

Family stories and memories of Ruth Simpson Clift

Sometime in 1945 mother set out to write a biography (novel?) about her mother. As it developed mother took the opportunity to preach a few sermons. I am not comfortable with all of her theology, but it reflects the practice of early American Methodism on the frontier. Then her story moves into being an account of some memories of her own childhood which I found very interesting. The manuscript was typed on some loose leaf pages in a 9" by 6" notebook I had in the Navy. The pages have turned brown and words are missing in places. The writing consists of scenes, each with a heading, and I have followed that pattern in transcribing it. I did not think I had the book, but we found it in cleaning out a trunk of old memorabilia in 1999 when we had a flood downstairs and cleaned out some closets with foot lockers of memorabilia. I do not remember ever having read it but I had known of its existence. I think mother embellished the account in places but the facts about her family are probably largely accurate. I got a picture that I had not had of what life was like, more or less, despite the rosy glow mother paints. The frontier feeling is there and the emphasis on clothes is what I grew up with. I got rather tired of typing "Brother Simpson" but I suppose mother was still thinking of some kind of novel or biography. It was standard practice to refer not only to the clergy as Brother so and so, but also adult members of the church community—they were "Brothers and Sisters in Christ." As I was growing up my grandmother was always referred to as "Sister Simpson" by everyone in the community. Nink's mother in law was "Sister Russell." When mother got to the vignette on "Will's Suit" she starts referring to her father as "Papa" which is what they called him and that was a relief. Mother hardly mentions anyone without telling the color of their eyes and how beautiful the eyes are! I thought this rather odd until I remembered how pleased I was when little Dylan, at an early age, looked at me and said, "Papa you have pretty blue eyes like me." (Mother, her brother, and their father all had blue eyes.)

My grandmother Cora died in 1950 and she lived with mother and dad the last 5 or 6 years of her life. They built the west bedroom and bath on to my parents' house for her. I suspect mother may have interviewed her mother quite a bit during those years as it coincides with the time when she was writing this account. I was away from home during those years, first in the Far East and then at school. I was in my second year at Harvard Law School when my grandmother Cora died. After I read what mother had written I decided that in the process she had come to a new appreciation and love for her mother even in the midst of caring for her in her last years.

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Reverie

She sat alone in her living room with the lights turned low. Her frail, lovely old face, with its wet, tender eyes was oh so sad, for word had come that her grandson, John Roger Simpson [Uncle Will's 2nd son] had been killed in an airplane crash. [Summer, 1945]

With her hands folded in her lap and with tears slowly rolling down her furrowed cheeks, she prayed patiently for Bert and Will. How her heart went out to her son, Will, in his loss of his boy.

(Memories of the past rushed through her mind. She even thought of the time she heard the angels sing back in Mississippi when she was a wee girl. She had heard them above the high trees where she was playing. She stopped her play and looked up for a long time. Then she ran across the green into the kitchen, demanding of Hannah, Where is Mother?)

“Land sakes, child, what is de matter with yo? Yo face jes shining and yo looks as if you seen a ghost! I think yo find Miss Mary upstairs; she ain’t gwine to get very far from dot young son, Arthur!”

Little Cora raced through the house and up the stairs; there she found her mother as Hannah had said, near the crib of her young son. “Oh! Mother, come with me,” she said, as she tugged at her mother’s skirts. Mrs. Bellenger looked down into the upturned face and seeing the earnestness there expressed followed the child downstairs, through the house and across the green to the towering trees where Cora had been playing.

“I was standing right here with my doll, Sally, in my hands, when I heard the Angels singing above the tree tops. It was so very sweet that I ran to the house to get you, but we have been so long coming that now they are gone.”

Mrs. Bellenger kindly patted the little head and stooped down and kissed the child and said, “Perhaps they will come back and sing to you again sometime.”)

“Oh God, have mercy on Bert in this sad hour.” Hopes bud and bloom only for decay. Grief and disappointment are the portion of humanity.

(How well do I remember the first time I saw Bert. It was when we were living at the parsonage. I answered the door that hot summer day, and Bert and her father were there. They wanted to know if she could board in our home and attend the summer normal that was to start the nest week. When Bert came to board Cora had reached her thirties, and Bert was in her teens. The two brown-eyed women had many happy times together.)

Then Cora thought of Will and his return from Oklahoma. How his father had worried about him, helping Will to get started in business. How happy Lena and Ruth had been to have their brother home again. How Papa had bought the new buggy so Will could go to the Divide and court Bert and win her hand in marriage.

On and on her thoughts ran. Ruth had come in one day after making a trip to the Divide with her brother, Will. She remarked, “Will thinks he is smart!” (Will winked at Cora.) As they had ridden along in Will’s new trap, the two of them building air castles, Will made the statement that he was going to have a cook after he married. Ruth declared that she was going to have a cook also and never wash dishes. “Now, Ruth Doolie, that would be fine for you, but you don’t know that, and I do know that I am going to have a cook and there is nothing like knowing!” After some arguing, Ruth demanded, “How do you know?” Will chuckled and said, “I am going to marry a cook!”

Dear God, she prayed, "I know the great and the humble, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, the learned and the ignorant must answer the call of death. But, oh how hard it is to give up the young life." She thought of her sixteen months old little Cora Mae that had sweetened her life for those short months and how empty her arms had felt when the little one went on to a better land.

Then Cora's memories went again to her childhood. When they had left their home in Mississippi to move to Texas, Aunt Narsisie had looked long into her sister Mary's eyes as they kissed. Aunt Sisie said, "Mary you are braver than I am to undertake to live in wild Texas."

Cora thought of how her father had dipped up some water in a little tin cup as they crossed the Mississippi River, and each one had taken a sip of the water, and said farewell Mississippi, we are bound for Texas. How her mother had cried when she told her mother (Mrs. Ray) goodbye. "God bless and keep you," she said. How Uncle Dannie had tried to joke the children to keep them from crying.

Cora arose from her reveries and crossed the hall to the middle bedroom, pulled out the top drawer of the chest of drawers, and searched among her pictures until she found the two she was looking for. Returning to the living room she placed Ajax's picture on one end of the mantel and John Roger's picture on the other. Then she stood and looked at them for a long time.

Oh, how her heart ached for the dear boys that are fighting our battles for us in this cruel war. She crossed the room and sat on the couch, thinking of Ruth and her trip to Chicago and on to South Bend Indiana to see her son, Wallace, graduate from Midshipman School in Notre Dame. God speed them on their return, for Wallace will be able to help me bear the heavy burden of sorrow. He is so young, yet it seems he understands as Papa did. Oh Papa, papa, you have been gone seventeen years. How I miss you, dear sweet Papa; if you were here now your heart would ache with mine, and now to see Will's heart broken over the loss of his son.

We are on trial here on this earth, and the use we make of this life will stamp eternity with failure or success; will elicit from the Master's lips, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, or depart ye cursed." As Jesus says, "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." If we do not follow him, we are not his and we shall perish everlastingly. The Bible teaches us the way to live and in so doing will teach us how to die.

The Preacher's Peacock

It was in the year of 1889 when Chalmers Bellenger walked back and forth waiting for his four daughters and three sons to finish dressing for Sunday School and Church. Now Mr. Bellenger was indeed a very proud and prosperous farmer and also operated the gin in Parker County, Texas. His French blood swelled with pride and joy at the sight of his four daughters dressed fit to kill in silks and satins he had worked so hard to provide.

Mrs. Bellenger, tall and slender with sharp brown eyes, was, as usual, practically undressed by the time she took a pin out here and there as she pinned her daughter's

ribbons in place. Her hair pins went also first to one daughter then to another, until her lovely brown hair hung around her shoulders as she waved a good-bye and said “God bless you” to her adorable family. She then turned to the kitchen to help the cook with the noon meal that must be a success for Pa was sure to bring the new preacher home with him for dinner.

As usual Ventura, Cora and Arthur rode horseback over to the meeting house. Mr. Bellenger drove the surrey that carried Emma, Elizabeth, Floyd and little Oscar to the church on the hillside. In front of the church building there was a grove of trees where the horses were hitched. Mr. Bellenger led the singing, opened the Sunday School, offered prayer, and turned the services over to the new preacher, who was a handsome young blue-eyed widower of 30 years.

The young preacher read from Galatians 6-14: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Man is constitutionally inclined to glory in some thing. He boasts of his high birth, his great wealth, his superior attainments... To meet this principle God has presented to man an object worthy not only of his trust, but of his boast. He says to man: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord who exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness, for in these things I delight saith the Lord.’”

As the charming Cora sat there fanning her soft brown curls, back from her fair face, she did not hear the young minister as he talked of the goodness of God. She saw nothing but the beautiful blue eyes as he looked down on her. She said over and over to herself: “I have never seen violet eyes like those before.”

The young minister’s voice rang out as he said: “It is not by conquering armies, nor by warlike navies; not by might, the might of great nations, but by the attractions of the cross will He draw all men to him. The cross gives light for darkness, innocence for guilt, purity for pollution, life for death and heaven for hell. It changes the gloom of despair to the effulgence of hope. It proclaims Jesus Christ the resurrection and the life, and declares that ‘Whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life;’ and that ‘Though he were dead, yet shall he live.’ There is no virtue in a cross which may hang about your neck or shine upon your bosom, but there is virtue in the religion which warms the heart, shines upon the face, and illuminates the whole life. It is the life of our civilization and the hope of our progress. It is the basis of all good government and the only assurance of its permanence. It gives honor and dignity to man, and incorruptible purity to woman. It blesses marriage and makes home attractive. It unites parents and children by ties so strong that no violence can ever break them, and no length of time can wear or weaken them. It adds a charm to the domestic circle which neither wealth, position nor intelligence can impart. It brightens the face of youth and smoothes the brow of age. When unable to remove or avert the clouds that so often darken earth, it always spans them with the bow of promises which assures us of cloudless sunshine beyond. It lessens the horrors of war, and multiplies the hopes and joys of peace. It takes away the sting of death, and robs the grave of its gloom. The cross is as important to man as the compass to the mariner, as the sun to the traveler, as skill to the physician, as food to the hungry, or as water to the thirsty. I urge you to stand by the cross. Glory in it and in nothing else but the cross.

Umbrellas

Cora and Ventura had beautiful silk umbrellas that their father had given them for an Easter gift. Ventura's was rose colored with a small green vine printed around the edge, while Cora's was an apple green with roses all over it. Shortly after they got the umbrellas, Cora sat down on hers at church one day and broke the handle. Cousin Willie had been visiting the Bellenger family and was preparing to go home. Willie lived about six miles away; she always came horseback when she visited her cousins. Mrs. Bellenger had consented to let Cora and Ventura go home with Willie and spend the night and return the next day. Ventura was going to carry her umbrella; this worried Cora, for her umbrella was broken—of course she couldn't carry it! So she planned to get Ventura's umbrella. She told Ventura to get on her horse and she would hand her umbrella to her. Ventura, never dreaming that her sister was planning to deceive her, agreed. Ventura led her horse to the stoop, and stepping on the large rock she mounted her horse, and as she reached to straighten her hat, Cora gave Prince, the horse, a punch with the umbrella. Prince jumped and shied away from the umbrella. Cora said, "Ventura, I don't believe Prince will let you carry your umbrella. I'll try and see if Greeley will let me carry it." So, Cora carried Ventura's umbrella as she had planned.

On arriving at Cousin Willie's home, they were ready for a snack. They knew where to look for it, for Aunt Anna always kept cookies baked. They went straight to the cookie jar, and sure enough it was half full of sugar cookies. A smaller jar sat by the cookie jar; it was full of raisins. This jar was a beautiful and hand painted sugar bowl. Aunt Anna had had it all the years during the rearing of her family; it was a precious possession. Cora had looked at it many times, and studied the gooseberry spray that decorated the bowl; the exquisite gold handles of the bowl intrigued her. The bowl was the largest sugar bowl that Cora had ever seen. The lid had been broken, and Aunt Anna kept the bowl filled with raisins, next to the cookie jar.

Home on the Farm

Throughout one long, hot summer day, Mrs. Bellenger and her oldest daughter, Ventura, with very little help from Cora, had been canning peaches in glass jars. As they sat on the back porch in the quiet of the afternoon, resting, and counting the number of jars of peaches they had canned, they noticed a large flock of birds come fluttering in and light in a grove of trees near the brook. "Those birds flying in and settling in the trees as they did remind me of days in Mississippi!" said Mrs. Bellenger. As they talked on, they watched the cattle come trailing down the path to the brook; long shadows walked by their sides. Some of the cows stood under the trees chewing their cuds lazily, after they had drunk from the brook that ran near the house. Others returned to the pasture to eat more grass and weeds before sunset. Mrs. Bellenger and Ventura continued their leisurely talking; in a few minutes Cora, all fresh and cool in a beautiful flowered mull

dress that she had painstakingly made, joined them. (Mrs. Bellenger, a very accomplished seamstress, had instructed her four daughters in the art of fine sewing, then watched them carefully to see which would profit most. She found that Cora and Emma were very proud peacocks, earnest students in dressmaking, Emma excelling in hat making. Ventura and Elizabeth became accomplished in the art of cooking and serving meals.) Cora paraded before them in her long flowing dress, then returned to her bedroom to primp some more.

A refreshing stir of breeze brought a gentle summer fragrance from open fields in soft, warm sunshine. Mrs. Bellenger had smiled as she noticed the glowing face of Cora. She said to Ventura, "I am proud of Cora: she did a splendid piece of work when she made that dress; it looks very nice on her. It is a good thing my mother thought to give me several 'Lady's Books' with that bundle of patterns when Chalmers and I moved to Texas, for I have used them again and again. As my mother handed the patterns to me, she said, 'I know styles change, but by the time you get to Texas, Mary, things will be different with you; you will have so many hardships. You can not give Lou or any other Negro girl a cold biscuit to wash your ears for you.'"

Mrs. Bellenger's tired face seemed to relax as she dreamily talked on of the leisurely days in Mississippi when Lou in her gentle, easy way would wash her ears with such a soft cloth that you couldn't tell she was touching them. When she would finish she would always say, "Now, honey, you has fair skin, pearly teeth, and shell pink ears; go, dance and have a good time for yo won't be young but once." Mrs. Bellenger said, "God bless Lou wherever she is, warm her soul, for there re no better people on this old earth than the colored people, if you treat them right; and my mother and grandmother taught us it is wrong to mistreat them as it is wrong to mistreat a small child."

Cora came into the kitchen one Saturday afternoon beaming with the thought that tomorrow is the first Sunday in August, and, at the little Methodist church on the hillside, there would be an all day meeting with dinner on the ground. (The pastor would be back to see about his congregation for they only had church with the Methodist preacher in charge once each month. There was Sunday School each Sunday with some minister from another denomination filling the pulpit.) The kitchen smelled of coconut cake and apple pies; also, grape jelly had been made by Mrs. Bellenger. There was the clean smell of fresh, ironed clothes as Sadie, the maid, got every thing ready for Sunday. Cora had been to Weatherford with her father that Saturday afternoon and he had bought her and Ventura a gold carved brooch with earbobs to match. Cora looked very charming in her cool, green basque with gathered skirt. Her yellow leghorn pushed back on her head and long ribbon sashes hanging down her slender back. Her father adored her; of his four daughters she was the one he admired most. He had tried to tease her about getting all fixed up for the preacher tomorrow, but her mother's brown eyes snapped as she warned, "Chalmers, you had better not be encouraging Cora to fall in love with that preacher; he has three children and is thirty years old. Besides, you know she has been engaged to Bill Wilson for one year."

"I am afraid people will think we have raised our girls to be fickle; well, we haven't, Mary, but did I ever tell you I was engaged to be married to a girl in Georgia before the Civil War and, when the war was over, I ended up in Mississippi, met you,

never even wrote and told the girl about you. But there is one thing, Mary, Cora just must go back to Mississippi this fall to school.”

Now that it is Saturday night, Mrs. Bellenger sees that each child is well scrubbed and that prayers are said; then she goes into the kitchen to see that everything is in readiness for Sunday dinner: the hen ready for baking, the ham ready for frying; everyone sorted for the salad; the green peas shelled for boiling, and squash and cantaloupe lay on the table. Also there is grape jelly ready for serving with the ham; a large bowl of peaches for the cobbler pie, to be served with heavy cream (the cream was never whipped in those days). When all this was attended to, she retired. Mr. Bellenger was very tired from working hard in the fields during the week, and from his Saturday afternoon shopping trip in town. Yet he took out his violin, and sat down on the door step for his usual Saturday night treat. Mrs. Bellenger, practical woman that she was, insisted that he drop his fondness for his violin, now that he has such a growing family.

Everything went off smoothly when the family arose Sunday morning, since the preparations on Saturday had been made so capably and completely. The entire family was as polished in appearance as a piece of sterling silver. (Cora wore her beautiful green mull dress.)

James, the hired man, hitched the three horses to the hitching post out in front at the end of the long avenue of cedars; then, he drove the surrey around to the side gate and called to Mr. Bellenger, “Everything is ready, Sir.” Mr. and Mrs. Bellenger came out, dressed in their best. Mr. Bellenger cleared his throat and chuckled to himself as he watched his son, Arthur, and his two lovely daughters mount their horses. The girls looked beautiful in their long black riding skirts. Their side saddles were new and shining. Arthur rode gallantly beside them.

