grew to a burning flame as I listened to his wonderful voice, heard his instruction, simple as it was, and joined—even if selfishly—in his regular morning prayer.

The next year our pastor's son, a fairly competent teacher, held a class at our cross-road church, which was largely attended, and opened the way for Dr. H. S. Perkins, who came to us in the Fall of 1872 for a one week's convention, which attracted the "talent" of not only our country folk, but from nearby villages and towns. They came to find a class of singers able to handle the heavy choruses of the old masters, so thorough had been our rural training. A return engagement was arranged with Dr. Perkins for the following year.

My father, who was the main spirit and prime organizer of these advantages, suddenly died in the Spring of 1873, and the coming session proved to be the last ever held in that part of the country. It was after the close of this record convention, and just at the moment when Dr. Perkins was leaving our home for his train back to Chicago, that I summoned strength to hand him the manuscript of a little song, one of many I had written in the solitude of my own bedroom, requesting that he would not look at it until he was on his way.

That song, entitled "Hour by Hour," was my first to get into print. I wrote both the words and music, and they were printed almost exactly as I had written them.

Some months after giving the manuscript to Dr. Perkins, as I was driving a load of grain to market, I met a neighbor returning from the post office. It was a custom for neighbors to carry home each other's mail; he stopped his team and handed me the book containing my song. The effort and determination engendered within me by the sight of that printed paper may never be realized, but it helped me over many a seemingly impassable road, and lured me when hope was almost gone. Today, in recalling it, I am thrilled by its memory as I was the day I drove along all but unconscious of jolt and dust on that load of grain more than forty-five years ago. I have written songs that have been sung around the world, but never one that so thrilled and fired me with determination, effort and joy, as that little im-

perfect song, written one evening as I sat by an open window, writing on a bit of paper which rested on the window sill.

Some time before this I had sent the manuscript of a duet and chorus to Root and Cady, music publishers, of Chicago, but, receiving no reply, I had concluded it had gone the way of others and had nearly forgotten it. Imagine my surprise and joy on receiving about this same time printed sheet music copies of it, with my name in large letters on the title page. Other pieces followed, as time went by, although none of them attained much sale.

I never would allow any member of the family to see me write or hear what I had written, until it was published, always working in seclusion, unaided or encouraged. Often in the field I would stop to write down on bits of paper what came to me in the busy hours of farm work and rush.

It is not with egotism I copy the following excerpt from a letter I possess, but to show how utterly consumed I was by the power that governed me.

"I recall the day you stopped the team on our way to the oats field, and I could not get you to drive on, although I said. 'Uncle Newt (my father) will be after us,' till you had written on the planed board of the hay ladder to your satisfaction the music and words to a song that was running through your mind. When we returned and had the load off, you copied it on paper, and again we went to the field for other loads. That piece of music, printed in sheet form, you showed me some months afterward."

I wrote many songs that were printed in many books during the next few years, then came a time when I gave it up entirely—nor did the old flame of ambition control me again until the year 1890, when for a certain reason and a special purpose, I wrote "Send the Light," which immediately sprang into popularity. It became a favorite with Chaplain McCabe (afterward Bishop of the M. E. Church) and by missionaries was carried into almost every foreign nation. "Calling the Prodigal" was written on Market Street, San Francisco, in 1889. For it I received five dollars.

CHAPTER EIGHT

In August, 1873, just as I was entering my seventeenth year, I taught my first singing school. An uncle who persuaded me to teach, organized a class, largely of children. I shall never forget the first session of that school. It convened at 3 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon. I worked in the field until noon, then, dressed in my "best clothes," I walked three miles to the school house where the sessions were held.

It had always been a task for me to take my part in the Public School program on "Speakin' Day." Now I was obliged to get up before a class, *talk* and *teach!* How I did it, is still a mystery—but the term was finished to the satisfaction of my pupils. I received for the three-mile walk and the instruction, the sum of one dollar and fifty cents per lesson.

The following Winter I taught other classes, becoming a full-fledged "music teacher."

