Blue Blood
&
Red Clay

The Memories of a Virginia Childhood

1. Beloved Over All—Kipling
   The Background, the Setting.

2. Family Portraits


4. The Chapel (St Marks)

5. The Springs (Fauquier White)

6. Rosedale and Pleasant Hill

7. Lower Neighborhood—and other places
   thereabout.

8. Haunted houses—the old Pendleton Place,
   the Hudson Place, the Rixey graveyards.

9. Visits to the Big Town—Culpeper.

10. Out into the Big, Wide World.
Neighborhood life at Rixeyville was perhaps not at all unlike that of hundreds of similar villages and countrysides throughout Piedmont Virginia—and for that matter, the world—before there entered into it the automobile, the electric light and the radio—those triple threat engines of destruction that kicked the last of the Nineteenth century into oblivion and ushered in the Twentieth with a bang—a bang of blowouts, punctures, flashlights and static.

In the Fall, the men hunted, partridges, rabbits, squirrels, and sometimes even groundhogs, coons and o'possums. Nearly everybody had a hunting dog or two, generally well trained and pretty effective, though scions of no bloodline and scarcely ever of pure bred type such as pointer or setter. At our house we had a black dog of the English shepherd type called "Alec" (probably named after my father's brother, Alec, a lawyer in Richmond who shocked the family by leaving the Church to join the Seventh Day Adventists and learning the Bible by heart). Alec was fair in the chase of birds but remarkable after a rabbit. He had as a running mate a little spotted, black and white, spaniel, named Dixie. He was a sprawled out little fellow so low slung that he had to make up with speed what he lacked of leg coverage. He generally arrived at one of the stone fences where the hare usually took refuge all out of breath and a minute or two behind the larger dogs, but once there he took charge of the situation. Alec and Dixie, dogs of my childhood, dear unforgettable playmates and companions.
Then, as winter came on, there came also hog killing time, a feast of blood and slaughter held on different days at the several country houses, and followed by a continuing feast of gluttony in them all—for everybody used to get some of everybody's sausage, spareribs, liver pudding, chine and souse—while of course the regular cuts of shoulder, bacon, fatback and hams went off to the smokehouse for curing. Great fires burned outdoors, whereon vast black iron kettles of sizzling hot water awaited the unfortunate victims. With the colored men all at work and the white men standing around telling them what to do, and the children at a distance waiting for the bladders to blow up, with great racks of hickory to hang the bleeding animals on, and with shotguns, knives and scraping irons, no wonder the poor pigs squealed, the children yelled, the men laughed and swore, and bedlam reigned supreme! But, for months afterwards no one ever went hungry.
This spot of mine, beloved over all, sprawls out on a moderate ridge in the rolling undulating countryside east of the Blue Ridge foothills, skirted on the north and west by the lazy Hazel River and a little over half way beyond the county seat of Culpeper Court House towards Warrenton. Just where a road to the north branches off from this highway, then the main one between Culpeper and Warrenton, two country stores, two blacksmith shops, a postoffice, an Episcopal Chapel, a public school and 6 or 7 houses constituted then, and constitute now for the most part, the village of Rixeyville.

It was in many ways a drab, uninteresting looking place, the houses all of wood, with roofs tin or shingled, and the yards nothing to brag about. Notable exceptions were some 200 years old oak trees in our yard and some great tree box equally as old. Notable exceptions, likewise, were the magnificent plum trees in the Newhouse yard, and the tremendous Elephant Ears at Miss Eliza Melton's. The two stores faced each other at the cross roads, both with porches, and my father's on the west side surrounded by the old rambling two story house where we lived. When the Democrats were in, which was rare, the postoffice was in our store, and when the Republicans got it, it went across the road to Mr. Weaver. My father had it in Grover Cleveland's first administration, lost it to Mr. Weaver when he was defeated, and got it back when he was re-elected.

Looking back it is indeed remarkable the material of the Almighty had packed into that one little village. There were the Payne family, Mr. Albert with a wooden leg and his wife, Nelly, whom everybody loved, black and white, and four children, Albert and Harry, boys, and Frances and Nelly George, girls. As they were our very closest neighbors, and as our family also had four children, two boys and two girls, and all of us around the same ages, you can imagine that the
Paynes left an indelible impression on my mind. Especially the two girls and their mother. I was devoted to Mrs. Payne. She was a large, gentle, kindly woman, who would give away anything that wasn't fastened down. She always had a colored girl around the house and kitchen but she baked her own rolls, and they were the best in the village. I soon found out when the rolls were to come out of the oven and contrived in devious ways to arrive at the little porch that separated the house from the kitchen just in time to be given one—or two—dripping with butter and the heat blisters still on their shiny brown tops. Then when I'd get back home to supper, my dear mother would worry about my lack of appetite! It was the Payne girls, for I liked them much better than the boys, who started me to playing with dolls and sewing! I would go off fishing wading fishing wading in good weather with the boys, wading, fishing, chinquepinning and berrying, but the long winter evenings I was generally playing dolls with Frances and Nelly George. I was a bad little boy in some ways and I'm afraid I tried to play some other games with them, too, but it was just the gambolling of little animals on the green, and soon corrected by the rigors of an old shoe applied in the right spot, or sometimes a hickory switch around the bare legs!

I shall always remember one story about Frances. One summer we had a fancy visitor at our house, from Baltimore, a Mrs. Fant, a widow and a high stepper. She provided the village with enough excitement to last it for a long, hard cold winter—several of them. She made goo-goo eyes at my father (and several other gentlemen) and according to my sister Genevieve, in hiding behind the dining room buffet, actually kissed him and in no sisterly fashion. Mother, promptly told about it, dismissed the matter with a casual flutter of her hand declared she wouldn't have a husband other women didn't want to kiss.
Any proper and complete Rosedale saga must include a chronicle of the Walter Morrison family. Walter Morrison was a handsome young widower, the son of "Uncle William" Morrison, of Washington and bookstore fame, and his lovely wife, "Aunt Genie". He was left with four children, all boys, Lewis, Walter, Charlie and Hamilton. In the last stages of tuberculosis himself, Walter came to Rosedale to die. But, to my childish fancy, his four boys came to play, and play we did with a right good will. Charlie was my boon companion, but he quickly faded from the scene with pneumonia and weak lungs. Well do I remember it, even the death scene, because it was my first acquaintance with the Dark Angel whom I was to meet again so often in life—and so often at dear Rosedale.

It seems Charlie had expressed a desire to see me and I was ushered barefoot and trembling into the fearsome chamber, barely in time to receive his last ave atque vale in the form of a wan smile and the touch of his gentle hand. I also inherited his shirts or blouses, which were of much handsomer material than the ones to which I was accustomed, were beautifully laundered and had an aroma of lavender about them.

Lewis, the oldest boy, had a quarrel with "Uncle Dick" Lewis, and aided and abetted I fear by my tender hearted mother, at least to the extent of clothes and coin, ran away to Chicago, and I don't know what became of him. Hamilton and Walter, who was called "Brother" by everyone, grew to young manhood, married and settled down, before they succumbed to the dread disease of the stricken family.
The chestnut orchard at Rosedale.

In this day and generation when chestnuts are as scarce as hen's teeth and hard to be met with only in fancy grocery stores in big cities, or purchased in little bags on great metropolitan street corners, I have to pinch myself to remember those days at Rosedale when Cousins Matt, Lu and Fannie, armed with sheets and long poles, and accompanied by such house guests and family retainers as wanted to go along, set forth on bright October mornings to gather chestnuts by the bushel. Certainly in the gay nineties in Virginia many well-established homes had their chestnut orchards, the product of long thought and care. There were dozens of trees in the Rosedale orchard and they were great, old ones that never failed to bear. In these troupes that sallied forth so gaily after the rich brown, glistening nut, were always whatever group of children there chanced to be on hand; and I was always in the number. The spreading of the sheets beneath the tree, the merciless flagellation of the boughs, and the plop, plop, plop of the chestnuts pouring down, sometimes loose and ready to be picked up, sometimes still in the burrs, — and then the triumphant march homeward, each with his sac of booty against the long, winter nights and roasting before the open fire.

Aunt Tin

Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest, some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood, and many a flower's born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air. To which I would like to add, in my feeble way, and with Mr. Gray's kind permission, that there have been thousands of saints on this earth never recognized by ecclesiastical protocol. Such an one, my dears, was Aunt Tin or Miss Tinnie of Rosedale. If there had never been another Rixey, she alone would have dignified, raised aloft like a banner and sanctified the name to me forever.
Rosedale (Aunt Tin)

At the time of which I write, she had already passed the zenith of her good life, and with her devoted husband, her three daughters and son, her mother and her emancipated slaves all about her—and revolting around her, she had made and kept the name of Mrs. Richard A. Lewis something around which everything that was good and beautiful and true in Culpeper County—could rally and be strong. But neither her goodness nor her strength nor her influence were ostentatious. She sat in quiet dignity and people naturally drifted to her for counsel, guidance and sympathy. The simplest problem, heartache or need of the simplest "darkey" engaged her quick and lively reaction just as surely and squarely as an approach from one of wealth, position and power. She was kind, she was witty, she was wise; and her strength went out to all weakness, to prop it up, her loveliness and charm to all ugliness, to soften and tone it down, and her loving kindness to all obduration and hardness of heart, to conquer and overcome it, just as naturally as water flows down hill or the tides move in and out. for me

I is difficult to think of her without thinking of Whistler’s mother. To look at, there is really nothing remarkable about the woman in that picture which is yet so compact with everything of the dignity, dearness of motherhood as to tug at the heartstrings of every mother’s son of us. Aunt Tin was a sparse, thin, woman, slightly stooped from waiting on other people, with blueish grey hair and eyes, with a somewhat longish face set on the serious side, but which would light up like candles with thought and feeling whenever she turned on the current of her soul. At other times, in repose, she seemed of alabaster, her noble head finely chiseled in the manner of Giotto or Cimabue. Remembering now, I can give some credence to the story that the Rixey family was originally the powerful Ricci of Florence.

