Yesterday Was Not So Bad

BY

Charles Judson Dutton (1887-1963)

Memories of a 19th Century Boyhood in Kittery, Maine

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Chapter 1

Though the parsonage and church were the center of my life for many years, yet it was the river – only a few yards below the house – which always thrilled me. We had come to the new town after dark and I was at once put to bed in a strange room. There was a large window and looking out of it I could see the long flickering lights of the city less than half a mile away. I went to sleep with the low, deep whistle of passing tugs on a river I could not see from the bed.

It was historic territory to which we had come. In the town and neighboring city were old houses, sternly beautiful, still belonging to families whose names went back to the settlement of the country. There were hundreds of stories of the early days – and I must have heard them all – for the schools I first attended made certain we knew the history of the community in which we lived, and strongly stressed the patriotism and courage of the founders.

The first white man to see the river remained only a few days. He was Martin Pring. The year was 1603, and he had two ships, one of 50 tons, the other 20. With him were 43 men. He had sailed from Bristol, England, and was looking for the northern portion of Virginia. Instead, he reached Maine, and in June of 1603, sailed for 12 miles up our river. The woods were dense; his men spent time trying to find sassafras, then regarded almost as the elixir of life. But they were unable to discover a single tree. Nor did they see any Indians.

Eleven years later a far more famous man became the second explorer to visit the river. In 1614, Captain John Smith discovered the Isle of Shoals, which he named Smith Islands. There is no record that Smith ever received any rewards for his various discoveries. But he did make a map, and on it, for the first time, were the words NEW ENGLAND. He named both sides of the river. My town was called Boston, a name taken a while later by a settlement 90 miles away. The other bank was called Hull.

In 1623 the first settlers arrived to discover mines, cultivate the vine, carry on fishing and engage in trade. The first house however was not built of timber cut from the thick woods but of materials brought over by the settlers. Little can be discovered concerning them, though it is well known that shortly after landing they built salt works, since fishing was to be the leading industry of the colonists.

In 1634 Fernand Gorges and John Mason were granted what is now New Hampshire and Maine. Gorges soon sold out to Mason his New Hampshire holdings. He never visited the New World, but it was his idea to establish a manor and the settlers were to be the tenants. In 1631 about 80 emigrants had been sent from England, of whom 22 were women. In the group were laborers, carpenters, stewards and one "surgeon." The next year arrived a different type of settlers, a large number of cattle from Denmark. So well did they increase

that in 1638 a steward of Mason's drove a hundred through the dense woods to Boston, sold them for a hundred dollars each, then vanished to the Dutch town of New York.

The first morning in the parsonage I was up by dawn, my face pressed against the window. Below me was the river, deep blue under the morning sun. To the left, a long line of buildings, the masts of two ships, and, to my delight, a warship was in dry dock. Across the water was the low uneven line of the city, with a towering church steeple – a white point of beauty. Out in the river, not very far from the end of our new yard, was an island. Not a large island, but a very famous one, whose story father told us at breakfast.

There was launched, in 1782, what was at the time the largest warship in the world, "The America." It was a 182-foot ship with 74 guns. It was the only warship at the time that the new nation could boast. It was built under the eyes of John Paul Jones, who was to command it. But it never sailed a day under the American flag. It was also the tenth command that Jones lost during the Revolution.

At the end of the summer of 1782, "The Magnificent," belonging to the French fleet sank in Boston harbor. Why they did it was not even clear at the time, but Congress, on September 3rd, 1782, voted to present The America, still unfinished, to the French nation. When, on November 5th 1782, it was launched, the flags of France and America were flying from the masthead. An hour later the ship transferred to the French. In 1794 she was captured by the English and placed in their navy.

Breakfast over, I started out to explore the town. The fist step was the church, only a few feet from the house. It was an old church, though I believe the second or third building. That might explain why it did not have the fine colonial lines of other churches established at the same time. There were many stories regarding the historic names of former ministers and members.

When one minister died, 40 years before the revolution, after years of service, a resolution was passed by the town and written upon a scroll. The minister's name, it said, "would long be remembered because of his uncommon meekness and patience under great trials and tribulations." Everyone knew what was meant by "great trials." It was his wife, known for her beauty, and, as one of the time wrote, "devilish disposition."

Perhaps the clergyman had discovered that meekness was far better than valor. There were Sundays when she nailed fast his study door and his deacons had to come from the church and release him that he might preach. At his funeral she appeared clad in deep mourning. A relative of the minister seized her dress and tore it off, saying that she who had made his life so miserable should not add to the offense by seeming to mourn for him.

The expenses of another minister could be seen. For the coffin, $230. Rings for the bearers, $30, with $100 for gloves. For the solace of the brother clergymen was $25 for rum, $15 for brandy and $5 for pipes and tobacco. Both liquor and tobacco were considered necessary at funerals and whenever the clergy met in council. I was to see in a diary later: it dealt with the ordination of a new minister. It said "Rev. ------ was obligated not to taste or touch the rum, brandy and beer provided for the visiting ministers. It was thought one should

be able to read the charge without stumbling." I wondered a bit about this, until I read in Woodrow Wilson's history of America as similar statement about an ordination in Virginia.

Down the long dusty street I passed the house in which had been born one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. True, he lived the larger part of his life in the town across the river. At the age of 21 he had commanded his own vessel and made half a dozen voyages to Europe and Africa. At the age of 29 he retired with a fortune made in the slave trade. Many were the stories of Colonel Whipple by his descendants – though they passed over his slave trading.

The evening had come for his wedding. It was to be the social event of the year. The bride's home was illuminated, the minister in wig and gown, the assembled guests waiting in the parlor, whose floor had been freshly sanded. The bride was above with her maids putting on her finery. Thirty minutes passed, then the bride sent for the bridegroom. He found her, her wedding dress discarded. She told him "I have decided not to be married this evening." It's tonight or never," was the reply. It was never. The Colonel walked out of the house. The woman within ten days sent word she was ready to go through with the ceremony, but she received no reply. The intended bridegroom never called on her again.

When he went off to war he took his servant and slave with him. He noticed the colored man was very sulky and moved slowly. Asked what was the matter, the slave replied "You are going to fight for your liberty. But I have none to fight for." "If you behave like a man and do your duty you shall be free," was the promise. A few weeks later the slave was a free man. The house in which the Colonel was born had been a garrison house. It was still standing.

A garrison house was built with the upper story projecting from eight to twenty inches on every side. This was not as some believe, to afford loop holes through which one could fire at the Indians. The openings were intended to allow the women to pour boiling water upon attacking Indians and to put out fires. These houses had few windows; those in the lower story were very small with heavy wooden shutters. My first sight of such a house caused me to remark when I returned from my sight seeing trip that it was pretty small. Compared with some of the houses being built today I would have to change my opinion.

The long bridge at the end of the street ran to the island upon which was the Navy Yard. I had never seen a river before, or a ship. But across the bridge were the masts of ships and there was a war vessel in dry dock. I started for them, but had to pause and peer down to the water. The tide was out and I had my first smell of mud flats and salt water. There were fish by the piles, crabs and even a lobster. The current was swift and in the middle of the bridge the water, which was rushing to the nearby sea, looked dark, almost black. But I was not fated to see the ships that day. At the further end of the bridge was a guard house and a sentry who stopped me. The sight of his gun drove all desire from my mind of going further. Later I had complete freedom upon the Navy Yard.

During the next few years I was filled with stories about the town and nearby city. It was pretty hard to which community they belonged. From the beginning, the two were closely intermingled. People were born in one place and moved across the river to the other.

The city with its beautiful houses, its proud, aristocratic history seemed in my boyhood part of the place wherein I lived. I went to school there, and only after four P.M. was I back to the small town. One night I told my father I would like to live in the city. He said that in the early days perhaps they would not have permitted me to do so. A few nights later he read to me some records to prove his point.

The records showed that it was not easy to become a resident of the two towns. They had an idea which today would cause our social workers to faint. They wanted as citizens only those who could support themselves, who were of good character and birth. That it was the duty of the town to support its citizens save in times of stress, never entered their minds. They duly inquired into the habits, morals and financial responsibility of those who wished to become citizens. They had to be worthwhile people. What a howl would go up today if a town did that.

As early as 1686, an individual was examined for "bringing his wife and two children into town without leave, and was warned he must give security for saving the town from any charge for himself and children, or depart. He then promised to depart in a week."

In 1692: "Roger Thomas making a request to the inhabitants for admission to be an inhabitant in the town – the answer was they would not 'close it' without he give good security to save them harmless from all charges. But he provided none and the selectmen in behalf of the 'towne' warned him to return to the place from which he had come."

And in the same year: "The selectmen being informed that the widow Markwell was in town contrary to law and order, have issued a warrant to the constable to warn her to go out of the town to the place from whence she came and if any did entertain her they should pay a penalty of five shillings."

Father explained that it was a new settlement, isolated, with, save for the sea, little communication with the outside world. The citizens shared their toil and goods with each other. Everyone worked. To allow "strangers" to come into the town who could not show they could support themselves until they are established in a business was a very necessary law. Why should the townspeople support those who had not and perhaps never would contribute to the general welfare! He thought it a just law – which shows just how much out of step he would be with modern social thinking. I was informed, after reading the records, that the idea the world owes everyone a living, irrespective of their ability or character was not believed or even thought of by those who settled and built New England. Yet, though the town barred for many years those who would be a burden, it welcomed any of good character, who had the ability to get along, and would fit into the community.

It was not unpleasant being a minister's son in an old town, not if you were curious about everything and found many people glad to answer questions. We were to live there for nine years and when we moved father received a scroll saying he was the best minister who had served the church in 100 years. Father, I remember, smiled, and reminded him that the church was much older than 100 years.

For three years there was trouble in keeping me away from the river. It was rather difficult, for all I had to do was to go out our back door, walk over the grass for a few yards, and there it was. I wandered over a rocky beach or played over small tugs, which were being painted on the shore. It was the coal dock with its broken down pier, which troubled my parents. The beams bending in crazy angles were unsteady and swayed in the swift tide. It was from them that I used to fish. As I could not swim, a fall into the water would have been a disaster.

Once it almost happened. That day, with a little girl, I was playing on a small floating dock. There was a flat-bottomed boat tied to a rail. Climbing into the boat, the girl untied the rope and started to pull the boat around the dock. Suddenly the rope slipped from her fingers and fell into the water. The tide was running out on its swift way to the sea. The boat began to drift out to the main stream. Two things saved us from the fate Thomas Bailey Aldrich told of happening to a chum in his "Story of a Bad Boy." We started to scream. Better still, at low tide, there was a blanket of seaweed ten feet from the shore. Into this the boat drifted and stuck. A worker the coal shed heard our screams and came and pulled our boat to shore. But the family heard of the incident.

This time my father put his foot down. The next time he heard of my being at the river he was going to duck me into the water. One day, mother dressed me in my best suit, extracted a promise of my good behavior, and sent me out to play while she entertained her church club. Father came home, enquired for his son, and discovered I was not at home. Going to the shore he found me. I was taken out in his boat and ducked several times in the icy water. Dripping, shivering and wailing loudly I ran home to my much-embarrassed mother. But I still kept going to the shore, though after the ducking I always made certain that father was out making pastoral calls at some distance.

One day I was taken to see the copy of the cage which had been built in 1671. There was a simple reason for the place of punishment. It was ordered "that a cage be made or some means invented by the Selectmen to punish such as sleep or take tobacco on the Lord's Day out of meeting." This order was passed in 1662 and for some reason was not carried out until none years later.

It was a horrible looking affair, twelve feet square and seven high. The planks were four inches thick and six wide with openings of three inches. Inside the cage was a pair of stocks with a bench to sit upon. For some reason it was placed close to the church and there were a few, though not too many, who were imprisoned within it. A number for smoking tobacco, one for stealing a jug of rum, one sarcastic citizen for saying "I have no doubt the devil will welcome the selectmen." An expression, couched in various ways, which had been heard in many a town meeting. But this individual wound up in the stocks, as did the woman who complained too loudly that the minister's sermons put her to sleep.