Little Oscar rode on the front seat, while Emma, Elizabeth and Floyd rode in the back. They had a pleasant drive over to the church, little Oscar asking numerous questions, such as: “How do birds get born”? “Did I hatch from an Easter egg”? (his birthday was on Easter Sunday.

The Methodists of Parker County had a gracious day that first Sunday in August. They planned their protracted meeting for the last two weeks in that month. It was at this camp meeting that Cora lost her heart to W. K. and decided to give Bill’s ring back to him. Brother Simpson told Cora about the death of his wife, and how had struggled along trying to preach and keep his children together. His children were Mark, Daisy, and Will Simpson.

The next week when Bill called on Cora, after a short chat, she told him of her love for the new minister and of her intention to marry him. As she gave back to Bill his wide gold band ring, he began to cry, and fell to his knees before her and begged her to reconsider what she was saying and keep the ring. But this she would not do. Her mind was made up, so his visit was cut short and Cora never regretted her decision. The next week found Cora shopping in Weatherford for her wedding dress and her second day dress. As she and Brother Simpson had set December for their wedding month, there were no woolens to be had until about September first. So she purchased laces and embroideries for her undergarments. In those days there were no ready made under clothes and very few ready to wear top clothes.

Very carefully Cora sewed each seam. One day when she was all laced for trying on some of the new creations she was standing in her corset and was holding her chemise in her hand. One of the children came running into the house saying, "Brother Simpson is coming." Not knowing that the hired man was in his room, the shed room he always occupied, (it was mid afternoon and everyone was supposed to be at work), Cora dashed into the room to hide. She thought she was alone until she heard someone clear his throat; turning, she saw James, the hired man sitting on the bed. So there she was in her corset, leaning over, holding the door, with her seat almost in the hired man's face. When she turned around and saw him she threw her hands into the air and ran out of the room screaming. Brother Simpson caught sight of her as she flew into an adjoining room. Cora dressed as quickly as possible and went in to see him. She was adorable in her soft blue muslin with her face still flushed from the excitement she had just experienced. Brother Simpson took her into his arms and kissed her very gently and said, "Miss Cora, you are the ideal of my heart's desire." Brother Bellenger left the room and the two sat down to make plans.

The next Sunday Brother Simpson was to preach at Zion Hill some ten miles away. Cora began to make plans to go. Her mother objected; it wasn't fitting for a young lady to go traipsing off ten miles to church. Besides, the very next Sunday, their meeting would begin, and she guessed that Cora could wait until then to see that preacher. "I tell you, Cora, it's not going to be so funny married to that preacher with three children. You can't even cook a good meal. All you ever think about is the way you look, and looks won't feed hungry children."

But when Sunday morning rolled around, Mr. Bellenger had Cora's and Arthur's horses hitched at the side gate waiting for them to start their journey. Arthur objected to going, but Mr. Bellenger made it worth his while, so he said no more. (Mrs. Bellenger never knew why Pa, on his next trip to Weatherford, bought Arthur a new watch and chain.)

Brother Simpson and Cora had very little chance for words together that day, but they looked deep into each other's eyes and he whispered, "I have the ring with me, but I'll wait until our meeting starts to give it to you."

Dinner for the Preacher

As usual Brother Bellenger asked the minister to go home with him for dinner. The new preacher accepted the invitation and after much hand shaking with the brothers and sisters of the congregation and laying his hand on the heads of many babies, they departed for the white two story farm home of Brother Bellenger.

Ventura, Cora and Arthur had ridden horseback to church that morning. Arthur and Ventura became restless to mount their steeds and start for home, but Cora lingered, cutting her soft brown eyes at the bewitching blue eyed preacher, but after a jerk or two from her brother who was always hungry when church was over she followed her brother and sister to the little grove where they had hitched their horses.

Brother Bellenger was helping little Oscar and the other members of his family into the fringe topped surrey, Brother Simpson turned to him and said: "Is Miss Cora not

going with us”? Brother Bellenger replied that the three oldest children had ridden horseback to church that morning. The young preacher asked many questions about the farming in Parker County and about the people and their problems, as they leisurely drove along the country road.

When the three horse back riders arrived at home the son took the horses to the lot to be fed while the girls rushed in to tell their mother that the new preacher was coming home with Pa for dinner. Cora added: “He has beautiful blue eyes that look right into your heart.” Ventura laughed and said: “Cora, what did Brother Simpson preach about”? “Well, I don’t know,” replied “Cora, “but it was a sublime sermon and I think he has the prettiest blue eyes I have ever looked into.” “You are so silly!” said Ventura. “He preached about: “Glorying in the Cross of Christ.”

After Brother Simpson was introduced to Mrs. Bellenger they all gathered around the bountiful dinner table and the minister returned thanks. The family satisfied their hunger with the good food, all except Cora, who minced her food and lingered to hear Brother Simpson talk.

Shortly after the meal was over and after obtaining a list of the different Methodist families along the road, the young minister departed to visit with other members of his flock. Each family opening their hearts to him and placing upon him their burdens.

Camp Meeting

The great day rolled around, and campers came from near and far to hear the gospel preached. All stood at the close of one of the services and Brother Bellenger led the song, “Down at the Cross where my Savior died, down where from cleansing from sin I cried.” Brother Simpson asked the Christians to come into the altar for prayer for the lost souls. Soon the altar was filled with men and women offering prayers out of their hearts for their loved ones who were out in sin, lost and without God. He then called on Brother Bellenger to lead the song, “Whiter than snow.” “Lord Jesus, come down from thy throne in the sky, and help me to make a complete sacrifice; bring down every idol and cast out every foe. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”

After this song, the Christians were asked to step to one side and sinners were asked to come to the altar if they wished to be saved from their sins, and a throng of strong men and women and children came and fell down in the straw and begged for mercy; many received forgiveness and rejoiced and sang praises for days. While some would not give up the idols of their hearts and theirs were hardened, and they went away unsaved.

The men had their sunrise prayer meetings and the ladies had their grove meetings just before the services in the evenings. Groups of young people also met and much courting went on to and from these services. Their hearts leaped for joy as they found their life mates in this manner.

In the evening when the church services were closed, Brother Simpson found his way to the tent of the Bellengers and ate and drank with the family. When he and Cora were alone, every moment of their time was spent in planning their home. Brother

Simpson was boarding at Veal Station at that time as there was not a Methodist parsonage there. He told Cora that if the Conference sent him back to Veal Station, he would have to build them a home before they could marry. He told her he owned a pair of horses and a buggy. Also, saddle bags, and had money sufficient to build a small home for them; he thought he could have it ready by December. When they went to Georgetown for the children that would be the wedding trip. So December 17 was set as the wedding date.

When the Fall materials arrived in the Weatherford stores, the Bellenger survey came home laden with bundles of white wool cashmere for the wedding dress with rosebud buttons for the basque. A deep plum colored wool for the second day dress with cut steel buttons for its basque. Cora worked hard early and late on her wedding clothes and many a frolic for the young people she missed because of her diligence in the painstaking preparation of her trousseau.

Wedding

For weeks preparation for the wedding had been taking place. The Bellenger home was buzzing with activity for today was Cora's wedding day. The first person to arrive was Cousin Willie. All morning you could hear laughter as Cora's sisters and brothers brought into the house arms full of evergreens and vines with bright berries. The house was beautifully decorated, and the fires were burning brightly in the fireplaces throughout the house.

The dining table was laid with a snow white linen cloth; three white cake stands were placed down the middle of the table. The one in the center was the beautifully decorated wedding cake; between these lovely cakes was placed milk white china goblets, holding twisted peppermint stick candy.

By five o'clock the house was fairly humming with guests, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Cora suddenly felt the whole affair to be absurd; her happy anticipation vanished. She said to her mother I am going to faint. She rushed to the bedroom and fell down on the bed and buried her face in the pillows and began to weep her heart out.

Mrs. Bellenger said, "Oh my dear, do not cry; I will send your father to talk to you. Cora's throat felt tight and funny. She could hardly swallow. As she lay there sobbing she could hear her father's measured steps as he climbed the stairs. He entered the room and took her in his arms as he had done so many times. She nestled up very close to him, and listened to his tender admonition, and while she was thus reflecting, all cares were banished from her heart. As she arose her disheveled hair fell about her shoulders. She heard someone at the front door. As her father went down the stairs he called back, "I know I can count on you, Cora." She listened as her father opened the door, and very graciously welcomed Brother Simpson and the presiding Elder, Brother Nelms, who was to perform the ceremony.

Cora piled her hair high on her head and straightened her spit curls. She went to a window and looked out. She could see the winding path that led from the woods up to the garden path. It was winter and the deciduous wood nearby looked cold and bare. She could see shocks of feed in the field. She heard the rustle of leaves and looking in an oak tree near the window she heard a red squirrel scold as he cast down an empty acorn cup.

Sweet memories rushed to her mind; the garden path had been flower skirted last summer when she and Brother Simpson had strolled down it. Just inside the gate of the white picket fence was her mother's flower garden with its many kinds of roses from which she had made many a sachet to pack among her clothes. As she thus reflected on the flowers and music of the birds of the past summer she remembered Brother Simpson saying, "I love the flowers for they never inquire whether their owner is rich or poor."

Brother Simpson felt restless and anxious to go up to Cora but Brother Bellenger very tactfully engaged Brother Simpson and Brother Nelms in one conversation after another, playing for time for Cora to compose herself. At last Brother Simpson could converse no longer. He excused himself and ran up the stairs, and across the hall and rapped on Cora's bedroom door. Cousin Willie who was putting the finishing touches to Cora's costume answered the door and welcomed Brother Simpson. Then she slipped out of the room and left Cora and Brother Simpson alone. A mild and gentle smile beamed from Cora's face as Brother Simpson crossed the room and took her in his arms.

The minutes slid into each other, and the time for the wedding was at hand. The bridal party gathered in Cora's bedroom. When they heard the first chords of the organ they filed down the steps and across the living room to an improvised altar of greenery. This was a very impressive service. Brother Simpson took her hand and kissed the ring that was a symbol of their vows: "to keep thee only unto her so long as you both shall live." The bridal party and some of the kin spent two days in the Bellenger home. When Cora and Brother Simpson had their wedding presents and clothes packed in his valise and her two telescopes with her little tin topped trunk tied on the back of the buggy she put on her small hat with seven tiny birds, five above and two perched beneath the brim near her rich dark hair. Her going away dress was wine bengaline silk with tight fitting basque and leg-o-mutton sleeves and a beautiful tailored skirt with small bustle. Among her wedding gifts was a beautiful rosy red Brussels carpet from her father. Cora's heart was warmed many times by the lovely gift.

Leaving Home

The sky was a thin blue with feathery white clouds and the air was crisp as Brother Simpson and Cora drove away from the Bellenger home that December day. It pleased him to see how popular Cora was. Her friends and loved ones waved goodbye, with many a wish for their happiness. He could feel her near him; he could see the shine of her rich dark hair and the soft brown of her eyes. As he bent and kissed her, he smelled the rose perfume that was always a part of her. A deep feeling of love warmed his heart as he beheld her beauty, her feminine cared for loveliness. "You are utterly charming Cora," he said. "Did you know that you do not have to make music to have it? You are in tune yourself if love is in your heart."

After leaving the Bellenger home, they spent the first night in Weatherford, Texas. The next day they drove over to see their new home at Veal Station. Brother Simpson had built a house of three rooms downstairs and two above. They left their belongings here and went on to the home of devoted friends of Brother Simpson, the Fergusons. Here they spent the night.

On the following day Brother Simpson and Cora took the train for Georgetown, Texas, to get Brother Simpson's children. While at Georgetown there was some discussion between Uncle White and Aunt Jennie about keeping Will, the youngest of the three children. Will, kindhearted child that he was, not wishing to hurt the feelings of his Uncle and Auntie, slipped around to Papa and said, "Papa, I do not want to stay." Brother Simpson chewed his tongue and told him, "Not a hoof shall be left behind." Cora was touched at heart when she saw the neglect the three children showed.

The children enjoyed the train trip home, and when some passengers across the aisle took out their lunch box, little Will came close to Cora and placed his hand in hers and said, "Mama, I wish I had a bicket." The family had a hearty laugh at how soon Will began depending on Cora for his food.

The Simpsons arrived at their home late in the afternoon tired and hungry. Cora was soon busy. The children needed to be washed and dressed in clean clothes and fed. She wondered what she would feed them. She remembered her mother's words, "Cora, you can't feed hungry children on pretty clothes."

The children loved their new mother and were very proud of their new home.

First Home

The next day, Cora, Papa and the three children worked at getting their home in order. Cora was anxious to get the red Brussels carpet spread out, and Papa was anxious to unpack his books. Cora said, "The carpet must be unpacked first." "No," said Papa, "There is nothing that comes before books." "But," protested Cora, "I cannot help unpack our books until we have the carpet down." The children agreed with Cora.

When the lovely rosy red carpet was spread on the floor, the room became very cozy and pretty. Cora sat down and played and sang, "Little Brown Jug." This pleased the children who begged for more. Papa said rather crossly, "Where will we put the books"? "I wish you had a study at the church and didn't have to keep them here," said Cora. "But I don't have," said Papa, "so what am I going to do"?

Brother Simpson didn't know much about a hammer or about nails; neither did Cora, but she began to figure how long the planks would have to be to make adequate shelves for the books. During the building of the book shelves the builders suffered from mashed fingers, but Cora would not give up until the shelves were perfect. She was as persistent with them as when making a dress for herself.

When the books were in the shelves and the large Morris chair was pulled up in front of the fire and when the little gold cupid clock that Cousin Willie had given her was set on the mantle, the living room looked snug and cozy. The children's faces bemed with happiness. They watched Cora arrange her family photographs on the center table. One photograph of particular interest for the children was one of Brother Simpson and one of Cora in her second day dress of plum colored wool.

Lonesome

After about six weeks, Cora began to feel sick of mornings. Late in the afternoon, when the train whistle blew, her heart would sink as she would wonder what they were doing down on the farm. She would go and sit on the back steps and think: if I could go home right now Ma would be cooking supper, the hired man would be bringing in great buckets of foaming milk, Pa would be shaving and washing the sweat from his body, getting clean in preparation for the evening meal. Floyd, the only blue eyed one of the seven children, would be rubbing the nose of the puppy and the kitten together and watching the cat spit. Cora's heart ached with longing for home and the smell of her mother's cooking.

One of Daisy's favorite occupations was to take down Cora's long dark hair and dress it becomingly. Cora won the hearts of her new sons by making kites for them and going to the creeks Sunday afternoon to fly them, after their father had gone off to preach. Cora was always lonesome when Brother Simpson was gone, but the children were always glad for then Cora would play with them and go to the creek and fly the kites (so none of the good sisters and brothers would know they flew them on Sundays).

The Spring following Cora's marriage she took her three step children to spend three weeks with her mother while she helped Brother Simpson in his protracted meeting.

Cora had some beautiful dresses left from the summer before her marriage. Now that she was about five months along with her first baby she loosened the belt of her lovely pink flowered muslin. She made the same adjustment for the dropped yoke challis with the knee flounce and with the flowered lawn that she had worn the night she gave Bill's ring back to him. Also, her apple green sprigged silk with its puffed sleeves. After very carefully making the necessary adjustments she pressed every garment and sighed as she did so because of the weight of the sad-iron. She was young and strong but nevertheless she breathed a sigh of relief when the last dress was packed and Brother Simpson's shirts were all ironed. She didn't forget the little sachet of rose petals to make the clothes smell fresh and sweet.

When they arrived at Godfrey's chapel the first Sunday of the meeting, they were assigned to the home of Brother Cassaways. There they spent the night and usually went to the homes of other families in the community for their meals. There were three members of the Cassaway family, Mr. and Mrs. Cassaway and Mr. Cassaway's spinster sister whom everyone called Aunt Cassie. Aunt Cassie was apparently simple-minded, but was very clean in habit and a wonderful cook.

One day Cora hurried over to the Cassaway home as soon as she got through playing the organ for church. She did not linger to shake hands as her stays were pinching her and she wished to loosen them. On arriving at the house, Aunt Cassie greeted her with, "Well I'm glad you've come. I have a vegetable dinner, and I would like for you to make the corn bread. Make egg bread said Aunt Cassie. Cora went into their bedroom to wash her hands in the large china bowl that sat on the wash stand. While in there she thought hard on how to make egg corn bread. She did not know how and she almost dropped the large china pitcher as she put it back in place.

She went bravely into the kitchen and began to sift the meal into the bowl. When she had mixed all the ingredients except the egg, she put the corn bread into a greased pan. Then she beat the egg and spread it over the top and put the bread into the oven to bake. When Aunt Cassie was serving the meal, with a twinkle in her eye, she asked

Brother Simpson how he liked the cornbread. He replied that it looked all right, rather yellow on top, but it tasted fine. "Well," said Aunt Cassie, "Your pretty young wife made it." Cora blushed and wished silently, as she had many times, that she had listened to her mother when she admonished her to pay more attention to her cooking and think less about how she looked.

After about two months in their new home Cora made arrangements for their children to remain at Veal Station. She went with Brother Simpson over to Pleasant Grove to spend the night and all day Sunday. Saturday night was spent in the Downs' home. The room they occupied had a fireplace as did every bed room in the house. This bed room was an outside room and at the bottom of the door a hole was cut so the cats could come and go at their pleasure. So Cora and Brother Simpson were greatly disturbed throughout the night by the cats coming in and lying on the warm hearth.

