

MY MEMORIES --- A MONOLOGUE

By
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INTRODUCTION

When I began to record these memories I imagined myself seated at the fireside with my children around me. The first person singular is not objectionable to your own children; it seems to enhance the interest in the story if "daddy" was a figure in it.

I find as I have progressed in the writing that I have wandered away from the fireside and talked as though to friends and acquaintances in the office or on the road, but the personal pronoun has remained. I have never been depressed by an "inferiority complex".

If this record should get into the hands of other than my own immediate family it can be laid aside as easily as you can turn off the radio if something objectionable is coming in.

Fresno, California, January 9th, 1930

H.W.W.

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AN EARLY ROVER

Every man's life is subject for a biography but if every such biography was written there would be no one to read them; the average man reads few biographies and if his own were written he probably would read none other.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt something of value in the record of an average man's life and having a little time to spare it may amuse me and perhaps benefit my children if I record my remembrances and experiences.

Born in Dover on the South coast of England on December 12th, 1870, I began to travel very early in life. When only one and a half years old my parents with two other young couples, uncles and aunts, were taken with the emigration fever and started off for the United States of America.

Boarding the White Star Line Steamer Hecla of about 2000 tons burthen at Liverpool they sailed for Boston calling at Cork in the South of Ireland to take on Irish emigrants. This was fortunate for me because my mother was stricken with seasickness the first day out and did not recover until arrival at Boston many long days after.

A strapping Irish lass with a newborn babe took me on and succoured me at her breast so that I landed in Boston perhaps the most vigorous member of the party.

From Boston the party headed for Southeast Minnesota with the intention of filing homesteads and naturalization papers. The strange thing about this whole adventure was that none of the party had had any experience as farmers; all had been born and raised within sound of the waves of the English Channel and all more or less connected with the sea. It perhaps was an indication of the adaptability or at least the nerve of the average Britisher to start off on such a journey with young children and no knowledge of country life.

Of course I have no remembrance of the journey but my mind holds many incidents as related by my mother in later years. It seems that from Boston we proceeded by railroad and ox carts until we finally arrived at our destination. If you can imagine an eighteen-month-old baby on a pile of straw down in the corner of an ox cart bumping over the plains looking for a homestead, you have a picture of my start in life.

An then, because there had been an Indian massacre in the neighborhood a short time before and as the Winter was very severe and mother could no stand it; the return journey was started and I was back in England at the old town of Dover by the time I was two and a half years old. Six thousand miles of ocean travel in an old iron steamer which now would be classed as a tramp, a few thousand miles of primitive railroad and ox cart transportation and then to arrive at just where we started from was not a very auspicious beginning for a long life.

It was while on the railroad trip to Minnesota that the party made its first acquaintance with that famous American Institution - ice cream. All meals were taken at stations along the way and at one of these ice cream was served. Uncle Harry, thinking it was some new kind of pudding, ladled a large spoonful into his mouth. For a few seconds he thought he had been burned. After that he could not be induced to eat ice cream. Serving frozen cream, to him, was as bad as serving boiling soup. This trivial incident may have helped his determination to go back to England, which he did, with us, and he never returned to America. He is still living today in Dover at an age that must be near ninety. Uncle Harry could not leave the sea. During the World War Dover was badly bombed by German aviators. At the proper signal all would dive for the dugouts, except Uncle Harry! He would stand out in the middle of the street, shake his fist at the bomber and curse the Kaiser.

My first consciousness of living came shortly after our return when we were settling down at home. Our furniture had been stored during the absence and upon return was being moved by hand cart. One load arrived while I was standing on the sidewalk and for some unaccountable reason the whole load was dumped into the street when the hand cart stopped. On this load was the old Grandfather's clock and a large barometer that had been in the family for generations. The barometer never functioned afterwards but the clock was undamaged and we as children often hid in it while playing "hide and go seek". That crash brought my first consciousness of living. My next personal remembrance, probably several years later, was of climbing up a steep stone apron along the seawall trying to get away from the waves and slipping, falling and cutting a gash over one eye. How I was rescued I don't know, but I can still see that long and wide sloping apron of cobble rocks reaching up to the Esplanade along the sea front at Dover. As children we spent much of our time on the beach and on the North and South Forelands above the chalk cliffs. We would sit and watch the ships go by and wonder whither they were bound. The sea is in my blood and in all my later years the sight of ships has given me a thrill.

SCHOOL DAYS

My school days began in a kindergarten conducted in a private home in the neighborhood. I can remember the tall white haired lady, the mother of two children, who took it upon herself to give us the beginnings of an education. Later I went to a public school: the first time accompanied by some older children. I sat on a bench by myself all day at the side of the room and said nothing that I can remember but I must have

progressed because I became a leader in school songs. The only reason I am sure of that is because the schoolmaster would scold me if I did not carry the tune far enough beyond the class to get them started again when the song would begin to die, as it often did when it was new and the children had not developed confidence.

The schoolroom was long and narrow containing three classes, each with its individual teacher; a raised platform before the class with blackboard behind and an ebony ruler constituted the equipment. The children sat on benches, probably forty to a class, and the teachers were all men. The only woman teacher I ever had was the white haired lady in the kindergarten. Punishment is the outstanding recollection of these early school days. For various infractions of the rules we received one or more cuts from the cane or ebony ruler across the open palm of the hand. The method of procedure was to place the delinquent boy upon the platform facing the class with right hand extended from the side, palm up, then to apply the punishment after explaining to the class what it was for. The boy who could take three cuts of the can without withdrawing his hand or crying was a hero to his class. Perhaps here is where the British first learned to take punishment without flinching. School songs and punishment, teamwork and grit, perhaps that is all that is necessary for the early formation of character.

Dover Castle on the North Foreland, soldiers at target practice on the Downs, occasional trips with fishermen in small boats on the English Channel, a run to take off a pilot, are incidents in a young boys life are never forgotten. And then London!

THE BIG CITY

Some change in the family fortune took us all to London about 1878. We settled down in a northern suburb, Edmonton, about 12 miles from the heart of the City on one of the old Roman roads. Edmonton Green in those days was nothing but an open space surrounded by shops of all kinds. The one-ring circus of the early days and the Punch and Judy shows all gathered here in proper season. Bank holidays with trips to Chipping Forest in char-a-bancs, pleasurable occasions all stand out above the routine of school days. And then the first thrill of Love? Drury Lane Theatre and the Christmas pantomime! With the first vision of the female form divine in tights! How common today, but then so seldom seen. Gorgeous as the pantomime may have been that one character in the play remains, all in red with a feather in her cap.

My father had established a business in London and when I graduated from the eighth grade of the Board School at about the age of sixteen I went to London daily and served as office boy and minor clerk. The business was shipping; it seemed that father could not divorce himself from all connections with the sea, but it had to do with passengers only; we handled no freight.

EMIGRATION

And so I began to meet people from various parts of the world who would come in the engage accommodations from their return, and also to meet the hundreds of emigrants who were starting off for foreign lands. At about this time there was a large emigration of miners to the Pennsylvania coalfields; they came from Wales, Cornwall and the northern counties around Lancashire, husky fellows very fond of their beer.