Since father had a great love for the past and history had been made in our towns, where every house had its stories, I was told them all. What was more, I wandered through streets which had seen Rogers and his Rangers start on their long trail to Canada. I passed,

on my way to school, Daniel Webster's law office and houses in which Washington had slept – for more than a night. I played many hours on "The Constitution" and was chased off "The Kersearge" by the angry marine on guard. I played in a blockhouse which Indians had failed to burn. I talked with old sea captains who told of trips to China, Russia and the South Seas. One lived rather close by the past in my boyhood town.

As a boy, on my way to school, I used to walk up a long street. At the top, the embankment was 20 feet high. There was a cemetery above it and from the street large iron doors led in to great vaults under the ancient graves. At the top of the street was the historic church to which the cemetery belonged. An old controversy had split the congregation apart and led to the building of a new religious edifice.

An old sea captain had stored the barrels of rum which he had brought back from the West Indies in the vaults under the cemetery. No one objected at the time; it was a legal business. Everybody used rum. But the day came when it was cheaper to distill the liquor in Boston, and the vaults were empty. A new brewery, just founded, asked permission to use the vaults to store their beer. Then trouble started which split the church.

The objections seem rather absurd today. Those against beer said, "Rum was a gentleman's drink – used by us all." No objection to rum being under the graves. But beer was something else. It was a cheap, common drink; besides, the brewer did not belong to the church. There must have been more of the beer drinkers, for the brewer won out. Those opposed to him left the church and built a new one. I believe later on in Boston a similar situation arose. In that case, the minister, a rather well known man, resigned and wrote a poem.

There was a small church a few miles from the town – which came into existence because of an argument over the story of Jonah and the whale. A wealthy sea captain said it was impossible. He had seen whales. True, the animal might swallow a man, but no one could live inside him for three days and nights. He was expelled from the church for "not accepting the Holy Writ." He promptly built a chapel and had his own church.

Thought it is said the first settlers came to America seeking religious freedom, yet it is hardly true of the Plymouth settlement. That was a financial venture; those who financed the Mayflower and the other vessels lost all they had invested. The real purpose back of the settlement of America was in most cases economic. In the case of those who first came to my town it was purely that.

They first built their homes, and then came the church. Since they all held the same religious beliefs, and all were poor, it was logical that all were taxed the same amount for the support of the church. Since the minister was the one educated man in the community, it was natural his words were respected. If one studies the history of early New England, it is a surprise to discover how few bigots there were among these early churchmen. There were some. It is mostly of them we hear.

Of course the first church established in my town was narrow in its viewpoint. But it was a seaport, and seaports are always more liberal than inland towns. No witches were ever persecuted here, though they were believed in. Since they were a small group, isolated from other towns with a trackless wilderness to the north of them, they felt all should share the common beliefs since they shared the common dangers. That everyone must accept the church, follow the accepted rules, was only self-protection. After all, they were alone in an unknown world. One weak link might bring disaster upon them all.

These early churches knew little of the mercy of God – in fact they had no belief in such a sentimental idea. But they did believe in the Devil. The early history of the church is filled with stories of citizens who had encountered him. A few miles up the river was a blackened cellar. It had been the home of a man who seemed to have acquired wealth overnight. "Had sold his soul to the Devil," people said. One day, out of a sunlit sky, a bolt of lightning hit the house. Building and owner vanished in the blaze. "The Devil came and collected," the story went. It was still talked about when I was a boy. And once I talked with a man who had seen the Devil.

On the shore, a little below the parsonage, was a small white house. It contained only two rooms. The kitchen, with its small stove was also the living room, whose walls were covered with curios from many lands. The kitchen door led onto a small floating wharf, at the end of which was tied a small dory. The only occupant of the house, save for a huge yellow cat named Spider, was about 75. Until the age of 60 he had been a sailor, though never rising above second mate. Now, with the bit of money he had saved, he made a living from fishing. It was the cleanest house I had ever seen. Everyone loved the old man; he never missed a service at church. He is the only individual I have ever met who had seen both a sea serpent and the Devil.

Long before he had left the sea he had built his two-room house. In between voyages he was ashore and made a few dollars by ferrying people across the river. One night he took the Devil across the water. I heard him repeat the story again and again. It never varied.

One night about midnight there came a knock at his door. There stood a man hidden beneath a long black cloak, an odd hat hiding his face – a tall man, whom the sailor said frightened him. He wished to be rowed across to the city. It was a bad night, with the wind whipping up the river, which, as the tide had changed, was rushing swiftly to the sea. The sailor protested; the man said he would give him a dollar. Since his usual fee was ten cents, he consented.

But he was frightened. The night was dark, the wind high, and after they set out two things troubled him. In the rear of the boat, hat low over his unseen face, the long black cloak tight around the tall, thin figure, sat his passenger, never speaking. Though the wind was high, it seemed to end as it reached the dory. There was another thing – it was snowing, but when the flakes touched the tall dark figure in the stern of the boat, they glowed as though hot.

At the other side of the river he pushed the boat ashore. His passenger rose, rushed by him, thrusting some coins in his hand. They were so hot he dropped them. "They burned a small hole in the bottom of the boat. But I was not surprised. When he went up the bank, he slipped, and I saw one foot. It had a hoof."

Quite a story to tell a small boy. True, I wanted to see the hole in the boat, but was told all this happened many years before, and the present boat was a new one. Father's reaction, for he too heard the story many times, was: "Old sailors tell queer tales. No doubt he did take a stranger across the river on a dark, stormy night. Being frightened, he thought he was ferrying the Devil."

But I was not so certain. A little while later I was taken into an old house and shown the "devil's footprint" on the hearth bricks before a great fireplace – a foot which ended in a point. If one's imagination was good, it had claws. Then I heard the story.

A hundred years before, the owner of the house was sitting before his fireplace. His spirits were low; that day he had heard that one of his ships had been lost at sea. He had obligations to me. He sighed and muttered to himself, "I ought to sell out to the Devil."

There was a sound in the chimney – a rush of air – and before him on the hearth brick stood a grinning figure, tall, dressed in black, who bowed and said, "I heard you. All you desire can be yours. I only ask you to sign with your blood an agreement that your soul is mine."

Hardly able to move, knowing that it was the Devil himself who was before him, the man of the house found strength to stammer the Lord's Prayer. An oath burst from the black-clad figure, he stamped one foot on the bricks, and then vanished. There was an odor of sulfur. When he was able to stand, the owner saw on the bricks the imprint of the foot. It was still a dim shadow on the brickwork when I sat looking at it while the old take was retold.

The Devil, of course, is mostly native to New England in American folklore. Perhaps this is due to the dense, mysterious forests, the ever presence of terror of the unknown, and the horrible theology preached in many of the churches. I was to discover years later an interesting fact.

It is now believed that back of the stories of witchcraft there was a modicum of truth. Witchcraft was a cult, a secret society with its masters and devotees. It was a hangover of the old pagan cults, a secret protest against the strict religion of the day. Its members were in every country, mostly France and England. A few perhaps came to America.

But every description of "Robin," the master of the witch's Sabbath, held at full moon, is exactly like the Devil of New England folklore. The same tall, gaunt figure, the same somber clothing, the face hidden by the odd hat. The same sudden appearances and vanishings from sight. And seen by many. Very many.

Naturally we had ghost stories and haunted houses. My first sight of the haunted house was frightening. It stood in a field, half a mile from the bridge. It was unpainted, falling in ruins. No one would live in it. No one had for more than 50 years. The house was

haunted. Many years ago there had been a murder committed there. Since then, one of the victims walked at night.

As I remember it, it was a simple murder, with nothing exotic about it. A sea captain returned home from the sea some weeks before his vessel was expected to be due. Unlike the Romans, on similar occasions, who always gave their wives a day's notice before their return, this sailor decided his homecoming should be a surprise. It was, to all parties concerned. Finding his wife entertaining a neighbor (the description of the entertainment was omitted out of respect for my tender years), the Captain killed both the neighbor and the wife, then vanished. The house remained empty for years, then people moved in, and promptly moved out. There was a woman robed in white who walked through the rooms at night. Loud sighs and cries were heard. Every tenant of the house told the same story. Finally no one could be found who would live in it. When I saw it, it had been falling to pieces for 50 years.

There were tales of ghostly lights seen off the Isle of Shoals – of a ship lured on the rocks by wreckers. But these stories were not impressive. There were always lights offshore and near the Isle of Shoals. Ships were always passing in the night. It would be difficult to recognize a "ghostly light."

There was even a ghost in one of the city churches. The minister, many years before the revolution, was a Royalist during the war. Before it ended he went to England, where he died. But stories were told of his being seen in his robe and wig. Nights he had been seen standing in his old pulpit. Why he should return from overseas to haunt his forsaken church was an unexplained mystery. But most of the church janitors claimed to have seen him.

I came into the town at a time when there were no great figures in the pulpits. Emerson, Parker, Channing had once been names on everyone's lips. They had gone. So had Beecher, There was no one to take their places. There were other names, unknown to our day, of ministers who had left their imprints upon the two states. They were dead. It was a bit difficult to learn just what they had done.

Everett Edward Hale was alive, and spoke in our church some years later, just before his death. But that was in another town in one of my father's later churches. In that church too came Julia Ward Howe, reciting *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. There were others whose lives touched those of the period we call "the flowering of New England." Mostly they were living in the past, trying to interest those of the present, who were not much concerned with what they had to say. The church was changing.

Once it had ruled New England. Its power vanished only to revive under a handful of clergymen who went forth to battle against a rigid theology and against slavery. But that day was now over. There were no great causes and no great clergymen to go forth and fight for them had they existed. The great day in the church was over.

It was in such a background in this old historic town I was to spend my boyhood. As I look back, they were happy days, a great deal more sane than the present.

Chapter 2

It was very comforting to live so close to God, thought at times it was a little frightening. The church was on part of our yard, only a few feet from the parsonage. It was called "God's House," and we heard the term almost every Sunday. Besides, "God's Eye" was there. I saw it every time I was in church. And it was always open.

Above the pulpit was a large curving arch. In the center was painted a great eye, a realistic eye, with yellow rays extending to the top of the arch. There was a motto surrounding it – *Thy God Seeth You*. No matter where you sat in the church, the eye seemed to be searching into yours.

It rather frightened me. Sitting each Sunday well toward the front. I was presumed to be watching father in the pulpit. But half the time I would be glancing at the Eye and was convinced its rather sinister stare was directly at myself. And I developed a rather queer idea. The Eye was open Sunday – that was God's day – but during the week it was closed. I was certain of that.

This idea in the end was suddenly shattered. There had been wild discussions among my schoolmates regarding the Eye. That it was open Sunday we all knew and my argument that it was closed during the week was generally accepted. Then one day we decided on a simple solution. We would go into the church on a week day and see for ourselves. That would settle the argument. It did.

It was not hard to secure the key; it hung on a nail over our kitchen sink. Three of us slipped through the back door of the church. It seemed very still and empty. We crept over the basement floor and up the stairs to stand before the door leading to the auditorium. We were uneasy, a little awed by the silence. Then one of us flung the door open. One look and we were rushing down the stairs, over the basement floor, out to the yard. We had seen the Eye as we looked into the church; it was open, and its look had been directly on us.

The church burned a few weeks later. I found in the ruins a large piece of plaster from the pulpit arch. It was the center of the Eye, blackened by smoke, with a hole where the pupil had been. That ended all interest in the Eye. Since the fire had started in the auditorium, where every inch was under the Eye's scrutiny, it should have know the church was afire. In the new church building there was nothing above the pulpit. So far as I can recall no one missed the all-seeing Eye. At least, one did not.