It was her wont, when the family, relatives and friends of her household, gathered around the fireplace in her mother’s bedroom used as a sitting room, to take her place on a low chair, a very low chair, at the left corner of the mantlepiece, and sit with folded hands and with
little **mar** to say. She was a good listener, though, and you could tell by the quick changing expression of her mobile face that she was entering thoroughly and completely into all the doubts, fears, hopes, joys, adventures and misadventures, of the gay, sometimes disputatious chatterboxes around her. Every now and then she would have something to say, soft, mild and gentle, but decisive. "It was generally to take up for somebody. If you can't say anything good about them, don't say anything at all." "Well, now, maybe they did the best they could." "There are always two sides."

These and many other expressions of a similar nature which the highbrow and the cynical might jeer at as bromides or banalities were nonetheless pure gold, apples of gold in pictures of silver, as they came from her lips, accustomed as she was to **maxxxmuth**, speak truth, know honor and love mercy.

Rosedale was a house of many keys. There was the key basket, kept on the sitting room mantelpiece, with hundreds of keys in it; but there was also a great bunch of keys that Aunt Tin carried on a string about her waist and in her apron pocket. She had to be called, as head of that house, to open the great pantry for the day's rations to be metered out, not only for the family and guests, but for certain things to go to the colored folk in their log cabins. If a little boy happened, just happened you understand, to be passing through what was known as "the little dining room" from which the pantry opened, with a great fluttering about she would always discover a cookie or two, or a pear, and poke it at you, with some deprecatory remark, such as "Why in the world aren't you out doors playing with the other children?" or "I declare, John Smith, you're just like your father, always with your tongue hanging out."

O, **great** Keeper of all the Keys, wherever she is, wherever her beautiful spirit is, turn not from her nor ever let there be utterly destroyed the kindness and the bounty she herself was ever wont to show.
Richard Lewis of Rosedale, whom we called "Uncle Dick", although he was a distant cousin, was quite a fellow himself. With his Fauquier and Black Horse Cavalry background, you would expect him to love horses—and he did, and race horses to boot. He always had a few hopefuls around the place and the local shows at Culpeper and Warrenton knew his colors well. He had plenty of temper and liked an argument. Once, having driven one of his favorites to the races hitched to a buggy, and having stood all he could of bragadocio from a rival with a new horse, he declared, "I can unhitch my mare right now and beat the tar and stuffings out of that horse."

His challenge was promptly accepted, somewhat I think to his dismay. But he had bragged better than he knew, for that nine mile drive to the buggy proved just the kind of warm-up old Spinett needed, and she won the race by a length and a half, thereby endearing herself forever to Rixeyville and Rixeyville history.

It was his love of horses that was responsible for my being named John Walter after my father. Ordinarily you would have expected the first son to carry off the honors as the Junior, but when my older brother was born, he was named after Uncle Dick Lewis because he promised him a thoroughbred race horse as a christening present.

I have heard it many times since but I am sure it was for the first time and as a very small boy I heard Uncle Dick Lewis admonish his son, Jamie, never to ask anybody where they came from. "If they are from Virginia, they'll tell you soon enough. If they are not, there's no need to embarrass them." I also remember hearing him say there were four things which a Virginia gentleman never did:

"Bruise his mint, cut his ham thick, bring his horse in hot to the stable or vote the Republican ticket."
"Miss Marthy" was something of a grim, gaunt figure, in her early seventies, with large cheek bones, light blue grey eyes and a crisp, commanding voice. She was crippled from a fall and used a crutch. As she was also nearly blind, she used this not only to walk with but to feel her way about with. Some times she used it to crack the shins of little boys suspected of mischief. In her bag, inseparable from the old lady, she carried horehound drops for appeasement purposes, and heavens forbid, also a bottle of brandy and rock candy. You will understand that she was bothered with a constant cough, and when these attacks came on with their ach, achs and ahem, hems, she would take out the little bottle, make a terrible face and take a swallow of the fiery, golden liquid; after which she would settle back behind her lace ruff, compose her features in sublime benignity and doze off for a little nap.

In some mysterious way I was never able to fathom "Miss Marthy" was a Baptist—and an Old School Baptist at that. She not only believed in hell fire, brimstone, damnation, Satan, pitchforks, pokers, and all the trimmings, but she believed that long before you were born your name had been "entered" for it, or for its opposite, Heaven, and that there was just nothing you or anybody else could do about it. She read a miserable little magazine called "Signs of the Times" propagating this strange gospel, or rather she made people read it to her. As soon as I could read, this was my portion. To this day I'm very proud of the fact that I read hundreds of those "Signs of the Times" from cover to cover without a single word, phrase or paragraph of it sticking anywhere to my back, except perhaps "original sin", which I have always rather liked and enjoyed anyway, not only as a phrase but as a

There was a story—and I believe it was true—that "Miss Marthy" had been a Confederate spy in "The Late Unpleasantness". All the terrain between Rixeyville and Washington, D.C. was a Civil War battleground. Horseback, she roamed it practically at will, followed by a colored man with a basket of home-made pies, some of which she sold and some
of which she gave away, depending upon
the color of the uniform. In this way she gleaned
many a piece of information as to troop movements
and battle plans, which, come night and darkness,
she got to her two friends, Moseby and Jeb Stuart,
sometimes by messenger, sometimes by racing it
herself across the innumerable gaps and crevices of
the Blue Ridge foothills.
Rosedale.

If you asked me how many acres there were in the old Rixeys place called "Rosedale", or what year its main house was built, even now I would be at a loss to tell you. In my childhood it so overshadowed all the other places in the world for me that I would have no more questioned its authenticity than I would have entertained the remotest idea that there could be anything wrong with the Episcopal Church, the Democratic Party or General Robert Edward Lee. It simply stood there, a great square white house with green blinds, among great trees, in meadows of lush green. It had always stood there. And so it would always stand.

I started to call it my second home. It was that and more. It was almost my first home, because my mother was very ill in the first year of my existence, and I was sent to Rosedale for safekeeping. Everafterwards, it has always been the focal point around which my returning thoughts have gathered, even more so than the house at Rixeyville, tied on to a country store, where I was born.

Perhaps it was because there was a quality, a timbre, about the people at Rosedale that is unforgettable. First and foremost there was Grandma herself, who wasn't really my grandmother but my great aunt. "Woodlawn", the old Rixey place of my grandparents had burned to the ground, my grandmother had died, and my grandfather, Smith Henry Rixey, had turned over two of his little girls, Jeanie, my mother, and Minnie, to his sister-in-law to "raise." He couldn't have placed them in any finer hands. "Miss Marthy", as the colored folks called her, and sometimes the white, was a character who might well have stepped out of the Old Testament, Scottish Chiefs or Rabelais, or a combination of the three.
She was already an old lady when I was a boy. She had a daughter who had married a dashing soldier from Fauquier, Dick Lewis, and they lived with her and raised their children there and inherited the place on her death. We were taught to call them Uncle Dick" and "Aunt Tinnie", and their children, Jimmie, Matt, Lula and Fannie were our dear cousins and lifetime friends, and particularly the boon companions of my father, mother and Aunt Minnie, because they were all of somewhere around the same age. The three girls grew up to be old maids, all of them, not because they could not have married, but because they were needed at home to look after a big plantation, a delicate mother and an invalid grandmother. Jimmie, the boy, married my favorite cousin, Rose Robinson, and they settled down at Pleasant Hill, the old Rixey place a mile away on a high hill looking into the Blue Ridge mountains, and made of Pleasant Hill a fortress of hospitality and good cheer, but of this Pleasant Hill and Cousin Rose, Cousin Jamie and their little girl, Margaret, and all the delightful things and times associated with them, more later. "Grandma" and "Aunt Tin" and "The Girls" made Rosedale. True, Uncle Dick was there in the background, generally on his horse, and generally terrifying to little boys, but he liked to be out among men and in politics, and he died so soon and while I was so young that he seems no more than an apparition to me.
The Lower Neighborhood, which to my childish fancy lay far and away beyond Eliza Washington's humble Cottage and The Big Woods, but which in reality was only five miles from Rixeyville to the southeast, was noteworthy for three families, a Baptist Church and a protracted meeting held every summer where religious fervor was dispensed along with baskets of fried chicken, country ham and caramel pie. It was also the place where the Rixeyville families went to spend the day, with as much preparation and pomp as one would now summon up for a trip to New York City.