Although I had never been twenty miles away from the old farm, a voice within me kept speaking of the "world," and I longed to see it, and in the Spring of 1874, with $75.00 in my pocket, I bade my folks good-bye and started West. At Omaha, I bought an emigrant ticket for San Francisco, California. To this I added a basket of lunch and a "pistol." Arriving at destination, I had just twenty-five cents ("two bits") in my pocket. At that time "emigrant" was "slow freight." We had no Pullman sleepers. Men, women and children slept on the seats they occupied during the day, and we were eleven days on the way.

One night my "gun" fell out of my pocket and was picked up by the passenger in the seat behind me. His return to me of the "weapon" the following morning was the beginning of a friendship between us that lasted until I returned to the "States," as the East was called.

Of course, to *live*, I must *work*. I succeeded in getting employment at $2.50 per day as helper to a carpenter-contractor, who was building the Palace Hotel at that time.

A coincidence came to light fifteen years afterward when I became chorister to a church in San Francisco, through the efforts of the Sunday School Superintendent, to find that he was one of the superintendents of construction of that celebrated hotel and was daily present during all the time of my labor.

Returning home in the fall of the year 1874, I resumed the work of teaching singing schools during the Winter months. Through the summer season I gave lessons on the reed organ, filling in odd time by helping on the farm. In this manner the next two years passed. In the fall of 1876 I opened a music store in a western town, carrying a general supply of sheet music, music books and general musical merchandise, small instruments, organs and pianos. This venture proved to be anything but a success, and after a few months, I turned my attention once more to teaching, which I followed until the year 1879.

During this time, in spare moments I had been busy with my writing. In 1877 my first song book was issued. It was a book of 48 pages, published in "shape-notes"—"Gabriel's Sabbath School Songs."

In the fall of this year I "joined the Brass Band." They assigned me to the E flat Cornet, and furnished me for practice an old rotary valve, german silver army cornet—the bell of which pointed backward over the shoulder. The E flat Tuba player used the same instrument he had carried and played during the war of the Rebellion, the valves, also rotary, of which would often refuse to work just at a crucial moment, and the language resorted to by that old soldier would not look well in the printed columns of a religious publication.

I soon became leader and instructor of the band, writing many of the quicksteps, marches and other pieces we played.

Our organization owned a Band Wagon, gorgeously painted and decorated. We had a Drum Major, properly equipped. We also had a Bass Drummer who (as the Trombone Soloist used to say) "Looked like he wrote all the music and taught the band." We were very proud

at various Soldier's Reunions, to play passing in review before such noted men as Generals Grant, Sherman, Logan, Harrison and other distinguished civil war heroes. Our E flat Tuba player, (he of questionable language) enlisted at the beginning of the war and played with his regimental band until Lee surrendered. My! how his eye would flash and his shoulders straighten on those review occasions, and woe to the fellow who made a mistake or lost step "before the General."

Besides our own organization, I became instructor to various other bands in near by towns. If there is *tune* or *melody* in my songs I give the credit of it, largely, to my work with these military bands. We were not professional and played only the light, tuneful marches, quicksteps, etc., of the day, which *required* melody, and being encouraged to compose special numbers that we might have what no other band had, it cultivated and increased what little talent I may have possessed.

Many ludicrous incidents happened during my work with those brass bands. We furnished music for special occasions, as the Fourth of July, County Fair, Fireman's Tornaments, Soldiers' Reunions, etc. At one of these latter occasions our band was selected to play "in review." This was a great honor, as several other bands were present. We all were at once greatly elated if not nervous. After the parade and "sham battle," the line of veterans and officers was drawn up across a field that had recently been cleared of trees, and some stumps still remained. The custom was for the band to play a waltz *down* the line, returning by a quickstep. We got to the foot in good shape, but in returning, our Trombone Soloist, whose place was at the right of the Tuba player, above referred to, inadvertently tripped and fell sprawling to the ground throwing his instrument several feet away, much to the wrath of the old soldier-musician and the entertainment of the thousands of people who witnessed the accident.

In 1878, I was associate editor of "Gospel and Temperance Songs" published by the John Church Co., Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1879, in asso-

ciation with H. S. Perkins, "The Class and Choir" was published and I started out organizing and teaching Conventions through the North. From 1880 to 1885 I taught throughout the Southern States, from South Carolina west to Texas, and from Kentucky south to Georgia and Alabama.