The next morning when Brother Simpson was stirring the ashes preparatory to building a fire he chuckled and called Cora to come and hold up the cat's tail while he put a wee bit of hot ashes under it. The cat would clamp its tail and spit and make a break for the hole in the door. They kept this up until all seven of the cats had experienced what it meant to have hot ashes under their tails. As cat after cat raced through the hole in the door old Aunt Downs stuck her head out the kitchen door and said "What's the matter with them kats"? Cora and Brother Simpson laughed until they cried and they found it hard to keep their faces straight at the breakfast table.

Will's Suit

One of Cora's first undertakings in the way of making clothes for her new children was a little suit for Will. She had a brown coat that was out of style which she had left at her mother's home. Each night after she retired she would lie thinking about how she could rip the coat and re-style it as a suit for chubby little Will. He would be adorable in a little double breasted suit with brass buttons. Cora would smile as she fell asleep planning the little suit for Will.

Cora asked Papa every week how much longer it would be until they could visit her mother and father. A month or two had passed; Summer was slipping into early Fall. Cora longed to go home. "Why do you want to go,?" Papa would ask whenever Cora mentioned going home. "For one thing, I want to get my brown coat that I left at home," Cora replied. "You had a new coat when we married, what will you do with the old one," Papa asked. Replied Cora, "I think I can make a winter suit for Will from it." "Ah! you can't," said Papa. "Is sewing all that you are ever going to want to do"?

This remark ruffled Cora, and with a defiant toss of her head she said, "Did you know that careless dress, and a lack of neatness is a breach of etiquette? Little Will needs the suit and if I am willing to spend my time in making it, you should provide a way for me to go home." "Oh well," said Papa, "can you be ready to go tomorrow"? Cora's heart leaped with joy at the thought of getting to go so soon. All of the many tasks she had to do in preparation seemed easy and light: wash a little, iron a little, press a little—soon every thing was ready and packed. That meant sufficient clothes for all five

of them. That night she was very, very tired, and rest was so sweet, she sighed as she drifted into sleep.

The first year of their married life brought many new experiences to Cora. She had been petted and spoiled by her fond father. She tried diligently to be a good and faithful wife and mother. One day when Brother Simpson found her crying softly he said, "My dear, if it were not for my trials, perhaps I would not know God as I do. I have in you Cora the love and confidence of a true heart, so I have a wealth all my own, a wealth that comforts in trial, in poverty, and loneliness. You never fail to evidence gentleness and good breeding. My children's love for you is proof of this. Children's ideas are unbiased truth."

Baby Coat

As the balmy month of June passed, Cora was confronted each day with a desire to start making tiny garments for the new baby that was to be born in October. Still there was no money to buy material. One day she sat idly playing the organ and day dreaming about sewing for her new baby, this baby that was to be a thrilling new experience in her life. Suddenly she thought of a plan for a baby coat. She could rip the beautiful white wool cashmere wedding dress and make a coat for her new baby. There were yards and yards of material in it. Up she jumped, hurried up to the attic, and opened the little tin topped trunk that contained her wedding dress.

In a few days Cora had made for the new baby, a lovely little long coat with shoulder cape. (Cora seldom complained at the smallness of the family income. However, she always exhausted the supply.) The layette was very scanty, but each garment was carefully and lovingly made. When the new baby came, the step children were wide-eyed with wonder as Cora showed the tiny bundle, little hands tightly clenched, little moving red feet!

Of course naming the baby was discussed and discussed. Just what would be suitable? Brother Simpson chose Ruthie for her name, but somehow that did not meet Cora's approval as did Lena Emma. (Emma was for one of her sisters.) So the dear new baby girl was christened Lena Emma.

Every three months Cora and the children went for a visit with the Bellengers. Grandmother Bellenger always had a little bag of doll scraps for Daisy. Cora was teaching Daisy to sew.

Daisy would take the bag and run off to the cellar with Elizabeth, Will, and Oscar. Often when the girls would have their doll dishes on the little table, ready to play, Mark and Floyd (whom they called Bud) would come in pretending to be Doods. Each one would have a derby hat of Grandpa's set on the side of his head. They would step high over the table, and sometimes "spit" right in the middle of it. Often the girls would cry and go tell Grandma.

Prayer Book

Although Cora had been raised in a home where family prayer was offered each day, she felt that she could not pray in public as her husband wished. That Fall when Brother Simpson came home from Annual Conference he brought Cora *Autumn Leaves*, a very beautiful prayer book, but this book did not correct her genuine timidity. One evening at Epworth League she arose to quote a scripture saying, "And he came unto them saying..." She became frightened and repeated the same thing three times. She sat down, vowing that she never again would say a word or pray a prayer in public. However, after continued coaxing from her husband, and after many years of trying, she became very fluent in prayer. Many people have testified that it seemed that she could reach up and take hold of the very throne of God and bring down his grace upon the people.

As Brother Simpson handed Cora the new prayer book, he said, "We are to move to Santo next month." "Move!" exclaimed Cora, "where on earth will we get money to move on? It took every cent we had for you to go to Conference, and I wanted to go with you so badly. I am already five months pregnant. What shall we do? We will all need new clothes to be presentable to a new congregation."

"The Lord will provide a way, dear," said Brother Simpson, as he patted his wife's shoulder.

The next day Cora began ripping the plum colored second day dress to make Daisy a dress that she might not be ashamed before her new playmates. The move was made and the next Spring another girl was born to the Simpson family. This daughter was christened Ruthie Jewell. Her eyes were blue as violets like her father's. Cora got up as soon as possible from her bed of child birth, and went to work to raise a garden, and raise a great number of chickens to help feed her fast growing family.

The next Fall whenever she began looking over her husband's wardrobe, she saw that his overcoat was badly worn and unfit for him to wear to Annual Conference. She decided to rip the coat and dye it. She heated water in an iron pot in the yard, and dyed the material. She then re-assembled the pieces, turning the worn pieces inside. When she had pressed it, the coat looked like new. Poor brown eyed Cora! She was so tired from tasks of this sort that her shoulders began to droop under the heavy weight of work and pride.

She had asked her husband for money so many times to buy material for clothes for the family, but each time he had said, "Dear, I wish I could grant your requests, but I must not go into my savings. It is not what is on your back that makes you what you are but what is in your head. I will have to have more books if I ever make a preacher worthwhile. When I go do Conference, I'll get the books and study harder, and I surely will get a better appointment next time."

The months passed swiftly by, and it was time for Annual Conference again. As it was to be held in Fort Worth and wouldn't cost much for Cora to go, she began preparations to attend. They went by Peaster and left the children with Grandpa and Grandma Bellenger. Brother Simpson had his money sewed in his vest pocket to keep from spending it.

The Conference had some great sermons preached. One day a call was made for Foreign Missions, and Brother Simpson gave all his book money. He was left to come home empty handed but with a happy heart.

After serving two years at Santo the family moved to Millsap. Here Cora's only son was born. He was named Marvin Bailey for Bishop Marvin and Presiding Elder Bailey.

Chick Funeral

One day in the Fall of the year Lena and Ruth kept right on with their doll sewing and did not pay any attention to the cheeping of their sleepy little pet chickens. They laughed as they watched Mary Lou and Margie follow Marvin as he trudged back and forth from the porch to the old room in the back yard where they had their playhouse. The chicks kept on following him begging to be put in bed. It was getting late, and the air was chilly, and they were getting cold and sleepy. Now that darkness had come on, the girls had to stop their doll playing. When they ran to get the little box that the pet chickens slept in, they found it on the far end of the back porch. They noticed the piece of blanket that made the bed for the chickens was spread out on the porch, and Marvin was sitting on it. "Get up, Brother, off the blanket. Where are Margie and Mary Lou?" Marvin got up slowly and said, "Here they are; I am sitting on them to keep them warm." Lena and Ruth gasped in horror at the little dead chickens. They all began to cry and ran to tell Cora.

The next day they had a big funeral. They took a match box and lined it with a piece of silk. Cora gave them a bit of lace to put around the top. They put Mary Lou and Margie in this little coffin. Lena did the singing. Ruth did the preaching and praying. All the neighbor children came over for the funeral, each one passing around to view the last remains of the pet chickens.

Pansy Bed

We were all especially proud of Cora's pansy bed. It seemed that every pansy's face was different. Cora told us how we might learn to draw the pansy. First the mother, then the two daughters nearest her heart, then the two stepdaughters. Lena and Ruth drew pansies for days and colored them every shade of purple, yellow, crimson, pink, blue! "Let's not talk about half-sisters and stepdaughters any more" said Cora. "Let me tell you an old German tale."

It is told that the perfume of the pansy was once equal to the violets, but as it grew wild in the fields, the people sought it with such enthusiasm that they heedlessly trampled the grass needed for the cattle, and even the vegetables required for their own table. Seeing the wreck that was wrought by this eagerness, the flower prayed to the Trinity to take away its odor that it might be no longer sought. This prayer was granted, and it was then that it took the name of the Trinity. To the monks it was the flower trinity or herb-trinity. To some people it is three faces in a hood. With Christianity it became the flower of St. Valentine. Hearts ease is another title. The poet has sometimes called the pansy ladies' flower, bird's eye, kiss me quick, or kiss me at the garden gate. The violet kept her perfume and is known as the modest violet, while the pansy lost her fragrance,

she kept her smiling face that has cheered humanity in the journey along the pathway of life.

Noah's Ark

Few were the toys the Simpson children could call their own, but there is one that stands out in my memory: that was mine and Marvin's little Noah's Ark. We each got an ark with twenty-four little wooden animals. The ark was too large to go in our stockings, so Santa set them on the hearth right at the tip of the toe of our long stockings that were filled with nuts and candy. Of course mine and Lena's stockings had china dolls in them. Lena's doll was dressed in shell pink and mine in baby blue, and each had long stockings and shiny black china shoes. Right in the toe of Lena's stocking was a note that read, "Be a good little girl this next year and don't talk too much" signed Santa.

How delighted Marvin and I were over our little arks. They had double decks, with a gangplank that let down for the animals to come in on two by two. I can see them now as we marched them in two by two. That Christmas Santa tied strings around the cuffs of Papa's breeches and filled the legs with coconuts and stood them near the fireplace. We laughed and clapped our hands for joy, and Papa pranced around in his long white drawers, pretending he would have to go that way all day.

I shall never forget the decorations that year. There were lots of bunches of broom weeds that Cora had dipped in water, then sifted flour over them. They were very attractive. She used one as a center piece for the Christmas dinner table and also on the little service table that stood just inside the dining room door. The little snow white trees were admired by every one that saw them. We did not always have a turkey because we were too poor to buy one, but we children did not know that was the reason. Cora and Papa never talked about being poor before us, so I thought we were rich. I always felt sorry for the poor people. Papa said many times that it is easy to see that the home where love and contentment abides is the home that is the richest. The Christmases we did not have turkey Cora always had a fat hen with the trimmings, the very best she could fix with what she had to do with. I never heard her say Christmas is just another day. Instead she would say, "Life is just what you make it. Now children, Christmas is a special day; it is the Lord's birthday. Let us each deny ourselves before the day arrives, so that we may do for someone something extra on Christmas Day to make their hearts happy and Christ more real to them. Let us all be kindhearted through out the holidays, not one time thinking what will I get or what do I have to give. We must all give kindness and love to each other."

Then she would tell us the beautiful Christmas story. How in the dim stall on that mid winter night the Star shone bright and guided the wise men and the angel band sang to the shepherds, "Peace on earth." Then she would play the organ and we would sing the Christmas carols.

On these cold sleety Christmas mornings, we would awaken early, and make a race for our stockings and then run back to bed with them while the fires were being built. Cora always had little round tea cakes with seed candy sprinkled on them to be

eaten with our regular breakfast. We never got to go to our grandmothers and grandfathers like most children do at Christmas time. Papa always had to preach and keep his congregation together at that time of the year. When he could preach no longer because of asthma and had to superannuate, he was too sick to go and the business was always rushing at that season of the year.

Ink Spot

One Winter evening Papa sat by the fire laboring over his sermons. Cora came in from the kitchen where she had been baking a cake in preparation for Daisy's birthday. She would be sixteen and Cora was determined that the family, at least, would recognize their big sister's maturity by having the especially decorated cake in her honor. Cora had iced the large white cake with glistening white frosting. She wrote sweet sixteen over the top of the cake in pink and put tiny pink rosebuds around the outer edge. The whole house was full of the delicious odor of the sweet-smelling cake. Cora was very tired when she entered the room where Papa was. She sat down to warm a little and picked up her embroidery and arranged the colors symmetrically. Ruth stood at the window with her nose against the windowpane watching the rain sweep the streets in front of the house. A couple drove up in a buggy and a young man sprang out and hitched the horse to a hitching post in front of our house. "Oh, Papa!" said Ruth, "here comes a couple to be married. I know they are because the man is wearing a red tie."

"Your books," said Cora, "are scattered all over the room." Papa hurriedly rose to go to the door and turned the bottle of ink upside down on the Brussels carpet. Cora said it would be all right, but as she straightened the room she felt a sickening tug at her heart.

When the marriage ceremony was completed, and Cora had wished for the couple every blessing and they had departed on their way, Cora attempted to remove the horrible black spot from the cherished carpet. Silently she worked trying every method of ink removal that she knew. Age had already dimmed the freshness of the carpet, and now the ugly spot. "Oh well," said Cora, "let's forget it" as she nonchalantly tossed her head and carried out a pan of water. "The next time we lay the carpet we must remember to put the ink spot under something big like the organ. I don't want to be like the Sikes, living in that careless manner of 'come day, go day, God send Sunday.' I believe every day is a day crowned with opportunities. I can see how after a trial like this a person could let the many cares of this life crowd out their pride in their possessions and appearance."

Lena's Prize

One day while Brother Simpson was engaged in conversation with a newcomer in the community, a Mr. Thorn, the man said, "I have received the second blessing, and I cannot sin." Brother Simpson said, "Well, if two blessings are all you have ever received from the Lord, you are indeed poor, for I have received many blessings from the Lord yet I have to work very hard to keep from sinning. You are sinning in that you are lying."

The holiness religion of Mr. Thorn was rapidly growing, however, and Brother Simpson was losing some of his good members.

The sheriff came over one day and arrested Mr. Thorn. The next Sunday Brother Simpson told the story: "There was a man that could not sin; his name was Lord Thorn. This man went over into a nearby community and stole a pair of horses, but God provided a sheriff who arrested Brother Thorn and brought him to justice.

Again it is time for the Simpsons to move. Brother Simpson has now entered his fortieth year, and his health is fast failing him. The new appointment is Center City. The second year the Simpsons were in Center City Cora, one day, called her three youngest children to her, and asked them if they would be willing to help care for a baby brother or sister if they had one. The three children agreed and promised they would be so good to the new baby that it would never want for anything.

It was this year that Lena, Cora's firstborn and her only child to have her beautiful brown eyes, started to school. Lena was a shy little girl, but very smart and studious. The teacher offered a prize for the highest grade made throughout the school term. The following summer Lena and Ruth went to the post office for Papa. Lena received a small package addressed to her. Upon opening it she found a silver linked bracelet with a heart-shaped clasp and a tiny little key that unlocked it. She ran out of the office and up the path jumping broom weeds as she ran. Chubby little Ruth followed. Lena began to call as she neared the house, "Oh, Mama, come and see what Mr. Oliver has given me." Mama and Papa and the children gathered around Lena. They were all so proud of her and the prize she had won.

New Baby

One day when Lena came in from school, Ruth and Marvin didn't meet her as they usually did for they could not leave Cora's bedside because the new baby was there. "Oh Lena! See new baby. Its name is Cora Mae. The children were delighted and it lightened Cora's heart to see the children so happy over their little sister. At the same time her heart was heavy and sad because Mark, the oldest of the children, had gone away to work, and Daisy had been compelled to come home from college to attend to Cora and help with the work.

Ruth loved to caress the new baby! Daisy would allow her to hold the precious bundle for a few minutes.

Although the family was very poor, the children were very happy. There was an orchard and a garden back of the house from which Cora and Daisy canned many jars of fruit and vegetables to help feed the family. Up a little hillside and down a small valley Lena, Ruth and Marvin tramped picking wild flowers and using up spool after spool of Cora's precious thread to make daisy chains and crowns of wild pinks, grandmother's nightcap.

One day a dove was cooing in a nearby tree, and little Ruth said, "Nena, what is that"? Lena replied, "It is the Holy Ghost crying in the wilderness!" Ruth was very frightened; it was late in the afternoon. She stole very near to her sister and said, "Nena, less go home to Mama."

Dumbwaiter Table

One of the Methodist families that often invited the Simpson family home with them was the Hamilton family. Ruth always wanted to be the one of the children to go along with Papa and Cora to this home. She enjoyed the little hillside near the house with the black and red haw trees on it. Most of all she enjoyed sitting at the Lazy Susan dining table. The table was large and round with two decks and on the bottom table was placed every body's plates and silver and napkins. On the top round table that revolved easily was placed the food. Mrs. Hamilton had a beautiful sterling silver caster and in it was a crystal spoon holder, salt, pepper, and vinegar cruet. It had a silver stem that reached above the crystal. Perched on top the stem was a silver butterfly which served as the handle. Ruth often found herself hungry when the meal was over, because she would forget to eat. She always became completely absorbed in the constant turning of the table as different ones eating the meal asked for the various dishes of food.