It was not a large town, though a very old one. The sea was close by and the swift flowing river separated us from the small city in the neighboring state. There were old colonial houses flanking the dusty main street. Houses built by revolutionary heroes and sea captains, in which their descendants still lived. It was a static town, 50 years ago, with a population about the same, year after year. Little real poverty, no one with wealth, with no class distinctions, no intolerances.

There were two churches. Ours was the older and the larger; it had grown up with the town and its membership took in most of the old families. The congregation was increased at times by officers from the ships laid up for repairs in the Navy Yard. Their blue uniforms always intrigued the boys scattered among the congregation.

Some of the members of that congregation would today be called "characters." Sea captains with white hair who rolled a little as they walked. One who took up the collection at the age of 80 had spent three years ice-locked in the Arctic. Another at the age of 21 had made one of the fastest sailing trips from China to Salem. There were retired seamen in that congregation, though only a very few had been captains.

I can still see our doctor coming into the church when the service was half over. He always seemed in a hurry as he dropped into the pew in front of us. A slight man, living in the same house where before him had been other doctors of his family. I remember a story told about his father – a doctor whose kindness and gruff speech were still remembered. The house in which his son lived had a library of over 1600 books and I had the run of it. The old doctor never joined the church, though once in a while he would come in when the services were half concluded.

True, once his wife had him on the verge of joining. In that day the church had a statement of belief, more or less loosely accepted. It was discarded in 1890. All candidates for membership were required to go through an examination before the deacons. That day, a glowering doctor stood beside the minister and the spiritual leaders of the church. Questions were asked, then the minister turned to the doctor:

"Are you willing to be damned for the glory of God?"

The doctor gave a start and whirled to rush from the church study, but paused at the door to roar, "I'll be damned if I will be damned for the glory of anyone!"

He never joined the church though he helped support it all his life.

Evidently, he had no use for sentiment or self pity. One day he was treating a man who had discovered that a casual love affair can lead to complications. The man was protesting he had been over punished for his sins. The doctor stood it as long as he could, then broke out, "Stop sniffling. You're being punished for being a fool. For picking up a cheap whore."

It was his son who said his father on his departure for college told him, "If you get into trouble of any sort let me know at once. I will get you out. But, if you make the same mistake twice, I'll whale the life out of you."

There was a colored man, hard of hearing, who sat in a front pew. Old, straight as an arrow, as the saying is, with snow-white hair. A proud man, whose bow was the most gracious I have ever seen. He told me his great-grandfather had been at the same time a king and a judge. Years later I discovered this to be true.

There were slaves in New England till about the time of the Civil War. In 1767, in the city across the river, were 187 slaves. Their lot was far from unpleasant. They were

permitted to have their own social meetings and had a mock government. His great-grandfather had indeed been a king.

Every year the slaves held an election. They chose a king who was also a judge, a sheriff and other officials. If any slave was guilty of a crime, bringing discredit on his race, he was tried by his own people. If guilty, they punished him. Their elected king presided as judge. Their masters as a rule accepted their decisions.

No law was ever passed in our neighboring state abolishing slavery. But after the Revolution, most of them were emancipated by their owners. Many refused to accept freedom and lived out their lives with their former masters. There was never any evidence of the slightest cruelty toward the colored people. Many dressed as well as their masters – and some had far more dignity.

Though the church was the center of my life and that of the town, yet I cannot recall any theological implications from the pulpit. The church was presumed to teach kindness, charity, and tolerance. No one pressed any particular beliefs upon anyone. People were sincere in their convictions, but they were not fanatics. There was little effort to "convert" others. Both churches were on very friendly terms.

One of the deacons had been a sailor until the age of 70. His life had been spent before the mast; he had sailed around the world a dozen times. Lack of education had prevented promotions. And so, retired, he became a constant church attendant. In education and background he could hardly compare with the other deacons, but he was made one of their number. It ws done because of the simplicity and sweetness of his character. Everyone loved the old man. He it was who told me of seeing a sea-serpent and the Devil. Father's only comment, which tells a good deal, was: "If uncle Johnny says he saw a sea-serpent, then he did." But I remember mostly the odd way he treated and mixed the English language. His instincts were always correct. His manner of expressing them oftimes weird.

Father had been very ill. On the first Sunday after his recovery he walked into the Sunday school, the old sailor was overjoyed to see again his beloved minister. He rose to his feet and poured out his soul in prayer:

"We thank The, Lord, for sparing our minister's useless and unprofitable life."

Father, weak from his long illness, laughed so hard he had to be assisted back home and to bed.

I saw the old sailor die, in Sunday school. It was a warm June day with the sea breeze creeping in through opened windows. The old man rose to say he hoped they would have a good picnic for the children. He loved children. Suddenly he sank to the floor. I had often heard him say "When I go aloft to meet the Skipper, I hope he calls me suddenly." The Skipper did. The old man died in an instant in the church he loved so well.

I had to go to college before I ever realized there was such a thing as intolerance or that I was supposed to hate races or individuals of another race or religion. It took ranting clergymen, politicians seeking votes, undercover societies to show me that ugly side of human nature. I never knew such a thing. None of us who lived in towns such as mine knew about it then. We did, later.

Anti-Semitism I had never heard of as a boy. In the church, two soloists were daughters of our Jewish storekeeper. A colored man passed the collection plate. An Indian and a Buddhist attended the church during the summer. Greenacre, that summer school for seekers of the esoteric, was nearby, and we had leaders of oriental religions speak in the church. That they converted anyone to their philosophies is doubtful. The old sea captains had seen some of their religions at close hand might express a salty opinion as to their value, but would never have dreamed of preventing them from speaking.

I used to go with father to Greenacre. It was a few miles up the river, which meant we either sailed or rowed the distance. It was a gathering place of those interested in the occult, and introduced the Swamis, Yogis and Behaists to America. It was a pleasant place, the people – mostly women – kindly and gracious. I sat in a large tent listening to lectures I could not comprehend. Then father would allow me to creep out of the tent and play about the grounds. Greenacre, as a school for philosophy, vanished years ago, but it had an influence.

I wonder what my father's church members would have thought of a campaign manager who publically boasted "We set out to set race against race, labor against capital, religion against religion. Perhaps it was immoral – *but we won!*" Such a statement would have caused much indignation from *all* groups. In 1948 only a few papers published it. It was too commonplace.

There was another colored person in the church, a woman who was 80 when I first knew her. She always insisted she was going to live to be a hundred. She did, and added two years to her wish. A rather short, stout woman, half Indian, half Negro, who had been a slave and had spent a goodly portion of her life as a cook for wealthy summer visitors. When she attended church, dressed in rustling black silk, with a white lace collar and cuffs, gold chain and brooch, she was easily the best dressed and most dignified woman in the congregation, and the most gracious-mannered.

I remember father and one of his deacons made her garden each spring. I would go on Saturdays to her little white cottage, hoping for a slice of her famous fruit cake. That she was colored of course I could see, but that was all I ever realized. The entire town attended her funeral.

When my father resigned that church to take another charge, she insisted he take with him her most cherished possession, a very unusual and beautiful picture of Abraham Lincoln. Where she acquired it I wish I knew. In fact, despite much effort upon my part I am unable to discover anything about it. No Lincoln authority knows anything about it. It hangs in my study as it did in my father's.

There was of course intolerance then, mostly in the larger cities. Sadly enough, it came from those groups who themselves had come to this country to escape religious and political intolerance. But it was not the vicious, commercial, organized racket of today. And among what many call our middle class, and what we called our better class (and perhaps they were), it did not exist.

The church had no clubs for boys or girls. They were hardly needed. I, like the others, did belong to a "band of hope," which was sponsored by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. We enjoyed the monthly meeting, since there were always cakes and cookies. The "Band" was no doubt a worthy thing. Still, we never knew anyone who was unkind to animals. And there was, of course, Sunday school. Ever that for me.

It was a meeting place for those who had not seen each other during the week. A rather noisy session during which patient women tried to lead us through the weekly lesson. It took almost as long as Paul to go through his voyages... The only one which interested us was his shipwreck. But that Sunday school did one thing. If we see any Biblical references in a book we at least know what they are. That's more than most of our young people can do today. And then each Sunday a large, vividly colored picture was presented to illustrate the weekly lesson. It was hung on a wall. Some of the pictures I can still recall, 60 years later. Vividly the Ark of Noah, on a very blue sea. And the one of Moses with his stone tablets. And the crossing of the Red Sea.

There were many more things connected with the church that I remember. I learned to ride a bicycle in the basement. It was a large room. During the week the chairs were stacked in one corner of the room. In the center was a large furnace with a gleaming tin jacket. Pledging me to secrecy, father took the bicycle into the church and my instruction began. How he ever explained the great dent in the tin jacket caused by my running head first into the furnace, I never knew. Neither of us ever mentioned it.

Of course, as the minister's son I was expected to attend all the services on Sunday. There was also another reason. Mother had no one whom she could call upon to look after me evenings. The evening services (they had them in those days) began at seven and were over by eight. As a rule I slept through it all. And as to what was preached from the pulpit, I cannot remember but a single sermon of the thousands I heard him preach. But as I look back, I think there was a reason.

He was not a sensational preacher. None of those whom I knew in my boyhood were. He had the idea that the duty of a minister was to talk about religion, not politics. And that meant that individuals could shape their lives by the teachings of Christ – very simple teachings. Just love, charity, tolerance. Let people so conduct themselves and all things would go well. So, though only one sermon can be recalled, the spirit and philosophy was ever felt.

Father preached over four thousand sermons, and was presumed to be a good speaker. So far as I can tell from his sermon books, he rarely repeated. Yet of the many I

heard, I recall but one. It is difficult today to know why, at the age of thirteen, that one sermon stays with me after all these years. It was about Judas.

We were told that Judas was a much-maligned individual. Perhaps he had been the only one who believed in Jesus. Puzzled, wanting the kingdom to come, he tried to place his leader in a position in which he would act. Then, utterly dismayed by the death of the one he loved, he committed suicide. Though at the time my father was unaware of it, some scholars later took this viewpoint. I remember the moral at the end of the sermon was that we should not judge anyone unless we know all the facts.

Only once was father at the center of loud shrieks of protests and received scores of angry letters. In his youth he had worked in a mill and belonged to the Knights of Labor. In a sermon he said in passing that certain labor leaders had been in America too short a time to understand our history and background. That statement was repeated in the newspapers. Then letters came, violent, and as a rule poorly spelled. His only comment as he showed them to me was, ""look at the names signed on them." Of course you would be called intolerant if you said that today. He was right.

There were a few services that can be recalled. Each Memorial Sunday the Commandant of the Navy Yard and his staff attended church. In formal dress, they would march into their reserved pews. The church was always jammed that morning. Once they even brought the Navy Band, but once only – the din almost shattered the walls of the church.

One Memorial Day service three unusual things happened. There was a dog living across the street who tried every Sunday morning to sneak into the church. This day he succeeded. Since father was praying and presumably the congregation also had their eyes closed, Grover reached the platform and lay down beside the pulpit, The prayer ended, and the minister stepped back – onto the dog's tail. With a loud yelp the animal leaped into the air. The second thing happened that same morning. Father had repeated the Lord's Prayer thousands of times. This time, right in the middle of the petition he paused, and then he started all over again. Three times he tried to repeat the prayer and failed. He had forgotten it. Then came his third misfortune. He rose, went to the pulpit, and placed his sermon notes before him. Through the open windows came a gust of wind that lifted the sheets of paper and gently wafted them through the window on the other side of the platform. After that, nothing further took place.

There was the Sunday the church burned and the nearby parsonage almost shared its fate. It was exciting to me, but far from it to my parents. We were to move to a large city in two weeks. We never went. Father thought he could not go until he had helped the people rebuild their church. There was only one thing saved from the burning building, and that was the Sunday school library. And that never would have been missed if burned. It was brought over to the parsonage. There were 150 of the most pious books ever written for children. I read them all. Only *Black Beauty* was of any value and I had already read that.