In the winter of 1882 I taught a class of colored people. The next year the male portion of one of my classes in Texas consisted largely of cow-boys, who always carried their lariats and "guns" with them; but a jollier, more easily governed lot of fellows I never tried to instruct. That same year, in Muskogee, my class contained over twenty Indian girls. At the closing concert two of these girls sang a duet. In the audience were about fifteen adult Indians in all their beaded and blanketed originality. They stood up along the rear of the room—refusing to be seated,—grunting their sober-faced satisfaction or displeasure from time to time.

In 1891 I taught music in the Japanese Mission in San Francisco.

During the school year of 1886-7 I had charge of the music in the Public Schools of Oscaloosa, Iowa. In June, 1887, I again went to California and taught throughout the State until March 1889, when I entered the employ of a certain church, of San Francisco, as its chorister.

During those ten years of travel I had entirely given up composition, but on assuming the pleasant requirements of this splendid Church and Sunday School, the old ambition came back and I began anew the labor that has since has been my only occupation.

It was for the "Golden Offering" of our Sunday School at Easter time that I wrote "Send the Light." It was for our King's Daughters I wrote, in ten days, the libretto and music of "The Merry Milkmaids." It was for our little folks I wrote "A Dream of Fairy Land." It was for our Christmas program I wrote my first Santa Claus Cantata "How We Waited for Santa Claus." All were written without thought of publication, but today nearly all those works are printed and sold not only in the United States but in Great Britain and elsewhere.

In order to be more centrally located and in closer touch with church music publishing interests, I left San Francisco and came to Chicago—arriving the 2d day of October, 1892, immediately establishing a studio in the Methodist Book Concern Building which headquarters I retained for twenty-three consecutive years.

CHAPTER NINE.

It is difficult, in writing of oneself, to avoid the appearance of conceit. Egotism or modesty, reproach or commendation, facetiousness or homage may be easily written of another, but personal allusion is usually construed as being self-praise.

I went alone out into the world of which I knew nothing, when I was sixteen years of age, with seventy-five dollars in my pocket. I had never ridden on a railroad train; had no conception of what a city was like or of the temptations that lie in the path of an unsophisticated (or any other) boy. I did not know the value of money, the elusiveness of its nature or the absolute necessity of possessing it, even in small quantities. I had never handled or possessed it, as all my necessities were supplied, as were those of the other members of our family, by my father.

Of my name, honor and family I was always proud. I could challenge the world to show a stain on the record of father, mother, sister or brother; and, as they were, so I must be. I made many mistakes, trod upon many a thorn, followed many a path that lost itself in the mirage of poor judgment before the lesson of that great teacher Experience was learned.

If I have accomplished anything in life; been a help to anyone, child or adult; written a line or stanza that has been influential for good in any human life, or brought to the world a single message in song that has helped to draw one soul to Him of whose children I am the most disobedient and of whose servants I am the least, the credit is not mine, but all the honor must go to my sainted Mother whose trust, hope and faith in me never wavered and whose yearning prayers followed me through wasted years of discouragement and finally brought me back to the ambition and determination of early life, whose influence still is my guide, and whose memory is today my most precious possession.

My first work, on arriving in Chicago, was to assist Dr. J. F. Berry (now Bishop) in the

preparation of the first Epworth League song book "Epworth Songs." At once the demands upon me far exceeded my ability to supply. Music of all kinds—for church, Sunday schools, young people and day schools, as well as for various musical instruments was called for.

Following no "system," I worked only when in the mood—never forcing myself to "grind out" a song of any nature.

Many a splendid hymn submited to me was returned to the writer simply because a melody did not flow spontaneously from its lines.

It was an infallible rule with me, however, to write SOMETHING every day; the diversity in character of my work made this possible and comparatively easy. It might have been a hymn, or music for a hymn already written; an anthem or a day-school song; the development of a character for a cantata or a recitation for some special occasion; a piano duet or an organ voluntary; an instrumental arrangement—SOMETHING every day.

Many ideas came to me while on the way to or from home and the office, or walking along the noisy street, but usually they were caught in the quiet hours of evening and night-time. Thus the years kept faith with the old Blacksmith:—

> "Each morning saw some task begun,
> Each evening saw it close."

My first song to become universally popular was "Send the Light," published in 1890, although "Calling the Prodigal" and "I will not forget Thee" (1899) were extensively used and were republished in Great Britain.