One of the steamship lines we represented ran from Rotterdam and Amsterdam to New York, now called the Holland-America Line. We sent our passengers over from London to the continental ports on small ships which loaded freight at the St. Catherine docks and then dropped down the river Thames to a floating wharf at Blackwall Dock where they picked up passengers who had gone down river by rail. Sometimes when fog was on the river the ship would be slow in coming down and the passengers would spend their time while waiting at a neighborhood "Pub" where they would absorb large pewter mugs of "four ale" and other types of beer occasionally bolstered up with a gill of gin. Always suspicious, if the ship was late they would believe they had been cheated out of their passage to America, and so it was my duty to accompany them by rail from London and see that they safely aboard. I had more than one unpleasant experience. Here is where I began to learn tolerance and kindness to my fellow man and on only one occasion did I fail to see all safely aboard and on their way to a new country and a new life. On this occasion the ship was very late, dense fog covered the whole river from Gravesend up to London and beyond. Too frequent trips to the "Pub" finally resulted in complete oblivion to quite a number, but those retaining part of their senses threatened to throw me in the river so I thought it was wise to leave, but not, however, without providing for their care. Old Peter McCracken, the big Irish wharfmaster, promised to put them on board and when I returned the following week with another party of emigrants he told me they had carried those miners aboard and laid them out in rows upon the iron deck and so they started out.

One of these occasions I felt the spirit of adventure stirring within me and instead of returning to London by train I decided to walk. This took me along the waterfront and through Whitechapel, Mile End, Bow and Poplar, the East End of London, tenements and squalor. Public houses everywhere; "Pubs" by the way are what in the United States were called saloons. On all these trips I wore a blue serge suit and a midshipman's cap carrying the badge of the steam ship company and I was often asked what ship I had come in on. It was at this time that "Jack the Ripper" was most active and in my long walk I passed the spot where that night one of his victims was found. The East End coster-monger with his bell bottomed trousers and big pearl buttons the full length of the outside seams were in evidence and cannot be forgotten.

Amongst the thousands of emigrants that passed through our hands, two American boys of about my own age stand out. I learned that they had shipped on a cattle boat from Baltimore and instead of returning on that boat they had drawn their pay and an

allowance to purchase tickets for their return on any boat they chose. Having spent most of their money they were looking for the cheapest return passage and as our fares were lower than the direct lines from Liverpool they decided to go through us. An on the train from Fenchurch Street station to Blackwall Docks they produced harmonicas and for the first time I listened to a duet surpassing anything I had ever heard. The harmonica and the Jews harp are favorites amongst the coster-mongers of the East End of London but they could never play as those American boys played. They were playing only for their own amusement but I was so thrilled that I pulled off my cap and passed it around amongst the other passengers; we were traveling third class and all were just plain working people but I gathered in many coppers and small silver. We were so successful that we changed cars several times on the trip and ended up with over five shillings, which would amount to about a dollar and a quarter in U.S. coin. Good beer money for the boys as a quart of "four ale" only cost eight cents or four-pence in English coin.

The way emigrants were handled in those days would be shocking to us today. On one occasion a party of Russian and Polish Jews came into our hands through a booking agent in Hamburg, Germany. They wanted to go to America in the cheapest way and as a rate war was at that time raging between the British and Continental Steamship Lines the fares were very low and the Continental Lines were determined to get their share of the business. This party of emigrants was shipped from Hamburg, Germany, to Hull in England and came to London by train. I was delegated to meet them and transfer them from the station of their arrival to the station of their departure. When they arrived there were so many of them and they had so many bundles that it was out of the question to hire conveyances, so I started off on foot and they trailed along behind me, men, women and children. Wearing my uniform I was a conspicuous figure and they followed me like sheep with occasional rests when they would sit down and the sidewalk with their feet in the gutter. The noon hour arrived while we were on the road, so I told the leaders to wait while I went into a restaurant for lunch. I was not halfway through my meal when a policeman came in and spying my uniform he asked me whether I had anything to do with the mob of emigrants who were blocking the traffic out on the street; I had to confess my temporary responsibility so he urged me to get out and move my party along as they were not only blocking the traffic but were opening up their bundles and dining in groups on the sidewalk. The policeman had tried to keep them moving but they would not leave without me and finally by pointing to the restaurant they had given the policeman an idea that someone was in charge. When I went out they were packed solid in front of the restaurant and the foot traffic had taken to street; as soon as they saw me they hurriedly tied up their bundles and the procession moved on. It was a long and tedious journey but I finally got them all to the station, took them down to the boat and shipped them back to Rotterdam in Holland where they took the ocean going steamer for New York. Poor devils! I supposed they thought they never would get to their destination but they had been quoted a through fare from Hamburg to New York and because of the rate war it was the cheapest and so they took it not knowing the devious route they would have to travel.

On another occasion a large party of Greek gypsies came to London by steamer and landed at Millwall Docks where they made camp and the authorities could not move

them. They were headed for America but had not bought through tickets so they were fair prey for booking agents. As we had such touts and agents everywhere, looking for a chance to make a small commission on each passenger they secured, we soon had some of the leaders of the gypsy band in our offices and were able to secure about 100 of them for our line, and we started them off. Again it was my job to move those gypsies from one dock to the other and it had to be done on foot, however, it was accomplished and they were shipped to Rotterdam and from there to New York but they were not allowed to land. The publicity in connection with their arrival in London and the announcement of their intended destination forewarned the U.S. Immigration authorities and for some reason they were debarred and returned to England.

About a year later the same gypsy leaders came to us and arranged for passage of the whole band to South America. South American authorities were not so wide-awake and the first party was allowed to land; those following on later ships were returned. Some years later I saw that a band of gypsies had arrived at a Pacific Coast port from South America and I wondered whether these were the same gypsies reaching the United States after all.

Aside from these outstanding cases we moved to the United States thousands of good people who no doubt became citizens of worth.

As I gained experience in handling emigrants I was promoted to looking after the first and second class passengers and made many trips with them to Rotterdam and Amsterdam in order to get them assigned to their cabins on the ocean going ships.

After about four years of this work I became infected with the fever to emigrate and when 20 years of age started out with a brother only 14 years old and we followed the many thousands who had gone before. We left London in March 1890, and went by steamer to Rotterdam, then to New York on the SS Spaarndam, and from New York to Galveston on the Mallory Line SS Nueces. From Galveston we took the train for California and arrived twenty-eight days after leaving London.

BELL RINGERS

Before taking up the record of my life in the United States a little may be said of other experiences in England. During the years I was in my father's business I traveled daily between Edmonton and London and while in London would take country cousins who came up from Dover to the sights - St. Paul's Cathedral, Houses of Parliament, the Law Courts, Crystal Palace and Kew Gardens. Many such sights I would not have seen so thoroughly had it not been for showing the country cousins around.

At home, in Edmonton, one of the pleasant recollections is of the time I spent with a group of young men who were the bell-ringers of the old Episcopal Church. Eight bells, the largest weighing over a ton, were hung in the tower. These bells were rung by swinging a full circle for each stroke and great skill was required to balance the bell,

mouth up, at the beginning of each stroke, the bell reversing its direction each time. The bell rope ran in a groove in the rim of a large wooden wheel attached to the bell and on each alternate stroke the excess of rope previously encircling the wheel would fall in coils at the bell ringers' feet. As the tower was 50 feet high and the only guide was the floor of the belfry about 40 feet above our heads the rope had to be handled deftly so that it would be brought down within reach to grasp for the balancing of the bell and the pull to ring it in proper time with the other seven bells. The accuracy with which we would keep these bells in time and the many changes in the order of ringing so that variations in the peal could be accomplished is still a marvel to me.

On New Years Eve we would ring the old year out and the new year in. For half an hour before midnight the bells would be rung with heavy leather mufflers strapped about the clapper. One man was stationed in the bell loft ready, at the stroke of the midnight hour, to remove the mufflers so that the bells could peal out in full volume and welcome the New Year.