Ruth had always wished that she could be the one to turn the table each time at meals, but she usually sat very still and watched the table turn around. One day she and Mary Hamilton came in from a romp over the hillside; they were hot and tired as they went to the kitchen. The dumb waiter table sat near a scrim curtained window. Mrs. Hamilton came in with her apron full of eggs. She walked across the room and placed the eggs on the table. After bustling around and stirring up the fire in the wood cook stove, she then took a great earthen crock out of the milk cooler, and crossing the room she set it down. Then she took a cream dipper and skimmed the cream from the jar of milk. She placed the pitcher of heavy cream back in the milk cooler; then she left the kitchen to go into a fenced yard where she kept young chickens. Here she poured the crock of sweet clabber for the young chickens to feast on.

While Mrs. Hamilton was out of the kitchen, Ruth began to turn the Lazy Susan table, slowly at first, then a little faster, forgetting about the eggs. She gave the table a spin that sent the eggs flying in every direction. Some of them hit the wall and splashed to the floor. Another hit the windowpane and left it yellow and smeared. Soon Mrs. Hamilton returned to the kitchen. She was astonished to see the eggs scattered over the room. "What on earth has happened, she demanded of Ruth."

Ruth said, "Oh! Mrs. Hamilton, isn't this just awful; a hen must have flown in the window and broke the eggs." Then Ruth's heart began to thump wildly whenever she realized she had told a real falsehood.

That night when the Simpson family gathered around Papa for their evening prayer, the lie which Ruth had told about the eggs seemed big and dreadful. She said over and over to herself, "Why didn't I tell Mrs. Hamilton that I broke the eggs myself when I turned the Lazy Susan table."

When the prayers were finished the children went to bed. The house became very still and the tick of the clock on the mantel piece was all that could be heard. Ruth's heart was heavy and as she lay in the darkness and watched the shadows in the corner of the room, she wondered if she should go to Cora and tell her about breaking the eggs at Mrs. Hamilton's house that afternoon. She didn't go tell Cora; she lay still in the darkness and felt she could still see the cross face of Mrs. Hamilton in the room. At last she fell asleep and the next day it did not seem so bad. She never told this story to anyone.

Coming to Robert Lee

As the Simpsons came near the little town of Robert Lee on a chilly November afternoon in 1901, Ruth, age seven, stretched her plump little body and leaned over the wicker arm of the back seat of the Simpson surrey and said, "Oh, Papa see our new town; how very pretty it is. It will be our little home in the valley with Christmas trees on every hillside." (Robert Lee is today a charming little town with some 200 small houses nestling together in a little valley with cedar covered hills surrounding it.) Part of the Simpson family came in the surrey while others came in the wagon that brought the household furnishings. The Simpson surrey was indeed beautiful. There was a wicker band about eight inches high that joined to the back of the front seat, making a little pen where the children put their feet and a nice place to put packages. Around the top was tan fringe three inches wide.

As the Simpson family came into the little town, Cora began to strain her eyes in the direction of the church. In 1901 there was only one church building in the town and that was the Methodist church. On one side of the church there was a neat looking home with four rooms and a front porch and a large latticed back porch, covered with a lovely rose vine. The house was pretty and white with a lot of green around it. On the other side of the church was an unpainted two room house that didn't look inviting. "Oh!" said Cora, "I do hope the neat looking house is the parsonage!" Alas, the two roomed house proved to be the parsonage. Brother Clark, the former pastor, was still living in the parsonage and had not moved his household goods out. Brother Simpson was very distressed for he did not know where he would take his family. Brother Simpson, Cora, Daisy, Will, Lena, Ruth, Marvin, and little Cora Mae all got down from the surrey and approached the parsonage. Cora was very dismayed whenever she passed through the ill-hung gate and entered the shabby house. She took her children out to the privy, then inside the house to wash their hands before sending them out to play. Brother Simpson went off to town to contact some of the church members. It was not only until he returned and brought Brother John Reed with him. Brother Reed invited the Simpson family to stay in his house until their household goods came and the Clarks had time to move.

As it was November and school had begun and was now in progress for one and one half months Cora was anxious to get her children in school. Lena was ten years old and was in the sixth grade. This was Ruth's first school. Her teacher, very carefully enrolled her pupils. Her methods of teaching were very advanced for those times. Ruth learned to count with colored sticks, and adored making pictures with the colored chalk.

One day after it had been books for an hour there was a rap at the door. When Mrs. Evans opened the door, there stood a little round faced Bohemian boy, who said his name was Vladimir Wojtek. Vladimir was dressed quaintly in an adorable little black suit with a long black silk tie with red roses embroidered on the ends of his sash tie.

Mrs. Evans had a large desk and on opposite corners of her desk were round slick racks about the size of a hen egg. When any child wished to be excused from the room to

go to the privy that was about one hundred yards from the school house he would take one of the rocks after he had held up his hand and been given permission from Mrs. Evans to go. In this manner she allowed only one child to be out of the room at one time. The rocks were very popular. One day Ruth got her little finger almost bitten off as she went up to the desk to get the rock. Thelma Reed grabbed her hand and bit her finger as Ruth passed her desk. She did this because she was very jealous of Ruth.

Mrs. Evans always went to Mineral Wells each summer to rest. Her daughter was named Ruth. She called Ruth Simpson and Ruth Evans her two Ruth's. One summer she brought back from Mineral Wells two lovely crepe paper bonnets. One was rose colored and one was yellow. The rose one was lined with green and the yellow with blue. She allowed Ruth Simpson to take her choice of the two for her own. Ruth chose the rose one. She had very few surprises so this gay little bonnet was her pride and joy.

One day when the school monitor for Mrs. Evans' room passed out the bonnets and caps to the pupils Ruth Simpson's bonnet was not in the lot. Mrs. Evans noticed this and told Ruth to remain after school and she would help her hunt for it. They searched and searched for the bonnet, and finally they found it in the dark closet underneath the staircase where the brooms were kept. The beautiful little bonnet was all torn and dirty and Ruth's heart was broken. She held the ruffle in place as it once was. Then she cried and cried. Mrs. Evans did all she could to comfort Ruth and said she would punish Thelma very severely for this. Everyone knew that Thelma had torn up the lovely little bonnet.

Staying in the Reed Home

While the Simpson family stayed in the Reed home, Cora's mind was turning the question over and over: how could eight people live in the sixteen foot square rooms. She knew that great ingenuity would have to be used in arranging the interior.

When the Clark family had moved out of the parsonage, and the unpacking was started, as usual, the Brussels carpet was stretched out first. Cora examined the carpet with a critical eye. There was the ink spot she had tried to remove; then there were the circles where the babies had dampened it in days gone by. As she stood there with her children gathered around and looked at the wedding gift, her thoughts were something like this: "Alas, dear wedding gift, you have served your day and well. You have been a bright spot in this humble home throughout the years. There is not a glowing fireplace in this parsonage to bring out your rosy tints!"

Cora turned to Will and said, "Son, please cut from the best part of the carpet two mats for the front door." Then she sent Papa down to the Jim Burroughs Lumber Co. with measurements for two trundle beds. She put up two beds in one of the large rooms and rolled the trundle beds under them. From two wooden boxes she built a pretty dressing table. At McCallum-Reeds Dry Goods store she purchased white muslin for window curtains, bed spreads with deep flounces that concealed the trundle beds and a deep, full skirt for the dressing table. She trimmed these things with turkey red calico ruffles. She placed the finished dressing table between the two large beds and hung a mirror above it. High on the wall on each side of the organ she built book shelves. Thus

she used every inch of available space. When Cora had finished her work the room looked bright and cheerful.

Papa asked Cora why she trimmed the window curtains and the bedspread and dressing table in red ruffles and she shrugged her shoulders and said, "Red stands for courage and it takes a lot of courage for a wife to manage eight people to live in two rooms." Papa laughed and chewed his tongue and said, "Melvinie, you will win some day."

By Spring Papa had secured enough funds to add two rooms, and a porch the length of the two rooms. The carpenters had laid the foundations and had up part of the frame for the new rooms when Robert lee experienced a very hard sand storm. A strong wind blew all day and by four o'clock in the afternoon, the sand was so red and thick you could not see across the street. People lighted their lamps early that day because of the darkness.

Judge Graham lived in a spindling house with two rooms above and two below. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Graham, their grown daughter Mamie, their twin daughters age twelve, a boy of six and a little girl of four. Mr. Graham was not at home this sand stormy evening. The house blew over and caught on fire. Mamie broke the window panes with her hands. She put her mother, sisters and brother out the window, and then went back to survey the house before she climbed out. It was believed she was trapped by the piano. The wind and rain pelted the mother and children severely as they made their way down the street. Ruth was sitting in the room of the parsonage next to the church holding little Cora Mae. As she peered into the street between gusts of wind and dirt she saw the twelve year old Graham twins holding to the front gate trying to open it. Ruth called Papa, and Papa and Cora opened the parsonage. The wind whipped into the house as Cora made her way against it to the front porch and holding on to a post she reached out to the little girls. The children were exhausted and dripping wet. Their hair was so matted with mud that it later had to be cut. Cora quickly hunted dry clothes for the children and they shuddered as they told of their plight. As Cora looked out the window and watched the storm she heard a frightening cry. Looking closely through the awful wind and dirt she made out Mrs. Graham. She was holding to the little girl trying to make her way down the street. With every gust of wind she fell to the ground. Then she would get up, then fall again. Cora quickly sent Will to bring her to the house.

The Graham house was completely burned. The daughter, trapped in the house, was fatally burned. The neighbors took her over to the Hubert Pearse home that stood where Miss Ollie Green's house now stands. When they laid the charred body on the bed someone removed a heavy wool cap from her head and the girl's lovely brown hair fell about her shoulders, unscorched.

Finally, the windows in the house stopped rattling as the feverish and fitful wind became calm. Cora fed everyone and made them comfortable for the night. Then she and Papa went to the Pierce home so Papa could talk with the young girl about the state of her soul. Her eyes were burned completely. To the amazement of everyone, the girl folded her scorched hands over her breast and sang "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" without faltering. Then she said, "Jesus take me home and her spirit took its flight.

W. M. S.

Cora retired at the close of a very busy day with a very worried mind. She had tried to get a Women's Missionary Society organized for the Robert Lee Methodist Church. As she lay in bed she pondered and pondered over the day's events. She wondered why it is that some one always must pour cold water on every thing you try to do. She complained to Brother Simpson of the hard lot of a preacher's wife. He replied, "My dear you have tried as best you can to do this piece of work so cast your burden on the Lord and leave it there."

Cora did this and with tear dampened eyes she soon went soundly to sleep. She was awakened by a bright light in her face. "What are you doing," she asked Papa. "I am striking matches and holding them so the light will shine on your face and I can admire your beauty. You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen; and did you know today is our wedding anniversary." "Why, no," replied Cora, sleepily, "how long have we been married?" "Dear, we have been married eleven years and it seems like only yesterday that I saw you for the first time in the Peaster Methodist Church in Parker County. I still remember how you looked in your full skirted dress," he said.

Christmas Tree

A group of men and women met and set up a large pole that reached from the floor to the ceiling of the church. The pole was round and looked like a telephone pole. It was full of holes into which were thrust thick, bushy branches of cedar. When completed the make believe tree looked like a real mammoth cedar tree. It revolved easily. With the aid of a step ladder the trimmers could reach the topmost branches. They decorated it with twisted red candles stuck in little metal holders. These clamped on to the cedar branches. Next was the festooning with long ropes of cranberries and popcorn and long strings of tinsel. Next was the bags of oranges and nuts and candy hung here and there over the tree. (To this day oranges and cedar smell like Christmas to me.)

By two o'clock on this Christmas Eve, hacks, wagons, surreys, and horseback riders arrived at the church. One could hear many cries of "Merry Christmas" or "Christmas Eve gift." The grownups unloaded every thing from rocking chairs, mirrors, rugs, albums, water sets, lamps with fancy shades, and dolls of every description. The dolls as well as many other gifts were just tied on the tree. Very few of the gifts were concealed in wrappings. Looking over the tree, one could see drums and horns and square boxes containing Jack-in-the Box. There were rocking horses and little red rocking chairs for good little boys and girls. Some children got bicycles and little red wagons.

The Christmas program took place while we waited anxiously. Then Papa and the Sunday School Superintendent or some other man would call attention to something on the tree. Suddenly we would hear sleigh bells outside the church. All the children would

squeal and the timid ones would sit close to their mothers. The young mothers chewed gum, whispered to each other and held the babies on their laps. The brilliance of the twinkling lights made the little babies blink their eyes.

As Ruthie entered the church auditorium that Christmas and breathed the wonderful fragrance of oranges and cedar she again selected the largest doll on the Christmas tree and watched it throughout the program. She hoped this time that Santa would bring this doll to her instead of to Willie Baron. As Ruthie sat there in a daze of happy anticipation Santa with a long snow white beard, a suit of red velvet, black oilcloth leggings walked right up to her and placed a small soft gray fur around her neck. Ruth jumped to her feet and her little cheesecloth wings sprung up and down, for she still had on her costume she had worn in the angel chorus. "Oh, Santa," she said, "You do love me." Miss Lena Smith was responsible for the gift that caused Ruth to again to have confidence in Santa. None of the children could understand why Santa thought the Wallings and Barrons had been better than the others.

A great deal of gossip took place at the tree. The Robert Lee grapevine had it that Jim Barron and Ella Blackwell were going to be married after they were seen together at the Christmas tree.]

Finally Santa picked up a large round pink package that was attracting lots of attention, and held it up with care. He looked at it and turned it first one way and then another. At last he let the weight of the box rest on his fat round belly, and said, "Well, it looks good, and it smells good!" The children laughed and clapped their hands. Santa read the tag: "For Brother Simpson." Papa walked over and received the gift and a broad smile spread over his face. And he said as he set the box down, "I will have to be real good to deserve a large beautiful gift like this." How we did wish to know what was in the large pink crepe paper covered box! Ruth hugged her yellow headed and blue eyed bisque doll tight as she kept running her hand over the soft fur of the little gray squirrel neck piece and looking from her doll to Lena's doll with its brown hair and dark eyes and little kid slippers and silk socks. On the thrill of seeing the bright newness of the pink cheesecloth dresses and the pungent smell of the new dolls.

Many hearts were breaking after the Christmas tree because there was greet rivalry among the younger set and even the fathers and mothers as to who gave the most expensive gifts.

Papa stood at the door of the church at the close of the Christmas Program and shook hands with the people. You could hear footsteps crunching on the frozen ground as the people left the church. There was much laughter and excitement. Firecrackers exploded! Skyrockets and Roman candles swished upward and burst into stars, leaving a long tail across the dark blue sky. This lighted up the church yard as the people mounted their horses and loaded the gifts into their surreys, wagons, and buggies. Every now and then you could hear a half drunk call out "Christmas comes but once a year."

When we got home that cold wintry night, Cora lighted the lamps while Papa stirred up the fire. Then we all gathered around Papa when he sat down and lifted his large sweet smelling gift on to his knees and began to untie it. When he had removed the ribbons and the lid, we peered inside. Papa carefully lifted out a large snow white coconut cake and set it on the dining room table. Great tears filled his eyes as he read the card that was in the box. "Brother Simpson, I love and appreciate you and Sister

Simpson and I wish I had something handsome to give you, but I don't so I have baked one of my very best white cakes for you and your family. With all my love, Sister Smith.

The fragrance of the delicious cake filled the room. Cora said, "How sweet and good her kind heart is." Papa chewed his tongue and said, "She has wrought a good work." Cora cut the cake and poured each of us a glass of milk. We ate our slice of delicious cake and drank our milk and hung up our stocking. We then gathered around Papa and he said the evening prayers. We all went to bed feeling love and contentment in our hearts as we fell asleep.

McCutchen-Lockhart Wedding

The Baptist congregation had just completed their new church. Miss Fannie McCutcheon and Professor Lockhart were to be married in it. Ruth Simpson and Willie Barron were chosen to be flower girls in the wedding. Willie was one of Ruth's best friends. They were nearly the same age and the same size. They each had blue eyes and golden curls. It seemed to Ruth that Willie had about everything a girl could want, but she had a sweet disposition and Ruth loved her devotedly. Mrs. Barron came down to the parsonage and she and Cora planned the dresses that the little girls would wear in the wedding. The dresses were of sheer white lawn, with several narrow lace edged ruffles around the full skirts. At the head of each ruffle was Valenciennes beading into which pink ribbon was laced. There were rosettes of ribbon on each side of the front with ribbon streamers.

In the church a white wooden arch was built for the bride and groom to stand under. Up the sides and across the top of the arch at intervals chemists test tubes were placed and into these water filled tubes were placed rambler roses. White muslin was stretched along both aisles to make a lovely pathway to the altar where there were tiny white wooden gates. The little flower girls entered scattering pink rose petals from their little baskets, and walked slowly down the aisle and opened the small white gate for the bridal party.

The bride and her attendants passed through the little gate and continued on to the arch where the minister waited. How lovely Miss Fannie was in her white satin gown with her dark hair gleaming under the bridal veil. The wedding music was played by Miss Ollie Green. As we left the church we could hear the remark, "Did you ever see a more beautiful bride?"