In 1895 "Let a Little Sunshine In" appeared. It came to the notice of Mr. B. F. Jacobs who had it put into the program of the Sunday School Convention which was held in Boston that year, from there being carried by delegates to all parts of the country, it immediately became popular. One of the musical conductors of that Convention relates how, one gloomy rainy morning, while they were singing the song, very suddenly, just as they sang the words of the chorus "Let a little sunshine in" a beam

of glorious sunlight shot through the upper windows and flooded the congregation, electrifying the singers.

In 1896 by much persuasion, I prevailed upon a leading publisher to include two special selections in a book he was then preparing. One of them was "To the Harvest Fields," the music of which I had writen especially for a children's Christmas cantata. The "swing" and simplicity of its melody convinced me that if sacred words were fitted to it there was a place for it in evangelistic choirs. It immediately became a favorite, and was the beginning of gospel choruses from which "All Hail Immanuel," and other pieces of that nature developed. "Higher Ground" and "O! it is wonderful" appeared in 1898. For these I received five dollars each.

The "Glory Song" I wrote in 1900, and sold for ten dollars. It has been said that no gospel song in history ever attained its international popularity in so short a time. In less than five years after publication it was sung around the world. The wonder of this, however, is not due to the song alone, but to circumstances and conditions that took control of it.

Many interesting incidents connected with it have been sent me from many countries, besides scores that have appeared in print, but to me the most remarkable fact concerning the song is that it stands today note for note and word for word as I sent it to the printer years ago.

It has been translated into many different languages and dialects, and many millions of copies have been printed. I have heard it played by brass bands, German bands, hand organs, street pianos, and phonographs. I have heard it numerous times sung by ten and twenty thousand people, and again by the usual congregation; but the most impressive rendering I ever heard given was by a certain congregation of over one thousand men; these men were all dressed in steel gray suits, and sat with folded arms; the man who played the organ and the man who held the baton and led the song were dressed in exactly the same way. Down the right side, across the rear and up the left side of the audience room, on high stools, sat a row of men in blue uniforms holding heavy canes across their knees; these men seemed never for an instant to take their eyes from certain spots in front of them. Not a man whispered during the service—for it was a state's prison. Among that congregation of 1,077 men 256 were there for life—there to live and die, and on each of their cell doors, where they would read it every time they left and re-entered, was that startling word "life." How strangely their voices impressed me—these men without a country, without a home, without a name, deprived of every privilege accorded to all men by the Almighty, and known only by a number! As I sat before them, the prison pallor of their faces against its background of gray within that frame of blue, made a picture never to be forgotten. With few exceptions every man sang; here sat one with downcast eyes—there another with mute lips, while yonder near the center a large, strong fellow was weeping like a little child—but silently. They told me he had been there but a short time, and I wondered if he had heard the song before, under different circumstances—and where, for he had a kindly face.

Softly they sang that last stanza:

"Friends will be there I have loved long ago;
Joys like a river around me will flow;
Yet just a smile from my Saviour, I know,
Will through the ages be glory for me."

The song ended, the chaplain said a brief prayer, and that great crowd of men, at signals from the guards in blue, marched out squad by squad, keeping step to the music of the organ played by the man in gray.

A friend vouches for the truth of the following: A party of young people were dancing; the orchestra modulated into the melody of "The Glory Song." Presently a couple took their seats, another followed, then another, and another, until the floor was cleared and not one dancer remained to keep step to the music.

CHAPTER TEN.

"He Is So Precious to Me," was written in 1902. I had faith in this song but after three of our foremost publishers had rejected it—although I offered it at five dollars—I printed it in a book edited by myself.

This presents the opportunity to state that ninety per cent of my most popular pieces met the same reception, and were printed and copyrighted by myself; which goes to prove that no man, no matter how great his experience, can correctly prescribe for the public.

In the same book with "He is So Precious to Me," were included "Keep Your Heart Singing," "Sunshine and Rain," "Reapers Are Needed," and others. "He Lifted Me" was written in the latter part of 1902, and, although being rejected by several publishers, Mr. C. M. Alexander caught the glint of its purity, and through his work it has circled the globe.