Only once did it fall to my lot to stand on the big oaken beams amongst those swinging giants, with nothing but a candle in a lantern to guide me when I quickly made the rounds to remove the mufflers. All bells at the midnight hour were stopped, balanced mouth up ready to peal out the New Year welcome and the slightest push would have sent a bell off balance clanging out of turn and before its time. Scurrying down the circular stone staircase and giving the signal was the most exciting part of the experience.

Three of the bell-ringers and myself bought a set of 16 brass hand-bells and learned to play Christmas tunes. Each man had four bells, two in each hand, one, mouth up, riding the top of the closed fist and one hanging between the first and second fingers. Leather handles and clappers that could only strike directly across the bell enabled us to strike up or down or sideways as required and with practice the 16 bells could develop many tunes. On Christmas Eve we would walk through the snow from one country mansion to another and play the chimes and tunes and sing Christmas carols. Good bread and cheese and beer and cake and wine and sometimes small money donations were tendered and accepted and we would return well fed and happy with enough small change to "wet our whistles" for several nights to come. All this I did for the pure enjoyment of it and because I liked the acquaintance of these country fellows who were so expert as bell-ringers but who seldom went to the City of London, only 12 miles away.

But even I was impressed with my provinciality when the brother of a chum returned from foreign lands. He was a sailor and sometimes when playing cards would get a thripenny piece in the settling of the score. This small silver coin, worth 6 cents in American money, was beneath his notice and every one he received went out of the window if we were playing cards on the train. Such disregard for money, no matter how small the coin, was shocking to me, and yet it impressed us all with the feeling that "here was a man".

YOUNG LOVE

I spoke of my first love at Drury Lane; I remember only three others, one - a little girl neighbor whom I spoke to only when the back yard fence was between us; I was probably 10 years old at the time. Then Kitty, my little blue-eyed Irish sweetheart, about 16, and Emily whom I left behind when I started for America. I carried the photograph of Emily and some letters for years but finally lost them and heard no more of her. Kitty came nearer to an angel and the cloven hoofs of Satan, a lovable imp of mischief. Emily was tall, dark, sedate and serious; perhaps Kitty drove me to that extreme.

ON WHEELS

Along about 1885 all the boys were taken with the bicycle craze. My first bicycle was the type with the very large wheel in front and the very small wheel behind with a curving backbone connecting the two. Steps attached to the backbone were provided for climbing to the saddle, which was directly above the big wheel. The method of mounting was to place one foot on the first step at the small wheel, hop along on the other foot to get forward motion and then to climb the backbone and get seated, at the same time finding the pedals and keeping the wheel going. Too much impetus in the climb would send you spread-eagling over the handle-bars, so considerable agility was required to get seated in balance; going over the handle-bars meant a fall which might be serious as most of our streets were paved with cobblestones.

This style of bicycle was the best for country riding as the height enabled you to see over hedges and walls and get a wider view of the countryside. Fields open to the country roads are seldom found within a thirty mile radius of London and riding through country lanes had no charm, excepting their winding course, unless you could see over the hedge-rows.

My next bicycle was of the same type excepting that in an endeavor to reduce the size of the front wheel drop pedals attached by rods to crank were developed. These pedals were worked up and down like the foot treadle of a grindstone; the only advantage I could see was that the seat was further back from center and the danger of spread-eagling over the handlebars was reduced. This type did not last long and the bicycle of today with both wheels of the same size and chain and sprockets took its place. The first of this type were heavy and hard to propel; up to this time all bicycles had solid rubber tires about one inch in diameter.

On these awkward contraptions we took many "runs" out into the country; bicycle clubs were popular and Saturday afternoon trips to some country tavern were enjoyed. The pneumatic tire developed later but not until I had become a "city dude" and had given up bicycle riding. Our other sports were foot races, steeple chasing and gymnasium. Hunting and fishing as enjoyed by American boys was unknown to us. The largest fish I ever caught was a stoney-roach, about 6 inches long, and the largest bird I ever brought down was a starling, about the size of an American blackbird. You can read

stories of pheasant shooting in England but this was not for boys on the outskirts of the City of London.

MISCHIEF

There was only one form of thievery indulged in by such boys. Apple and pear orchards were not far distant but all enclosed by thick hedges or brick walls. The orchard which received our particular attention was a part of the Church property, and while surrounded by a thick hedge we were able to work holes through the hedge close to the ground large enough for a boy to crawl through. The method of procedure was to station a boy at each end of the land as outposts and for the rest of the gang to take sticks and stones and bombard the trees over the hedge until we knew that an abundance of fruit had fallen, then we were satisfied and left the scene until darkness set in. That night we would crawl through the hedge and upon our hands and knees would feel around in the grass for our spoils. If the grass happened to be high it was a slow process but each find was all the sweeter. A strap around the waist enabled us to fill our shirts but judgement had to be used or we would get stuck in the hole in the hedge; as the pastorate was close by silence reigned until we had made a good get away. The apples were always good, but the pears, right from the trees, were hard and green but we ate them just the same. The worst dream I ever had in my life was of trying to run from one of these raids and not being able to move a foot. Blue-coated policemen were plentiful in the neighborhood and the best known was a big red faced cop called "Hock of Bacon"; how he ever acquired such a name amongst the boys I have no idea. Happy days, with no sense of responsibility yet developed!

AMUSEMENT

Later when going up to London every day we learned to go to theatres and music halls for our entertainment. I remember that Dan Leno and the White Eyed Kaffir were popular at the time.

Sometimes we would lose the last train home, about midnight, and have to walk twelve miles, but sidewalks all the way. The streets were lit with gas lamps and on one occasion we did not have a match between us so I had to climb a lamp post to get a light for my pipe. This was not easy as there was only small opening at the bottom of the lamp through which the lamp-lighter pushed his pole with a lighted wax taper attached when the round of lighting up for the night took place. On these occasions we arrived home about 3 o'clock in the morning and we were lucky if we got to bed without waking our parents or other younger members of the family who might "tell" on us at breakfast.

HARDTIMES

Just a shadow of responsibility began to develop about 1888 when our business began to get bad. Hard times in the United States cut down on emigration from Europe and at about the same time South American governments developed a colonizing scheme which included free transportation from the old countries and a land grant with funds for live stock and buildings. We had developed quite a large emigration business to these countries as agents of a French line of steamers running from Havre, the Chargeurs Reunis line. This combination of hard times in the U.S. and free emigration to South America crippled our business until father was much worried over our future. Finally he had to give up and in 1892 he followed us with the rest of the family to California. Giving up an established home and business is not easy for an Englishman, yet he had always said that someday he hoped to return to the United States. By the time he made this second journey he had accumulated nine children, the youngest yet a babe in arms. When we went to Minnesota, about 1872, there were only two children, a brother three and a half years old and myself, one and a half.

As I write this I am going into my sixtieth year; father and mother are gone but all nine of the children are living and married; none have produced such a family. The total result of these nine marriages has been twelve children and no grandchildren to date. Race suicide?

I realize as I write this record that it will present a more or less disconnected story. The brain cells seem to burst open and release memories like kernels of popcorn over the fire and there are always some that will not "pop".

A SECOND START

So now I am back to the starting point of our journey to California. Two English boys, one fourteen and one twenty, unconcerned over our future, healthy, happy and with enough money to carry us through. We had first class accommodations on the steamers with credentials that introduced us as the sons of the London representative of the companies, a cabin to ourselves and a seat at the Captain's table. Here I made my first acquaintance with pickled green olives. I thought they were plums, and watched the other passengers before taking one myself. When I finally did I was in a quandary; swallow or spit it out? Good manners compelled me to swallow it and before the trip was over I was enjoying them.