The new church was finally built but it held no charm for me. It would have been impossible to learn to ride a bicycle in that basement. Nor would I have been able to use the steeple as a place to read dime novels. There was no high steeple, and besides, I was growing up.

The other month I spent Sunday mornings listening to radio sermons. There are so many – of all faiths – all types of voices. But nearly all were pleading to join some cause, back some idea or society which would save the world. A few raved, others begged. Oddlt enough, after you put aside those who talked of theological ideas most of us have cast aside, few seemed to be talking of religion. Those who analyzed world affairs showed an astonishing lack of knowledge of the books written by people who knew something of the world. Most of them were against something: books should be censored, birth control banned. But somehow, one missed something. I wonder if it was the feeling one felt in that New England church?

The other evening, there came over the air the whistle of a boat in a seaport 4000 miles away. All at once I was back in a little room in the church. It was the mid-week prayer meeting, a service I rarely attended. There were perhaps 20 people in the room, and it was very silent for minutes at a time.

Near a window I was leaning, half asleep close to mother. Through the open window I could see the lights of the city and the nearby Navy Yard. From the river drifted the low whistle of a tug. Fireflies sparkled in the fields which stretched to the water's edge. It was peaceful in that room, a sort of serenity which caused me to be relaxed and sleepy. Mother roused me when the service ended and we rose to our feet. The humn with which we always closed drifted quietly out the windows into the streets, out into the night:

"God be with you until we meet again."

As I think back through the years, somehow I believe those people really meant that hymn.

Chapter 3

Judged by all the standards of today we were poor, but we never knew it. Any worker nowadays, whose labor boss calls him out on strike, receives more in unemployment compensation or "insurance" than did my father weekly. Of course father had what is today an absurd idea, that it was his duty to point out to others what their duties were. Their "rights" were intermingled with their duties. That anyone who could work should be paid for not working never entered his head. His $20 a week was under what men working in the Navy Yard received.

But we did have a house, the parsonage next to the church – a large house. It was 60 years old when we moved into it and should last for a hundred years more. Unlike the modern boxes they build today and call homes, this was an honestly built house. It cost $1400. Today, a similar house would cost $20,000. But it would not have the fine seasoned timber in it, the good strong nails, and heavy timbers. But of course our house was not "modern."

I have seen many of these modern houses. Some glitter with steel walls and wide windows. They are as antiseptic as an operating room or a barber shop. They have all the modern improvements. They only have one fault. They are not meant to be lived in. They resemble offices, not homes. Others are mere boxes, shoddy.

An acquaintance recently showed me through his new home. He had spent $30,000 on it. The walls were plastic, the chairs steel. It was cold, dreary. I asked a question: "Where will you put books?" He gave a swift glance around the plastic walls, then said, "Oh books. Who reads those?"

Our house was a home, the center of family life. We lived in every room of it save the two extra bedrooms on the second floor, and they were frequently occupied by guests. There were well-filled bookcases, and two fireplaces (one smoked badly). True, it lacked modern plumbing, but no house had it then. And we were all there. We did not need to go outside for our entertainment.

We ate lots of fish. Father had built a boat. True, its building had caused him trouble. He had built it in the cellar, during the winter. It was a flat-bottomed affair. When spring came he found he could not get it through the cellar doors. He had to rip it apart and rebuild it in the yard.

We spent many hours in that boat. We would drift with the tide down the river, perhaps three miles. Then we would fish. They were easy to catch. A great white cod would take the hook and be dragged into the boat. Pollock, of which there were thousands, were also easy to catch. We threw them aside. I believe they get $.50 a pound for them now. Also, I have an idea that much of the mackerel and bluefish for sale nowadays is really pollock.

One day we saw a whale. We were fishing close to where the river flowed into the sea. Suddenly the water heaved. Up came a great head, and then the long length of the whale. It was fairly close to our small boat. It was by far the largest thing I had ever seen. As it rose in the water it did not even glance at our boat; it just swam away. We continued fishing, but I was frightened.

Our fish were mostly cod and halibut. Once in a while we would catch a fish, which after it was in the boat, would start to swell until it was much larger than its original size. These we used as bait for our lobster pots.

Father liked fish, but the rest of us were not so fond of it. Mother liked it as father invariably cleaned and cooked his catch himself, and later washed the pan in which it was cooked. We had fine fish chowders, a rarity nowadays. Great cod, stuffed with dressing and a delicious cream sauce. Lobsters, all we could eat. Clams, dug from the beach three miles down the river. And tiny mussels picked from the rocks at low tide. They had to be steamed almost at once. Dipped in melted butter, they had a delicate flavor that never palled. Cunners, of which you could always find thousands. Few ate them then. Mother fried them in batter. They were very good. Nowadays you buy them under the name of blue perch, sea perch, etc. The nearby river and sea gave us nearly half of our food. Many of the fish being sold today we never would have eaten. Of course, too, we had a fine garden.

There were, of course, no canned goods in our home. Mother did all the canning and jelly and conserve making. Every Saturday I could watch her prepare the beans for our supper that evening. They had been "put out to soak" Friday evening. On Saturday morning they were placed in the brown bean pot with large slices of salt pork. Molasses was added, and into a "slow oven" went the pot, its contents to cook all day. Bread was baked, and pies. The brown bread steamed on the top of the stove. The tantalizing odors of a Saturday always kept father and we two boys close to the kitchen. I have rarely missed, all my life, having baked beans and brown bread on Saturday night. As long as my mother lived, she always baked her own bread.

In a study issued by the government none so long ago I read two interesting items. The first told, with propaganda for the government bureau, how forty years ago we did not eat as well as nowadays. The second item was how to use left over canned goods. The professor who wrote the pamphlet was from somewhere in the Middle West, Iowa I think. What he knew about New England cooking of 40 years ago was less than nothing. We did not need government bureaus in those days to tell us what to eat. And there were seldom leftovers.

Mother always bought her flour and sugar by the barrel. Once I fell headlong into an almost empty barrel of flour. I was a long time getting rid of all the flour. It was pervasive stuff that got everywhere and clung.

Those Saturdays with the fresh, wholesome bread and biscuits, at night the delicious beans and brown bread. What does that professor, with his degree from a state-subsidized college, know of how well we New Englanders lived and ate?

Meat was cheap and milk was five cents a quart. Since my brother and I disliked milk we did not buy much. Fruits – apples, pears, peaches – were too common to have a market. Anyone would give you all you wished. Berries gre wild everywhere.

I due remember our first grape fruit. A judge in Florida, a family friend, sent us one Christmas a box of fruit, oranges and a few grape fruit, the first we had ever seen. We cared little for them.

Father had little difficulty in getting people to attend church. After all, in those days, it was the social meeting place of the community. He had an ideait was his duty to instruct his people. When he died, still a minister, he had given up the idea. He quoted Socrates, who mentioned a man who traveled the world over of his time. The sage had said, "But everywhere he went he carried himself." Like the philosopher, father in his later years concluded it was impossible to educate people with little background and little within themselves.

But when I was a boy, he did think it was possible. True, most of the people in our town had about the same background. In a sense, lectures meant little. But it was the day fo lectures. All over the country, men were speaking to audiences both eager to hear and see them. Father's lectures were very cheap, ten cents as a rule, with no one turned away if he came without the fee.

William Dean Howells spoke. Most of the townspeople knew him. His summer place was only four miles below the town. A cordial, heavy-set man. I cannot recall his lecture. A swami, in robes, came from Greenacre. He spoke for an hour, with no one quite certain about what he was talking. Father played with the idea of asking Robert Ingersoll to speak. Today, churchmen have gone far beyond him in the criticism of the Bible. He was at a shore hotel; father had met him, and like others, was impressed. He gave up the idea in the end. After all, it was a church and Mr. Ingersoll's remarks about the Bible and churches were scarcely flattering.

Father's last public lecture was a sad blow. A well-known apostle of temperance held a three-day meeting in the church. We children attended an afternoon session and were persuaded to sign the pledge. For three nights the man packed them in. On the fourth day he was arrested in the city for being drunk on the street, with a prostitute on his arm. That ended all the lectures for a long time. Later, father became much interested in prohibition. Before he died, however, he sadly admitted that it had been a terrible mistake.

There was little to do in our town in the way of amusements. I doubt if many desired to get away from their comfortable homes. Either they were too weary by nightfall or too contented. Home was really the centerof their lves. People spent but little time visitng one another. They had less leisure, but it was perhaps more wisely spent.

Amusements perforce were simple. There were no movies, no radios, no television, no automobiles. Save for entertainments at church or an occasional communal lecture, we

stayed home. There was not the restlessness of today, the apparent dread of being home without outsiders, the need for entertainment. No one ever ate outside of the home. There was no restaurant in our town and certainly no tea room.

I remember the first phonograph I ever heard. One evening father took me to a home. There was our Judge, the Doctor, and our host, the town's one lawyer. On the table was a black box, with a large horn attached. Soberly, and very proudly, the lawyer cranked the machine. Then into the room came music. True, it was shrill and squeaky. But after all, it was music and from a box. I think we were all awed. Father and I walked home in the darkness. I remember he said, "It will be better, in the years to come."

One thing we looked forward to eagerly was the "Old Folks Concert." They would start rehearsing early in the fall, and just before Christmas the concert would be given to a packed church. Those who took part had ransacked attics for their costumes. It was mostly singing, songs like *Carry me back to old Virginia*. A nervous girl would sing *Oh, Promise Me*. But it was the owner of the meat market we liked. Large, fat, with his face blacked, he would sing *Old Black Joe*. I presume he had sung it for years, yet we always laughed at the sight of him and wildly applauded.

Then father got out a magic lantern and gave two lectures. There was a sheet stretched before the pulpit, but it was somewhat wrinkled and the pictures showed unexpected distortions. The church lamps would be turned down very low. You couldsmell the oil, see smoke issuing from the chimneys. On the sheet one could see colored pictures, distorted but thrilling. But the slides with pictures of white snow and ice and polar bears I can still recall. When, years later, I met Dr. Cook (whom I believe a little more than I do Peary), I mentioned that lecture and the slides. He remarked he must have seen the same ones, and that the pictures had a good deal to do with his interest in the Arctic.

The family income was about $30 a week, unless my $1.80 from my paper route was counted. But that, all save 20 cents a week, was carefully banked toward my college education. There was no talk of money at our home, nor was there ever any credit buying. We understood if we wanted anything, first to be certain that it was needed and next if we could afford it. Always cash must be paid for whatever was purchased.

Mother, as the minister's wife, had of course to belong to a Larkin club. The chairman of the club received special gifts for organizing the club. We spent hours looking over the catalog when mother was the chairman. The things were not too bad. The bookcase she received has long ago vanished, but I still have the chair.

Once I wanted a certain premium and sold bluing to obtain it. It came in small packages and cost a dime. You sold ten, returned the money, and then received the premium, which was absolutely useless. The trouble was, all we boys were selling bluing. Only the mothers would buy it. We sold only to mothers whose sons in return sold to our mother. The mothers decided one consignment of bluing was sufficient.

It was about this time I heard of my first strike. Alas, how many others I have heard of since. I do not recall the details, but 10 men went on a strike because the town had hired a Greek to help dig ditches. Father went into action. In print he reminded the 10 they had themselves but lately come from Ireland. Why did they have any right to call any immigrant not an American? The strike ended fast.

But father got an idea from the incident. Many years later, disgusted with the prevalence of unnecessary strikes, his idea grew. I have tried to interest publishers in it. But at present they are more interested in fake historical novels, with big-breasted women on lurid covers. Two even called the idea "un-American." Shades of my father.

He wanted, in later years, a survey, a book written which would tell us where our labor leaders were born, their educational background, whether they were American citizens, and the amount of their salaries. He had concluded that most of those who make so much trouble in our country are, at best, the first generation, children whose parents came here for freedom. He listened to a famous radio priest one evening mouthing intolerance and hatred. Father said, "He was not born here. And he forgets the lack of tolerance within his own church."