Elijah P. Brown, founder of "The Ram's Horn," sent me these two lines:

> "He had no tears for His own griefs,
> But sweat drops of blood for mine."

saying he believed the theme might suggest words for a song. It did, and "My Saviour's Love," published in 1905, was the outgrowth. His exact words are a part of the second stanza.

A certain minister of the Gospel who now holds a responsible position in his denomination once said to me:—"Gabriel, why do you put so much allegory in your hymns? We all know that while the Scripture says, 'There appeared an angel comforting him,' it was merely a figure of speech." Yet we wonder why the church is not more spiritual than it is to-day!

Gospel song writing possessed its share of comedy as well as a part bordering on tragedy. A publisher asked me to write a song for him on a given subject. This I did, at the usual price of ten dollars. When the MSS was delivered, a check was sent me calling for five dollars, with a note saying that as the subject

had been furnished me, the deduction had been made. It always seemed to me a good joke, but I never could quite decide who the joke took in.

The song proved to be a popular one, and doubtless helped many another poor soul who had been a Christian for forty years, without the blessing having cost one cent. I could always say with the pastor in the old story—"God bless your stingy old soul."

I once wrote and published a song entitled, "Over in the Glory Land"; the manuscript had been seen only by myself and the typesetter. My surprise may be imagined when one day, soon after, I received from an Eastern hymn writer a text on the same subject, same title, same meter, and substantially the same subject matter throughout, stanza for stanza. He had not seen my song nor I his poem, yet the one was the counterpart of the other. I immediately mailed him a printed copy of my composition, which proved to be as much of a surprise to him as his had been to me.

One evening during 1896, while in a despondent, down-hearted mood, I was glancing over some song-words; none seemed to appeal to me. Presently I remembered having received a hymn in the day's mail which I had not as yet looked at. Taking it from my pocket it seemed like a voice speaking directly to me as I read, and its melody rang out of silence into my heart exactly as it is sung today. I wrote it out, and in a letter to Mr. Alexander the next day, I mailed it to England where, in Albert Hall, "The Sparrow Song" was first sung in public.

Some time in the year 1905 I received a letter from one of our most celebrated evangelists, asking that I write a song especially for him. To this I paid but little attention as I never had been and never expect to be able to deliberately and intentionally write a sacred song. Time ran along, and the incident was all but forgotten, when one day I was introduced to the writer of the letter. His acknowledgment of the introduction was a warm hand-shake and the inquiry: "Have you written that song for me?" I answered that I had a number he might try over. He assured me he would sing the song around the world. He came to my

studio; I handed him two or three manuscripts. Immediately he said: "No! I want a song written especially for me."

In 1907 I wrote one I thought perhaps he might like and mailed it to Great Britain where he was then laboring. Getting no reply I supposed he had not received the song, and dismissed the matter from my mind. One day, while at a popular Bible Conference, not caring to attend the afternoon session, I was alone on the veranda of the hotel, reading, suddenly a well-remembered voice began singing:—

"Sweeter and sweeter to me,
Dearer and dearer each day;
O wonderful love of my Saviour
Growing dearer each step of my way."

Clear, sweet and beautiful came the tones—but no singer was in sight. I know there was, to me, only one such voice, but supposed its owner to be, at that time, in Australia. Spellbound I listened until the chorus was finished, and, as the singer emerged from his hiding place, who was it but Gypsy Smith! He had sung the song from his home, via Australia around the world.

There are a few incidents in life which have courted my pride, and, as I consider, been an unusual honor to me. One of these was the receipt of a letter, dated November 24th, 1892. from the Rev. Dr. S. F. Smith, author of "My Country, 'tis of Thee," written by his own hand. in which he enclosed a poem, also in his own chirography, saying it was composed for me, at my request for an original hymn. The letter is too dim to reproduce, but the hymn shows his splendid calligraphy at the age of 84 years.

Julia Ward Howe once wrote me a flattering letter, saying she would send me some of her original hymns, that I might make musical settings for them. I suppose her increasing feebleness prevented, for on July 28, 1908, she wrote, saying it would be impossible. The letter is in her own handwriting and is one of my most treasured keepsakes.

I have been honored with a personal acquaintanceship and correspondence with D. L. Moody, Sam P. Jones, W. A. (Billy) Sunday, Gypsy Smith, J. Wilbur Chapman, R. A. Torrey

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy Kingdom come! we watch, we wait,
With fervent lips we pray,
Ride on, O King, in regal state,
O come the glorious day!