The three households lastingly impressed upon my mind were the Starks, the Cooneses and Mr. Ryland Brown. The Starks were of great importance in my early scheme of things. Both Mr and Mrs Stark, he a great big oak-tree sort of man and she a wiry, catbirdish little woman, took a great fancy to me, as well as to my mother's sister, Aunt Minnie, and nothing would do but that we should come every summer for two weeks with them on their farm. They were always great visits. First there was Roy, the youngest of the Stark children and just my age. A sensitive, fine looking blond boy, with big robin's egg blue eyes who as host deferred to me and spoiled me, and who carried about with him as a boy intimations of immortality and the early death which was to take him away before the shades of the prison house could close in upon him. Oh, Roy, Roy, that I might take again from your princely hand some of those luscious ripe sickle pears or hold my straw hat for the sleek brown chinquepins you were wont to thresh out for me with your stick! The other Stark children were all much older—and didn't matter a great deal. Bruce, the eldest, a tall, dark and handsome farmer, Elma, a stalwart blond and Lottie, a round, dumpish brunette. Both Elma and Lottie taught in the public schools, and it was my privilege to be one of Lottie's boys in my sixth year.
Then there was the dining room table. I can never to this day think of it except to smell and smack my lips over the slabs of Virginia ham fried and smothered in milk gravy, the sliced red tomatoes, the fragrant cornbread and the iced tea. Of course there were other things and other meals, including memorably boiled shoulder with greens and corn pone, for lunch; but it was the fried ham and gravy, the sliced tomatoes, the corn bread and the iced tea that I got at the Starks that set the standard by which I have measured those delightful affairs ever since; and they have never been equalled, much less surpassed.

The Henry Coons place was a little farther on. There was Mr. Henry and the two boys, Carol and Powell, good sturdy little country boys; but there was "Mas' Ginnie." Mrs. Henry Coons was that to everybody, black and colored, old and young. She had the best and kindest face of anyone I've ever known in my life. She was my blessed mother's best friend. Her eyes were steely blue, of a really piercing quality, and she had a soft, husky voice that managed to carry to the world a little of the love and tenderness and concern of her great heart. She lived to be a very old lady and her mind got mixed up at the last, they say. Perhaps she was just tired, or pretended, in order to escape from a world of strife and sorrow, when she was only fitted for peace and joy.

Closeby, the Powell Coons family had the most pretentious manor house in the neighborhood. It was brick and well built and had some pretensions to art and style. There was a daughter of the family, "Wickie," who had married into money and lived somewhere in the west, I believe, Chicago, that city being the farthest west our minds could conceive. Three things I remember about visits to this place, --the remarkable things that had just "come" from Wickie, great giant Bartlett pears fragrant and mellow, and a
basement dining room, where the children were fed at a second table, after the lords of creation, our parents, had dined and dined well and long. It was on one of these occasions that I was admonished to have patience. "I don't want patience, I want pie" I yelled, for which I was taken behind the boxwood bush when I got home.

Mr. Ryland Brown belongs in a class to himself. I don't think I was ever in his house. I'm not even certain that he had a house. I never saw him except on a horse, with great saddle bags escaping from both sides and always bulging with interesting things. He was a great friend of mine, he was, but he teased me mercilessly. First he called me Mxx "Mister Tailor", referring to the fact that I had made doll clothes from the age of two to five—and would like to forget it! Then he started calling me "John, the Baptist", knowing that I was one of the most intensely bigoted little Episcopalians he had ever run into. He was a somewhat heavy-set blondish man, who came often to the store with his horse and his saddle bags. And the funniest thing, I cannot remember his ever having got down off that horse, or whether he had any legs, that is legs to stand on, or not.
Into the calm beatitudes of an Arcadian village, one fine Spring came two perennial English bachelors, Doctor and "Bertie" German. The fact that the Doctor had married Clara Payne, a large, eye rolling, but rather handsome local girl, and that she had indeed brought him to Rixeyville, interfered not in the least with the Doctor's roving attentions to the fair sex. He had his brother Bertie for a foil. They were both tall, dark and handsome and they liked music, good food and lots of women. Rixeyville, where every available male was tied down, labelled and quartered, had never seen anything like it. They were of course royally entertained. Clara Sat at home, getting madder and more morose by the minute. Bertie played the fiddle and the Doctor the piano while Clara burned. Sometimes Clara went away and then the Germans would entertain. They brought to the village the first gramophone those parts had seen or known. It had a large morning glory horn and cylindrical records. A great rasping roar usually preceded the formal announcement of what was to follow. "Under the Double Eagle March" was the first record I ever heard and "Listen to the Mocking Bird" the second.
Christmas was the time of times, at the chapel and in the deep countryside generally. In the first place, we were generally snowed in, and when we weren't snowed in, we were axle deep in ruts of that famous miry, red potter's clay peculiar to various parts of Pedimont Virginia and to Culpeper in particular. As a rule from December 15th to April 15th one had to live pretty close to one's neighbors—and like them. In the second place, we were still too close to THE WAR for anybody to think of celebrating any national holidays, such as July 4th, and so all our patriotism, along with our religion, burst into flames at Christmas time, along with firecrackers, Roman candles, sky rockets and pyrotechnics of every conceivable sort. The boys of Rixeyville, led and abetted by the young clerks in the stores, contrived a home-made pyrotechnic that I've never heard of nor seen anywhere since but which was of sufficient importance for at least one night during Christmas to be dedicated to it. This was the Turpentine Ball. It was a contraption wonderfully and fearfully made, of old rags, torn into narrow strips and then rolled, along with string and twine, into a balllike shape about the size of a baseball; after which it was soaked in turpentine for at least 24 hours. It was the nearest thing to a Molotov cocktail the gay nineties could devise, and now I wonder why those Rixeyville boys, especially my brother Dick, Hamilton Newhouse and the Melton boys didn't ever think of that subsequent device which played such havoc with the Germans before the gates of Stalingrad. We managed to create quite a bit of excitement with the turpentine ball, however. You can imagine two sides of boys, drawn up in battle array behind every bush and tree in the neighborhood, each with a bucket of these missiles, which, when lit and flaming like little comets, sailed through the black night, carrying terror to the boy who wasn't lucky enough to dodge in time, and even more terror to the Lords of Creation who peered at the spectacle from behind drawn curtains and watched for fires and waited for burns. Sometimes there were both.
The big night during Christmas, however, was at the Chapel. It generally took place the third or fourth night after Xmas Day and before the New Year. For days before the members of the Sunday School gathered in the afternoons and decorated. I have never seen such decorations anywhere since those halcyon days. Wagon loads of running pine, cedar, holly and mistletoe were brought in and soon under the nimble fingers of eager and expectant workers, the lovely little church with its glossy warm pine wainscoating and gothic ceiling, and its sidewalks of bayberry green, was aglow with great festoons of running pine, plaited into ropes, and wreaths of cedar and holly; after all of which came the Tree, the Tree itself and none other! Such a tree it always was! There was a community pride and joy in that tree, for well did the villagers know that it would be carefully inspected and meticulously commented upon by visitors from Oak Shade, Jeffersonton, the Lower Neighborhood and even Culpeper itself. So that it came about no ordinary tree would do. From year to year it was watched for in the nearby woods, set aside for its day of glory, and finally tenderly and reverently moved into the little chapel of St. Marks. And there it was transformed into a thing of beauty and a joy forever under the finely poised perspective of "Mss Matt". Looking back now, I wonder if there were ever so many gold and silver balls, bells, circles, crosses, horns, crescents, such strings of tinsel, such lovely angels, and such strings of popcorn, anywhere else at any other time in the world! The popcorn strings were made right there in the chapel and oh what fun it was to string the popcorn, and nibble as you went along—all broken pieces being legitimate prey.
One vasty star, that of Bethlehm of course, topped the tree, and just underneath it a great angel which I now recognize to have been copied from Botticelli, with a silver trumpet, hung there, poised for flight or music, with all the mystery and power and glory of the Christmas festival summed up in its shining presence. Dear, dear Gabriel of those far off days when angels were all about us, in trailing clouds of glory and appalled in celestial light.

different

Sandwiched in between the stages of decoration, the Sunday school, divided into classes, was "practiced." This chiefly consisted into teaching us all to march, without stepping on each other's heels, to the lively strains of "Onward Christian Soldiers." We had crosses and banners to carry and usually did pretty well and made quite a brave showing. However, one Christmas we ran afoul of that thing in the world which the Latin poet speaks of as cupidus rerum novarum and which Mr. Franklin Roosevelt afterwards immortalized as the New Deal—a simple and quite understandable desire for change, novelty. Somebody I forget just who, but it must have been indeed a brave, brave soul—discovered that there was an "another" tune to Onward, Christian Soldiers. As if there could ever be another tune to that old battle cry of fighting churchmen. At any rate, we were practiced and marched and drilled to the new tune. When the time came, however, although the leading voices carried the new tune, the congregation literally bellowed forth the old, and between the two we children got all mixed up and crisscrossed—and Babel came to pass. We were all disgraced. It was the great catastrophe. I well remember later on that night my mother, always an advocate of the middle way and compromise, coming to the rescue with her inevitable contribution of verse,

"Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."
As a little Churchman, I was a curious paradox. I believed but yet I doubted, the child was indeed the father of the man, of all men. I believed so firmly that I really could fall down on my knees and worship and adore, so completely that I never missed a Sunday School or a church service in 5 years, so overpoweringly that, according to Aunt Minnie, I would make her stop whatever she was doing at any time of the day to "Pray the Lord" for me, if I had been bad or told a lie. And yet I have the distinct and vivid recollection that in the same period I suffered my heresies and doubts. I allowed myself easily to believe in the sensual pleasures as gifts of God and nature. I was persuaded to this convenient philosophy by a charming young E...e of nine years, who argued that if it wasn't right, why did God provide the wherewithal. Also I was perfectly willing to believe in Heaven, but I found hell fire and brimstone, and Satan himself, altogether incredible. Gradually the conviction grew on me that these were the inventions of our elders, the Lords of Creation, who had thought them up as means and methods of control over little boys and girls. It never dawned on me but that at the proper time and in the proper place we would be advised better, just as we had learned about Santa Claus. Thus I went on my way rejoicing, determined to grow up and be a preacher like Mr. Ribble and Bishop Gibson. Dressed in my mother's night gown and using my sister Genevieve's long black hair ribbon for a stole, I used to posture and pose and preach before the long mirror in the Middle Room. I loved the fine rolling tones of the Church organ and music, the stately English sentences of the church service, the curiously refined appointments of the Church, fine linens, gleaming brasses, candlelight and flowers. I liked the power the ministers seemed to have in the community, especially over women and children, and even over the men at important times, like weddings, baptisms and funerals. I might truthfully add that I liked the power they had over dinner tables, where the choice cuts and the white meat of the fowl were always reserved for their ecclesiastical palates.
1. Ice cream - Aunt Minnie
2. Fire - Aunt Minnie
3. Music - Miss Smith's
4. Lunch - Aunt Minnie
5. Suit - Aunt Minnie
6. Trips - Aunt Minnie
7. Picnic - Aunt Minnie
8. Picnic - Aunt Minnie
9. School - Aunt Minnie
10. Auntie - the superintendent
11. Farquhar White - sisters
12. Alice - Alix put the lunch
The Belated Lark—William Ernest Henley

Arms for Oblivion
Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back, 
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion. 
Troilus and Cressida Act III scene 2 Line 145

The Importunate Barge— 
Jason and the Golden Fleece

Blue Blood and Red Clay
The story of a Virginian childhood
1. Quote from Hennings Statutes what Governor Berkeley said about public schools.

2. Also quote early voting qualifications in Va "a house at least 12 ft square"

3. Last words of Stonewall Jackson: "Let us cross over the River and rest in the shade of the trees."

4. 
1st, A medal every year, known as the Virginia Medal of Merit, designed by some famous medalist and struck off in bronze, to be awarded "The Virginian of the Year", one who has during the preceding twelve months achieved the greatest distinction in the arts, the sciences or in public service.

2nd, The Jefferson Ball this year to be in honor of not only Jefferson, but the Virginia State educational institutions William and Mary, The University of Virginia, V.P.I., V.M.I. and their Washington alumni. Some representative of each institution should be invited to appear at the intermission, stand in the receiving line, and the orchestra would play the school's alma mater as its alumni were invited to stand.

3rd, The Virginia Society should offer a prize of at least $100 (a special fund to be raised by voluntary subscription) for the best "Hymn to Virginia", a state anthem, words and music. "Carry me back to the Virginia" is too dragged-outy and too doleful. "The Roses Nowhere Bloom So White" is better, but still not adequate. The Virginia Hymn should be in the nature of Kipling's Recessional but music more stirring and above all else simple to sing. Here's a chance for The Virginia Society to really achieve something worth while and enduring.
The Great Blizzard

Measles—Dick and myself—the folding bed—

The Equinox—all the chickens went to xxxxxxx
roost at noon—and Mr Newhouse saw a great light.
The Power of Words.

Was never more powerfully illustrated than in connection with Coloen Henry Lee's famous tribute to George Washington. In the resolutions as at first presented to the House of Representatives in December, 1799, the tribute read, First in War, First in peace and first in the hearts of his fellow citizens. This was afterwards changed to First in War, First in Peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen. One little word, but what a difference!
One of Senator Glass' favorite stories was that of the British statesman (was it Pitt or was it Gladstone) who was walking through Hyde Park in London with his little boy, to whom he was pointing out all the statues and memorials of the great. Innocently enough the lad asked his father, "And why isn't there a statue of you here?" To which the wise statesman said, "Son, I would much rather people would ask why it isn't here than why it is."

Senator Glass was very sensitive to the approaches and ravages of old age. One day Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, to whom he had been previously introduced and for whom he entertained a high regard, rushed into his private office and kissed him. While I think he liked it very much, he was a little confused because I saw it. So that day late in the afternoon when he returned to the office from a difficult day in committee and on the Senate floor, he said,

"Smith, I am getting old. Wherever I go, people get up and provide a seat for me at once, as if I were tottering on the brink of the grave. They even take my arm to help me up and down steps and in and out of cars. Then they invariably exclaim, why, Mr. Glass how well you are looking, clearly insinuating that I have no right to be thus flourishing on borrowed time. And now all the ladies rush up and kiss me, in that filial fashion that plainly enough denotes I am no longer dangerous."
As soon as the Democrats got control of the House of Representatives in 1910, they immediately started an investigation of credit control and the so-called "Money Trust". Glass, who was on the Banking and Currency Committee and destined soon to be its chairman, was opposed to a "witch hunt" of big names and even more opposed to the selection of Samuel Untermyer as committee counsel. He was overruled but not out-talked on this. His biting summary was that "Mr. Untermyer has been selected on the time-worn theory that it takes a thief to catch a thief."

Carter Glass was, as everybody knows, a very small man, physically. There were many jokes about it, none of which the Senator particularly relished. One day shortly after the disastrous 1924 Democratic fiasco of Madison Square Garden, Mr. Dockweiler, the Democratic National Committeeman from California, was in the Senator's office in Washington; and on the way out remarked, "He's a great little man, a great little man. If he had been two or three inches taller, he'd have been President of the United States." This being repeated to Senator Glass, the Senator literally snorted, "Tell Dockweiler that it was a great pity about Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Napoleon." Indicating that Senator Glass had given some thought to his stature and to the subject generally.
Carter Glass was not only fearless, but in the accepted political sense he was sometimes foolhardy. One of his greatest friends and supporters was Mr. Fred W. Scott of Richmond, a man of great wealth and a stock broker. Mr. Scott supported Mr. Glass liberally in 1924 as a dark horse for the Democratic presidential nomination and for the Senate each time he was elected. But Mr. Glass witnessed the Wall Street boom of 1929 and its subsequent debacle with increasing indignation and concern. The concentration of credit at New York for stock gambling purposes and the depletion of bank reserves for necessary business purposes throughout the rest of the country he regarded as morally and economically indefensible. He almost exploded when Mr. Coolidge issued his remarkable statement from the White House that the stock market was O.K. "Think of the President of the United States becoming a Barker for the stock gamblers", he commented. And so, after it was over, little David thought he would do something about it, or rather many things about it. One day he suddenly dropped in the hopper a bill to put a 20 percent tax on all stock transactions involving stocks bought and held less than 90 days. Now Carter Glass knew the Senate and the Congress well enough to know that he could never get that bill through, but his name behind it was so powerful that it gave the Wall Street boys the fright of their lives. Among these, Mr. Scott didn't like the bill a bit and wrote Senator Glass a long letter to that effect, mincing no words. Of course he got a reply back from the Senator hot from the griddle. A second letter from Mr. Scott was more friendly and explained that he hadn't written sooner because of a broken ankle which he had found very "painful". Carter Glass wrote him he was sorry about his foot but that a broken foot was nowhere near as painful as a broken heart.
Glass had a great way of ambling into the Senate chamber in the midst of a long drawn out debate and "feeding the lions to hear 'em roar". His technique was to interrupt a speaking colleague, asking him to yield so that he might insert something into the record apropos of what he was saying. Generally it was a firecracker loaded with TNT. For instance, in the hey-dey of New Deal spending (then tell the story) I was about a Democratic President, Cleveland I think, who vetoed an appropriation for flood control, as I remember.
We know nothing—absolutely nothing. Our surest knowledge is a bold surmise. Of what is the cause, much less the occasion of us, we are as ignorant as we are ponderously curious. We write and read millions of words about death, we speculate in a hundred religions and philosophies, we spend millions of dollars and mountains of energies in vainly trying to alleviate its sting, oblivion, and yet—and yet life, the thing we can hold in our hands and look at, and examine under the microscope, what is it? Whence does it come? what makes it move and glitter and dart about in prismatic splendor?
When Presley Alexander Lycurgus Priddy gently smacked a perfunctory cold fish kiss on the large petulant mouth of the big complaining hunk of flesh he called his little woman, it was just exactly three minutes and 50 seconds before 8 o'clock of the morning of July 4th. Priddy himself was off with the boys for the day, and up to no good. True enough, it had taken weeks of preparation and explaining and yards upon yards of lies to pacify, mollify and cajole Mary Ellen Priddy into complete and abject surrender.

At exactly the same time, one hour later, 3 minutes and 50 seconds before nine of the clock, an explosion in the pantry of the Priddy bungalow scattered every piece of its frail timbers into smithereens, along with all that was mortal of Mary Ellen Priddy. Just at the precise moment when his noble spouse was being wafted in great gusts to glory, Priddy himself was escaping himself, for a two hour session, at the nearest bar, along with three raucous beer swivelling companions. The fact that he was supposed to be in a little town 25 miles down the pike attending the unveiling of the first World War II memorial in that part of the country disturbed him not at all. It gave relish to the beer, which was otherwise a trifle stale.