Father heard the labor leaders calling out men on absurd strikes. He wonders how the men could be so foolish. He looked up the background and nationality of these labor leaders. It made him wonder the more. These people came to this country for freedom, tolerance. Now they are the most intolerant people we have. And what has become of love for one's country?

I mentioned the South. He had been there and did not like their attitude towards the colored race. Yet he firmly believed in states rights. He declared, "Every state should take care of its own problems. Why ever allow a group of politicians to dictate what people should do?"

The strike ended. All was calm, but for the first time he was called names. It never troubled him. He did, while it lasted, read the sheet that said he was "un-American." I think the odds were with him. He and his family had been here a long time, before the others had arrived.

The furniture in the house was ample, not too old. But it was all friendly, homelike. We did not redecorate each year; no one suggested we "modernize" our home. The couches you could lie upon, even put your feet on them. The chairs were old and comfortable. All were a part of our living. Few dishes were bought, and we never had to listen to such inanities as "soap which washed whiter than white." Only one new thing came into our home when I was a child.

Father was a musician. He almost "went into music instead of the church." He played a pipe organ very well and had a fine tenor voice. He wanted an organ in his home. Mother said we could not afford it. I think they cost $50. There were arguments. One day the organ

appeared. After that, many were the nights I went to sleep listening to my father play the organ.

There were but few really poor people in the town. On our streets lived two sisters whom everyone agreed were very poor. Mother used to take food to them. One Thanksgiving father had two turkeys given him. I was sent with one to give to the poor women. When I entered the kitchen, there on the table was a turkey, stuffed, ready for the oven. When they died, they left an estate of $40,000.

Money was never spent carelessly in our home. A new suit meant talking it over. Then I would be taken to the city. Time and care was spent selecting suitable, well-wearing cloth. I had but few toys. I did have a bicycle, which the family later regretted. It seems I was never on time for supper. And one Christmas I received a wonderful boat.

It was the annual Christmas festival at our church. A great arch had been constructed over the pulpit. It was loaded with gifts. On the platform was a house, covered in red paper that looked like bricks. Santa Claus came out of the house and distributed the gifts. At the very peak of the arch was a big boat, a battleship. It was 30 inches long, 13 inches tall, the sort of toy a boy dreams about. Throughout the evening my name was called among the others, but my gifts received scant attention. All I could see was that boat. We boys were all excited, whispering, wondering as to the lucky boy. It was the very last gift taken down. When my name was called, I was almost too dazed with joy to go up and receive it. I played with it for years. When my son was old enough, I gave it to him, and it was still as good s when I received it. Later we gave it away. Mother at the time thought it was money foolishly spent. Father understood what it meant to me. It had cost $2.00. No one could measure the pleasure I received from it. It lasted for 30 years. Perhaps some small boy is still playing with it.

I know that it is easy to say now "in a planned security" that father was either unseeing or a member of a dying society. His type has died it is true, to be replaced with all the confusion of today. With gang leaders, corrupt politicians and labor leaders all seeking power, and with a chance too that the entire world may be wiped out. It is still my conviction that the ethics and the teachings delivered from his pulpit were far better and more honest.

Down below the house, close to the river, was a coal yard and a little shed. Here two men built dories. I spent many an hour there. The door would be open and the wind from the river would rustle the sweet-smelling shavings. They worked very slowly for long hours. But they refused to sell a boat unless "it was right." Right to them meant pride in their work. The dories were cheap; I doubt if they cost more than $25. When business was good they made three a week. They vanished long ago. Dories are now made in mass production. The price is much higher. No one working on them cares if they "are right."

The only luxury in our home was books. Father, on his infrequent trips to Boston – for what purpose I never knew, unless it was because his denomination had its headquarters

there – always came back with a book for me. There was *Robinson Crusoe* in an English edition with fine woodcuts, and both the first and second parts. He brought it home one dark, rainy night. Later I found him reading it in his study when he was presumed to be working on his sermon.

Once he came back with Rollins' *Ancient History*. It was in three volume, od, the cover in not too good a condition. Nor was the history, as I discovered years later. But all one winter I read and reread it. There were talks at the supper table of Caesar, Hannibal, and others. Father said he had picked it up in a second-hand shop for fifty cents.

One day he came back with *Clarissa*, Richardson's famous novel. There were seven volumes. They were old. Why he bought it we did not comprehend. None of us found it interesting. Mother used to say she never minded giving up anything "if it meant a book for the boys."

Father always saved 10% of his salary. This was spent for the church, charities, and what was left was banked. He believed in thrift and thought a man should support himself and his family. When he died, the government stepped in, took away a goodly portion of his years of thrift that he had intended to care for their old age. It left mother with about half as much as he had intended her to have. But it was needed to support those of today who know nothing of thrift, have no sense of personal responsibility. But they all have votes, which reminds me...

We did have an unusual voting system in our state. Everyone could vote for a president, governor or other state officials. But if the law to be voted on was about money, only those who owned property and paid their taxes could vote to spend the town's money. After all, it has always seemed logical to me. The taxpayers are the ones who furnish the money.

But. In the end, the politicians leaped in. It was not a "fair system," it was undemocratic, un-American." Finally the law was changed. In rushed the voters, the non-paying citizens. They voted for a stadium for the high school – but neglected the hospital. In all, they voted for the spending of several millions, all paid for by the few. The mass of voters paid nothing at all. It still does not sound like the "American way" to me.

Father fought the change in the law, and once again he was called names. His position was simple: People should have responsibility and pay their fair share for what they wanted. His words did little good. No one listened. The crowd, whipped up by a political publicity man who later went to jail for graft, won out. In rushed the crowd, voting for expenditure of money they did not have. Once again father suggested he would like to know the background of those who were using the people in order to gain power. He had his own opinions. They were never too popular.

Judged by today's standards, we must have been very poor. We never knew it. I saw a government document recently that stated every family should have an income of $3000 annually. They listed the things needed. There was a radio, payments on a car, $150 for

"amusements," and nothing, of course, for books. Not a word about such things as culture, charity, church work. There was a small item for education.

Naturally we had no radio; they were unknown. Save for the news that tells us what sort of worried world we live in, I doubt if we missed much, save some excellent music. There were no movies, no ballyhoo about so-called stars, most of whom father would never have allowed in his home. No cars. But we never felt the need to rush about to one place to find another just like the one we had left. No dishwashers, though dishes got washed, and no protests from mother about "dishpan hands." No beauty parlors, whose constant ballyhoo keeps our radio silent much of the time. No love story magazines. No appeals for aid or advice as to how to cope with juvenile delinquency. The average home took care of that. No news of teachers on a strike, nor loud appeals to hate someone or something. Why we must have been barely civilized.

Father discovered these things before his death. He had preached tolerance, thrift and patriotism, and he practiced them all. He used to advise young men to take out insurance so those close to them would have some protection. He saved on his small salary, retired in a very modest income. Just before he was killed by a speed-happy driver, he went to a town meeting to protest the building of a $250,000 stadium for the local high school sports. It was his old-fashioned idea the town needed a hospital far more than a stadium. That a new high school should be built. As a taxpayer, he rose and stated his views. He was, to his immense surprise, called an "economic royalist."

The individual who shouted at him had been in this country but 30 years, and in our town but 15. He paid no taxes, so of course the new stadium would cost him nothing. Father, besides being called an economic royalist – I suppose because he owned his own home – was told he was "out of step with the modern world." Indeed, he was old-fashioned" and "out of step with his times."

Chapter 4

Between the ages of 11 and 14 I was engaged in what might be called literary research. True, my parents, save on one occasion, knew little of my labors. But it is also true they were more or less suspicious.

Every morning at 8 I walked over the long bridge to the Navy Yard. It was always an interesting walk. Ships to gaze upon, the dry dock to pass. Then I boarded the naval tender to go across the river to school.

Every afternoon, save on Thursdays, two of us took the 3:30 tender back to the Navy Yard. We who came from across the river were excused a little early in order to catch the boat. But on Thursdays I always sailed across the river at 4:30. There was a very good reason for my taking the later boat.

Close to the boat landing was a small tobacco and news shop. It was a dingy place, dark, dirty, with a small light on over the counter. At the further end of the store was a long bench, its surface a vivid mass of color. They were the dim novels (true, they cost but five cents) that came out that day. The bench held stacks of thin pamphlets whose covers promised exciting adventures within. Plainsmen were struggling with Indians, whose tomahawks were lifted high in the air. Others, gaudy in red, yellow and black, hinted of adventures in unnamed countries.

The store was run by a kindly old German who allowed us to spend all the time we wished at this fascinating counter. Since he never came around to see what we were doing, we managed to scan most of the weekly issues before spending out precious five cents, for that was the total amount either of us had.

There was the *Tip Top Weekly*, where Frank Merriwell began his long career. I must have started reading them about this time, and in all I read over 200 issues. I noticed recently a complete collection sold for a little of $1000. We paid five cents. Any with the covers in good condition are worth a dollar or more today.

There was another weekly, *Work and Win*. Its chief character was Fred Fearnot. He went through rough adventures similar to the other hero. Somehow these never thrilled me. My closest friend however had little use for Frank Merriwell. Long were the arguments between us of the respective merits and abilities of the two heroes, arguments which died away when we attended high school and lost all our interest in dime novels.

There were so many of these weeklies. Nick Carter was the best liked of the detective tales. Old Sleuth, Cap Collier and King Brady the Quaker detective in the main did not interest us. Perhaps it was due to the fact that Old Sleuth and Cap Collier were coming to an end. Besides, they had no colored covers.

There was Diamond Dick. The first one I read was *Diamond Dick on his Metal: Or, the All Star Combination*. The gaudy cover showed the masked hero battling on top of a train of cars. Somehow I never cared for the Western tales and read few of them.

The Frank Read Jr. stories and a similar series, Frank Wright, were interesting, though we did not see them every week. They are rather valuable today. The author died but a few years ago.

I still recall covers of the steam man, also the flying machine, the submarine, and the tank. Wild, impossible tales of inventions by youths – inventions which today are commonplace, but fantastic then.

Pluck and Luck, with its stories of the west, adventures and travel, always seemed to us a little uneven. The stories by "The Old Scout" – all adventures with the Indians – we generally passed over. But I still remember some of the stories of exploration in the Polar regions and in Africa. The series went on for years after I had given them up.

There was another series – I am not certain if it was *The Starry Flag* or The *Red White and Blue*. Perhaps there were two, for one dealt with the adventures of an ensign, the other of an army lieutenant. Which of the two, perhaps both, won the Spanish-American War single-handed, was hard to discover. Both series were written by Upton Sinclair. I read them all.

There was also a humorous weekly. True, I never knew anyone who read them. Once experience was enough for me. I did not find it all that funny. As a rule, we stuck to *Nick Carter* and *Tip Top*.

It must not be presumed we bought all these weeklies. I would buy *Tip Top*, another boy, *Nick Carter*, etc. They would be passed around. It might require a week before a tattered *Pluck and Luck* came to me, or a *Diamond Dick*.

Now, my parents never knew of my literary efforts. They did wonder why each Thursday it was necessary for me to be an hour late to reach home. I made of course some explanation, not true. Something to do with an extra musical period at school. As I was the worst musical pupil in the school, the explanation was accepted.

But one day to my horror my father discovered me reading a Nick Carter in the Polar Regions. The cover was lurid. There was a polar bear comforting the hero on an ice floe. Somehow it failed to create any enthusiasm in my father's heart. It was confiscated and I received a lecture on the evils of cheap literature. It was a problem I found easy to solve.

The church was next door. It had a high steeple to which one could climb. Once on the platform, all I had to do was draw a bolt and I was safe from the world. There, high above the dusty street, I read in safe seclusion my dime novels. When the church burned down, I had at least a hundred stored up there. They were not rescued, although the Sunday school library was.