O joyful scene! O world-wide rest!
When land, and stream, and main,
From north to south, from east to west
Shall own Thy peaceful reign.

So let Thy glorious Kingdom come
As comes the morning ray,
And fills heaven's wide-expanding dome
With pure and perfect day.

We watch, we work, for Thee alone,
On Thee, our help, we call;
O King of saints, come, take Thy throne,
Triumphant Lord of all.

S. F. Smith.

accept or deny the request.

and many other great evangelists, and their letters were ever a blessed help to me, especially those from D. L. Moody and Sam P. Jones, coming to me, as they did, at a time when the road was rough and steep and the burden heavy to carry.

One paragraph contained in a characteristic letter from Mr. Jones, reading:—"I love you because I like you, and like you because I love you," will never fade from memory. He little knew he was engraving those words on a human heart in such a manner that only death can erase them. Recently I visited what they call his grave. There is no mound to mark his bed—only a small head-piece at the foot of a beautiful monument upon which in plain letters appears the familiar name:—"SAM JONES." As I stood there, bareheaded, his words repeated themselves over and over to me, and I thought: "You are not dead, nor is this your grave!" He had helped me. Then I read on the base of the splendid obelisk that raises its proud head high enough to be seen from the car window of three different railroads, these words:—"They that lead many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever." He had helped me more, I thought, than he had any one of the many thousands of others who had been blessed by his ministry.

A letter from Mr. Moody urged me to come to him where he was holding a meeting in a near-by town, to help him with the music. I did not go, because I never felt that I was competent to conduct or have sole charge of the music in evangelistic services. The older I grow and the more "conducting" I observe, the more I thank God that He told me about the matter in time. Gospel music conductors should be qualified intellectually, musically, spiritually and in absolute humility of purpose; should he or she fail in one qualification, the Work will suffer. Having become convinced that my true work was composition, I continually refused to be led into any other channel, and believe that any little help I may have been in the world has been because of my firm resolve to concentrate all my life-energy into that one endeavor.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Many times have I been asked the question: "How is a song written?" To a really unanswerable query a superficial and imperfect answer might be: As a subject takes form in the mind it suggests an appropriate melody; the main thought is usually woven into a chorus and becomes the crowning glory of the song—if it has such. It is not written according to technical rule, for the mechanical nature of such a composition would destroy the spontaneity of its diction. Neither is it composed to order, for the commercial spirit would stifle the silent voice of inspiration. Not as a carpenter builds a house—for almost any man can learn to become an artificer, while to create, originate, or compose a song is to do something that cannot be learned from books or taught by the most skillful instructor. One may learn to write correct harmony; may conquer and control the voice; may master the most difficult instrument of music—but—the composer must be born.

I believe in inspiration, but do not believe the Great Master deals out cut and polished diamonds. He gives the thought, and the composer or poet must develop the theme. Sometimes a great deal of perspiration is necessary, for a single flaw in the harmony or a trivial weakness in the words is fatal. Those marvelous stories explaining how the Lord gave this or that song word for word and note for note should be listened to with a great deal of skepticism.

Hundreds of hymns are sent to me from all parts of the world, and when one comes in with that brand upon it, nine times out of ten is proves to be of no account whatever. The late Sam Jones once said to the writer, in his peculiar, joking way: "My! My! if the Lord is sure enough responsible for all the songs you fellows accuse him of, he's going to have a mighty hard time to set himself right with the folks."

In Art, in Literature, in Music, in Industry, he who is first or among the leaders is ever

the target for emulation or of envy. If some one's work arouses scorn or derision it is entirely safe from mediocrity, since what is condemned must have something in it in order to attract attention. The palm of greatness is always accompanied by the weed of detraction and while thousands worshiped at the throne of Bayreuth, the few whom Wagner dethroned call him Impostor. Mediocrity is neither envied nor emulated.

As everywhere within our horizon the results of pre-eminence are twofold, they are germane to those in Gospel hymnology. Many of the hymns contained in our Church Hymnals, would, were they submitted to a nineteenth century editor, be thrown in the waste basket; likewise many a gem lies hidden between the covers of our present-day song books, that will become known and appreciated in the days to come.