When they found him, P.A.L. Priddy was pretty drunk, but drunker than he was pretty. He with his jolly companions was really celebrating. Whether he was just celebrating to celebrate or whether he was celebrating to mark what he knew to be a final release from 21 years of matrimonial imprisonment is another thing—and just what the police wanted to know. Like Helen's lips, the corpulent bustle and the stinging tongue of his Xantippe, were roving dust, and how came, demanded the Law. "How do I know?" demanded Priddy in return.

They decided to slap him in jail until he could refresh his memory and as there was no city slicker around with a habees corpus there the little emancipated notary remained, and pined and opined. The evidence, such as it was, was dead set against him. Nobody would have ever accused him of the courage of Lizzie Borden and giving his wife "forty whacks", if she had been whacked to death. Nobody could imagine him getting aggressive with a revolver. It would never occurred to the most lurid imagination that he would be bold enough to poison, choke, bludgeon or kick his wife to death. He would never have been accused of leaving her in a running automobile, to be gassed, or with no breaks to go over the cliff. But everybody, it seems, could picture him as sticking a match to a 60 minute fuse at the end of which there was a little package of TNT.

Unfortunately for Priddy, there was reason. In order to dodge German bullets in World War I, he had worked in a munitions plant, from which he had emerged to celebrate the Armistice and boast of his knowledge of explosives. He had been known, too, to boast that if Mary Ellen didn't lay off him he would some day "blow her as high as Haman". He had been seen just two days before the explosion with a large package that wasn't a keg of nails. And he had purchased 62 feet of fuse from the local hardware. The conclusion was inescapable. The trial was swift, sure and penultimate. Presley Alexander Lycurgus Priddy was found guilty of premeditated, long cogitated, hot blooded murder, murder in the first degree, and duly sentenced to be hanged by the neck until dead.
The day before the hanging, however, as big as life—and bigger—Mary Ellen Friddy walked into the jail, took her little Friddy by the scruff of his neck, carried him out and set him on the sidewalk and said, "Now, my fine fellow, be a lesson for you." It seems that Mama had been in on the little piece of horseplay all along and knew precisely what her badgered little husband was about. As the bungalow was rented and the rather skimpy furniture insured for far more than it was worth, she simply took her suitcase, walked out of the house and paid a long deferred visit to an old aunt in the obscurity of a remote countryside.
"What's In a Name?"

At Bagdad, in the days of the glory of that city, lived Ha'keem, the Wise One, and many people came to him for counsel, which he gave freely to all, asking nothing in return.

There came then to him a young man who had spent much but got little and said: "Tell me, Wise One, what shall I do to receive the most for that which I spend?"

Then answered Ha'keem, "A thing that is bought or sold has no value unless it contains that which cannot be bought or sold. Look for the 'Priceless Ingredient.'"

"But what is this 'Priceless Ingredient?" asked the young man.

Spoke then once more the Wise One, "My son, the 'Priceless Ingredient' of every product in the market-place is the Honor and Integrity of him who makes it. Consider his Name before you buy.

Ayres.
From Snuff Boxes to Atomic Bomb

A light, breezy, mostly humorous but sometimes serious, review of what went on behind the scenes on Capitol Hill in the past quarter of a century, with lots you will want to know about

1. Are Senators people?


3. The Greatest Deliberative Body in the World. The Senate Rules designed to protect the Senate from itself.

4. Gray hairs and High Honors—the Rule of Seniority.

5. The Senate Mail Bag—where the constituent displays his acquisitive instinct.

6. The Senate Restaurant—and its subsidiaries.

7. The Machinery that Moves the Senate. Steering committees, assignments, etc.

8. The Little Wheels within the Big—The Secretary's office, the Sgt at Arms, the Library, the Disbursing Office, the Carpenter's Shop, the Paint Shop, the Custodian's office.

9. The Galleries and the Players

10. The News Hawks—including the Trained Seals.

11. Climbing Up the Golden Stairs—and Reaching for the Hope Diamond

12. Is the Senate obsolete?
Alms for Oblivion
Blue Blood and Red Clay
The Importunate Barge
The Belated Lark
The spirit burned in him like a vestal light in an alabaster urn.

"His bright spirit burned with incessant glow through the fragile alabaster of his weakened body."

"His spirit burned like a lamp in alabaster."

"His spirit burned like a flame in alabaster."

"At least he was always turning up something, rather than waiting for something to turn up."

Mrs Jameson

All her life she had stowed away precious things in the iron safe of her mind—and now she had lost the combination.

"The key that was to unlock the pent up treasury of her mind was lost."

"If cares and troubles are put here to test us, and not infrequently, it would seem, to best us, Why can't we get in on the neat little game And send the things back from whence they came?"

"Unopened, unaccepted and "C.O.D."

"With love and kisses from you and me."

"All his life he was busy saving time, because he had been told it was money—and now he had all the time in the world and no money."

"The question now was what to do with all the time he had saved up."

"Save time, save time, they said, time saving devices are the gadgets of the hour."

"But for what?" Is that not the question.


"Men certainly hurry as if they had some place to go."
"He was a lugubrious old gentleman who had been everywhere, seen everything, done everything and read everything and didn't believe in any hereafter at all and in very little of a present."

"He always struck at you with a feather with a barb in it."

"He always sprayed you with the perfume of flattery before he aimed his blow at your vitals."

"She was one of those persons who could talk in seven languages and think in none."

"The good Bishop was wont to say that if he could only control the tongues of his congregation, they might do what they pleased with their feet."
Whether the opening of our eyes to the realities of life or the closing of the weary lids upon its illusions is the more painful of the two processes has long been a debatable and much debated question. My vote would go unquestionably to the loss, the inch by inch decay, the slow creeping paralysis, which day by day and year by year destroys our hopes, our dreams and our ambitions, and leaves us hanging on the line like a lot of old rags with the good rich earth washed out of us.

On the other hand I am bound to admit that like a child coming out of a deep sleep and a quiet peaceful slumber to find such things as death and cruelty and injustice, not to speak of poverty, misery and degradation, all about us is like a series of electric shocks far indeed from pleasant.

If you think back, for instance, can you remember the first experience you had with death, the first time you actually saw a thing or a person actually in its throes and afterwards like cold and stiff and still? Nine chances out of ten, the first you saw of this was a chicken having its neck wrung or chopped off. It was in my case, and I remember even now that I thought the poor fowl would never stop hopping and fluttering about and that I did not think it was funny. I soon got used, however, to the death of chickens, especially since they turned up crisp and brown and gravied on the dining room table. I never got used to seeing them killed, however, and to this day I would never eat a piece of chicken, if I had to kill it.

There of course followed quickly for a country boy a long line of experiences with death, but none the less each registered upon a sensitive mind that electric shock of which I have spoken. I remember particularly my brother Dick and Eppa Rixey coming home from a hunt and opening their bag and my first sight of a dead rabbit. I had been used to seeing them hopping about the orchard and running across the roads as we drove along, and of nearly all things they seemed the liveliest and the quickest. To see one of these limp and flabby and still, its white fur splattered with blood, sent cold chills of horror and resentment up my spine. Another time, when I tagged along with the hunters and we were nearly home and at the old rail fence back of the Rosedale barn, my brother insisted that I had to shoot his gun. He put it in my hands carefully, showed me how to hold it and aimed it at a Robin high in a nearby tree. I closed my eyes and pulled the trigger. The report was almost knocked me down, but alas! there was the poor beautiful, harmless bird dead upon the ground! I rushed over to it, took it up as tenderly as I could and hoped even yet that the injury I had done my fellow creature was not real. But there was death! Final, complete, irrevocable, as I found it then, and have ever since, to be.