There was a good deal of prejudice against the dime novels in religious circles. Father was not much concerned. He was trying to direct my reading to what he called "good literature." But just as today much juvenile delinquency is blamed upon the "comics," so in my youth the five cent novel was the culprit. Church and school thundered against them to no avail.

Yet there never was a more moral literature for youth. Frank Merriwell went through over a thousand volumes. He never smoked, swore or took a drink. Nick Carter, despite his remarkable adventures, always saw right triumphant. The world of the heroes of the dime novels was one in which right and virtue always conquered. Evil had no chance at all when Nick Carter or King Brady went into action. The average youth of today would find them dull.

Just why those weeklies were considered trash is hard to see. Perhaps it was the gaudy covers, yellow and red as a rule. Covers which promised more than one found in the text. Yet it is to be doubted that any boy became a delinquent from any of them he read. The *Tip Top Weekly* may have started the interest in sports.

Not all the weeklies were read in the church tower. A school board had provided us with very large Geographies. Behind their dull gray covers could be concealed a gaily colored novel. One could read a good hour in Study Hour. But one day a teacher, a man, descended upon me and took away my book. That noon I came upon him suddenly during the noon recess. There was the teacher, intent on my book. He tried to toss it in a drawer when he saw me.

It was then I received a lesson in psychology. He replaced the novel on the desk, smiled and said "Not a bad story. I will return it at 3:30. Only don't read any more of them during your school hours." I never did.

Dime novels were very far from my only reading. I lived in a town where books were as common as milk for breakfast. Good books. The classics. By 10 I was reading everything I could find. There was no guided course. True, father read through Dickens and Scott each year, and Thackery – the latter probably because he had used an ancestor of ours in his Henry Esmond. At times he would seem to have an idea there were certain things I should read.

Most churches have Sunday school libraries, or they used to have them. Books purchased in sets of 50 to 150. Volumes of insipid piety, which probably explained the reluctance of the average Sunday school scholar to taking these books out. When our church burned no one troubled to replace the library.

Of course we had the *Rollo* books. It has been the practice of bright, clever critics to have a lot of fun with them. It is to be doubted if they ever saw them, much less read them. But they were filled with information, and gave many of us our first vision of foreign lands. Certainly they were better than the comics of today.

There was, until I was 15, a feud over *Pilgrim's Progress*. I was told it was one of the great English classics, ranking next to the Bible. I retorted that it was a silly book, uninteresting. Then, since the family copy was small, with very fine print, I added that it hurt my eyes to read it. Father glanced again at the book and said I might be right. Shortly before, I had had an operation on my eyes. But, he went at once to the city and bought a copy with standard sized type. I was told I could finish the book. Still being opposed to it I tore five pages from the center. When asked at the supper table to detail the ending of the

search for the Holy City, the information was given that I did not know. The book had pages missing.

I believe there was a little suspicion as to just how it happened that a new book had pages missing just where I was to read. The book was returned and this time I received a copy, which is still in my library. Finely bound, with great woodcuts. I did read this copy; it would have been impossible not to have done so. Sunday afternoons I sat in the study from two until three reading *Pilgrim's Progress* with father sitting in a chair beside the window.

When the book was finished my opinion of the great English classic had not changed. I thought it dull, dreary and utterly uninteresting. Two curious things happened as a result from my reading the book.

One, Freud could have explained. Years later, I spent two happy days in Bedford, England. I may be the only American tourist who did not go to see the jail where Bunyon had his vision. Though I was urged to do so, I firmly said "No."

And then the other episode. After almost a year of trying to convince me I should like *Pilgrim's Progress*, one evening my father returned from Boston. That always meant a book. That night when he came to the table he handed me a book, a large, thin volume. "Bunyon wrote other things besides *Pilgrim's Progress*," he said. It was *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, a finely made book with wonderful illustrations. I still have this collector's item.

And I did like it. The hero, if so he could be termed, was truly a bad man – up to all sorts of evil tricks, who reached an end he well deserved. There was much preaching, much moralizing, yet there were several interesting stories used to illustrate the fate of the wicked.

One caused me to resolve to always tell the truth. It was the story of a young girl, a very bad young girl, who was "a Swearer and a Curser and a Liar and a Thief." She denied the stealing of four cents and said, "May God have the ground swallow me up if I have them." The ground promptly opened and she vanished. When they dug her up, in her pocket was four cents. Since Bunyon gave the year, day and month of this revelation of divine power and justice, even named the town, I was convinced of its truth.

I mentioned it to father. His reply was that I must not believe all that I read, a shocking truth at the time. I asked a theological question: "Could God do it?" I was assured that "no doubt He could, but He would never do such a thing." That was fairly satisfactory. As a clergyman, father ought to know what God might do. But to make certain and to be on the safe side, I concluded to stick to the truth. Which I did – for a time.

As a rule there was little effort made to force or censor my reading. Father did try for a time to interest me in Jane Austin, but gave it up. Then as now, it was impossible. Yet at the age of 15 the major portion of the better books had been read.

Magazines were not too common. Almost all the parishioners took the same ones we did: *The Atlantic*, *Independent*, *The Living Age*, and of course *The Youth's Companion*, whose weekly issue was read by the entire family. *The Atlantic*, more or less smug, was of

close interest. We knew some of the writers. They spent their summers only several miles from our home. And authors were respected – then.

There was William Dean Howells, Thomas Nelson Page, Mark Twain and George Cabel. One summer, a friend and I were sitting on the side of the wharf, fishing. It was a private wharf, belonging to my friend's father. After a while, a tawny-haired man, middle aged, with a long cigar in the corner of his mouth, sauntered toward us. Dropping down on the wharf, long legs dangling over the water, he talked with us for over an hour. Only one thing is remembered from that conversation. I wondered if there were any mermaids in our river. I was assured that while there might be, the river was very cold and mermaids greatly preferred warm water. That evening I discovered that our companion had been Mark Twain.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich interested me until I met him. I had read *The Story of a Bad Boy* and twice daily I passed the Aldrich home on my way to school and return. I met him, or perhaps it is better to say, heard him at a reception in our own church. Since the talk was rather serious, I lost interest in both the speaker and the speech. Howells I ran into at the nearby summer resort. Since shyness was never one of my virtues, I always spoke and several times we walked side by side to the post office.

There was a great deal of history to read and dream over. Why not? Every night from my bedroom window I could see the island where John Paul Jones had built America's first warship, "The Alabama." A ship back from a polar expedition had been explored. Nor was that all.

There were old, retired sea captains in the church and town. Men who, when boys of my age, had sailed away on voyages lasting from five to eight years. Men who had sailed "the seven seas," who had stories of the spice islands, of Greenland, and other far-off places. One old sailor told me of the sea serpent he had seen. The town itself was full of history. And I heard or read it all. We heard too a great deal of love of country, then.

It did something, at least to me, and I believe to all of us in the schools. No one ever told us the government owed us a living "from the cradle to the grave." Nothing was said about the duty of the government to feed and clothe us – BUT there was much about our duty toward the government.

The books, even the stories of Oliver Optic, Alger, Castleman, and Ellis taught simple virtues. Thrift, personal responsibility, patriotism, and, if one was willing to work, success was possible. True, success meant security and position in later life. But I was taught I must be responsible for my own life; my future, good or bad, depended on myself. And that I had a personal responsibility toward society. Every book I read taught these basic virtues. Even the dime novels had the same high ideals.

It was an old town with its history going back before the Revolution. There were stately white colonial homes on our street. House which for several hundred years had been in the same families. Sea captains, generals of the French and Indian Wars had built them. Their spacious rooms were filled with antiques, odd ivory curios, old prints and books.

Since I was the minister's son and they were gracious and kindly people, I had the run of many of these houses. Often, on a Sunday afternoon, in a book-lined room with old French wallpaper on the walls, I sat reading. Only once was there any attempt to censor. It was years before I discovered why it happened.

It was a rainy afternoon, and I was seated in the library of our doctor, the fourth doctor of his family to live there. It was a book-lined room, the collection of four generations. Sermons, classics, old histories, everything but medicine. That was in the doctor's office. I had complete liberty in the room; no one troubled to see what I was reading, save for that one afternoon.

There was a tall antique bookcase in one corner with three shelves of books, behind glass doors. I had never troubled to look at these volumes. But that afternoon I threw back the glass doors and looked over the shelves. Old poetry, mostly. Volumes in faded brown leather. In the end, I took two small, squatty volumes over to the chair by the window. The title page was interesting, with the letters in old English spelling. I had just started to read the first volume when the doctor came in. As a rule, he always gave a look at the volume in my hands, often talked about it. This day, after one glance, he took the volume from my hand, the other from my lap, and replaced them behind the glass doors. After that, the case was always locked.

Years later, a rare book dealer in Charing Cross brought from the back room two squatty brown volumes. "This may interest you," he said. "It's a rare first edition."

I opened the first volume. Suddenly the years slipped away. I was again that fourteen-year-old boy sitting on a rainy afternoon in a book-lined room on Government Street. Again I saw that title page, the old faded letters. The paper, almost 200 years old, was still as good as it was in the volumes I had seen years before.

Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure

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London

Printed for G. Fenton in the Strand

MDCCXLIX

It was the story of that "Immortal Lady," the presumed first edition of Fanny Hill.

Years later I went back to my town. Again I sat in the old library. The house was still in the family, though there was no doctor there now. The books were still upon the shelves. The desk and bookcase were the same. But the two brown volumes were no behind the diamond-shaped panes of the glass doors. The "Immortal Lady" had vanished – like my boyhood.

Chapter 5

My first financial venture, at the age of 12, was one of the very few in a lifetime that turned out well. True, there were wome complications, storms, snow and a very devilish crow. But the returns for the $2.00 I invested really paid off.

I bought a paper route for two dollars. The purchase was entirely an accident. The young gentleman who had the route wished to sell. He and his family were leaving town; I had met him on my way home from school. Two dollars of course was way beyond me but by a miracle I had found on the streets of the city twenty-five cents. He agreed to accept the quarter. Two weeks later I was to mail him the balance. Since he had 60 customers at ten cents each weekly, his profit was three cents each, not a bad bargain. About a year later I sold the route for $3.00.

When the family was told that evening of my business venture, there were long arguments. First, where did I get the twenty-five cents? Since my weekly allowance was ten cents, this down payment came as a surprise and demanded an explanation. I said I had found it. Asked if I had tried to find the owner I replied I had not.

Father agreed in the end the paper route had been a bargain at the price asked. It would require but a week to repay my indebtedness. Mother had no objection. The papers arrived from the city at 4:30. It would take me at least an hour and a half to deliver them. It would be dark; winter was coming. There would be bad storms, much snow. To all these objections, Father had but one answer: it was high time I had some responsibilities.

There were two paper routes in the town: the one I had acquired started at the small post office, went up a long hill, down several short streets, ending in the outskirts of town. Most of my customers attended our church. Some of them I never saw. Most I knew, at least by sight.

The papers were brought from the city by the trolley at 4:30. The fact that the big roll had my name on it made me feel important. The roll would be opened, several papers sold off for two cents to people upon the streets, then the mile and a half route would be started. It took me a little over an hour to deliver them.

At old colonial homes I would climb the steps, ring the bell – I knew all the people in these houses. Then the larger houses vanished a I came closer to the edge of town; small houses now, all save one. This was a large white house, close to the water's edge. There was a great lawn, the grass uncut. A high, rusty fence surrounded the property. Behind the house was a dilapidated barn. I peered in once, saw empty stalls, two carriages. Two sisters lived on this property. All I ever saw of them was once; an arm came reaching out of a half-opened door to accept the paper. But every Saturday night, on the top step would be ten cents, and frequently an apple or an orange.

No one ever saw the sisters. There was some story about a captain, engaged to one of them, who sailed to the polar seas – to die of starvation. Money must have been there. We

heard their father, himself a sea captain, had filled the house with curios, but no one ever saw them. For years they had shut the house against the world. Later I was to hear when the older sister died it was three months before the doctor was called in.