Down below we had nine hundred emigrants and after making the acquaintance of the ship's doctor I was invited to accompany him on his rounds. We started down the stairs into the steerage but were met with such a wave of indescribable odor that I stopped half way started back. The doctor laughed and said, "Come on, you will soon get used to it," so I held my breath and plunged. Every nationality under the Sun seemed to be represented in that group of emigrants. The sleeping accommodations were bunks in tiers four high and four deep. Anyone having the outside bunk might have three others crawling over him if he went to bed early.

At meal times, tables about two feet wide were suspended in the passageways and the emigrants stood up to eat. Stewards with big two handled iron tubs passed along and dished out soup or stew or whatever was on the days bill of fare; bread was plentiful and the doctor assured me that these emigrants were getting better food than they were used to.

Going down the English Channel we met the swell of the Atlantic and although the weather was fine we shipped heavy seas over the bow; the spray reached the supper deck and were wet as we held to the front rail and swayed with the pitching of the vessel. Compared to the ocean liners of today our boat was a miniature of 4500 tons burthen; we were nine days making the crossing and before we arrived in New York we passed with sight of the vessel that had left Rotterdam the week before.

We stayed in New York two days and then sailed on another boat for Galveston, Texas. As soon as we were outside the harbor the ship began to roll so badly that plate racks had to be used to keep the dishes from sliding off the tables. I learned that our ship was flat bottomed in order that she could get over the sandbars into Galveston Harbour. As we got into Southern waters we saw flying fish and dolphins in large numbers. We stopped for one day at Key West, Florida, and while ashore had the novelty of eating fresh young coconuts picked from trees while we waited.

In Galveston we had our first experience of a meal served with abominable coffee and five or six small side dishes containing various vegetables. On the train from Galveston we had no sleeping berths, in fact we went right through to California without taking off our clothes. Somewhere in Texas a typical cowboy, the first we had ever seen, boarded the train and traveled with us for over 24 hours. He had his saddle, lariat, spurs and big sombrero. He told us he had sold his pony and was taking the train West and would buy another pony wherever he got off. I think he was quite amused by the questions of two green English boys but was kind and generous.

The plains were covered with dried up carcasses of cattle; he said a drought had hit the country the year before and many of the cowboys were leaving for other fields. In some parts the railroad track was laid on saplings cut from adjacent groves and very little ballasting and leveling had been done so that the going was quite rough compared to railroad travel today.

We finally arrived at our destination in California about 10 o'clock on what seemed to us a very warm morning. We were still dressed in our dark English clothes; I remember I wore a hard Derby hat, quite out of keeping with our surroundings. A brother who had preceded us about two years was supposed to meet us but failed to do so. After making some inquiries we started off on foot across the desert but soon got lost; fortunately our tracks were easy to follow and in short time a team and spring-wagon caught up with us and here was our brother, read to take us to his location.

THE VINEYARDS

As we drove into the settlement the first thing we noticed were symmetrical rows of small brown stumps in the fields and when told that this was a Muscat vineyard we could not believe it as our preconceived idea of a vineyard was of green vines growing on trellises. Later in the Spring we saw these brown stumps put on foliage and we accepted them as vines. It was not until several years later that we saw a vineyard as we had imagined it to be, Sultanas on trellises; the Thompson Seedless vines came many years later.

After settling down the first work I did was placing vine cuttings in the nursery rows at about 50¢ per 1,000 and from that day to this, a period of nearly 40 years, I have been connected with the vineyard business.

I intend to keep this record confined to a narrative of personal experiences, but may find myself occasionally wandering off into social and economic problems because of my later activities in a semi-public way.

I found in the vineyard settlement where we were located quite a group of English boys; they all seemed to gravitate to one center, the home of an Englishman who had provided a "bunk-house" for sleeping accommodations. The wife did the cooking and the boys paid a nominal amount for board. This group of English boys were mostly happy-go-lucky fellows who worked when they felt like it and played a good deal of the time. However, I took matters more seriously and soon became known as a steady worker and had many short jobs offered to me. I believe I preformed them all satisfactorily except one - the only time I was ever "fired" in my life. One of the colonists had a number of large Eucalyptus trees around his buildings and decided to cut them down for firewood and I was offered the job. If you can imagine a green English boy right from London tackling the job of felling trees and cutting cord-wood you can get a picture of me. With the assistance of the owner we felled a few trees without smashing the buildings and then I made my first acquaintance with a two man cross-cut saw, but as the owner had other things to attend to it soon became a "one-boy" saw without shrinking in size. Not being used to this kind of labor I went at it with speed, jerking the saw rapidly back and forth instead of taking long strokes. No amount of instruction seemed to affect my speed and the owner soon became disgusted and left me alone. If I had not been fortified with good muscular training in the gymnasium I would not have lasted long; as it was, I expect I wasted fifty per cent of my energy.

The thing for which I was fired had nothing to do with the trees. The old fellow was a crank about his livestock and it was my duty to lead them to the watering trough and then feed them and bed them down in the barn. Cotton ropes were used for leading and tying and I was particularly instructed not to let the ropes touch water in the trough as it would make them stiff. So, as the horses plunged their muzzles in the water I stood there, holding the ropes in the air like a dainty lady holding up her skirts; the whole proceeding seemed so ridiculous to me that I became careless and the ropes would occasionally loop down into the water. One day the owner when taking the horsed out to

work detected the water stains on his cotton ropes and gave me such a bawling out that I left and never went back. Later he came and tried to get me to return but that cross-cut saw had got in its work and I decided I would never make a lumber-jack.

During this first Spring and summer we saw the vineyards bloom and bear fruit and when harvest time came we were offered jobs picking the grapes for raisin making; wooden trays were used and we were paid two or three cents per tray. Here my speed did me no good, the delicate hand work of picking the bunches and laying them carefully on the trays slowed me up so that my earnings were smaller than any of the other boys received. At that time practically all the Muscat grapes were cured into "layers" to be merchandized in the form of the original bunch and careful handling was necessary to prevent the grapes from shattering.

In England we had been used to the Spanish layer raisin for Thanksgiving and Christmas festivities so my imagination could picture the curing of the bunches of grapes and the layer raisins which should be the result and I suppose I was more careful than necessary.

COW BOY

After working for about a year at odd jobs in the colony I was offered my first steady job at twenty-five dollars a month and board, and I took it without knowing what it would involve; but having taken it, I stuck to it for nearly three years. I never was a quitter, and I did not get "fired". I found I was going to a large ranch of about six thousand acres. They had hundreds of mares, two stallions, innumerable cattle, hundreds of acres of alfalfa which were cut for hay, and some vineyard which was really a side line or experiment induced by observation of the vineyards in the colony.

My first job was in the dairy milking a string of thirty cows, feeding the calves, and also putting in many hours in the hay fields. Up at four-thirty in the morning and to bed about nine each night, and what a bed! The bunk house was built of one by twelve-inch boards, but without battens so that there were open cracks from a quarter to an inch wide. The bunks were made of the same lumber and the beds consisted of a "tick" filled with straw. Each man furnished his own blankets and for nearly three years I did not see a sheet or pillowcase. I had never been near a cow in my life and the first attempt at milking paralyzed my fingers so that I would have to rest them several times before I could finish one cow. I did very little work in the fields until I became a proficient milker, but the "boss" saw that I had "grit" and was determined to do the job, so he encouraged me. After that it became my duty to break all the heifers and I always had a few in my string. I became so attached to my "string" and they so attached to me that they would all cluster around me when they were driven in from the fields. Sometimes they boys would run in bands of mares and on one of these occasions I happened to be out in the cow pasture and when the band came stampeding through, my string of cows all made a rush for me and crowded around me seemingly seeking protection.