Again, mother had a pet Jersey cow Cousin Walter Morrison had given her. One day the dogs chased her in the fields and ran her up against a rail fence, where she was nearly dead upon the ground! I rushed over to it, took it up as tenderly as I could and hoped even yet that the injury I had done her was not real. The day and several hours before this was to be done she came downstairs with her hat on, called Isaac to hook Alice to the buggy, grabbed me up barefooted and dirty, and started off. "Where are we going, mama?" I ventured to inquire. "Anywhere, anywhere," she said, and we had gone miles in the direction of the Fauquier Springs before she said, "We are going to Jeffersonton. I want Dr. Campbell to look at your tongue."
But I really learned about death, so far as people are concerned, from "Uncle" Gum. Uncle Gum Rixey was an aged and rather morose old gentleman, whose striking resemblance to a patriarch of old was accentuated by a magnificent Roman nose and a long white beard. He was related to both my mother and my father and during the first five years of my life clerked in my father's store and lived with us. He sat at the foot of the table always and he drank his coffee out of a saucer, that is all he didn't spill on his beard. This left a stain, a yellowing brown streak right down the middle of it, which, primp as he might, nothing could ever quite efface. I suppose he was a fine old gentleman, but he wasn't my idea of any fun, and I avoided his eagle eye as best I could. I remember one day he caught me red handed in the store, with the blousing part of my blouse pretty well bloated up with the most expensive candy in the store—chocolate almonds, pounds of them. After recapturing the booty, he threw me wriggling and squirming and still exuding chocolate almonds out of the store. Well, one morning they found the old fellow cold and stiff and dead, just from old age and weariness, in his little back porch room. I remember standing there, with my mouth open and my eyes agape, staring at him, and wondering if I could just stick a pin in him if he wouldn't wake up and yell out. I just couldn't believe he was dead like a chicken or a rabbit, a bird or a cow. My poor mother, seeing my distress, took me aside and told me not to grieve, that he was "with the angels now." From what I had seen, heard and knew of Uncle Gum, I didn't feel that this was going to be a mutually satisfactory arrangement for either of the parties concerned. And then came the burial. I recall from the memory of that affair, even as I do from that uncivilized force called a "funeral" to-day. In the first place, Uncle Gum had a niece in California and the interment had to be postponed until her arrival. Unfortunately, in those days there were neither airplanes nor very adequate embalmers. The neighbors took turns sitting up, as they called it, with the body. What with their grog and plenty to eat, they got along pretty well the first five nights, but it was Spring and warm for Spring, and the sixth night the wake moved itself to the front porch for air, the seventh to the yard under the trees, and the eighth to the old Rixey burying ground. That left an odor in my very soul, the foul, beastly odor of death and decay, that not all the carnations and chrysanthemums and gladioli ever grown since, nay, not even roses and lilies, can ever quite wipe out.
There were always two great annual events at the Chapel—one the bodily transfer of the entire Sunday School, sometimes in a hay wagon, to the mother church, St. Stephens, at Culpeper Court House, for Easter Sunday, when the Sunday School children of the entire parish gathered, sang their Easter carols and presented to the Lord their mite boxes. These charming little affairs were previously distributed, in the very early days of the year, and they were covered with bright shiny paper in all colors. Of course there was a slot for the pennies, nickles and dimes, sometimes even a quarter or a half dollar. At our house various expedients were employed to fill them—all four of them. Principally, I believe, we made and sold chocolate fudge and bouquets of violets from our magical violet bed. This was an above ground hothouse covered with glass in the little box garden to the right of our entrance gate. From January on it produced a huge bunch of perfumed violets, single and double, in varied blues and purples.

By the time Easter Day came our boxes were usually pretty well filled and heavy with coin, we had learned the particular Easter carol our school was to contribute, our faces and bodies, including our well stained legs and feet, had been scrubbed to the semblance of alabaster, and our very best bib and tucker was ready for the state occasion. In addition, each scholar had learned a verse from the Bible, or the prayer book, to say as he or she went up to the chancel rail to present his box. On one of these times, when St. Stephens was packed to its doors with all the gallantry of Culpeper County, I disgraced St. Marks Sunday School, the house of Smith and little John Smith forever (it being still remembered in those parts) by standing up before the chancel rail indeterminably and then yelling down into the audience, "Mama, what was it about the Lord?" Anyway, before my poor mother and Sunday School teacher who had chosen for me the shortest verse in the Bible except "Jesus wept" (The Lord loveth a cheerful giver)
I had in a debonair fashion explained to Mr. Ribble the startled rector, "You just give it to the Lord. If he knows everything, as they say, he'll know that verse alright."

Perhaps here would be as good a time as anywhere to bring in Cousin Eppa Rixey and his wife, Cousin Willie. They lived in a lovely old square house just opposite the entrance to St. Stephens and were our headquarters on these occasions, as on any other that brought us to the county seat. Cousin Eppa has been referred to before as a lay reader and bible school teacher at the Chapel and as a tall, handsome man. If I live to be a hundred I never expect to see a finer looking one. He was one of a distinguished family. One of his brothers, John, was the Congressman from the district, one, Jones, was the leading financier and banker, one, Pressley, was Theodore Roosevelt's physician and Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy and the one sister, Miss Henry Rixey, was of such a lovely, stately and commanding presence that all men admired her but none could get close to her—at least the right one never did. They were all my mother's first cousins, as well as my father's second; but it was Cousin Eppa who was beloved over all; and his jewel of a wife, Cousin Willie.

Cousin Willie was a Miss Walton from Farmville, and the daughter of Admiral Cary Grayson, who lived with her at Culpeper when he was a young boy and went to William and Mary College from her house. Cary was the young Beau Brummel of the town and my one idea in life was to grow up and dress like him and go to William and Mary college. Cousin Willie was a great person. I use the word advisedly, soberly and in the fear of no contradiction. She was the mother of four handsome children, two boys, Eppa Jr and Walton, two girls, Frances called Franz, and Erlena, called Lena. These blessed children, especially the two boys, enriched my childhood and my life with great memories of childhood. But it was the mother herself who stands out in my memory and ever shall.
Cousin Seenie taught the infant class and ruled the little tots with an iron hand. My mother taught the intermediates and filled them full of poetry and airy nonsense about light and sweetness, as she had a distinct aversion to bloodshed and the Old Testament. Verses from Tennyson and Longfellow, her two favorite poets, she interspersed with the rhythmic beauty of the Beatitudes the psalms and the more romantic of the gospels.

After graduating from Cousin Seenie's class, I was for several years in my mother's, and I soon found out that "Miss Jennie" as they called her wasn't very orthodox. She didn't believe in any hell fire or brimstone and even thought it was alright to play on Sunday. Then there was "Miss Matt's" class, the larger girls and boys, taught 'with great dignity and charm by Miss Matt Lewis of Rosedale. It was a privilege accorded few in life just to sit and look and listen at Miss Matt. She was an aristocrat from the top of her head to the sole of her fine patrician foot.

She was tall, stately and brunettish, with a very fine pair of fiery blue eyes. She was my godmother and I adored her. Sometimes at the age of eight I was sure I was altogether hopelessly in love with her. Cousin Matt would make miraculous pilgrimages to Washington City (as we called the National Capital to distinguished it from Washington, our neighboring county seat of Rappahannock County, to us a much more important place) She would come back with packages of all sorts of things for the Chapel Christmas tree, donated by friendly Washington merchants and friends, including books, I suspect from Uncle William Morrison's bookstore on F Street. Of those I was given for prizes at different times, the immortal "Tale of Two Cities" by Dickens, "Thelma" by Marie Correlli, "The Mill on the Floss" by George Elliott, "Ivanhoe" and some of the Scott novels. Thelma was of course the worst book in the batch, and I just loved it!
The Land of the Midnight Sun is a phrase that thrills me even to this day.

Finally there was a Bible Class for the grownups, taught alternately by Cousin Eppa Rixey, Cousin Fannie Lewis and various visitors and neighboring bible students. As I never got that far in my ecclesiastical education, I will pass over it except to say that the Lords of Creation managed to huddle themselves together in the left front corner of the chapel nearest the organ, and look very solemn and demure. From occasional glances in their direction I was never able to determine whether they actually believed all the stuff and nonsense we were being taught, or whether they thought it were better to keep up a brave front in the presence of sharp-eyed youth.

Cousin Lula (she was the third of the Rosedale Lewis girls, Matt and Fannie and Lula) played the organ. It was a quavery little organ, and Cousin Lula always played it as if it were on its last legs and might give out any minute. But play it she did, nonetheless, exactly and precisely as it was written, time and all; and its insufficiencies were more than covered up by loud, almost boisterous singing of such good old standbys as "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "Stand Up Stand Up for Jesus" and "Golden Harps are Sounding".
The Chapel.

The little chapel of St. Marks, St. Mark's Parish, was built and always there from my earliest recollection; but I have a feeling, without looking it up, that it had not been there long when I came on the scene. Of course it was a horse and buggy affair and would never have been if the automobile had arrived a little sooner, in which case the families concerned would have gladly rallied their religious forces at "OakShade", the fine old brick colonial church 3 miles north of Rixeyville, or even gone the full 8 miles to St. Stephens, at Culpeper Court House.

As it was, however, the Lewises of Rosedale and Pleasant Hill, the Smiths and Newhouses of Rixeyville, some allied families nearby with Rixey blood in them, and a good many good natured neighbors of the Baptist and Methodist persuasion, all joined hands in erecting the chapel and keeping it going. The rector of St. Stephens came sometimes once a month, sometimes twice a month, and services in my childhood were always in the evening. The sabbath mornings, however, were always taken up with Sunday School, and sometimes Cousin Eppa Rixey came out from Culpeper and read morning prayer, or some other layman performed that feat.