Only shepherds of Bethlehem heard the music of the herald angels, and John alone testifies to having listened to the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The inspiration to write a "Messiah" was given to but one man. "The Passion of St. Matthew," although written almost three centuries ago, still stands a monument to the transcendent genius of Bach. Beethoven, in his wonderful creations, sums up the whole of human emotion—love, hate, laughter, tears.

Wagner caught and transcribed the echoes of the divine music sung by the morning stars at the creation of the world. Chopin carries us into the worlds yet to be. The fife and drum thrill us today with the same patriotism that inspired thousands of brave men to die for their country in the past.

Perfect music will never be known on earth, and not until the dawn of eternal day will its fullness be demonstrated. Then all who, through His grace, are permitted to join that immortal chorus will testify that the best the earth could give was but a faint, discordant echo of that with which all heaven shall ring forever.

Often a song the author believes will be a great success proves to be a total failure; and

sometimes—not always—the opposite result obtains. I always had faith in "My Savior's Love," "He Is So Precious to Me," "Higher Ground," and others, but was not impressed with "The Glory Song." "The Sparrow Song" and "He Lifted Me" appealed to me before the ink was dry on the MSS, but "Hail Immanuel" I have never cared for.

When "Since Jesus Came Into My Heart" sang its way out of silence I knew it had a message the world would hear. Its sentiment and melody are well adapted one to the other; it is simple, and easily learned by a congregation.

I sang it for the first time as a solo at a morning Tabernacle service; at the afternoon men's meeting it was repeated by request, after which the crowd caught up the chorus with thrilling effect. It at once became the most popular song of that campaign, at the close of which many thousands of people gathered at the railroad station to bid the evangelist good-bye: hundreds of those people having been converted during that mission, they changed the words to "Since Jesus Came Into My Home," and the noise of commerce was silenced by the mighty wave of song that arose from that human throng—

> "Floods of joy o'er my soul
> Like the sea-billows roll,
> Since Jesus came into my home."

A certain evangelist asked me to write a song for him, using the words of command attributed to Columbus in that beautiful poem by Joaquin Miller.

"Sail On" was the result of my effort, but the song did not please my friend, and the MSS lay in my desk more than a year before I had it printed. One Sunday morning at an evangelistic service I was asked to "sing just one verse." Having copies of the song, I handed one to the pianist, and sang the first stanza and chorus. The evangelist ordered: "Sing another verse!" I complied. "Give 'em the next one!" he insisted—and a long suffering audience got it.

From so humble a beginning the song has become one of Mr. Homer A. Rodeheaver's most popular chorus pieces. It is, however, suited for large congregations only, and requires a strong leader.

Probably no song has ever found its way around the world in so short a period of time as "Brighten the Corner Where You Are." It is sung in the war trenches and on foreign mission fields; in the Sunday school and prayer meeting; it is played by brass bands, orchestras and on phonographs, hummed in camps and whistled on the street.

I can say this without boasting because I did not write the hymn; it came to me as hundreds of others have—by mail. I remember receiving the verses, and before the paper upon which they were written was laid down I had the melody practically as it is sung today—a slight modification in the chorus to allow better progression in harmony being the only change made.

The subject of the song is old, but being presented, as it is, in a new form and in a manner that appeals to the sympathetic and practical nature of intelligent mankind, it has been a blessing to millions of people, and will be sung when they who wrote it shall have been forgotten.

A city morning paper recently said of it: "It's the town song. It's being played in cafes. It's a carnival jubilee air. It is syncopated by the 'ivory artists,' rumbled from almost every home piano, sung by the street beggar and the County Commissioners, whistled on the street and used as a panacea by people waiting for a trolley car."

It appeals to both saint and sinner and is accepted by people of every denomination and creed. Some have said it is not a sacred song, but it has been printed with a scripture quotation for each line of each stanza and chorus.

Many amusing, pathetic and impressive anecdotes have been told concerning the song. As an illustration of the carelessness of singers with their pronounciation: A little newsboy of Philadelphia hearing the song was so impressed with the sentiment that, meeting another newsie, he said: "Kum-mon an' hear 'em singin' 'Fight in the corner where yer at!' "

A correspondent of the New York *World* at the French front says: "It is becoming the catchword of the trenches. Among the dying and the starving soldiers of the battlefields to whom life is seen through the shadows of death, the slogan of cheer and hope and comfort is singing its message."