During the Winter season, when the hay was all in, I would milk my string and then put in practically all the daylight hours pruning in the vineyard. For a while I had the job of watering the stock out on the range; the range was fenced into fields of 160 and 320 acres, and wells were provided for watering the stock. Sometimes I had to pump for hours by hand and in other locations power pumps were provided. The "power" was an old mule, which I would drive or ride from one pump to another. Attached to a sweep he would walk around and around until all the stock was satisfied and the troughs were filled. While the mule was making rounds, I would take hammer and staples and fix up the fences about the haystacks or fields; the hay fences gave me most trouble as the stock would work the barbed wire off the posts trying to get into the hay.

GETTING UP IN LIFE

Nearly three years of this and I had worked up the reputation of being a "steady" man. As I look back now I feel that I was entitled to that reputation. And then I was offered another job at better wages where it was all vineyards. I took it because after all cows are not the best company. But I did not stay on that job long, only a few months. It seems that my reputation had spread far and wide and I was offered another job nearer in to civilization on a large orchard and vineyard property so I took that and stayed on the job nine years. When I left I was manager of the property and had married the stepdaughter of the owner. Some progress! From a green English city boy to the manager of a vineyard and orchard property! My three children were born at this place and then I became a landowner.

The manager of the property who had preceded me had left to start out for himself and had bought land a few miles away. One day he came to me and said there was some good land adjoining his that could be bought cheap, so we drove over to look at it and I recognized it immediately as good vineyard land. I had saved a little money and my wife had some from inheritance so we bought and began its improvement, while still retaining our position on the old home place. Then a spell of hard times hit the vineyard industry; the old home was sold and we moved over to our new home. There was not even a fence post on the land when I bought it, but in a few years I had all the buildings complete, the land all leveled, irrigation ditches built and the whole place planted to vines. This has been my home until six months ago when my wife passed away. My oldest son is now married, living on the property and I am learning to live a single life again.

During the nine years on the old place I applied myself to its management and we lived a happy life free from any financial worries. Only one incident stands out of a personal nature. Around our ranch buildings we had a number of large eucalyptus trees which had been topped several years before I took charge. New limbs of great size with dense foliage had grown where the tops had been cut off. On a still, hot day in July one of these immense branches crashed to the ground; the children were playing in the yard and when we rushed out we saw our baby girl emerging from beneath the foliage unhurt; the other children were not under the tree at the time. A narrow escape! Thereafter, I always

opposed the topping of this particular variety of tree as the new limbs do make a strong attachment to the trunk and will fall of their own weight when they reach a large size.

On this place we had a large variety of tree fruits and grapes so that our harvesting season extended over a long period. Muscat grapes were the last to be harvested and should early rains set in we had difficulty in sun-curing them into raisins. Having experienced this difficulty the owner had built a large artificial dryer, or dehydrator; it was equipped with a 30 horsepower steam boiler to provide heat for radiating coils and steam for a 15 horsepower engine to operate a fan which was used to circulate the heated air. It was here that I made my first acquaintance with steam as a power force and as we sometimes ran the dryer day and night over a considerable length of time I spent many nights in engine room. In a short time I was able to make changes which economized on fuel. One of these changes was the return of the condensed steam from the heating coils to the steam boiler so that little fuel was needed to re-convert the hot water into steam. One very bad season we ran this dryer from the 15th October until nearly Christmas curing the crops of neighbors after our own had been saved. After the old home was sold this dryer burnt down and a landmark in the colony disappeared.

Our life at that period was so uneventful that there is little to record. Happy days!

OWNERSHIP

When we finally moved to our own land our buildings were newly constructed and there was no shade, but in a few years we had trees and lawn and flowers and the vineyard had reached bearing age. Any one who has planted a vineyard and brought it into bearing and at the same time has small children growing up around him has experienced the satisfaction of living a creative life.

Soon after our vineyard came into bearing, we experienced another depression in the vineyard industry and there was considerable agitation amongst the growers and endeavors to organize into cooperative associations. Someday someone should write the "Epic of the Raisin" a story that could equal in interest and tragedy the "Epic of the Wheat", written by Norris.

It was at this time that I attended a meeting where representatives of the Southern Pacific Railroad were endeavoring to get the vineyardists to contribute to a fund to establish a National Raisin Day. This had since grown into an annual pageant equaling the Carnival of Roses at Pasadena, but at that time the growers were so poor that they had no money to contribute. It was at this meeting that I first learned that I had the ability to "speak on my feet". There were a large number of growers and their wives in the audience and I remember that I took the speakers to task for coming to the growers for money when they had not sufficient to pay their store bills; at the conclusion of my talk I received the first applause I ever heard as a result of my efforts.

I may have been wrong in the attitude that I took on the matter, but my immediate sympathy was with the growers and I felt that the railroad could provide funds from other sources while the growers were in such distress.

For several days afterwards I felt "washed out" and it was not until much later that I learned that my condition was the result of my first effort at public speaking.

When our vineyard was three years old it showed the first prospect of a full crop. There is no prettier sight in the spring than a trellised vineyard with its young green foliage and the forms of the grape bunches marshaled along the wires like miniature pine trees. And then one night in April the frost came, and by ten o'clock the next morning after the sun had struck the vines all were black, killed and drooping. So our hopes were deferred until another year. Subsequent crops were bountiful and we were able to pay off our debts and enjoy the comfort and a good home with health and happiness.

PUBLIC SERVICE

After my first effort at public speaking I attended other meetings but did not speak except when called upon. But I found that growers always listened with respect and it was not long before I became recognized as a leader and was elected as the President of a statewide organization of farmers.

This necessitated travelling throughout the state wherever local organizations of the association had been established; as this was before the days of the automobile, long distance trips were made by railroads and I had to depend upon members for local transportation by buggy to the meetings in the area. In my home area I would go to meetings in my own conveyance and many a night the old mare would bring me home at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning whether I was awake or asleep. Only a most understanding and sympathetic wife made it possible for me to carry on this work.

She never knew what moment I would grab my suitcase and be gone for a week or two weeks at a time but she "carried on," caring for the children and the garden and supervising the work on the vineyard.

During my first term as State President I was sent as delegate to a National Convention of farmers held at St. Louis, Mo. I was the only delegate from California and had been told by the National President that I would be called upon to make a "speech". When I arrived I found that the Convention would last for eight days and that everyone from General Coxe to President Taft was on the program. The printed program gave the time and place of my appearance on the platform and the topic I was to cover. President Taft was to speak the day following my assignment. During my speech I made some reference to President Taft's attitude on the tariff and the St. Louis papers headlined me as saying that "the delegate from California would ask the President some pointed questions on the tariff". When the President spoke he had changed the subject of his talk and I was told on good authority that the change was made because of the publicity given

to my speech. That may be true or it may not, but my speech was not the one I had so carefully prepared!

Previous to leaving for St. Louis I had written my speech out in full and on the train I read it over several times and polished it up, then with complete satisfaction I put it away in my suitcase. When I found my date and time on the program I was content and left my speech in my bag at the hotel intending to take it with me on the proper morning. Unfortunately, the printed program went "hay-wire" because some of the speakers did not show up and while I was sitting unconcerned in the audience, the National Chairman abruptly announced that the next speaker would be "H. W. Wrightson, State President of the California Division of the National Farmers Union", and gave the topic as printed on the program! And my speech was in my bag at the hotel! But I took the platform and judging by the applause and the remarks of the Chairman afterwards, I must have made a "hit" with the audience. I just get up and start, and stop when I get through. Some of my confreres say that I don't always stop when I get through but I usually get by without rotten eggs and cabbages for bouquets.