In another home was an old sea captain who sat in a chair by the window. I would see him each night and he would wave his hand at me. He had not walked for many years. One afternoon while he was alone, out of the window he saw smoke, saw the house next door was on fire. He knew there was a little girl all alone in the house. All we ever knew was that somehow the captain got out of his chair, RAN across the yard, and put out the fire. To the town it was all a miracle. Perhaps it was.

I liked the paper route. There were the people to see who smiled and called me by name, dogs to pat. One in particular, about half-way up my route, used to shake himself, yawn, stretch, and accompany me on the rest of the trip. If there is a dog heaven, that fat good-natured Newfoundland is certainly there.

I liked it all save for the last house on the route. It was on the outskirts of the town. There was a long walk before reaching it, and it would be growing quite dark. Not only was the house at some distance from the road, it was surrounded on three sides by tall trees. In the fast-growing dusk it always presented to me a sinister appearances. Never shall I forget the first time I delivered a paper there.

Already it was fairly dark as I approached the house. Suddenly there was a loud, shrill laugh and I heard the flapping of wings. A crow settled on my head and tried to snatch my cap from my head. What made it all the more horrifying was the fact the bird spoke, saying "Hello, hello!" Then came again that dreadful laughter. Somehow I managed to reach the house and fling the paper on the steps. The bird pursued me, flying low, darting at my head, shrieking all the time. I ran.

Every night I had but one thought – that crow. All would go well until I reached that house. The bird would be there, in the top of the tallest tree. The moment I appeared in view, and I'm as certain now as I was then, that he was watching for me, came his loud laughter and down he would swoop. Always he tried to snatch my cap from my head. There was no use to try and beat him off. A crow with outspread wings isn't small, and far from weak. He would pursue me to the house and follow me back to the road. Ever since, crows have headed my blacklist. I simply refuse to believe a famous naturalist who claims crows are lovable birds and like companionship.

During the fall the route was fun. One could stay out after dark. Certain homes were generous with cookies. But winter came and New England winters are far from fun. There were great snow drifts, blocked streets that you struggled through as best you could. Mother had predicted all this. Once, when I was ill, the minister carried the papers for a week. He met the crow and decided the Lord should have used some other birds than the raven mentioned in the Bible.

The next summer, our last in the town, I did have what today would be called a racket. It was an accident. Father was the chaplain to the Spanish prisoners. The

Commandant's daughter and I were friends. One afternoon we took the tug to the city. We loved the ride, the whistle of the boat, the dark blue water of the river. There were 30 minutes before the return trip. This particular afternoon I picked up a newspaper and put it in my pocket. The war of course meant little to us. True, we saw boats in the dry docks and saw badges, which said "Remember the Maine. To hell with Spain." But it all seemed very far away, even after I saw the prisoners landed and saw them every day. That afternoon, after our return, as I was wandering around the Navy Yard, someone offered my five cents for my paper. That gave me an idea: I could buy 50 of those papers for fifty cents. No newsman was allowed on the yard, but I was. The next day I went to the city, bought my 50 papers, returned and sold them at five cents each. It lasted but ten days, but I made $2.00 a day, though father disapproved. Then school reopened and only the paper route was left. Then, before another winter, the route was sold and we moved from the town on the river. In the years that have passed, I have returned but twice. It has changed, modernized now. But I have heard of it.

I have read a book, "A Social Survey," of the old town – one of those government projects for which we all pay. The names of those making the survey would seem strange to the old townspeople.

Of course the authors could not see the beauty in these 200-year-old homes, with their dignified lines, firm timbers, large rooms, and lofty ceilings, much unlike the government-built houses of today – four rooms and "please don't lean against the walls." The ships, now rotting there now, that once had been proud and beautiful. None of this they could see nor comprehend what drove the builders and owners of those homes and ships all over the world, and then return to port to live content until they died. Nor, in the kindliness of those who had lived in these homes. People who would have been unable to spell the names of the writers of this book, published of course at the taxpayer's expense.

"It seems," so I read, "a middle-class town with no interest in the common man." The houses were built "by people who were individualists. They represented an anti-social world." Of all the bunk.

This was about the men who had built those homes (the writers of course utterly failed to see that they are beautiful), had fought England in the Revolution; men who sailed all seas, carried our flag to unknown islands. Their virtues were simple; work, save, try to get along, be charitable toward others, be honest, and stand on your own feet. How could the writers of this book comprehend such viewpoints?

Some of the descendants of the people I once knew still live there. The homes are still there – square, white, beautiful. Some of them, true, now are boarding houses. Those now living in them have neither knowledge nor the slightest interest in the past. The old town is over. Progress? It has changed; is modern, cheap, noisy.

My family moved. As usual, I wanted something to do. It was a much larger town, with a wealthy summer resort nearby. Any boy could get work there after school closed in June and the summer residents began to come for the season. I had a half dozen interesting jobs offered me.

All the boys in our town wanted work. We were glad to cut lawns for twenty-five cents. This past week a young gentleman rather reluctantly said he would cut our lawn for five dollars. When I remarked that was rather a ridiculous price he stiffly said "My father told me we working people must stand together." But we knew nothing of working classes. We all worked. And we all realized if we ever aspired to become a member of the professional class, we needed better than a high school education.

When I was about 15, I became the representative of the Tabord Inn Library. The subscribers were mostly the summer resort people. The work was both interesting and easy.

The Tabord Inn Library was the forerunner of the present Bok-of-the-Month clubs. The idea was good. It failed because of one thing. For a certain sum, based on the books you wished, one could monthly receive new books. They were sent to you, delivered at your home. Each month you received new books, returned the ones of the previous delivery. That was the trouble: the books were returned. In the end they were swamped with used books and had to go into bankruptcy.

My duty that summer was to deliver each month about 20 packages of books, mostly at the resort six miles from my home. They came in large black boxes. I was allowed a horse and wagon in order to deliver them.

Each month that summer a friend of mine and I drove toward the sea. The horse walked all the way, but we did not care. We always took the longest way, through a little fishing town where the narrow river curved in a half circle through a great meadow, then up a hill and the first glimpse of the sea, as a rule calm, blue, a mile distant. All that day we drove up lanes or private roads to the large summer "cottages," then waited as maids ran frantically around, trying to collect the books which must be returned before the new books were delivered. Two dollars was mailed to me as soon as I returned the books.

Though the books were supposed to be returned to Boston the day I collected them, they never were.. It took me several days to look over twenty packages with 100 books. Always there were a few I must read. The company was always writing me letters asking about the delay in returning the books. I doubt if I ever replied. Summer over, there were no more boxes of books to deliver. The next year they had another method of distribution.

The following June I had another job. I went to work in a book and stationary store in the town. It was the book end that attracted me. It could not have been the hours nor the pay. Father was in Europe that summer. Every morning at six mother would get me out of bed. I had to be at work at seven. Four nights a week I worked until 10 o'clock. The salary – that is what it was called – was $2.75 a week for 72 hours. No one complained of the long hours, at least not myself.

But I never had much opportunity to see any books. All day, with the owner's son, who was studying law at Harvard, I sat in the cellar of the store putting together small express wagons. We worked under the sidewalk, with the light coming through the iron grating. All day, for two wekks, I put carts together, until my fingers were sore from fitting together bolts and screws. To this day I never see a child's cart without a shudder.

And I was unable to examine books. On the four evenings I was in the store, the owner used the time for inventory, which seemed endless. At the end of two weeks, with 142 hours of work, and $5.50 in wages, I was through. Father had written from England I was to drop the work. I spent most of the money for a camera and a poorly printed volume of Shakespeare. My summer's work ended with me having $2.00 left for the long hours I had spent in that store.

I had of course wanted a paper route in the new town. The family objected for a reason that could not be duplicated in any other town in America. The paper was owned by the future governor of the state. He was a Seventh Day Baptist. It was published six days a week. It did not come out on Saturday, but did on Sunday. My parents were not too strict, but concluded I could not have a paper route.

The double Sabbath was a great source of wonder to me when I first came to the town. My first Saturday was puzzling. I saw people going to church. One-third of all the stores were closed. Then, on Sunday, when I went to church, I saw people back at work. Women were hanging out their washings. I asked a lot of questions. The answers did not seem to make much sense. The town actually had two Sundays. It made some confusion. Some people had two days off each week. But it was all very friendly.

Many of the boys elected to become caddies at the fine golf club on the shore. It seemed to me to be too much work. To carry a heavy bag of golf clubs around 18 holes of links was real toil. I did not mind work, provided it was not physical. I went to work at the newsstand of the famous hotel. I had another job on the side. Every morning I drove a horse to the summer resort. Evenings I drove him back.

It was the biggest horse I ever saw. He walked the entire six miles, turning his head occasionally to see if I was really behind him. I did not have to harness him – as a matter of fact I never knew how. At the shore, I turned him over to a store, who used him for deliveries. One day, just as we came walking by the hotel, he fell down. What to do was beyond me. But somewhere it seemed to me that I had read when a horse fell down one sat on his head. Down I got and sat on the gentle animal's head. I was sitting on it when a Panhard car came by – then stopped. It was driven by the chauffeur for the Secretary of the Navy. For a moment he stared, then descended from his machine.

"What in hell are you doing?"

I told him. He laughed, motioned for me to remove myself, reached down, and gathered the reins in his hands. The animal struggled to its feet. All that summer I was well known at the resort as the boy who had sat on a horse's head.

That was a happy summer, spent for the major part at the wealthy resort. The estates were large, the owners famous. It was a quiet place. Nothing sensational ever happened. There were no nightclubs, no gambling, and no bars or wild parties. The same people returned year after year, lived quietly and sanely. Only the large hotels were open to the public – a rather select Public.

From the hotel verandah one saw the long, curving shoreline, ending in Point Judith. On a clear day the sand cliffs of Block Island glistened high in the sunlight. Long Island, 20 miles across the sound, was a dark line. At night, the light from Montauk Point was like a star. In the Race was a circulating light, which flashed on and off every 30 seconds. There were a dozen lighthouses that could be seen at night, points of flame in the distance. About 11 PM, far out in the water, there would come into view the steamer of the Fall River Line, blazing with lights as it passed down the sound on its way to New York.

There were always many of us working at the shore during the summer. It did not seem like work to most of us. Judged by today, our wages were not high, nor was the work hard. One met outstanding lawyers, physicians whose names were well known the world over, governors, ambassadors, and heads of our great industries. All treated us with kindness. One learned what gracious living could be, even though it was based on great wealth.

During late summer and fall one year came work that ended in my being called a thief. A group had decided the town was in some need of culture. They arranged a series of lectures for a price. Some university extension society was behind it. But first, tickets had to be sold for the course, $2.50 for the six lectures. Why I was given the task of selling the tickets may be impossible to say, but I was, and for the work was to receive $15.

All that summer and early fall I went into the offices and homes endeavoring to sell tickets. There seemed little interest in culture. By November, when the series opened, I had sold 150 tickets. The backers owed me $15.

The course opened. A few over 150 ticket-holders listened to a Harvard professor, whose voice could not be heard beyond the first three rows. He was dry, without the slightest flash of interest. He started the series on the unification of Italy. There were about 75 present for the second lecture, stalwarts, wanting their money's worth. The last three drew about 20, of which I was one.

The lectures, as a means toward culture, were a failure. I was still unpaid for my efforts. I went after the 20 who had not yet paid for their tickets, persuaded them to do so, and reported that I was retaining my promised fee.

Then, trouble. I had "no right to steal," so the said, fifteen dollars. I should have turned it all in. The committee, in its own good time, would pay me. Father, who was on the committee, was in a quandary. He thought my conduct ethically incorrect. It was true they owed me the money, but I had no right to pay myself. In the end it was forgotten. After all, everyone desired to forget that lecture course.

Four summers I worked at the resort, two of them at the hotel. One incredible summer I was the manager of a meat market. I, who did not know one piece of meat from another. But there was a reason – a good one.