Ah, that Sunday School, with its warm, friendly smell of pine benches and its glowing chancel of red carpet and gleaming brasses! The Sunday School seemed to be, at least she thought so, the especial and particular property of Cousin Seenie Timberlake. Cousin Seenie was an old maid who lived at Rosedale with the Lewises. How she got there or why, I never exactly knew. She was a small, sleek little woman, straight haired and straight-laced. She had a Baptist background, but she had all the zeal and ardor of a convert to The Church. She managed, as it seemed to me then and now, to combine all the worst features of both faiths—the narrow, hell fire and brimstone Baptist with the unctious, psalm-singing, prayer repeating 39 articulated Episcopalian.
If one asked me where the ordinary work-a-day world left off and the land of magic began, I would be inclined to say that all children are magicians and each weaves his magic out of the slender threads of what he loves most and understands least of mystery and romance. For me, as a child, there was untarnishable magic in a great stone house slowly crumbling to its ruins just off the road about half way to town and the fact that it was supposed to be haunted added rather than subtracted from its ivy covered, time eaten charm. There was magic, too, when Cousins Dick and Billy Lewis got together before an open fire and began exchanging their wartime experiences as troopers of the Black Horse Cavalry. What boy wouldn't be all ears to hear two dashing cavaliers tell how neither Yankees nor hell nor high water could keep them from going home to see their girls, being surrounded by the enemy in the midst of music, dancing and feasting, and cutting their way out to their prancing steeds with sabers that shone as bright as Excalibur! There was a touch of Merlin's wand, likewise, in the occasional visits of a "Mr. Ross", all the way from Mexico, with love in his eyes for my precious Aunt Minnie and opals, handfuls of them, and silver bangles in his pockets. Of course I was much more interested in the opals and the silver jewjaws than I was in the light in his eyes—and to tell the truth, I think Aunt Minnie was too. A rainy day trip to the garret with mother, would a trip to Samarkand now equal it, when she went down into the great leather trunk and showed me her wedding going-away suit of hunter's green trimmed with natural ermine, and opened up a little box in which were carefully kept the lilies and roses the confectioner's art had heaped upon her wedding cake. She was so proud of them, and alas, she and they are so dim and faraway!
There was distance, too, for enchantment. My mother's sister, Aunt Matt, had married a Klipstein from Warrenton and gone off to California in the gold rush, where she did raise a considerable crop of gold—and children. The doings of the Klipstein family at Bakersfield, California, their ranches, their oil wells, their jap servants and their trips back and forth to Virginia, were all fabulous to me, cut from the same cloth as the Swiss Family Robinson and the Arabian Nights.

Then there were my father's two sisters, Aunt Lizzie and Aunt Kate, who had in some way got ash away south as Florida, and married Robinson brothers. Money, as well as oranges, seemed to grow on trees down there. Aunt Lizzie also had vast holdings in Mexico and West Virginia, ranches, silver mines and oil wells. My early life touched hers in many ways, but principally through her daughter and my most favorite cousin, Rose, who had married Cousin Jamie Lewis and became the Lady Buntiful of "Pleasant Hill". She it was, and none other, God bless her, who took me on my first great trip out into the world—a visit to Smithfield, West Virginia, where I beheld the wonders of the mountains, natural gas, and a real live flood. I also saw my paternal grandmother, Amanda Butcher Smith, who was old and bed-ridden and spent all her money on patent medicines and lived with my Aunt Molly Brookfield. My father's sister, Aunt Molly, was plump and round and jolly. If memory serves, she had married a Major Brookfield, who had one leg and was also round and plump and jolly. There were others of the Smith tribe at Smithfield, and I am not certain but wouldn't be surprised if the place didn't get its name from them.
Our cook for many years before I was born and for my entire childhood at Rixeyville was a plump, well set up colored girl named Jeems Anna, big eyed and pretty with cordovan colored skin and even white teeth like pearls. Of the earth, earthy, she was one of the most elemental human beings I have ever known. She was the female of the species, every inch of her. Lusty and strong as an ox, her curves rippling around her in her calico mother hubbard, a Rixeyville painter, if there had been one, would have had no need to go to Tahiti for form, color or primitive qualities. She was being courted while I was a boy and I remember being not at all surprised when it was announced she was to marry a great, big strapping negro named Ed Hackley. We were all very fond of Jeems Anna, and it as arranged that she should be married in our dining room, the largest room in the house, by the then Rector of St. Mark's Parish, and with a musician named Webber from Washington to play the wedding marches. It was a magnificent affair, and went off with but two slight hitches. One was that my mother had saved all Jeems Anna's wages for years and had them in a savings account for her at the Culpeper National. Several days before the wedding she got it all from the bank—in silver—and called Jeems Anna in and gave it to her. Jeems Anna was completely flabbergasted. She had never had any money, had in fact never need any, and she didn't take to the responsibilities of capitalism as a duck to the pond. She ran her hands through the silver several times, and then said appealingly, "Miss Ginnie, please keep that thar money for me. Come to think on it, I don't think it'd be safe to trust it in the house with a strange nigger." And then when they went to dress the bride, everything requisite and necessary was found in the garret except long white gloves. One was found but its mate was missing. Finally, the one was used and the other arm was bandaged up in white ribbon and the deficiency covered up with a huge bouquet of flowers.
When we left Rixeyville, Jeems Anna, now Mrs. Hackley, went to live and work and have babies at Rosedale. And have babies she did. I started to say one right after another, but that wouldn't be strictly factual. Sometimes it was two right after another. She had so many children that after having exhausted all the well known Biblical names such as Paul and Silas, Ruth, Naomi, Mary, Martha, Peter, etc., she was reduced to the expedient of using all the family names, and little negroes actually went to their destiny with such cognomens as "Miss Ginnie", "Miss Tinnie", "Miss Mattie-Lula", "Mr. Jamie" "Mr. John", "Mr. Will Mason" and the Lord knows how many more. At least, however, poor Jeems was never reduced to such dire straights as was one colored girl in the neighborhood, who "went off to school" in "Philadelfy" and came home with a kinky headed little pickaninny which she named "Diploma".
Eliza Washington

To this day I cannot think of Aunt Eliza except with deep emotion and utter thankfulness. She was a small, wizened little woman, of a beautiful dark chinquepin brown, with a few tusklike teeth that had a way of not meeting, a crop of close-fitting nappy iron grey hair, and a great big heart of gold. As she had been a \textbf{young} slave and housemaid at Rosedale, the old Rixey place, during the Civil War, she was around the \textbf{sixties} when I knew her as our "Mammy". Now almost a half century later I have come to look a little askance on a lot of the romantic bosh that has permeated this word, with Al Jolson, Gone with the Wind and thousands of professional Southerners contributing; but truth impels me to say that Aunt Eliza was really a "mammy" to the four Smith children. She was the first to take us and wash us and introduce us into this vale of tears. Hers was the duty to see that we were fed—sometimes at her own ample breast. When we were hurt or cut or bruised, her kind hands, so large and supple and capable from cooking, scrubbing, and dough-making, ministered to us. In her great arms each and every one of us, lay, all dressed up in a common christening dress of hand-made lace, while the current Rector of St. Mark's Parish splashed us with well water drawn up in an oaken bucket from an old silver bowl, and introduced us into a world where we had renounced for us the world, the flesh and the devil and all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. And when there came, as there inevitably must, the Angel of Death, in the family or the neighborhood, it was generally Aunt Eliza who stood by to lay the pennies on the tired eyelids and smooth out the folds of the last earthly habiliments. And likely enough it was Aunt Eliza who slipped off unbeknownst to see that there was friend chicken and hot rolls and a baked ham for the friends and relatives gathered on those occasions.
Aunt Eliza was also sexton of St. Mark's Chapel. She not only kept the pews and chancel furniture spotless but the windows crystal clear. The altar brasses shone 'til you could see all sorts of things in them in the dim candlelight; and the lovely flowers from the old Rixey garden at Rosedale never graced a tarnished vase.

But Aunt Eliza was a Baptist herself, like all the other colored people in that part of Virginia. It never occurred to her that there was anything odd about it, her being a Baptist and her "people" being Episcopalians. If anybody had ever uttered the slightest disparaging word about the Episcopal Church or any of its service, which she certainly knew by heart, she would have been mortally offended. I can only remember once her having shown the slightest sign of impatience with its lengthy and sometimes tedious prayers. The service had been unduly long, anyway, and dear Mr. Ribble, in addition to special prayers for everything and everybody, was now praying for rain. For some reason I had been sent on home with last minute instructions about supper and passed Aunt Eliza on the way out in the vestibule. She was muttering to herself, "Jest listen to him, jest listen to him—wasting his bref, dat's what he is, wasting his bref. De wind's coming from de wrong direction."
Aunt Eliza was born a Colbert, and this Colbert family, owned and operated by the Rixeys of Rosedale, were quite a family. There was a sister, Jane, who had been "Old Miss Martha's" personal maid, and who I remember as a very dear old soul who could make mountains of pure white laundry out of dirty clothes bags of miscellaneous linen. She kept her "folks" in clean linen to the very last, and was found on the side of the road between her humble cot and the Big House, with her great basket of clean clothes beside her, and her tired old heart stopped dead like a clock with the main-spring broken. Then there was "Uncle French", a tall elegant looking negro, with a fine, open face, who had been the family coachman. To me as a child Uncle French was the most romantic of all the tribe, because he appeared to have no visible means of support, only worked on state occasions, like weddings, funerals and big dinner parties and carried around with him an air of genuine aristocracy. French had a brother, Silas, younger or older I cannot remember. Silas' means of support were even more invisible than those of French. He was some kind of a preacher and undoubtedly had access to the ravens. At any rate he managed to live a good long time on whatever diet they fed him because nearly 50 years later he was to turn up in Washington, D.C. on a visit to a daughter, when he searched me out and came to see me in the great marble halls of the Senate Office Building. The old fellow, nigh on to a hundred, sat and looked at me and kept muttering, "Miss Ginnie's child, Miss Ginnie's child". When Silas Colbert dies, and he probably will have passed on and over that one more river to cross before this is published, there will be an end to what was really one of the truly F.F.V. families of America—a nobility, black if you please, but a nobility of a kind not made by kings but by the King of Kings himself.
Aunt Minnie

Did you ever have a maiden aunt? In the list of earthly blessings, somewhere very near the top, she deserves to rank as an institution of unfailing kindness, inspiration and support. How many a maiden aunt has healed the bruises, sewed on the buttons, darned the stockings, stitched up the pants and made the cherry tarts for the wayward and tousled little boys ans girls her sister has brought into the world. Mark Twain must have known all about it, when he created Huck Finn's Aunt. I know all about it, because the Smith children of Rixeyville had Aunt Minnie.