The Passion Flower

"Spring is here," declared Cora one warm May day as she hunted among her cook books in the kitchen safe drawer for some flower seeds that some friends had given her the last time she started to move. She set the box of seeds on the kitchen table and stirred among them. Soon she found a small packet marked "Mary E. Burke's Passion Flower." As she laid it aside, she said, "There is one I know I am going to plant."

Cora chose a spot under the porch window to plant the seed. She mixed leaves and rich soil to make a porous loam. The rapid growth of the vine was noted by the children. When the first buds appeared they could hardly wait for them to open. Cora promised to tell the children a legend about the passion flower whenever she had time. The vine continued to grow luxuriantly; soon it was covered with blue blossoms that had white edges and a crimson crown that shaded into purple. How beautiful and alluring the fragrant flowers were. The tendrils caught the worn shingles of the roof and festooned it with the beauty of the vine. We begged and begged Cora for the story of the vine each time that we passed under it. One day she sat down on the edge of the porch and said: "The legend goes like this: after the crucifixion of Christ a vine sprucing up at the foot of the cross. It climbed upward and fastened its tendrils in the scars in the wood where the nails had been driven through the hands and feet of the Savior. The early Christian fathers saw in its bud the cup representing the Sacrament of the Last Supper; in its half-opened flower they saw the Star of the East, in its full bloom, the five wounds, the 3 nails, the hammer, the spear, the pillar of scourging, and the crown of thorns, in its leaves the spear head and the thirty pieces of silver, in its tendrils the whips with which Jesus was scourged. Cora separated one of the lovely blossoms as she explained the legend. There are ten colored parts including petals and sepals. These ten colors represent the ten apostles present at the crucifixion, Peter and Judas being absent.

In the center are a large number of filaments which represent the crown of thorns. The five stamens which suggest the five wounds he received, one through each hand and foot and one in the side. The three sections of the pistil represent the three nails. In some species the leaves are three-parted and represent the Trinity. In others, the leaves are five-parted and represent the fingers of the hands of the persecutors. The passion flower was chosen as the state flower of Tennessee."

Each of the children was very still and serious as Cora told the story. I am sure many modern mothers would think this story too morose for children but it made a lasting impression on my mind of the seriousness of the cross of Christ.

Jessie

A rap at the door one cold blustery morning brought Cora out of the kitchen. She found the caller was Jessie Newton. She brought an urgent note from Mrs. Newton; the note insisted that Sister Simpson come down and help Mrs. Newton finish Lula Newton's wedding dress. The note stated that Mrs. Kemp, her mother, who lived with the eldest daughter, Sophronia, had been sick and delayed her from finishing the dress. It was then only three days until the wedding.

At first Cora hardly could see how she would be able to leave her family as she was in the midst of ironing Brother Simpson's white shirts. Next Sunday was his day to preach at Bronte, and she had planned to go with him. Still, she felt she must help with the completion of the dress. So she instructed each child what she expected of him while she was gone. She left to spend the day in the Newton home and help finish the wedding dress.

Many amusing things happened that day. When Cora returned home she related them to us. Ernest, the only Newton son, beat the cakes and teased the girls. Lula and Bessie came in from San Angelo, and Jessie, the third of the six daughters, was all eyes, so eager was she to see the purchases the older girls had made in San Angelo. She asked so many questions that the older sisters became irritated with her. When she unwrapped a shiny new pair of slippers, a new slipper spoon fell out. Jessie quickly picked it up and said, "Well, what is this?"

The two older sisters looked at each other and lifted their eyebrows; Jessie glanced from one to the other, and decided, from their secretive expressions, that they were keeping something from her. She insisted they tell her what this was. The older girls acted very knowing and wise, and laughed mysteriously. Jessie finally said, "You will have to tell me what it is or I will tell mother." So, Bessie said, "Well, this is to keep Lula from having a baby." So Jessie vows to this day that a slipper spoon looks like a dangerous weapon.

Jim and Pecan Mott

A red-haired gentleman named Jim had been walking home with Daisy from church for three Sunday nights in a row. Daisy disliked going with him very much. A group of young people were going to Bronte the following Sunday. Daisy kept mentioning to Cora that she hoped Jim wouldn't try to take her. Lena, Ruth, and Marvin, danced around Daisy singing, "Daisy will wear flaming red to match Jim's head; Jim will wear dark brown and look like a clown." Daisy grew tired of the teasing and in despair called the children "Impudent Imps."

This was as good as the children wanted. They got the dictionary and looked for the definition of impudent imps. They found the definition to be puny devils. Then the children followed the sister around declaring they had never even dreamed she would call them puny devils.

Daisy declared she did not call the children puny devils. Cora was tired of the annoying teasing so she sent the children into another room and kept the door closed. While the three children, Lena, Ruth, and Marvin, were in the other room they decided to have a contest. The contest was to see which one could hold out the longest at leg driving. Leg driving was a game invented by the Simpson children. You walked on your hands and let some one drive you by holding your feet. The one who could hold out the longest was the winner. Marvin got mad on this particular occasion. Probably because Lena's legs were so long, and he was so small that he was kicked down all the time. So Marvin began to cry and fight his two sisters. They laughed and mocked him and called him a Roman gladiator. They continued this activity until a rap at the door quieted them. It was Lucille Patterson, a neighbor from the other side of the church whose house Cora had wished was the parsonage.

The Pattersons were out front waiting in the surrey for Lucille to return with the Simpson children so they could go to Pecan Mott to pick up pecans. Oh, how much fun it was to stir among the dead leaves for pecans that had fallen from the trees. Running here and there looking for pecans the children soon used up their surplus energy. They picked

out pecan meats that night while Cora read to them from *Little Women* and Daisy made delicious pecan candy.

(Stilts became a stylish fad in play things. Of course Lena, Ruth, and Marvin had some and felt they could not step out doors without them. They had a tall wooden one that big brother Will had made for them. They also had stilts made from cans. These were made by punching two holes in each can, and running wires or strong strings through them. A long string came up hip-length and ended with a loop for the hands.)

Cora Mae's Death

Brother Simpson had gone to preach at Fort Chadbourne and Bronte. Cora was walking the floor with Cora Mae. The baby had awakened with fever that was frightening to Cora. Papa came; they called the doctor and for days and nights Cora sat by her sick baby. During this long vigil Cora did not leave the baby's bedside. Each day Mrs. Jeff Davis brought great dishpans of well-cooked food and spread it on the dining table for the Simpson children to eat. As Papa and Cora would kneel by the baby's bed each day Cora would say, "Oh, God, spare her! I cannot bear it." One day Mrs. Averitt persuaded Cora to lie down in the room near the baby crib. Cora fell into a deep sleep and dreamed she heard the angels singing. They came floating in at the front door and as they passed over the crib the baby joined them. When Cora awoke, she rushed over to the crib and stared as if she did not expect her dear little one to be there. She fell to her knees and prayed that the child she loved so dearly might be spared.

Soon Cora saw a look on the little one's face such as she had never seen before. The little one had passed on to the great beyond. She was dead and past all help or need of help. Still her former self lay unaltered in this change. Poor Cora! Her heart was bruised and bleeding, and a great shadow passed over the family. Papa tried to comfort Cora by telling her to think of heaven where the young spirit had winged its flight.

Little Cora Mae was seven months old when the family moved to Robert Lee. All three of the children had long since forgotten their promise to take care of the baby if Cora would get them one. Cora did not have a play pen as modern women do. As little Cora Mae began to sit alone, Cora placed a horse collar on the floor and spread a piece of blanket over it and set the baby in the circle of the collar and gave her a string of spools to play with.

Papa and Cora talked about the way Cora Mae would awaken in the night and when a donkey in a lot nearby would let forth a long and weary he-haw, he-haw. Cora Mae would lay very still and then answer: He-haw! He-haw! When the rooster would crow for day she would mimic him. She never failed to divide what she had to eat with the kitty. She would lean over the side of her high chair and say: "Li-Li-Li-meow, meow, meow." The kitten would come running and put his little paw up for the bite. It was a cute picture when the baby would lean over the side of the chair to hand it to him. Cora and Papa looked very sad whenever Papa said he missed her climbing over him and hunting in his pockets for candy. He recalled how much she liked apples, and that one day when he had come in with a paper bag in his hand she had said, "apples?"

Papa shook his head and said, "No apples, today." She stood looking up at him in a begging sort of way so that he handed her the sack that she might see for herself. She put her little hand in and brought out an onion. She was very disappointed. Cora sobbed that there would be no more goodnights from the little crib. Cora sadly put away the worn little shoes and her forget-me-not-cup and saucer.

John Smith's Head

One Sunday soon after little Cora Mae's death Cora went with Papa to one of his appointments taking Ruth and Marvin with her. Daisy and Lena stayed at home. Will spent the day and night with John Smith. Sister Smith ran a hotel on the lot where the city hall now stands. The boys kept the door closed to John's room all Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Smith heard a lot of laughing but did not dream of what was going on. Late Sunday afternoon when all the boarders had eaten, she called the boys to supper. They did not wish to come, but she insisted, and to her amazement, when they came across the hall to the dining room John's head was as slick as a peeled onion. They had been shaving their faces earlier in the afternoon and Will suggested they shave each other's head and they begin with John. After the operation was over and John looked so queer without a hair on his head Will changed his mind.

Sister Smith cried and said John was not very pretty before his head was shaved and now he was hideous. She whipped John for letting Will shave his head. Then she sat down and cried; then she got up and whipped him again. She had the boys eat their supper afterward and then sent them to John's room telling him not to come out until his hair grew.

Thanksgiving

One November Papa's brother from Tennessee sent us a barrel of fruits and nuts. There were apples, quinces, grapes, chinkapins, walnuts and hazel nuts. What a wonderful Thanksgiving we had that year. Our dinner table was lovely. Cora took a mirror out of a frame and laid it on her snow white dinner cloth in the center of the table. She placed a very fancy fluted vase on one end of the mirror and let the fruit and nuts spill out of it. How good the dinner smelled and how pretty the centerpiece was.

When we were all at the table and were standing back of our chairs Papa said, "Children, let us all be thankful. You see here a horn of plenty because of the goodness of God to us and because of his goodness we have this bountiful table before us. We see in this horn many kinds of nuts and fruits all ripe and luscious. We could truthfully exclaim how attractive and beautiful the fruits of God's spirit. They are sufficient in variety and richness to make our lives beautiful. It takes time and toil to transform a wild and tangled forest into productive fields and flow gardens. It also takes time and toil to eradicate the natural and establish the spiritual growth in the hearts and lives of us all. So let each of us strive to make our lives as beautiful and useful as these material things are."

Galveston Trip

Shortly after the Simpsons moved to Robert Lee an Eastern Star chapter was organized by Mrs. DuVell. Papa was a Mason so he and Cora were both entitled to be members. So with several others they were initiated into the order. The next year Cora was elected Worthy Matron. The Grand chapter was to meet in Galveston. Cora was the delegate so she went to work to make for herself a brown broadcloth suit. After two weeks of strenuous work she finished the suit and it was a very handsome garment. Then she wondered and worried about a suitable hat. She solved this problem by making the hat herself. First she cut two cardboard disks; she made a hole in one large enough to fit her head. Then she joined them together with a three inch band of cardboard. This foundation was covered with the same brown broadcloth as her suit. The only trimming she used was a green bird that she took off an old hat. This ornament with a brown veil made a becoming hat. Never was there a more lovely picture than lovely brown-eyed Cora in her brown suit and hat. I shall never forget how she looked when she pulled on her brown kid gloves, picked up the train to her skirt and walked out to get in the surrey to go to San Angelo to take the train for Galveston.

She sent picture post cards of the city of Galveston to us. Daisy cooked good meals and kept us in school while she was gone. We had a delightful time talking about what a wonderful time Cora was having and wondering what she would bring us on her return home. At last the big day came and Cora returned from her trip. Her children gathered around her anxious for her to open her suitcase and display the gifts she had brought. She brought something for each one. For Daisy, who so willingly cared for us she brought a silk head scarf and a ready made rat for her hair. She brought Lena an umbrella, Ruth kid gloves, Marvin a top and marbles, and Papa some handkerchiefs.

New Business

A very sad day caught up with Brother Simpson when he had to take the superannuate relation with his conference. He no longer could preach because he developed a shortness of breath from the dreadful disease of asthma. He bought lots to place his store building on and a two acre plot of land on a small hill on the outskirts of town for his home. Cora cried and begged him to move to a college town so she could school her three last children. Papa firmly said, "No." He was broken in health and could not compete in business with men who already had money. He must borrow money to go into business and must start at the bottom. "Cora, it takes money to make money," said Brother Simpson, "so you be patient, dear, and if the Lord is good to me and gives me a few years to work for myself I'll buy you a diamond ring if your are seventy-five years old."

Many times at the close of the day when the family would gather around him for the evening prayers, he would invoke God's guidance and ask him for the blessings of longer life. At first fifteen years, then ten, then five, reminding the Lord how he had given the strength of his youth to his Master and asking for these years so that he might lay up earthly possessions for Cora who was twelve years younger than he was. She had

raised his six children for him and fought valiantly by his side, always taking the hardships off him because of his frailness.

Brother Long, a good old superannuate Methodist preacher, who lived alone on a farm out two and one half miles from town invited Brother Simpson to bring his family to come live with him until he got his home built. In November, soon after conference, Papa sold an eighty acre farm he owned in Parker County and with this sum he was able to open his store by January 1. Before school was out in the spring Papa started clearing the lots for his new home.

He took Ruth and Marvin to town with him each Saturday to wait on him. Under great adversity and with an undaunted spirit he labored.

Cora made a black silk taffeta dress for Mrs. John Snead. This was a very handsome dress with many small tucks. She received six dollars for making the dress. Cora spent the six dollars so many times that Papa teased her about how far six dollars would go.

One day while the lots were being cleared for the new home three buggies came up from town. Brother Simpson called to his children to bring him his coat which he had left hanging on a post. After he put on his coat, he took down the names of the couples to be married. So the children witnessed another wedding. Papa didn't have his discipline with him that day, so he gave the ceremony from memory.

Store

Brother Simpson pressed forward in his new business. The days were dark as he had to work hard to establish credit with the new wholesale people. He put in a stock of furniture, coffins, and later, he added lumber and hardware. A great deal of the work fell on Cora's shoulders as Papa was always short of breath and the slightest dust would cause him to cough. Cora would milk the cow, feed the horse, chickens and sometimes a pig. She would then do her work in the house and walk one fourth mile to the store to help Papa. She would cook his lunch and take it with her. Many times when the children would come home from school they would find in the old wood cook stove fried chicken with cream gravy and hot biscuits. Sometimes on the hearth of the fireplace would be the Dutch oven with beef or pork roast and sweet potatoes around it. Occasionally there would be deep apple pie and cheese. There was always milk in the cooler. The milk cooler sat by the outside door with a heavy cloth around it. The top of the cloth was placed in water and the bottom was drawn into the lower shelf where it was fastened with a clothespin. As the breeze swept through the kitchen door it kept the wet cloth cool and so the milk and butter stayed sweet and cool.

House on the Hill

As I sit and look out of my bedroom window toward our hill on which the rodeo arena now stands, I lean back across the years to the many happenings of my childhood.

It was a big day in the life of the Simpson children when they moved to their new home on the hill. They raced off to the nearby creek to play the entire day.

Cora went to work at the store and before the year had passed she brought home the best of everything Papa had in stock. Papa fussed about Cora taking off all his profits but I think it pleased him to see her have some of the things she had longed for all her married life. Pretty new rugs and rocking chairs, dressers with chests of drawers to match, medallion pictures and pretty lamp shades.

The first December in their new home was severely cold. The water in the cedar bucket was frozen each morning and icicles hung from the eaves and cornices. With the fire burning brightly in the wood cook stove the smell of bacon and eggs cooking, and all the family seated around the dining room table with papa returning thanks and everyone feeling warm, happy and contented, the family would start into another day. Soon after breakfast the girls would be brushing their hair dressing for school. Marvin always came in to have his hair parted, usually he was in a hurry afraid he would be tardy.

On long winter evenings, the children enjoyed their books by the fireplace. Many evenings one could hear the sleet against the windowpanes. One of the children might pop a popper of corn while others munched apples and read books.

If the creek were frozen over, the children would skate after school on Friday and all day Saturday. One year the creek froze so hard that when they led Old Possum, their horse, out on to the ice not a crack was made—the ice was so thick.

One cold but sunny winter afternoon the children trooped in from school, went by the safe for their usual snack of goodies and then went on to the creek to play as hard as they could until dark would overtake them. One of the children left the door to the kitchen ajar and Adah, the cat, came in and climbed into the oven of the wood cook stove. She was taking a nap when Cora came in from town. Cora pushed the oven door closed and fired up the stove to cook the evening meal. The children came in from the creek, and when they entered the kitchen the stove was rocking and they were frightened. They called to Cora and when she came into the kitchen she also was frightened but for some reason went over and opened the cook stove door. Out sprang Adah all scorched and panting and mewing so loud and excited. Lena cried when she thought how much the cat had suffered. Papa chewed his tongue and said he guess she would steer clear of the oven hereafter.

Feeding the Birds

Outside of the smokehouse chaparral bushes grew with their long gray thorns always ready to prick you if you came near. One snowy winter day Cora made us some stiff sweet dough. We patted and shaped the dough into little pellets about the size of lemon drops. Then we decorated the chaparral bushes with the sweet pellets, pushing them on to the long thorns until we had a regular sugar plum tree. We watched the birds feast on the sweets which lasted until the snow melted.