A missionary just home from Siam says: "I had gone into the interior of Siam to visit one of the most remote of our stations.

"Imagine my surprise, then—with practically a jungle at our backs and the tropical sun pouring down upon us—thousands of miles from the world of today—imagine my surprise, when those little native children began to sing, 'Brighten the Corner Where You Are.' "

Many people have asked: "How many songs have you written?"—a question impossible to answer. From a list I have kept of my published works, including song books of various kinds, children's cantatas, choir works, operettas, etc., I name

26 books of Gospel songs.
4 books of Sunday School songs.
4 books for Male voices.
5 books for Female voices.
7 books of Children's songs.
14 books of Anthems.
17 Choir cantatas.
8 Juvenile cantatas.
38 Santa Claus (Christmas) cantatas.
4 Operettas.
2 Reed Organ Instruction books.
2 Piano Instruction books.
2 Piano Duet books.

Several hundreds of pieces of sheet music—vocal and instrumental; more than a score of pieces for military or brass bands; several hundreds of special day services for Easter, Children's day, Christmas, Temperance, Patriotic and other occasions; octavo anthems, quartettes and miscellaneous compositions.

To compute the number of single songs that did not go into my own books would be difficult.

As an instance for estimation, I sold in one lot at one time to one publisher over two thousand titles; to another over five hundred.

With perhaps ten exceptions, I wrote both libretto and music of the forty-six Juvenile and Christmas cantatas, and two Operettas. It has been said that more of my Christmas cantatas have been sold and used than those of any other writer—earning for me the title of "The Santa Claus Man of the World." Always a lover of children, it was easy to produce that which was pleasing to them and readily prepared.

The words of a very large proportion of my gospel songs which have become popular were written by myself. For obvious reasons, in giving credit for authorship, over twenty different pseudonymes have been employed, and I have been able to share with but few friends the many pleasantries occasioned by the wording of many letters received accompanied with a request that they be forwarded to Miss So-and-So, or to pass on the joke when some fellow in my presence has bubbled over with praise or blame of Mr. What'shisname. It is a splendid way to secure the unqualified opinion of friend or foe.

Honest criticism has always been helpful to me, and more than any other element has exercised a controlling influence in my work, which through all the years has been interesting and pleasant, although at times carried on under unfavorable circumstances and conditions.

I have already stated that the goal of my early life has not been reached—and I shall not reach it, now! Opportunity knocked at my door and I could not rise to the occasion, which I shall regret to the last day I live. Should any young person with an ambition for the future take time to read these memoirs and find the least word of comfort, line of encouragement or discover through my failure that which will help them, I shall be glad.

At one time in life I had an insatiable longing to be rich. I wanted money! Not to hoard, but there was so much I wanted to do that could not be accomplished without sufficient

funds. The Great Father, however, knew it was not *money* that I needed, for, try as I would—though my income was not small—the last day of December usually found me situated about as I started the first day of the January preceding.

Now, since the years have led me up the Eastern slope and over the mountain-top of life, and I find myself hurrying down toward the sea, I begin to realize that my efforts were not as much of a failure as I had concluded, for I *am* rich—not in gold, but in friends! To feel a substantial slap on the shoulder and hear a voice, one has not heard for a long time, say: "Hello! old man; glad to see you once more!" is worth more than the satisfaction of cashing one's own check for any amount of money; while to clasp the hand of a friend and feel the pressure that we know is genuine is worth all the gold that was ever mined.

There are friends, and "Friends." Mine are all true, for I have never had anything for them but friendship. I have tried to be true to them as they have been loyal to me, for, one of these days—it may be soon—my work will all be done, and, standing on the shore of the great sea looking out, through the gathering gloom toward the sky-line, I shall discover the Boatman coming for me. As he draws nearer, and nearer, I shall say good-bye to those who have been so kind to me; and, as the boat touches shore I shall step in knowing that, though I must leave them behind me for a season, yet in the great judgment morning when the countless millions of those "who die in the Lord" shall arise and come surging and thronging from every corner of the earth to stand before Him who sitteth upon the throne, I know that my friends will be among that number, and that I shall know them again.

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