I took with me to this Convention an exhibit of our dried fruits, nuts and raisins and had arranged with one of our wineries to ship me a case or two of various wines. When I set up my exhibits I left space display the bottles and when the newspapermen were examining the display they learned what was intended to fill that space. After that I became very popular with the reporters who would daily enquire whether the wine had arrived, but it never did so they were disappointed but I held their interest, or the wine did, until the last day of the convention. I distributed the exhibit amongst them on the last day and expressed my regrets that the liquid part of the display had failed to show up.

While attending this Convention I made my first acquaintance with representatives of the United States Congress. They sat around in the hotel lobby at night and I expected to hear them discussing important matters of State. To my disappointment and disgust I found them very ordinary men getting the most satisfaction out of telling dirty stories. I wonder whether the members of the House of Parliament in England do the same.

As the only representative from California I was placed on the reception committee to greet President Taft and was honored with a seat upon the platform during his address. I was quite unconcerned over my previous reference to the tariff question because I did not learn till later that the change in his topic had any supposed relationship to my speech.

At the close of President Taft's address, the National Chairman placed me in the chair to preside over the meeting for the balance of the afternoon. I was surprised and honored but carried it off without trouble but that was not the last of it.

Charlie Barrett, the National Chairman, immediately after leaving the platform with the President, wired to our Association headquarters in California stating "President Taft had addressed the convention and that H. W. Wrightson was in the chair". Literally

true, but misunderstood in California. Our people took it to mean that I was in the chair while President Taft was addressing the convention. The following day I received a telegram from California asking for the definite time of my arrival home as the leaders in the community were planning to meet me with a band and wanted me to address a meeting at a dinner they were promoting! Not wishing to sail under false colors I did my best to confuse them as to the date and time of my arrival and succeeded in defeating their object. But what an opportunity for an unscrupulous politician!

The second year of my Presidency I was sent as a delegate to the National Convention of the Union at Charlotte, North Carolina. This was held in August so I sold my crop of grapes on the vines, took the children to a relative of my wife in Northern California and took my wife with me on the Eastern trip. We extended the trip to include San Antonio, Texas, New Orleans, Charlotte, Washington, New York, Boston, Niagara Falls, Chicago and Minneapolis, and from there returned over the Canadian Rockies and down the coast from Vancouver, part by water and part by rail. This was the first time my wife had been out of her native state, California, and she thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We visited relatives and friends in Maine, Illinois and Minnesota and were about ten weeks on the trip.

After nearly three years of this effort I had to retire. It was costing me about one thousand dollars a year more than the association allowed for expenses and there was no salary attached. One thousand dollars was a lot of money in those days and I could not afford to keep it up. So I returned to my vineyard and spent a whole year with my family keeping out of public activities and "minding my own business".

AND THEN THE WAR

During the war period I was an active director of our local bank, and my record of public service caused me to be made chairman of every activity connected with the war - Chairman of the Red Cross Auxiliary, Fuel Administrator, Manager of all Liberty Bonds, YMCA and Red Cross War Fund Campaigns, etc.

I organized a group of girls and women to make bandages, pneumonia jackets, etc., and upstairs over the bank I had rooms fitted up with sewing machines, tables, etc. On one occasion I decided to have a group photograph taken of them in their white suits and Red Cross Bonnets. Before having the photograph taken I tried to make them a little formal patriotic speech explaining what their work meant and what the supplies would be used for, but they seemed to be more interested in the photographing and I concluded that it was just as well that way. You cannot see red blood around the corner.

On my Liberty Bond campaign committee I had 30 of the best men of the community. They always responded to the call for service and put every campaign, including the Fifth Liberty Loan "over the top" with a good margin. In this community of thirty-six sections - one township - we sold \$500,000 in Liberty Bonds and War Savings Certificates. I still have the record of every subscriber and the amount purchased. Today

these people are facing bankruptcy; many have lost their home and have gone into the fields of wage labor.

When the Fifth Liberty Loan was proposed, I, along with other community leaders from all over the State, was called to San Francisco to a conference. The State leaders seemed to be apprehensive of the results of this last campaign. We were all asked as to the temper of our people and whether we thought we could "put it over". Many community leaders had evidently dropped out and it looked as though it was going to be difficult to get new men to take up the task. Whatever may have been the case in other communities, I boldly stated that my committee would respond to a man and that we would secure a big over-subscription. I knew my men, and the State leaders had shown me how to put it over but they did not seem to be able to see it themselves.

It was for this campaign that the Treasury Department provided "Liberty Medals cast from captured German cannons". These medals bore appropriate wording with a space left for inscribing the name of the person receiving the award. I asked for and secured 35 of these medals. Returning to my community I called my committee together, made them a stirring talk, told them of the medals to be awarded to those who stayed by the Government to the finish, and they went out and did the job. I took those medals to a jeweler and had the name of each committeeman engraved in the proper space. My wife attached a narrow red, white and blue ribbon with a neat little bow and a pin and I was ready for the finish. As soon as the campaign was over I arranged for a dinner and invited the County Chairman to come down and make the awards. The dinner was held and each member of the committee was called upon to say a few words; very few were able to say anything' they were workers not talkers. Of course I had to make a little talk and then the County Chairman read off the names of those to whom medals had been awarded and as each man came up he pinned the medal on his breast and with a handshake each returned to his seat. I thought the event was over and preparing to wind up the meeting as best I could when one stood up and burst forth with a laudation of my service to the community, the State and the Nation and on behalf of the members of the committee and the community presented me with a heavy solid gold finger ring, engraved with my initials on the seal and on the inside inscribed "Liberty and Victory - 1917 - 18 - 19". I was so upset that for the first time in my life I could not speak, tears came to my eyes and I had to sit down. I have worn that ring continuously ever since - in all my travels, wherever I go, that ring is on my hand. Good fellows, loyal citizens, they deserve much more than they have received.

It was during this campaign that the first airmail letter ever received in the community was dropped from an airplane. It was addressed to me and had a long red, white and blue streamer attached. We were advised of its coming and a large white cross, made with a sack of gypsum, reached from curb to curb at the intersection of the principal streets in the town. A large crowd gathered for the event and almost on time the plane was discovered circling the town. The signal was discerned by the aviator and the message dropped. It landed in the alley back of the bank but a small boy had the honor of rushing up to me and delivering it into my hands. Then from a raised platform I read the message to the assembled citizens. Those were stirring times. I was awarded the Red

Cross Service Button and Certificate, also certificates from the Treasury and other departments. I tried to get into over-seas service but the authorities figured I was doing good work at home and would not let me go. I was past the age for military service and had to "do my bit" as best I could. It is impossible for me to give credit to all those who worked so faithfully with me but I must mention Mrs. Roy Giffen, Secretary of the Red Cross Auxiliary. I shared the streamer from the airplane letter with her. It was at the close of the war that I was elected President of the Fresno County Farm Bureau and the round of association activities was resumed.

UP IN THE AIR

Soon after the Armistice my youngest son, a lad of 18, bought an old AOX5 Army training plane, in pilot's parlance - a "Jenny".