When we first moved to our new home on the hill Papa would stand on the side porch and whistle “Bob-white, Bob-white.” Soon from the creek he would get an answering “Bob-white.” Here they would come and light on the fence near the house.

At night we were often awakened by coyotes howling. It always frightened me and caused goose pimples to come on my arms whenever we would hear a coyote trot around the house and give his lonesome call.

Chum

One spring after the Simpson family moved to their house on the hill, as Marvin left for school, he decided to go by town with Chism Brown., As they passed the Baptist church they heard the whining of young puppies. The two boys crawled under the church and there under the steps were four plump little puppies. There was one white one with black spots and three brown ones. One of the three had a white tip on the end of his tail. The boys dug a hole large enough to put their hands through and pull the puppies out. The little dogs eyes were open so Marvin brought home the one with the white tip on his tail. Cora agreed for Marvin to keep the dog if he and Ruth would get up at night and warm the milk. They said they would do this. They bought nipples and bottles, but were so very sleepy in the midnight whenever the little puppy would wake them. They had to get up and feed him for he would not be quiet until his stomach was full. When hot summer days came, they fixed a box of wet sand for him to lay on. In the midday he would get so hot he would whine until he found the box of sand; then he would climb into it, stretch out his hind legs, and cool his stomach and go soundly to sleep.

Also at this time the Simpson children had a family of kittens. They named them Clutterbuck, Billonion, and Butchery. There were double doors between the living and dining room in which hung heavy blue-green linen curtains. When the kittens would be racing through the house, often one would run and leap on the curtains and swing awhile. One day Billonion was reaching through the crack in the door playing with Clutterbuck's tail when the door slammed and caught his paw. Lena, Ruth and Marvin performed an operation. They chloroformed Bil and put splints on his broken paw. After about the two weeks they put him back to sleep and removed the splints from his paw and he was as well as ever.

Millinery Business

Cora went into the millinery business with Mrs. D. T. Durham. Miss Lena (as everyone called her) went to Dallas to learn the trade. Cora was an apt pupil. She learned under Lena's direction how to tie many kinds of bows and knots that are indeed very frenchy. Almost every week new hats and materials to trim hats with were being unpacked at the millinery store. One day Cora unpacked a red felt covered in small rosy red feathers. A veil was stretched tight over the feathers. As soon as Cora saw the hat she wanted it very badly. She wanted it for Lena who was now about thirteen years old. Lena would be so thrilled when she got up to play the piano next Sunday morning if only she could have the beautiful red hat. Cora counted and counted how much that would take out of the week's earning if she bought the hat for Lena. She was afraid she couldn't get it, but she finally yielded and brought the beautiful red had home to her brown-eyed

darling. The next day Marvin was wanting to go to town to see an automobile that had come to Robert Lee to take folks riding. He didn't want Chum, his dog, to follow him, so he shut him up in the house not one time thinking of Lena's new hat.

Marvin followed the automobile all over town and late that afternoon when he went by the store Papa said to him, "Son, tomorrow is Saturday and you won't have to go to school; I have paid the auto man to take you and Ruthie for a ride. I am sure couldn't hire Lena to go but Ruth will be glad to go."

Cora sent her three children on home that day to water and feed the chickens and pig. She told them not to forget to gather the eggs. She said when Papa closed the store she would close the millinery shop and come home with him. As Lena and Marvin came in the sight of the house they could hear a noise. Lena said, "Oh my hat and raced up the hill.

When we opened the door out bounced Chum with his mouth as red as blood. He had torn every feather off the hat and the veil hung loosely around it. But the little dog seemed to be laughing as he jumped up on each of us.

The next day Marvin could hardly wait until Ruth could get her new umbrella and go off with him to town to ride in the automobile. The car did not have a top, so Ruth held her umbrella and rode all over town and down the Bronte road and out on the Angelo road. She and Marvin decided they had rather have a car as to have their bicycle. "But we wouldn't get enough for the bicycle to buy a car if we were to sell it, so that settles that," said Marvin.

The next day at school the talk about automobiles spilled over the eager lips of the children as they rushed out of the rooms and on to the playground.

Days came and went and there was much preparation for the close of school. Ruth was chosen for one of the leaders of the wand drill. So Cora went to work to make Ruth a costume of blue cheese cloth starched still. The wands were wrapped in the same color as the dresses. This was a very pretty drill. The girls on one side were dressed in royal blue and those on the other side dressed in bright red.

The Bellenger Visit

Grandma and Grandpa Bellenger had written they were coming to visit us. The entire Simpson family turned everything upside down in preparation for this visit. The yards were cleaned, the rose bushes were pruned, and the leaves raked from under the vines. A fresh coat of white paint was put on the fence and a sagging gate was mended. The window curtains were washed and ironed; everything on the place was given a fresh appearance as we prepared for this visit from the Bellengers.'

It seemed that the plum and peach trees blossomed out in heavier bloom. Then it began to rain and for two days the mornings were dark and heavy. The rain rattled steadily on the roof and poured in deafening streams from the eaves. We felt gloomy for the next day was the day we looked for our visitors. When morning dawned, the sun came out clear and bright. Then we noticed the blossoming plum and peach trees were almost stripped of bloom and the ground was covered with petals beaten thick and colorless by the un pitying rain. The sodden earth smelled fresh and clean as we raced off

to the creek. The creek had come down in the night, and we could hear it roaring as it rippled gaily along. We spent a wonderful morning floating sticks on the muddy water and watching the birds as they busily built their nests and sang their delirious songs of spring. Marvin kept wanting to go further down the creek to where the Whang-doodle mourned. The Whang-doodle was a cave we had dug in the side of the bank. We picked our way down the bank and slipped and slid as we climbed to the entrance of our cave. When we removed the large piece of tin that served for a door, we saw that all the things we had left sitting on the shelves and boxes were bone dry. We began to feel hungry, so we started for home and as we came up the hill, the mail hack was standing in front of our house, and not only Grandpa and Grandma but Aunt Emma and cousin Ira were getting out. We rushed up and greeted them. Grandpa cleared his throat and picked up the suitcases.

How slender and graceful Aunt Emma was. Her light freckles showed through her filmy veil as she stood smiling with hat boxes all around her. Aunt Emma was a milliner and had brought several hats for herself and new hats for each of us.

Cousin Ira was so cute with his bright red curls around his fair face. He is the son of Uncle Arthur and Aunt Susie. He was only five years old at that time and his father had died the year before. Ira spent a lot of time with his grandparents. He was such a smart little boy and filled many hours with happiness for his grandparents.

Such a gala week we spent for Grandpa and Grandma didn't come to see us very often. So the few visits they made in the Simpson home were never forgotten. On this visit Grandpa brought Cora a stereoscope with a great stock of pictures. They were the newest thing out and cost Grandpa \$30.00. That was a lot of money in that day to pay for anything. We spent many happy hours looking through the stereoscope at "Captain Ames and Troopers of the 2nd Life Guards and Naval Gun Detachment." Also: "Diamond Jubilee," "London Splendor," "The Radiant Monument of Electricity," "Pan American Exposition," "Library of Vatican," "Rome," and many other scenes. I am sure we enjoyed looking at these through the stereoscope as much as children enjoy moving pictures today.

In mentioning moving pictures, I am reminded of the first magic lantern show that came to Robert Lee. It was while the Simpsons were living at the parsonage. The man that was touring the country with the show wanted to know if he could use the church auditorium. Papa told him that he felt sure he could, because there wasn't another building in our little town that was large enough to accommodate the crowd unless it was the court house and there were not enough seats there. Papa found when he asked his congregation about it that a few objected, saying that we should not use God's house for shows. Papa tried to explain to them that the church was built by the people to be of help to them. Since there was not another adequate building and the pictures were instructive the people should have that opportunity.

Marvin Broke his Leg.

Now that school was out and the warm sweet summer days were here one of Marvin's daily chores was to take Old Possum, the horse, to the creek for water. One day Marvin and Chig Brown rode Old Possum to the creek to water him and they let Chum, the dog, follow. Chum was such a soft chubby little puppy they were afraid the horse would step on him, so they dismounted and led the horse.

At the willow water hole there were two bodies of water joined by a swift little stream that you could step across. The boys had stepped across the narrow place and were leading the horse. Chum came to the narrow place and began to whine and whimper. The boys told the puppy to come on and follow them. He tried but his short legs could not make the jump so he fell splash into the water. Then Possum slipped and fell on the slippery rock bottom. Marvin was watching the dog and did not move out of the horse's way so his leg was caught and broken under the heavy horse as he fell. The frightened boys decided that Chig had better run and tell Cora. Chig left Marvin on the creek and came galloping back to the house to tell Cora. Cora began to cry and pray. Lena and Ruth ran after Cora down the little cedar covered hill to the creek where Marvin lay calm, but pale and frightened. Cora stooped over her dear boy and gathered him tenderly into her trembling arms and retraced her steps up the hill. Marvin's foot hung limply for both bones were broken just above the ankle. Cora told Lena and Ruth to run on ahead and telephone for Dr. Turney to come quickly. They hurriedly did so and by the time Cora got to the house and carefully laid Marvin on the bed, and washed the tears from her eyes Dr. Turney was there. Some doctors are so grave and gloomy and look at you in a way that is enough to scare you into being sick, but not so with Dr. Turney. He would most likely laugh you into getting well. Marvin was put to sleep with chloroform and in a short time the bones were set and the leg was put in splints.

The doctor's orders were to keep him off his foot for nine days and then be careful for another month. The two older brothers were down from Oklahoma at this time. While they were here Mark and Will cut and stacked a wheat crop for Papa. Cora baked cakes, made ice cream and fried a great quantity of chicken and made lots of iced tea. To assist her in caring for Marvin Cora strung a make believe twine telephone from the head of Marvin's bed to the foot. Then she drew the string out the window. She had rolled his bed near the double windows and the south door that opened toward town so that he could amuse himself while she worked. She tied a large spool on the twine telephone for a receiver. Marvin would call up Mr. Bell's store and carry on a make-believe conversation, something like this: "Is this Mr. Bell? Will you send me a dozen oranges, a dozen apples and a quarter's worth of candy? Ring off, ring off."

Cora read *The Life of Dr. Rankin* aloud to us while Marvin had to remain in bed. This book made a lasting impression on our lives.

In the summer time while wading the creek with the Bell children after each rain we often got so interested we would follow the creek all the way to the Colorado river. There we would watch the killdeer run along the sand call, "killdeer!" The days were never long enough. We would return home in the twilight and hear the bull bats zoom down over our heads. As we watched the sun go down we would discuss the countries across the ocean and everything else we could think of.

Trip to San Angelo

All Fall Cora had been promising Lena and Ruth she would take them to San Angelo whenever school turned out for the Thanksgiving holidays. At last the day came and we set out. Cora drove the surrey and Ruth and Lena sat in the back seat. Before they left Papa cautioned Cora about everything he could think of. We had not gone far when Cora began to exclaim over the beauty of the drive. "Oh," said Lena, "Look at the mountains; since the frost has killed the leaves on the trees you can see so much further. See how blue the mountains are and see that house and windmill on that far hill to the right, I have never seen it before."

A crisp wind was blowing and Lena and Ruth pulled the lap spread up over their heads until they got to the Pecan Mott. Cora stopped here to let the horses drink. She gave Lena and Ruth a lunch of crackers, cheese, apples, and muffins with raisins in them. When we had finished eating, and each one had been back of a little bush, Cora rubbed our hands clean with a damp cloth. Next she straightened our hair ribbons and gave us a little talk on how to behave when we got to town. Again we climbed into the surrey and started on our journey. We had no more use for the lap robe tent as we were busy looking towards Angelo so we could see who could holler "I see town first." Now that we had climbed the mountain and the breeze was blowing in our faces we could smell the sweat of the horses on the leather and could see the shadows under the trees caused by the warm sun filtering through the thin mesquite leaves.

When we reached town Cora drove to a livery stable. Here she left the team and then went to the Landon Hotel and got a room for us. She sent us down the hall to the bathroom while she changed her dress, and as Papa said, "starched her face." Cora told us just how to use the water toilet, but Lena was shy and wouldn't take the lead, so Ruth pulled the chain and down came the rush of water and frightened the two girls almost out of their wits. After Ruth found out how the chain worked she pulled it until Cora came after them. They then went down into the lobby of the hotel, and there sat rows of cuspidors into which men spat as they talked and smoked cigars. How good the cigars smelled. They always make me think of a train that burns coal and puffs and switches lot.

Out on to the street and up to Baker-Hemphills (where Pennys now stands) Cora took us. While she traded I watched the basket with money and sales slip fly across the ceiling from the sales desk to the bookkeeper. Cora bought for Lena a beautiful red wool dress with soutache braid and a soft red felt hat with a tassel on one side. She bought for Ruth a tan checked coat with bright green felt hat that was hard and stiff with about an inch turned up all around the edge of the sailor. I hated it, but now I know that it was smart and pretty on me. Cora found just the suit she wanted for herself. It was a lovely heliotrope wool that was as soft to the touch as a kitten's fur. This suit had a beautiful taffeta petticoat that was changeable from purple to gold. The hat she got to go with it was dark purple velvet with the brim cut on each side up to the crown with heliotrope ostrich tips curling out the slash in the brim. There were two tips to the front and two tips to the back on each side. The shoes to go with her outfit were white button suede finished nubuck tops with a black patent calf skin vamp. They cost \$3.00 and were beautiful with her patent handbag. Many Sundays I have listened to Cora's taffeta

petticoat going swish against her wool skirt as she would pass up the aisle going to teach her Sunday School class.

Road to Angelo

In the autumn and in the spring as one comes down the mountain on the road from San Angelo to Robert Lee a beautiful view meets the eye from most any direction one looks. In the dusky twilight the shadows deepen and rocks show dimly gray and picturesque. The sheep feeding on the hillside make gray mounds that are difficult to distinguish from the rocks. During years that it doesn't forget to rain, flowers bloom profusely and fringe the hillside. The sweet smell of the out-of-doors is enchanting. There is a captivating beauty in the scene as one looks to the blue mountains toward Sanco, and the gorgeous coloring of the sunset in the west, with the hazy magical blues of twilight as the shadows begin to lengthen in the deep blue sky. Down below and distant, dim, and silent as a picture is the little town of Robert Lee with its small houses, little chimney tops, and church spires. Its warmhearted people crowd into town on Saturday afternoons to get their week's supply of groceries and exchange the gossip of the day.

Little Theatre

The Simpson children decide to stage a little theatre. Lena and Ruth work for days making costumes for the show. They talk Cora into letting them tear up a perfectly good raincoat to make an elephant's hide. They write Alta Bell to come up from Bronte on the mail car. Alta Bell was one of Ruth's very best friends. She had been staying in Bronte with her Aunt Toadie while her mother was in the hospital in San Angelo with a new baby girl whom they named Blanch. Alta Bell explained that she told her mother that she thought it best to name her Blanch so she would have a sensible name if she should be an old maid.

Cora let us have an old black lace dress and out of it we made Alta a charming evening dress with large bright red felt dots placed on the dress. The dots were about the size of half dollars. We cut them from an old red felt hat.

Ruth's evening dress was made from a white lace window curtain. All over it there were spangles cut from the tops of tin cans. Ruth also made for herself some tights from men's white knit drawers with stripes of red up and down the legs. She wore a bright red velvet jacket with the tights and did a funny act with hoops and mimicked a boy riding a bicycle.

We staged the show in the living room while the audience which was made up of neighbor women whose children were in the show, sat in the dining room. At one end of the living room we reproduced a natural looking rocky hillside by placing boxes of different sizes on the floor and over these we laid brown butcher's paper such as are used by builders, indenting the paper to give the surface a "hills-and-hollows" effect.

Before we put the paper over the boxes we placed buckets and jars of water on the boxes and floor. We punched holes in the brown paper and placed cedar branches in them to give the appearance of small trees.

Our show started with a parade of all the performers, dressed in their various costumes. When Lena struck the opening chords of the music, *The Animal Fair*, we marched into the living room singing:

“I went to the animal fair; the birds and the beasts were there.

The big raccoon by the light of the moon was combing his auburn hair.

The monkey he got drunk and fell on the elephant’s trunk.

The elephant sneezed and fell on his knees, and that was the end of the monk.”

Alta Bell sang several songs and Ruth gave a number of readings. One of the numbers on the program was *A Daisy Chain*. This was a dance by six girls dressed in pale green carrying garlands of yellow centered white daisies.

Snookie Hangs Himself

One hot summer day Cora shook out the ice blanket and spread it over the cistern to dry; the lid was off the cistern. Along came Snookie, Marvin’s dog. He was a big fat dog weighing about sixty pounds. Since the weather was so hot the dog was hunting a cool place. He jumped up on the cistern to lay on the wet blanket. He turned around in dog fashion a time or two before lying down. As his heavy body reclined down he went blanket and all into the cistern. There was about ten feet of water in the cistern. Lena, Ruth and Marvin tried every way they could to draw him out. He was swimming all this time, and they were crying telling him to climb into the bucket. He would try to cling to the bucket, but each time he would get his paws on it they would loose him before they could get him to the top. Finally they became desperate and let a bee gum down into the cistern with the hopes that Snookie would climb on to it and they could draw him out.

One of them ran into the house and phoned for help. Before help could arrive our good neighbor, Mr. John Robertson, came by and rescued Snookie by roping him and drawing him out by his neck. All three of the children eagerly grabbed him and were knocked down by Snookie as he shook himself violently to get rid of the water that clung to his thick coat of fur.