The shore resort had but one short business street by the water's edge, lined with shops. Most were from New York; few from our town. They were the stores which supplied the summer folk with their food. A new meat market was opened. I had the title of manager.

There was a man to cut the meat. I was chosen for one reason: I knew most of the people at the resort. That was all that was required.

My task was simple. Since, before the owners appeared for the season, the servant staff was sent ahead to open the homes. All I had to do was to interview the cook or butler. Our conversation was brief. Once in a while there was trouble over my age, which was 16. I promised the cook that if she would buy meat from us we would take 10% off the monthly bill. There was little difficulty in getting at least half the trade of the shore.

There were so many cooks, Irish and fat, French and talkative. All had one common interest: the promised 10% of the monthly bill. And they made sure that it was large. If a any of them had any sense of loyalty or honesty toward their employer, I did not meet them. The daily meat order would be phoned into the store. Then would come the query, "How much is that?" Then the order would be doubled.

True, the houses were large, some with many servants. The average meat bill in the store ran from $400 to $1,000 a month. In every case it was much larger than it should have been. Only once was a bill questioned.

I was called into a large living room. The man was one of the nation's' greatest lawyers. Dressed in a gray suit, with white hair, he smiled at me.

"You seem a trifle young to talk with."

I explained as well as I could my position in the store. He smiled, picked up his monthly bill, and said, "I see it's $600. A trifle large since there are only my wife and myself and three servants. As I remember them, the meals have been fairly simple." His voice changed, growing sharp: "How much do you pay the cook?"

I told him of the 10%, reminding him that every store in the resort did the same. I still remember his comment as he looked again at the bill" "The poor but honest, downtrodden servants."

What made the summers interesting were the people one met. There were writers, and you saw them like Jack London, later his wife, Booth Tarkington, and George Aide. There was also a pious gentleman who had made a fortune writing hymns – the most disliked individual of all to us, who worked at "The Hill." He could and did sear better than any chauffeur who parked before the store. There was a Harry Thaw, asked to leave the hotel for beating the woman who had accompanied him. There was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, who suddenly one day asked me why I was not going to his law school. A few years later, I went.

We were not paid much. I believe it was six dollars weekly. Most of it was saved for college expenses. But the money did not count for too much. There was the pcean, blue and calm. Once in a while would come a storm, sending waves pounding on the shore. Each day was an adventure. One rose at six each morning wondering whom they would see by nightfall.

I went back to the famous resort a few months ago. The sea is still there, as calm, as blue, as inscrutable as ever. The large houses remain, though half of them were closed, their owners taxed out of existence. The main street by the bay, quiet, in my young days had been jammed with a noisy, shrieking crowd. A C.I.O. union was holding a picnic. The fine specialty shops have vanished; instead are now hot dog stands, beer joints, and cheap stores selling suggestive postcards. "Progress" has caught up with the resort.

I know it is "progress," for one of those government "experts" wrote a book that used this resort as a terrible example. He said it represented "invested money"; was set aside for "parasites," people who were "unwilling to share." I'm still waiting for some labor leader who is willing to share with me his salary. This writer raved from the shield of his tax-free salary that such places gave "no opportunity for the masses."

I wonder. I worked there for four summers as a boy. Many of the people had been poor boys who somehow managed to find an opportunity in capitalistic America. The people were quiet, well bred. They seemed happy. Unlike today, they were not afraid. Juvenile delinquency, as we know it today, was unknown. Anyone who wished work could get it. That we were "repressed" or "ground under" never entered our heads. The work was fun, the people kindly. No one expected the government to care for them from birth to death. Of course, as the writer said, it was an anti-social world. How glad I am that my boyhood was passed in it.

The sea still comes curling to the sandy shore. They look to be the same seagulls I saw circling many years ago, whirling about, dashing into the sea. The breezes still sweep in from the sea. At night the lighthouses are the same tiny pinpoints of light in the distance. The houses loom, gaunt and dark, now mostly empty in the summer. The years have passed on. Yesterday seems to have more of charm, more real kindness, and far more opportunities for teenage boys than it does today.

Chapter 6

It seemed to me as a boy that the parsonage was always filled with people. It was a large, oldish house, standing close to the church. There was nothing beautiful about the dwelling but it had 13 good-sized rooms; five of them were bedrooms. They were often filled – by visiting clergymen as a rule, often unknown to my parents when they knocked on the front door.

They were a varied lot, but they had one thing in common: all arrived at about the same time. Between four and five in the afternoon would come a knock upon our front door. Mother would open it to discover some man whom she did not know. Often he would be wearing a Prince Albert coat (in sad need of pressing). Always he carried a bag. He would be effusive; mother would be called "sister."

The introduction was one-sided, and hardly ever did it vary. He was "a fellow worker in the vineyard, on his way in the Master's work." He had stopped to see his co-worker. As he stood, smiling, bag in hand, mother would open wide the door and invite him in. Once the man was deposited in the living room, I would be summoned from the yard.

Neither of us had any illusions. Father, as a rule would not be home. But we knew that our visitor intended to stay for the night, and of course supper. Supper in our house was a very simple meal indeed. But when a visitor arrived I would be summoned to rush to the market and buy meat, steak as a rule, which was cheap then. With the steak mother would serve some of her wonderful hot biscuits, and our visitor would eat. Steak, potatoes and biscuits would vanish amid glowing praises for the cook. Then father and the visitor would adjourn to the study. It would be dark. The visitor would feebly mention he must go. Did father know a cheap but respectable hotel in the city (five miles away)? It always ended with the visitor in one of our spare bedrooms. That, and the two meals, was why he had called upon us.

Who were these men? I cannot recall many of those clergymen who, as a rule, only knew of father because he happened to hold some office in the church denomination. They came in all types, all more or less unsuccessful in their profession. Bigots, fanatics, some. Others pathetic, defeated individuals, crushed by a world they could neither understand nor face. All wanted a lodging for the night.

One of the visitors I never forgot. There was a church convention in the city across the river. To us came a man – short, fat, with a smile on his face. As a delegate, he had been assigned to us. He was a minister in a little fishing village in Maine. In 30 minutes he became a friend.

Father was out, mother was washing. In 20 minutes he was in the kitchen, turning the wringer. He even hung up the wet clothes. That night he told me stories of sea captains in his village – of whales, even of sea serpents. During his stay he did even more; he introduced us to lobsters.

Now, lobsters were cheap in our town, for we were close to the ocean. I recall that we could purchase six of them for 25 cents. No one ate them, hence few fished for them. Below our yard ran the river, deep, with a swift current. We had a boat, a flat-bottomed affair in our cellar, built at the cost of $2.50. Father had built it to row across the river.

Our guest had asked us how we liked lobsters. None of us had eaten one. For two days I tried to assist him in the building of four mysterious-looking contraptions in our cellar. He took laths, found an old hammock, and with these items made four lobster pots. I helped him take them out to the river. Stones were placed in the pots, along with some dead fish picked up on the shore. He had found a rope, tied it to the lobster pots and to some blocks of wood. Then we rowed several hundred yards from the shore and sunk the pots in the river.

The next afternoon we went back. The first pot had nothing in it. The second had two lively wriggling lobsters, which scared me. In all we had five. Back at home, he insisted upon a large pot, and filled it with water. When it was boiling, he added salt and dumped in the lobsters, amid mother's protests. At last he brought them out, red and steaming. He showed us how to open them. Father objected a little, but after trying a bit dipped in melted butter … we had lobsters on our table very often after that.

Two of these visitors managed to keep me in a state of fear for years. If later (much later) I had not picked up a good knowledge of abnormal psychology, it might seriously have affected my whole life.

One day there descended upon us a tall individual who remained nearly a week. I disliked him, mainly because he never smiled and was always warning me that the "Lord would soon appear." He was the state agent for a religious paper, *Signs of the Times*, which was fairly well circulated then. This paper scared the life out of me for years. Perhaps it was intended to frighten far older persons than myself. No doubt it did.

It was devoted to one purpose and one alone. A single theme ran through every issue: the end of the world was at hand. As a rule, the articles selected night as the time for the re-appearance of Christ. There would be "signs on the heavens;" the moon would be red; water would engulf the world. The faithful would ascend to the sky, the others would drown amid the surging waters. I was not at all certain that I was among the select.

The covers were crude and sensational. One did the damage. It pictured a mountaintop surrounded by water. A few people were on the creat of the mountain, their hands uplifted to the avenging angel, who, with sword in hand, hovered over the mountaintop. The waters were filled with struggling forms sinking under the waves. Above it all was a moon, red and ghastly.

For years that picture haunted me. Night after night I had a recurrent dream. I was struggling in the water, trying to reach the mountaintop. Every night I looked out my window before retiring, often stealing from my bed during the night. If the moon was large, casting a silver gleam on the river, I felt a little cheered. It might not come tonight. But if I

fancied that it was at all red, I would lie down tense, expecting at any moment to hear the loud trumpet heralding the end to come.

My parents never knew how I felt. There were many who believed in the "second coming." My father did not. His church was a fairly liberal one. He had taken the man in as a gesture of friendliness to a fellow minister. The man departed by the end of the week unmourned by myself. But his presence lingered. Once a month – or was it twice – his paper with its lurid covers came to the house. As a gesture of gratitude he had placed us on his free subscription list.

Another visitor also managed to frighten me, though he stayed at our home for but two days. There was a revival in town, not at our church, but at a much smaller one up the street. To help care for the visitors, the evangelist was taken into our home for two days. One afternoon it happened.

To me was given the honor of escorting the evangelist to the home where he was to have dinner, not a welcome task. I trotted along at his side trying to make conversation. Seeing a large tree with branching forks, I said, "That would make a nice sling shot." I was told that my mind should be "on higher things." "Was I saved? Had I given my heart to the Lord?" Embarrassed, because no one had ever asked me such questions, I made no reply. He followed then with a treatise on HELL. It was a "lake of fire" with tortures beyond description – though he did very well with them. I left the evangelist at the place for his chicken dinner, then ran home and poured out my fears to my father. What he said I never knew, but the evangelist left our home.

Years later there was an ironic climax. I never saw the evangelist again, but I heard of him. He had become the head of a well-known fundamentalist bible school and had gone up and down the land pouring out his wrath upon the scientists – defending the "faith of our fathers."

Many years later, one evening I sat in Clarence Darrow's living room. It was very modest and small. Books were everywhere, in the bookcases lined against the wall, piled on the floor. Suddenly, out of nothing, Mr. Darrow mentioned the name of my childhood evangelist. "I see a religious leader died in Chicago today." My ironic smile caused him to ask if I knew him. I told of my experience. He laughed. His comment, made to others beside myself, is well known:

"Every morning I read the obituary notices in the papers and am disappointed. This morning I wasn't."

Of course mother had to stand over a hot stove in order to feed these people. Many of them did not come alone. Often they had their wives and, in some cases, their children. Father's church was a little larger than those of his visitors. They felt that, as a clergyman, it was his duty to take them in. As a rule but little appreciation was shone.

A few years later, I saw father suddenly realize how he had been taken over. We had in the meantime moved to a much larger town, to an important church where he stayed for 25 years. That speaks much for him and his church.

Came summer and we were going to a New Hampshire lake for a month. We were booked for a farmhouse where we had stayed each summer for the last four years. But the train was either an hour early or father had mistaken the time. The farmer was not there to meet us.

It was a small town, just becoming a summer resort. All at once, father recalled he knew the minister of the largest church. He should have – three times that minister, with his wife and two children had descended upon us. As the minister lived up the street but a few yards from the station, father, with a grin suggested we call upon him. We did.

He was at home. True, it took a little time before he came to the door. When he did, behind his effusive welcome, he was clearly embarrassed and troubled. He was *so* glad to see us, he only wished he could ask us to remain overnight, but his wife was away, etc., etc. As we walked back to the station to meet our famer, mother said "I glimpsed his wife in the kitchen."