Having taken lessons from a competent pilot he was a careful flier and I made several trips with him. The incident that stands out most clearly was a trip to a "flying meet" at Bakersfield. We flew from home to Fresno and there picked up two other planes and started for Bakersfield. Passing over the green irrigated areas of the Valley the air was "bumpy" but we landed in good time. When we were ready to return we were nearly out of gas and the supply at the field had all been used up, so we started with a small supply and landed at a point a few miles North where we "tanked up". As we continued North towards home I noticed what seemed to be a strange thing down below. Automobiles on the highway were burning their lights! As I was in the rear seat I could not call my son's attention to the ground so we cruised along leisurely until he happened to look down, then he "gave her the gun" for all she was worth. Our elevation was so high that the sun, setting behind the coast range of mountains was still filling the heavens with daylight but it was getting dark below! And we yet had some distance to go and then make our landing! When we landed it was dark on the ground, but my son had landed on the field so many times that we made it without accident.

Passing motorists heard us coming down and perhaps caught a glimpse of us as we landed so they stopped and came over to investigate. It happened that one of them knew me and recognized my voice. He exclaimed, "Good God, Wrightson, is this the way you travel now!" If I ever get trip in a submarine I will have traveled on the earth, above the earth and under the sea, which reminds me that I have several times been hundreds of feet below the sea, but it was hot and dry! Down in the Coachella Valley where the Salton Sink is 250 feet below sea level!

ON THE ROAD

When the farmers of the county elected me President of the County Farm Bureau the old mare and I again took to the road. Before I finished my second year as County President I was elected Vice-President of the State Farm Bureau Federation in charge of membership promotion. This started me off over the State again and I kept that up for

two years and then I transferred to the Sun-Maid Raisin Growers of California at the request of its manager and with the consent of the Executive Committee of the State Farm Bureau Federation. I stayed with the Sun-Maid two years.

During all this time I had competent help employed on my vineyard and although away a good part of the time was able to direct operations so that everything went along smooth and satisfactorily, again giving credit to that faithful wife for carrying on in my absence. In these later positions my traveling expenses were allowed and in some cases a small salary so it was not so much a losing game for me as my first experience proved to be.

Volumes could be written about the economic conditions that kept these organizations active and the successes and failures of their efforts. Personally I enjoyed my work and felt that I was rendering a service to my fellow growers.

At the end of this six year stretch of activity I again retired to my vineyard for one year but events and the growers again started my off and I was elected a member of the Board of Directors and also Corporate Secretary of the California Vineyardists Association, and entirely new organization developed because of the disastrous condition of the fresh grape industry; I am now, in January 1930, starting my fourth year in this position.

Each year I have addressed a meeting of vineyardists and business men in every grape growing area of the State from Ukiah in Mendocino County on the North to El Centro in the Imperial Valley on the South. In my home area I have spoken before groups of growers in almost every school house and have addressed the members of almost every service club in the Valley.

On August 6, 1929, I was called to San Francisco to attend a Board of Directors meeting. Expecting to return the following day, I had only a hand bag containing actual necessities for one night in the City. The following day, instead of returning to Fresno, I was on the train for Washington, D.C.! A light two-piece suit and a small hand bag are hardly the equipment to start on what might prove to be a three weeks trip. In Chicago I replenished my supply of linen and in Washington outfitted with new clothes; the balance of the trip to New York and then home was spent in comfort.

This sudden trip to Washington, D.C. was caused by the necessity of appearing before the Federal Farm Board, with other representatives of the vineyard industry, in an endeavor to secure Federal aid. Upon arrival in Washington we took a taxi from the depot to the hotel and while riding along I made the remark, "This is a sleepy-town, we will not get things done in a hurry here". And so it appears to be! We who have gone through the actual experiences in trying to solve our problem can see the necessities very clearly but if we are to receive Federal assistance we must take it as it comes. We have exhausted our private energies and must have the patience to await government action.

On the trip through the Middle Western states we passed through hundreds of miles of cornfields. When we arrived in Washington I found on the hotel menu "Corn on the cob - 80¢". In New York I found on breakfast menu "Malaga grapes - 60¢". Of course what appears to be an exorbitant charge for corn or grapes is really a charge for service but the average farmer "sees red" when he finds his product selling for such enormous prices while he is going bankrupt. I have never grown corn but I estimate that at 80¢ an ear, corn would bring about \$50.00 a bushel. I know that a breakfast portion of grapes at 60¢ would be about \$1.50 per pound but the grower is satisfied if gets 2¢ per pound. There are big problems in agriculture and marketing yet to be solved.

I was on this trip nearly a month and it was two days after my arrival home that I was stricken with appendicitis. If this had happened while I was East or on the train returning I probably would not be here now because I would have suffered in an endeavor to get home and probably would have suffered too long.

It is twenty years since I was elected State President of the California Division of the National Farmers Union. During all these years I have been traveling, traveling, traveling! I made seven thousand miles before I was two and a half years old and I feel that I have kept up about that ratio ever since, but I have had my vineyard home to return to, whenever I desired to retire and live "beneath my own vine and fig tree".

HARD TIMES AGAIN

The question now is, how much longer shall I be able to do so? The disastrous condition of this industry has caused hundreds of vineyardists to lose their homes and I find myself on the verge of bankruptcy. Only eight years ago my vineyard was free from mortgage and I had a little savings in the bank. Staying at home and caring for my vineyard personally would not have made any difference. The year I stayed at home before getting into the California Vineyardists Association work, I produced the finest crop in quality but income continues to decline.

There are no doubt, hundreds of minor incidents in my life that I have overlooked, kernels of corn that will not "pop" and there remains only recent experiences to record but it seems more difficult to evaluate them than occurrences in the more distant past.

TROUBLE - TROUBLE

About one year ago I had my first serious automobile accident. A young fellow, driving about 40 miles an hour, crashed into me at the intersection of a country road; both cars were completely demolished. When I recovered consciousness I was standing on my feet some distance from my car. The other fellow was still inside his car trying to get out through a broken window. Neither of us were hurt except for a few slight cuts so we shook hands and parted. Junkmen came out and cleaned up the wreck later. When I recovered consciousness after the automobile wreck I walked over to the other car, which

was tipped over on its side about 60 feet away. Holding on to the top I looked down inside and saw the young fellow trying to extricate himself from a tangle of seat cushions, etc., and reaching up to the broken glass trying to make a hole big enough to get through. Then I must have lost consciousness because the next thing I knew were examining the wrecks and congratulating each other on our escape. I don't know how he got out of his car. The usual crowd soon gathered and a young lady school teacher offered to take me home and I accepted. I did not realize at the time what I looked like but later found that I was covered with dirt from head to foot; the small cuts had bled and the dirt had caked on my hands and face - a terrible looking sight! When my wife saw me nothing but my self-control saved her from unnecessary grief. After she had cleaned me up I laid down on the lounge and "passed out" again. The doctor called and he said that I was all right and so it proved to be. The junk man paid me \$5.00 for the wreck! After a few days rest to recover from the nervous shock I was as good as ever. Evidently my time had not yet come.

Some months later I lost my wife after only a few days illness - a second shock; and then, I was operated on for appendicitis and other complications - a third shock. This, added to my financial distress, will stamp the year 1929 indelibly on my memory.

Someone had said that the test of sanity is the ability to adapt oneself to whatever conditions may develop. When I received word of my wife's death I was with a group of men. I had left her only a few hours before with the doctor's assurance that she was in no danger. The men noticed my happiness during the conference. When the bad news came I excused myself and left them to continue their conference undisturbed. One cannot record experiences during such a period of grief.