The Simpson children loved their three dogs very much. Old Fellow was a very blue greyhound that came to them from the highway, and little Christine was half rat terrier and half poodle. Poison was being put out so Marvin and Ruth kept the two large dogs tied in the smokehouse. As little Christine was Papa’s constant companion he wasn’t exposed to the danger of eating a bait of poisoned meat put out by the sheep farmers.

One day Snookie became restless and being a strong dog broke the rope and started off down the hill dragging the rope which had large knots in it. The path led across a narrow foot bridge that Papa had built over the creek which ran between house and town. As he was trotting across the knotted rope dropped into a crack and jerked him from the bridge which was at least thirty-five feet high at this spot. He hung in mid-air but his weight broke his collar and he escaped without injury. The next week the Robert

Lee Observer published an account of this accident with this heading: “Dog Hangs Himself.”

Drought

There never was a merchant just like W. K. Simpson. In the year of 1909 when one of the West Texas droughts had settled over Coke County, Brother Simpson locked up his business and took his son Marvin and went to Oklahoma to visit his brother, Jeff, and his three eldest children. He declared that while he was preaching he never had time for a vacation and now that the drought was on and credit business was all anyone could hope to do he would take a vacation. He came home in the Fall looking fat and saucy. During his absence Cora had kept the little farm out six miles from town running. She also kept every thing going smoothly on the hill. She had sewed many a fine seam for herself and her two daughters. Daisy came home with her father and she and Cora had many happy days together.

Safety Pins

Now that cars were just coming to Robert Lee, Jess Cradock, who had a blacksmith shop began fixing cars. He had what he called old number 10. This car was very popular as Jess would take a load of shoppers over to San Angelo for \$10.00. So the more that went the less the fare. Lena, Ruth, and Effie Walling had been over to shop and among the things they bought was a bundle of popular songs, “Every Body’s Doing It,” “Big Beautiful Doll,” and “Red Rose Rag.” Effie’s home was out about six miles from town, so she spent the night with the Simpson girls as she often did.

The girls rushed in to show Cora their purchases. They had a delightful time to tell about and a big surprise was waiting for them. Uncle Floyd from California had come for a visit with Cora and her family. Uncle Bud as we called him was thirteen years younger than his sister Cora and was still unmarried. He was quite a violinist and loved music, but had never sung popular songs. He thought his sister’s daughters were just about the cutest, prettiest girls he had ever seen. He joined right in with them although he was quite a bit older than they. Lena began to play the songs, and Effie, Uncle Bud and Ruth to sing them. Cora came in and protested to her brother that she did not think the songs were the proper thing. “Every Body’s Doing It” didn’t sound very nice to Cora. This tickled Uncle Bud. He agreed with the girls and thought the songs were just the thing. That night Rufus Barney came over to sing the new songs. It was Rufus’ delight to sing. Papa and Cora, being very tired, went to bed early. Uncle Bud, Rufus, Effie, Lena and Ruth sang the new songs and many others. Then they moved the sofa back, and sat down on the rug in front of the fire to play a game. They could not play very well because they were too eager to talk. They had a new book of fortune telling about your hands and the shape of your face. Ruth who was rather vain, got a hand mirror and was gazing into it complaining about her nose being too straight up and down. Rufus, trying to be helpful, said, “Did you ever try pinching and pulling your nose?” “Oh yes,” said

Ruth, "I have even slept in safety pins (meaning to say clothes pins)." "Well," said Rufus, with a loud laugh, "I guess we all have." He just held his sides and laughed until Cora awoke because of the noise, and she laughed until she cried just listening to Rufus laugh.

When Rufus left he told us he would be up in the morning to play tennis. We had a wonderful tennis court, with back stop nets and everything. It was the only one in town so there was always a group of girls and boys each afternoon and lots of mornings to play tennis. The next morning Rufus came and brought Bruce with him. We played several hard games, then went to the house to rest.

"St. Punch"

Lena and Ruth are growing up and Lena especially wishes to go to the play parties, the young people are having. Lena was very much in love with A. J. Taylor. Cora wanted her girls to have a good time but she was inclined to believe the social affairs of the community were not the proper thing. She often entertained for the girls, working for several weeks ahead of time making score cards, and planning the refreshments. But this didn't satisfy the girls; they wanted to do what the others were doing. Each time there was a party here came Lena and Ruth begging to go. So Cora would send them to Brother Simpson for permission, and he would ask, "Well, will they play 'Shoot the Buffalo'?" "Oh, no," Ruth would answer. Ruth had to do all the asking as Lena was shy and she often would threaten Ruth with: "You are too young to go, and I will see that you don't get to follow me around all the time if you don't do the asking."

It mattered not how late the hour whenever the girls came in, Brother Simpson would call them to his bed and ask, "Well, did you have a good time?" "Oh, yes," the girls would say, "we had a good time." "Did you shoot the Buffalo?" "Oh no," Ruth would say. "Well what did you do?" "We played Skip to my Lou and Tidie." Brother Simpson did not realize that Pass one Window, Tidie was just as much a square dance as "Shoot the Buffalo." Lena and Ruth lived in terror that he would find this out.

Several years later when their brother Will came home from Oklahoma to go into business with Papa, Lena and Ruth were very happy for Will would take them everywhere. He proved to be a good sweet brother always calling his sisters to see if they had a date before making a date for himself. One night they were dressed to go to a party when Will called them to come out into the moonlight. They went through the house and out into the moonlight. Will was standing there with his back to the path of moonlight. The night air was scented with the perfume of the honeysuckle vine that ran on the porch nearby. He stood there, regarding his sisters attentively as he said, "Girls I meant to give you these rings on your birthdays, but since I have them, I cannot wait that long to give them to you. You will be eighteen this Fall, won't you Lena" And Ruth sixteen next Spring?" In his courteous way he slipped the rings on to their fingers. The girls were thrilled beyond words for the rings were very lovely. Each narrow gold band was set with two small diamonds. They grabbed Will and smothered him with kisses.

That night at the party, after a rollicking game, everyone had gone to the dining room to refresh themselves, a certain middle aged man who always attended all the

young folks parties when he should have been at home with his wife and children, came up to Will and said, "Mr. Will, have you et punch?" Will chuckled and very politely said that he had not. Alas, Lena and Ruth heard this conversation, so to this day, "Have you et punch?" is a favorite saying in the Simpson family.

Tobacco

Late one afternoon Will and Ruth were returning from the Divide, and Will took a chew of tobacco. He asked Ruth how she would like to have a chew. She did not know one thing about tobacco, but she thought she should chew if he did. It didn't taste at all good, and kept her spitting all the time, but it didn't make her sick. A few nights afterwards Papa and Cora went across town to see a sick child. Lena was out at Effie's. It was a hot summer night. Will and Ruth were sitting on the front porch when Will said, "Well, Ruth Doolie, how about a chew?"

Ruth readily agreed that a chew was the thing to take. They sat there on the porch in the rocking chairs chewing tobacco and looking at the stars. Some of the juice ran down Ruth's throat and before Cora and Papa returned Ruth began to see the stars chase each other, and she began to say strange things about them. Will said, "Ruthie, you had better quit looking up at the stars; you are liable to get sick."

Ruth arose and said, "I feel strange; I guess I better go in and lie down awhile." Before she went to the door, she fell plop on the floor. Will picked Ruth up and carried her back to Ruth's and Lena's bedroom saying all the time, "Don't you ever tell Mama what made you sick."

Ruth thought she was going to die. When Papa and Cora returned they called Dr. Turney and he said Ruth had been playing tennis too hard. So Cora ruled that Ruth should not play another game until school opened next fall. Ruth never told on Will, but she was tempted many times whenever everyone except her got to play tennis.

Ruth Becomes Engaged

Ruth knew that Bruce was very much in love with her, and she with him, but they quarreled and Bruce took his mother on a long trip to Chattanooga and Soddy, Tennessee to visit the Clifts and the Wallaces. One summer day in 1914 Ruth received through the mail a picture of Bruce sitting on Lookout Mountain. He had scribbled under the picture, "Don't you think I look lonesome, without you?"

When Bruce came home they played tennis and went to Angelo to the show, and took moonlight walks. One night as they left the church, Bruce would talk of nothing but vine-covered cottages and happiness. He would hardly end one long spiel before he would begin another. "You see, if we could have three good crop years, I would be sitting on top of the world."

Ruth would reply laughingly, "And if there were three dry years, how would your store fare?" "Oh," Bruce would say, "You must not look on the dark side of life; we

surely wouldn't have three dry years." (Alas, though, Coke County is noted for its dry years.)

Fall came, and Ruth went away to school without giving Bruce the yes he was waiting to hear. But before two months were passed, Bruce was there (at Weatherford) like a clinging vine. They went to the shows and they drove old Charlie through the snow. They picked violets on the bank of the creek near by. Finally, when the yes was spoken and the wedding date set Bruce returned to Robert Lee walking on air, but dreading to ask Brother Simpson s he had promised Ruth he would do.

Bruce would leave his place of business at McCallum-Reed and go up the block to the W. K. Simpson store with determination to ask Brother Simpson for Ruth's hand in marriage. He would go in very bravely, but when Brother Simpson would ask, "What's for you, Bruce?" Bruce's heart would fail him and he would buy a can of paint. After a short chat he would go back to his store. This same thing happened over and over for several days until at last he realized that he had about every color and size of paint that Pittsburgh and Sherwin-Williams Paint Company had to offer.

Chocolate Set

One of the girls in our set was to be married. We all brought our gifts to Lela's as the bridal show was to be there. When Bruce brought his package, Lela wanted to know what it was, so Bruce told her to unwrap it and see. "You might wrap it up fancy for me," Bruce said. Lela opened the package and said, "Oh Bruce, you are not going to give this to her; it is too pretty. You must give this to Ruth." So she pushed the gift back under the bed in the room where they were fixing the packages. "Go back to town and get another gift." So Bruce obediently went back to town and bought another gift.

The gift under the bed was forgotten. About a month later we were leaving Lela's and she said, "Wait a minute, Bruce, and get that gift you have for Ruth." I waited for him at the gate. When he came we continued our walk on over to my home on the hill, and when Bruce went to leave he said, "I am leaving this package for you, and when I come back tonight, you might try serving me something from it."

Lena helped me open the package and we Oh-ed and Ah-ed as we took the elegant blue chocolate pot and dainty little cups out of the box. The set was a heavenly blue embellished in gold. (I still have it.) I remarked to Lena, "I cannot understand how he happened to leave it at Lela's. She said something about it being under the bed." Lena made delicious chocolate, sandwiches and cookies to serve that evening, and when Bruce came we complimented him on his fastidious taste.

Dot Born

The next year after Ruth and Bruce were married, Cora began sewing fine seams again in preparation for the new grandbaby. When at last the little granddaughter arrived, it was decided Lena and Bruce were to name her. So they went off into a huddle and came out with the name Dorothy Simpson. This sweet adorable baby won the hearts of

all those about her. As this little girl grew, Cora was given a new name. Papa in his affectionate way had always called Cora numerous names such as Eudora, Dear Melvinie, and Dola. As Dorothy began to talk she called Cora "Grampie," and the name has stayed with her all these years. When Dorothy was only a few years old she would call her Grampie over the telephone and ask her to watch for her, that she was coming over to see her. Each time Ruth would caution her not to walk across the footbridge, to go down into the creek instead. Before long Cora would see Dot's little bonnet come bobbing up the hill with Bevo, her little white curly poodle, trotting at her side. As she passed through the gate she always began telling all of the things she saw on the way over. One day she told Grampie and Ninkie about a great gray lizard that ran from under a rock in the bed of the creek—just how he came gliding by right in front of her and stopped on a rock in the sun. She had watched him cock his head first to one side and then to the other, and fast the lizard ran when Bevo gave a quick bark.

Then when sweet little Dorothy came home, she could not talk enough about the birds she saw at Grampie's. In her childish way she would describe the mocking bird that used to sit on a tall pole out by the garage gate, and how he would fly upward after each thrilling song. She would tell how the little cotton tail rabbits peeped at her from under the small cedar trees.

When Dorothy was about four years old Ruth and Bruce were out of town and Dorothy was spending the time with her grandparents. The screens from all over the house were off for several days as Papa was having them redone. The flies were bad because of this situation. In an effort to rid the house of flies Cora had put fly paper in several places in each room. On one of these days Lena put Dorothy to bed for an afternoon nap and placed a sheet of fly paper on the bed beside her. Lena was reading and after about an hour she heard a weak call, "Ninkie." Going in to Dorothy, Lena found she had rolled over on to the sticky paper. Her curls were stuck hard and fast. Lena certainly had a difficult time trying to get the paper off the child's face and out of her hair. When Ruth and Bruce returned home they were shocked to see how notched their little daughter's hair was. In places it was cut to the scalp in an effort to get the horrible fly paper loose.

Dorothy always worshipped her Aunt Lena so when Lena was to be married it was hard for her to accept her new uncle as she felt like Cortez was taking her Auntie away from her. After a very short time, however, she became as attached to Cortez as she was to Lena.

Dorothy wrote many notes to the stork asking for a baby sister. Each time she would tie her little letter on the rose bush at the front door. Then she would explain that she thought maybe the stork would see the note waving in the breeze as he went to the various houses over town delivering babies. Perhaps he would bring her a baby sister. She was very disgusted when her playmate, Joyce Hope Brown, had two little sisters and she had none.

John Robertson Baptized

One Sunday afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Cobb and Willie Inez, their seven year old daughter, came by the Bruce Clifts asking Bruce and Ruth and their seven year old daughter Dorothy to go with them to the baptizing that was to be further up on the creek from where we used to play. Ruth began to protest, saying she had not seen any one baptized in a creek since Papa used to dip people in creeks and tanks when she was very young.. The two little girls begged to go saying they had never seen anyone baptized in water and might not ever get another chance. At last we decided to go.

As the people gathered on the banks of the creek feeling as contented as the mountains, some of the little folks were holding to their mother's skirts while others picked wild flowers. The birds were twittering and chirping and the summer fragrance lingered in the woods. The sky was cloudless on this long sweet summer day. The friends gathered there sang "On Jordan's Stormy Banks." Brother Draper was to baptize a man twice his size. The man stuttered, and as Brother Draper said, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," and tried to push the man under the water, the man said, "By-by-by God Brother Draper, don't drown me."

Mrs. Cobb, Bruce sister, Inez, is a very excitable woman. She was standing with her hands clenched watching Brother Draper in his efforts to push the man under the water. The entire crowd was tense. As the man's face went under water, Mrs. Cobb gasped, and Mr. Will Cumbie became tickled and a ripple of merriment passed over the audience.

Wallace Born

After nearly ten years, Ruth and Bruce are going to have another baby. So the entire family are again all eyes for little articles such as dresses, gertudes, gowns, bands, coats, caps, shawls, sacques, bobs, booties, shoes, blankets, toilet articles, novelties, and white flags that have each day in the week for about a year.

Ruth's bedroom, at the front of the house, was turned into a regular baby boudoir. There was a basket to lay the baby in, a table on wheels to set the bathtub on, with pockets around the table to hold the toile articles.

When the baby was born, he didn't make a sound and was blue all over. Seemingly he was lifeless. Good Dr. Eaton quickly rolled him into a receiving blanket and raced across the room and hall to the fireplace room. Quickly a fire was built. Then some one lighted the oil stove in the kitchen and they ran in there with the baby. Dr. Eaton was pressing his sides in and out and was blowing into his mouth. They all ran off and left Ruth. Finally, Mrs. Eaton who was a nurse came back to Ruth's bedroom for more blankets and Ruth inquired whether the baby was a boy or a girl. Mrs. Eaton very kindly said, "Honey, I don't know; you just lie still, doctor will be back in a minute." Later, Bert came rushing in for something and Ruth again tried to find out about whether the baby was a boy or a girl. Bert rushed out of the room blowing like a shoat caught in a crack.

Finally this handsome eleven pound boy breathed the breath of life and everything began moving along smoothly again. Hattie, the strong, capable colored woman took care of the house, Bruce and Dorothy. Lena left her store and came each day for about two weeks to bathe the baby. She learned how to do this under Mrs. Eaton's direction. Lena loved the little baby so dearly for it had been only about a year since her little son had been born dead. She very fondly bathed Ruth's baby, stealing a kiss here and there from his plump little body. Each day Wallace was lulled away to the land of Nod as his affectionate Auntie rocked him crooning such lullabies as "Mammy's Little Cole Black Coon."

The Church Blows Away

As we talked over the back fence with Leetie and Joe, and watched the sunset, the sky was over spread with clouds of clear thin gold. The trees were motionless with their light green leaves of Spring. There was the perfect quietness which sometimes prevails over nature at the close of the day. The sun sank beneath the horizon. It was night, and we went into the house, never dreaming that before morning our little town would be torn upside down. We were sleeping soundly in the sleeping porch when we felt rain drops in our faces. We were awakened by muttering peals of thunder, the lightening ripped through the sky, the rain began to fall and patter on the window panes; soon it was coming down in torrents. The lightening leaped from cloud to cloud. Then it split and tossed the stoutest trees. Peals of thunder were followed by great sheets of rain. We heard a horrible crash, but we did not dare to go into the yard as timber was flying through the air in every direction. Soon we heard the whining of a dog at the front door. When we opened the front door in rushed the dog followed by Willie and Freeman Clark carrying their daughter Carleen. We were all talking at once, when we felt a gust of wind come through the house., We heard the kitchen door slam, and in a moment Joe and Leetie Turner appeared in the living room doorway all wet and dripping. Just then we heard a ripping, smashing sound as the hen house slid underneath the grape arbor and hit plop against the house.