When I was operated upon it had its lighter side. Arriving at the Sanitarium about 7 PM, I was assigned to a room and conducted by a young nurse. I was perfectly normal, able to walk and quite unconcerned. The first question the nurse asked me was whether I could undress myself! I assured her that I was perfectly able to do and she then handed me something that looked like a barber's apron and told me to put that on when I undressed. I told her that I had pajamas of my own, but she insisted that I had to put that apron on so I did. I had barely got into it when she quite unceremoniously walked in to see how I getting along. That damned apron opened down the back and just reached to my knees so I had to stand facing her and even at that it was embarrassing.

Then I discovered that there was no pocket in the thing and began complaining about that. Running her hands over my breasts she informed me that I had the thing on inside out! She was kind enough to leave while I reversed the order of my scanty apparel.

Soon afterwards the surgeon arrived to make an examination and asked me whether I thought I would sleep all right. I told him that I expected to so he ordered "ice packs" and departed. By this time it was 8 PM. Half an hour later the nurse came in, yanked down the covers and slapped a bag of cracked ice on my stomach and asked me whether I had seen Sam yet? I asked who Sam was and what he had to do with it and she said, "Sam is the colored boy who shaves you". I assured her that I did not need a shave but she just smiled and walked out.

Up to this time I had been confident that I would get a good night's sleep. It had not occurred to me that the doctor was suggesting an opiate if I felt at all nervous over the coming operation.

So I patiently waited for "Sam". When he arrived about 11 PM he had a large tray, an elaborate array of bottles and bandages and a very gracious manner, and then it dawned upon me that I was not going to get an ordinary shave. During the preliminaries I asked him whether he had to have special training in his "profession" and he informed me that he had graduated from a school in Washington, D.C. and had prepared patients for some of the best doctors in the land. As I had just returned from Washington, D.C. we had a common ground for discussion while he washed me off with ether, lathered my stomach and proceeded to shave off every hair he could find, then he painted me with some highly colored fluid, applied bandages and straps and bid me good night at 11:45.

Just when I thought I might go to sleep, a patient across the hall began to complain vociferously and by the time the nurses had him quieted down it was past midnight.

However, I did not go to sleep and the next thing I knew two nurses were putting me on a carriage and wheeling me away.

We arrived at the scene of operations too soon so I had to wait for the anesthetic but my turn soon came. The cap was adjusted, I was told to take long breaths, which I did, and then I was gone. A little loss of sleep the night before was of no consequence.

When I regained consciousness I was back on my hospital bed. Special day and night nurses had been assigned and I had two weeks of complete inactivity, the longest rest I had ever had. I think I was considered a good patient because I was practically dead from the neck down and from the neck up I had nothing but an infantile mind. Sam would drop in occasionally, which in spite of his darkness revived the lighter side.

One soon loses all embarrassment in the presence of these wonderful girls and women who are devoting their lives to the care of the sick and suffering. For some considerable time the surgeon's knife seemed to have severed me completely from the past. Regaining consciousness was like being born again and I seem to have again passed quickly through infancy, adolescence and youth.

PROPHECY

In order to record remembrances one must always be looking backwards but the world is always young and the future can be estimated from the past.

As I have read over the memories I have recorded there are two outstanding circumstances most worthy of note which may indicate the future - the rise and fall of my father's fortunes and the rise and fall of my own.

Economist and statisticians can show charts indicating the ups and downs in all lines of business. The crests and hollows in the sea of life seem to be about forty years apart.

It is significant that both my father and myself were at the crest during those years when we were raising our families and that the depression came in the sunset of our lives. It therefore follows that the upward trend for the younger generation is about to begin and opportunity to prosper is before them.

The best lesson to be learned from this is to save in times of prosperity in order that you may live through times of adversity. I know that this is hard to do. One would almost have to be miser in order to do it. When money is plentiful it is easy to spend as everyone seems to be doing it, but in this case it is wise to do exactly the opposite to what the general run of people are doing. Government bonds bought when money is plentiful and cheap will carry over at their face value into times when money is scarce and hard to get. All other securities, including real estate, decline in value in proportion to the decline in business but Uncle Sam's dollar remains a dollar regardless of the statisticians charts. You can level out the peaks and depressions in your own life if you will save when you have plenty to spend. Be temperate in all things.

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AFTERTHOUGHTS

Every man at some time becomes curious as to his ancestry, very few have any record back beyond a grandfather, and this is usually a personal remembrance.

Discussing this with my own father he said that it did not pay to be too curious or you might find some of your forefathers hanging on the family tree. This only stimulated further curiosity so he explained that as far as he had any record, our family for many generations had been seafaring men and that in the olden days some of them may have been smugglers and pirates who had been caught and hanged.

These, however, were the black sheep of the family. Others were ship owners trading throughout the world while still other members of the family were merchants who received the cargoes and disposed of them while the seagoers were on their voyages. I remember as a boy seeing large warehouses bearing the family name near the St. Catherine Docks in London, but I knew of none who were still ship owners. The day of the small wooden sailing ship had passed and individual ownership no longer prevailed.

Whether as seamen or otherwise, the family for generations has been connected with some phase of transportation. When steam was discovered and applied as a motive power, railroads were developed and my grandfather had something to do with the early railroad operation in Dover, England. My father was a shipping agent and representative in London of several United States railroads. In my generation none are in transportation although one brother did for a short time take to railroading, and another to motor truck transportation, and now in my own family my youngest son is in aviation, so the desire to be connected in some way with transportation has shown itself in four generations, and earlier generations were no doubt seafaring men.

Unless a family tree is kept true to the original stock it becomes overburdened with the budding and grafting of other stock by marriage so no family tree can show a true picture of a man's ancestry because marriage has introduced many strains of blood which the family tree can not show but which are present in each individual. There may be some satisfaction in finding outstanding individuals in one's ancestry because heredity may pass on to your own children some of the qualities of good men even though the blood stream may contain many other strains.

I remember seeing the family name connected with a professor in Cumberland University and another who was knighted by royalty. Others may have been equally prominent but in those early days mediums of publicity were very meager and only very prominent men became widely known.

In my own case, future generations could easily find public reference to my positions and activities because my name and photograph have appeared in the press many times in the past twenty years. Daily papers and magazine are continually seeking

copy to fill their pages and very ordinary men now receive more public mention than much better men could receive 100 years ago.

So, after all, you are what you are and a family tree will not change you. Many a purebred animal with a long pedigree has proven to be of little value and has been turned back into the common herd. If you have a feeling of superiority you are superior even though environment and opportunity prevent you from demonstrating the quality. There are instances of great talent suddenly breaking forth in children of seemingly inferior parentage, the talent has laid dormant in the blood stream perhaps for several generations.

Submerged in the masses of the so-called lower classes in Europe are strains of good blood. Environment and lack of opportunity keep them submerged, but when they are transplanted to the wide open spaces of a new country with abundant opportunities and an environment conducive to a wider vision some very remarkable individuals have developed. There are many instances of this in the United States.

This country, however, will not long continue to be a country of wide-open spaces as far as immigrants are concerned. We are rapidly changing from an agricultural to an industrial nation and in our big cities where most of today's immigrants are absorbed environment and opportunity will differ but little from conditions in the old countries.

Unless there can be a change and the population of our industrial centers and of Europe can spread out into the open fields of the country there will be a stagnation of genius and the development of rigid class distinctions as bad as any in Europe.

I would be much rather be poor in the country than poor in a big city because I feel that in the country there is opportunity and environment favorable to the development of whatever good qualities may be dormant in the blood. Everyone except the vagrant tramp is tied to his home and occupation by an invisible but unbreakable chain, some are very short and some allow a considerable range of travel and observation, the chains average longer in the country than in the city.

H. W. W.

Fresno, Calif., February 8th, 1930.