Dorothy got up when Bruce and I did but we left Wallace in bed. I kept hearing little whimpers but with so much excitement I had not thought of Wallace when all at once it dawned on me that I had left him alone in the leaking room. I exclaimed, "Oh, my baby!" and ran into the sleeping porch. There he was squirming every time the rain drops hit on his little warm face. I caught him up with a kiss and ran into the living room.

Our home had walls twelve feet high which helped to deaden the sound of the terrible storm. We talked until morning; then the neighbors went from house to house to see the wreckage that the storm and wrought. First, we went to our church which was only a half block away. Brother Roy Crawford was our pastor. The parsonage was so badly damaged that Jess and Lela Craddock kindly invited Brother and Sister Crawford to stay in their home while the parsonage was being repaired. Brother Crawford started a project to build a new church that Fall.

New Church

Brother Ramsey was our new pastor. After two years of planning and collecting funds for a new church building, the lot was cleared and the usable lumber salvaged from the storm ravaged old church.

It was a misty day in November, Brother Simpson at his store was waiting for the hour to arrive. When the clock struck, he arose and called Lena to help him into his overcoat. She protested that he would catch cold standing on the damp ground. But no amount of persuading could keep him from going up to the church lot. He wanted to be there when the plow was put into the ground in preparation for the new church building.

Many stained glass windows were donated for the new church including one for W. K. Simpson. The building committee (on the corner stone) was: M. B. Simpson, W. B. Clift, J. S Craddock and W. B. Cobb.

New Simpson Home

For sometime Papa and Cora had been planning a new home. Papa bought lots and they started the building of it when Cora received some money from her father's estate. She added this to their fund.

The next year after they moved into their new home which was only a block from Lena's and Ruth's houses, their grandson Wallace was born. When he was about a month old his indulgent Aunt Lena started coming early each morning and taking him to visit Papa and Cora. These visits were kept up for some time. Several times when he returned home and Ruth would ask him what Cora was doing, he would say "She is working on her mools." The mules he had reference to were unicorns in a wool picture she was embroidering to place over her mantel.

I look at this lovely picture today, it calls memories of Cora working on it while Papa and Wallace turned through the large worn geography which Wallace wagged with him, preferring it even to his brightest colored picture books.

Death of Papa

The Simpson family have been in business for years. It was very obvious that the family was in the business for Cora and her three children did the manual labor while Brother Simpson with his short breath did the headwork. In those days the manufacturers sent everything knocked down. Ruth and Marvin learned to pour the holes in chairs full of fish glue and stick the rungs in and tie them. Then the chairs were stacked to dry. When the glue hardened the chair might break but never where the fish glue was. So Ruth learned how to assemble a dresser or sideboard and screw on the mirrors as well as any man.

There was never a merchant just like W. K. Simpson for a newcomer never entered the store without being asked the question: "Do you know the Lord in the pardon of your sins?" Often after several conversations on the subject of right and wrong and the

importance of soul salvation many men testified that through Brother Simpson's help they were able to find God precious to their souls.

One day Brother Simpson called Marvin to his bedside and said, "Son the Lord has been good to me and Cora and blessed our efforts and caused us to prosper. I wish you to go to San Angelo and buy for your mother a new car to replace our old Ford. Your mother has been indeed a helpmate to me. She has cared for the three older children as if they were her own. She has always worked side by side with me encouraging me in every undertaking. Her shoulders are getting rounder every day from the hardships of this life. So son here is a signed check, go and get a handsome car for her. Marvin came home with a shining new Chrysler for Cora. Many happy trips all over Texas and out to California and down to old Mexico Cora and Brother Simpson took in their new car. When Cora drove her large car she would have to place a pillow in the seat and one under her stooped shoulders so as to reach the steering wheel. Cora brought Brother Simpson back from California much improved. In fact he and his little dog, Chastine, whose name Papa had changed to "Mayfield" in honor of Mr. Mayfield, his distant cousin when he ran for the U. S. Senate, began walking to and from the store. Now that he seemed stronger, Brother Simpson decided he would spend each winter in Carrizo Springs in Dimmit County. Quite a lot of preparation was made for Cora and Brother Simpson to spend the winter away from home. Cora's colored couple that had been with her for ten years were left in charge of everything. Carry to look after the house while Smokey kept the yards. After staying a few weeks in the hotel at Carrizo Springs and feeling like he disturbed everyone with his violent coughing, Papa had Cora write Marvin to come and purchase lots and have a cottage built for them. They moved to their new winter home. In only a short time, Brother Simpson took violently ill, and Cora phoned for Ruth to come and help her and bring her young son Wallace to comfort his grandfather. Bruce took his wife and twenty month old son. Wallace was a joy to Brother Simpson; he would climb onto the bed and sit quietly by his grandfather's side by the hour as they looked at the Geography which Wallace wagged constantly.

At this time the Methodist Annual Conference was in session at Waco. As the roll was being called at the Conference, Brother Simpson answered the roll call of heaven.

The family sadly brought the body of Brother Simpson back to Robert Lee and placed it beside little Cora Mae, and Lena's infant son's grave in the cemetery on the hillside, whose bare summit holds the neglected, silent graves of some of the pioneers of Texas.

Soap-Cat

For the last three days Cora and Ruth had been busy putting the house in "spick and span" order and cooking special dishes each meal. They felt sure Marvin and Mildred would return that day from their wedding trip. It was noon again and still they didn't show up.

The cat kept mewing in the kitchen and Cora kept complaining about the cat stepping under her feet. When Ruth glanced out the front door, she caught sight of the newlyweds coming down the walk. "Oh, they come," she said.

“Oh my goodness” reaching for a bar of soap Cora ran to the back door and said, “Kitty, kitty, kitty,” and threw the soap into the yard. The cat ran after the soap and Cora locked the screen.

The next day Lena, Ruth and Cora were walking over Cora’s yard admiring the flowers. Lena stooped over and picked up the bar of soap and said, “What is this new bar of soap doing in the yard.” We then told her of Cora’s trick on the cat. Lena laughed until she couldn’t laugh any more.

Grandchildren

Bruce’s children have always called him Daddy. Now he has graduated from Daddy to Papa since the grandchildren have come and Ruth is “Poofie.” Dorothy and Ruth agreed that Ruth was not to have a fancy name like “little mother,” “Mother Grand,” or “Big Mama,” but is to be called by all of her grandchildren just plain grandmother Clift. But by accident she inherited the name “Poof.” “Crackie” who is three years older than Patricia (Ruth’s and Bruce’s first grandbaby), always said “Aunt Roofie.” Along came Patricia and said “Poof.” So now to all the kith and kin it is “Poofie and Papa.”

Storm on the Coast

One of the most exciting trips Ruth made to the coast in the six years that Dorothy lived in Taft was the summer of 1941. Cora, Lena, Wallace, Ruth, Mildred and the three little Simpsons went to Corpus Christi to spend their vacation. They spent a few days in San Antonio on the way down. We all remarked about the beauty of a new yellow awning on an upstairs porch with a yellow suite of porch furniture as we passed down the street that led to Grande Courts. On arriving at the courts Wallace and his young cousins raced off to Brackenridge Park. The grown-ups enjoyed the Sunken Gardens for a short time, then on to the park to see about the children. Billie rushed up to us and said, “Oh, hurry and come see Cobby Horses!” Everyone laughed. Crackie informed him, “It is hobby horses, Bill.”

Lena and Ruth were all eyes for Rosie, one of the large monkeys. They felt like they should report on her health to the Garden Club ladies on their return to Robert lee, for Rosie was greatly admired by the club ladies the summer before.

When we stopped in Taft, Dorothy insisted that Carolyn stay with Patricia and come over as they did that night after Allen got home. On to Corpus we joyfully went and secured a cottage right on the water at North Beach. We sat on our porch and watched white gulls scoop through the air. A few afternoons later, Ruth’s in-laws, Mrs. Madera, and the Roy Clifts who lived in Corpus Christi drove out to North Beach to visit with us. While there Roy mentioned that a storm warning was given but they would keep us posted.

There was no more thought given to the warning. The next day we decided to move to Grande Courts. The move was made and lunch was eaten; the radio was turned off while we all took our rest. Then one by one the children awoke and started playing.

We were expecting Allen. Dorothy kept going to the door looking for him; she walked over to the office and came back in a hurry saying the flag was up, and people were going farther inland and that it might be best for us to go back as far as Taft. Everything seemed hazy and the clouds were drifting rapidly across the sky. The out-of-doors was gray and there was an unpleasant smell. Everyone seemed hurried and perplexed. We turned the radio on and it was constantly calling out warnings for everyone to take every precaution. To close all windows securely. As we left North Beach it was difficult to breathe. The long line of cars trying to get out of the city looked like a funeral procession.

There was an oppressive feel in the air. The sandy shore along North Beach was white with the spray and foam of the ocean. The water that looked gray and murky a few hours ago now began churning and as we got into the cars it began to rain.

Dorothy said let's not be frightened for often the storm heads out to sea and doesn't even hit the coastline. Everyone agreed that we were not going to have a hurricane although the Coast Guard was busy evacuating all persons along the shore. All seaside resorts were boarded up against the danger of the storm but no one seemed hysterical.

When we got to Taft, it was decided that all except Cora would go to the Green Hotel, just over one block from Allen and Dorothy. We left the car at Allen's and as we crossed the street to go over to the hotel the wind was tearing at our skirts and hair. Still without realizing the great danger we were in we went calmly to our rooms. As we went through the lobby we could hear the sensational warning over the radio, "There is the possibility that the Center will still head out to sea, and not hit the shoreline, but this is not expected by the weather Bureau." Then static drowned out the warning. Soon the voice was clear again saying it might pass Corpus and hit Goose Island. The crackling noise of the static again; later there were the very necessary warnings to the people along the coast.

As we went up the stairs you could hear the telephone ring loudly and persistently. You could catch sensational conversations as people poured into the hotel. Some seemed optimistic about the storm, saying it would blow itself out in a few hours.

Lena and Ruth shared a room together, while Wallace, Mildred and the three little Simpsons were given a large corner room up the hall from us. In a short time, Lena and Ruth were in bed; the wind blew hard against the long window panes of the ancient hotel. Looking out the window they saw the ceaseless toss of the trees. Soon they were fast asleep and for several hours they rested from the fatigue brought on by the excessive excitement and exertion. We were awakened by a horrible crash; a tree near the hotel had fallen on the large verandah and the long hotel sign had broken loose at one end and was flapping back and forth with each gust of wind. We sprang out of bed and rushed over to turn the light on, and the electricity was off. This gave us a helpless feeling. I shudder now to think of it. We dressed quickly and went down the hall to Mildred's room. Poor Mildred had been so frightened that she sat up all night long. She had tried at intervals to awaken Wallace to talk to her about the danger of the storm. Lena and Ruth went downstairs into the lobby and to their surprise nearly all the occupants had sat up all night, fearing the building might crash in on them any minute. We rushed up to Mildred's room and decided to awake the children and dress them and go sit in the lobby.

Ruth said put the children's shoes on them so if we have to wade out they won't cut their feet on the broken glass. We finished the night out by listening to the talk that went on. There were stories of other storms told. We were kept busy moving to stay out of the drip, of water coming down from upstairs. As day began to break, Paul and Marge served us toast, bacon, eggs, and coffee. Their supply soon ran out. Then some couples from Rock Port brought out some eats they had with them when they left their cabins. Everyone left the money for their breakfast by their plates. Morning dawned at last and we went across to Dorothy's and found that Allen had been gone all night. He had been called to Aransas Pass to remove the patients from a hospital whose roof had been blown away. Cora and Dorothy had gone down stairs because their apartment had kept rocking like a cradle during the storm. Dorothy exclaimed that she could not have endured the storm if Cora had not been with her. She was just like a rock to cling to. We raced upstairs and found Dorothy's apartment a perfect wreck. The wall paper was falling off the ceiling, hanging in strips and furniture and rugs were ruined by the water. As we looked around it was hard to realize that this was the same place we had stopped by only a few days before.

When we started the journey back home we were shocked all along the highway at the number of trees that had been blown over. The highway men were pulling the rubbish off the road ahead of us. As we went through San Antonio on one street we counted 28 houses without roofs. The house with the beautiful yellow awning we had admired only a few days ago was in ruins and the yellow porch chairs were demolished.

Furniture

Lena and Ruth must have inherited some of Cora's ability for making whatever their ambitions longed for. Now that Ruth was going to have a new house they started in with a strong determination to refashion her old furniture. To them this was very fascinating work. One of the pieces they did was an old brass bed. By sawing the posts at each corner they made the head and foot the height they desired. Both the head and foot were then boarded up. The head and foot were arched. This was very difficult to do, but they accomplished it by putting the molding in Lena's fish pond and leaving it overnight so it could easily be bent in shape. This framework was first covered with an old silence cloth Cora had discarded. The outside covering was of heavy linen in a beautiful red rose pattern on an ivory background. Off the side of a bird's eye maple frame they sawed the ornament. This they placed on the head of the bed. The wood part of the bed was painted an off white. Down the sides of the bed were deep skirts of the same linen as the head piece and foot boards. The spread was made of peach colored taffeta.

The tools they had to work with were so inadequate and the work was strenuous that one night Lena dreamed that they fastened Jim Robertson, a very tall courteous gentleman, that lives near here, up in the foot boards of the bed. He begged pitifully to get out, but they said *no* and nailed him up inside hard and fast.

I would like to tell of all the things we did, but I won't do so. I'll just mention one other thing. We made a set of twin lamps for tables in the living room. We made

them of three pound Folger coffee cans. Bruce put the electrical parts in the cans using bright nickel plated parts that were left from sheet-iron stoves. He placed these in the lids of coffee cans to screw the light bulbs in. Then he filled the cans with sand and soldered the lids on them. Next they wound fishing cord around the cans from top to bottom. This gave them a corrugated look. They were painted an ashy rose color. The shades were made of wall paper.

Goodbye Little Home Town

The pioneer days of Texas have passed. The wagon trail is dim at last. Over the West Texas hills the low growing cactus is scattered. The prairies are scorched by the hot winds when the drought is on. Yet each blade of grass or weed that grows have vitamins unheard of in a lush and rainy country where grass is knee high and the cattle are poor. The roving coyote has been chased out of Coke County. The once barren strips of land are now grown up in young mesquite trees since the prairie dog towns have been destroyed. We miss the chatter of the little prairie dog as he would stand on his hind legs at the entrance of his domicile and bark and bark until some noise frightened him; then with a quirk of his tail down into the hole he would go. Many rabbit drives have been staged, yet the rabbit remains, and the fox and armadillos have entered in droves since the coyote isn't here to chase them.

Now that the war is over and ammunition is more plentiful the rabbit and other rodents will have a more difficult time. The rabbit drives are lots of fun I am sure, although I have never gone on one. I once had our lunch boxes chuck full of good things to eat and go to the place in the community where the drive was to culminate. There are usually two men there ahead of time to barbecue a goat and make coffee. The rabbit drive is made by men forming a semicircle over miles of land, then closing in on the rabbits and shooting them. By the time the gunmen gather in to count the rabbit ears, the ladies have their lunch cloths spread out usually under a grove of trees near a home. There will be a space given over to meat dishes, another to vegetables, also salads and relishes. Then the home baked cakes and pies and other sweets. The man who had the largest number of rabbit ears is declared the champion rabbit slayer.

The picturesqueness of the little town of Robert Lee and the surrounding country is passing away with the pulling up and the pushing over of the cedars that cover the little hills that surround my little home town. The gray barrenness is appalling.

When the dam site is built on the Colorado River below Robert lee to irrigate 50,000 acres of this good earth and establish West Texas' largest water reservoir, and the North Concho flood control project above San Angelo is set up, all of West Texas will be thankful for the \$40 million spent in making this possible. We will feel like spreading a royal purple cape for the U. C. R. A committee to walk upon.

We all know President Truman doesn't have time to come to Robert lee and look at the dam site, and see the barrenness caused by the hot dry winds that burn the mesquite grass to a cinder. Yet in the Spring, rain or no rain, the mesquite puts forth its tender leaves, light green, and when the sunlight filters through these leaves later, the fragrant tassel like blossoms appear, and bees come honey hunting, and the low growing cactus

burst into courageous red blooms, and cat-claw bushes bloom out in dresses of orchid. There is a sweetness that stirs the soul, when you marvel at the pluck of nature. All over West Texas people have the pluck and grit to stay regardless of hardships.

Now that we have two gushing oil wells in Coke County, other changes must take place. So good-bye little Robert Lee town, good-bye.

Closing the Book

Although the plumage of the preacher's peacock has faded from a royal blue to a lesser hue, and her body is marked by the sacrifices of time, her dark eyes show a sensitive face where you can see lines of character. The once petted curves of her mouth become firm lines of determination, patience showing in her beautiful dark eyes. For she gave her strength in serving others, and a stalwart character was built that cannot be erased throughout eternity. It can truly be said that the magnanimous character of the Preacher's Peacock was built by climbing the stairs of faithfulness.