Aunt, love that would not let me go, then or ever, how well, how vividly I remember the great well of tenderness you were for us to go to. Like Aladdin's lamp, it was never empty, howsoever often we might draw on it.

Aunt Minnie was my mother's youngest and favorite sister. Christened Amanda, after my father's mother and her aunt, Amanda Butcher Smith, she was a Rixey from in every inch of her spare, gaunt frame. Raised with my mother at Rosedale, she became a part of her household when mother and father married and set up housekeeping, storekeeping, postofficeing and farming at Rixeyville. When the first baby came, my sister Genevieve, she practically adopted it as her own. Dick, the second child, she took little interest in, because she was so wrapped up in Genevieve. A few years later, however, when I arrived on the scene, my mother was ill, very ill, for many months, and poor Aunt Minnie had to take charge. I believe it was rather I who took charge. I was everything (or so I have been repeatedly told) that a good baby should not be. I was noisy, flippant, arrogant, bold and gay, -always gay. But nonetheless I had come armed into the world with some sort of a magic stick. At least it worked on Aunt Minnie, and has been known to work on others.
Aunt Minnie's duties in the household, besides keeping me in the straight and narrow, were to look after the salads and deserts for the table, put the finishing touches on the table for meals, skim the milk, safeguard the cream, superintend the butter making and dairying, teach Genevieve music, patch, mend and darn all of us into respectability, and on top of that little regimen, teach the village school. Several winters (and summers school in Virginia countryside at that time was purely a winter affair) lasting five months at most when the school had outgrown our meat house in the backyard and our dining room, we had to walk back and forth, through the snowdrifts and the rain and the mud, to a log school house in the great oak grove at Rosedale. One memorable winter, it was even farther off, at The Hill Place, and we had to ride. Aunt Minnie was an expert horsewoman, I rode behind her, and Alice was a sorrel mare who could do everything but talk. If there's a horse heaven, old Alice is there, G'd bless her, and knee deep in clover.

But Cupid was laying in wait for Aunt Minnie, right around the corner like Mr. Hoover's prosperity and somewhat belated, but there he was. Of the almost endless chain of clerks who came to serve in my father's store and board and room with us, love came to Aunt Minnie in the tall, gangly, swarthy blackheaded and blackbearded and black-eyed personage of one Clinton T. Hatcher. Thus ended Aunt Minnie's career as a maiden aunt and general flunkey for the Smith family of Rixeyville. Clinton, fired with ambition for once in his life, in all his six feet six of lazy indolence, took his bride to the oil fields of California, for the sinister purpose of acquiring filthy lucre. They left behind them tearful relatives and one little seven year old boy--very miserable and deserted and self-pitying, but doing his best to be gay with boxes of scraps and gew-gaws inherited from the departing bride and groom!
All this bypathing to explain the places where we couldn't swim and yet not yet a word about the swimming hole itself. It was a long mile away, where the road to Jeffersonton crosses the Hazel River over a small iron suspension bridge. Right under that bridge, slightly to the right and on the far side from Rixeyville, were some large grey stone boulders and beneath them a deep pool of almost crystal clear water, that is crystal clear in good weather. In bad, it turned Venetian red like every stream in the county, lurid and lusty with the bright scarlet mud so indigenous to Culpeper that people in other parts of the state could always spot a Culpeper vehicle by the color of its wheels.

Here the older boys went to swim. Being little and timid about water, I was only allowed to go when the clerks from the store could get off to take me. As I couldn't swim, not anywise in my first eight years at Rixeyville, I had to ride on Mr. Botts' back. Now Mr. Botts was an elderly grey haired gentleman, pot bellied and asthmatic, and why we both didn't drown has always been a wonder to me. None the less, no sea lion, no Moby Dick, no fabulous fish of history ever seemed as beautiful and graceful and above all as comfortable as Mr. Botts, as he glided about in the Hazel River with me on his back.
Dear me, so much, so many, and so far away! Just two things more and I am done with The Run and the Great Sycamore crossing. I was fishing there one day with Cousin Matt and my little sister, Martha, when lying prone over the great root of the tree to see if she could see the little fishes, Martha tumbled headlong into the pool beneath. I was no hero, but I had a good pair of lungs. Cousin Matt was farther up the stream but she got there just in time to get little Martha, by the dress, and haul her up as she was about to go down for the third time. As all the children at Rosedale were boys, Martha went home dressed up in boy's clothes, and pretty glad and pretty lucky to be alive in any at all! Another time, fishing at the same spot, I got my hook tangled in the roots of The Sycamore and in pulling it loose jerked it out with such force that it landed in my face and stuck in the gristle of my nose. Yelling like a stuck pig, I made my way to The House, carrying the pole and line as best I could to keep from jerking me to pieces. The dear cousins didn't know whether to laugh or to cry, but finally decided to laugh. I must have cut a comic figure, but comic or not, Aunt Minnie didn't laugh but hooked up Ojd Peter, the race horse with an ugly hip but the fastest thing on the place, and drove like the wind until she landed me in Dr. Alfred Rixe's office in Culpeper, nine miles away. There that grand scoundrel called in a boy named Diener, with a white coat on like an interne, started to boil a lot of instruments, looked very solemn and then said, "Let's have a look." After giving Aunt Minnie hell about using peroxide, which he described as "far worse than water and not nearly as good for a wound as corn liquor", he took hold of the hook, gently pushed it through the gristle, took a pair of clippers, clipped off the prong of the hook, and pulled the hook out. Then he and the Diener boy broke forth into hilarious laughter.
The Ole Swimming Hole.

The boy who grows up without one particular spot of water to be forever afterwards labelled in his mind’s eye and memory as "The Ole Swimming Hole" has missed something in life which neither the automobile, the electric light, the radio or the airplane can ever quite recompense him. Certainly, in the city, the modern swimming pool is a poor and tawdry affair as compared with that eerie and romantic place, often hidden away in a bend of a brook, secluded under great trees in the quiet of a river, or lying full breast to the sun in the peace and stillness of a lakeside. The Ocean itself, that great receivership of all waters, doesn’t count for shucks. It’s entirely too big and turbulent and noisy. For very little children, and for girls, perhaps, with their buckets and pails and sandpiles, just to look at and splatter their feet in, for young men and women able to ride the foamy crests, and again for the elders who like to visit the seaside in their age and stiff joints and rock to the lilt of the waves; but for a boy, alert to the sound of every pee-wee, avid of bugs, beetles, frogs, eels, snakes and every creeping creature, tuned to the slightest cadence of the wind and the rain, for him, little Jason and Ulysses and Don Quixote, the Great Adventurer in miniature, never, oh, never! &

The Rixeyville boys used to fish, wade, wash buggies (buggy washing was real fun in those days), in The Run, sometimes called The Branch, a surprisingly effective little stream of varying width and depth which ran through my father’s farm, on through the Rose Dale meadows, and through the Duncan place, deepening and widening as it ran and finally emptying into the Hazel River.
At one point in the Rosedale meadows, just in front of and about a quarter of a mile away from The House, there was a little footbridge for pedestrians across The Run, made of the half of a great tree, flatside up of course, and with a little handrail. Here, right under a giant sycamore at least 100 years old, was a fairly deep hole, but not wide enough nor large enough for swimming; and here, too, was a wide ford for buggies and wagons. So much happened to me at this one little spot in eight years that I feel justified in mentioning it, forget it as I never can! It was here while washing my father's new carriage, which had lost its top at a wedding (Rose Duncan's, where there was one too many trees and perhaps one too many stirrup cups for Papa), that my early life almost came to an inglorious end. My sister Genevieve had accompanied a cousin, John Brookfield, one of the clerks in our father's store, to the scene supposedly to help in the washing process. However, we got into an argument over the whip, the beautiful new whip in the shiny new whip staff, Genevieve trying to pull it one way, I the other. I won the battle but I almost lost the war, for as my sister suddenly gave up and let go, over the side of the carriage I went and into the only pool of water in The Run where I could have succeeded in drowning. My cousin John being on the other side of the carriage, knee deep in water and busy with the sponges, and not knowing what my sister was yelling about, almost let me drown. All I got, though, was a real good washing. I was carried up to Rosedale, dressed up in the dry clothes that seemed to be always available for anybody of any size at any time, and wept over by my blessed mother and Aunt Minnie in turns. I now distinctly remember that I had a feeling that I had at last pulled off something.
One of my other adventures at the Sycamore Tree didn't pan out so well. My brother Dick, older than I and should have known better, Hamilton Newhouse, the same, and the Milton boys, who didn't give a damn, and I were fishing one day. It was hot and sultry and our barefeet itched with briar cuts. We decided to

rest under the Sycamore tree. One thing led to another, and we decided to go in wading. Finally bored with this, we threw discretion to the winds, along with our garments, and laid down in the water. If we hadn't got to water fighting, perhaps our cousins up at The House wouldn't have been any the wiser.

However, as it was, I looked up suddenly and saw all the boys grabbing their clothes and making as fast as they could for the tall corn of my father's cornfield about a quarter of a mile south, their young white bodies straks of light through the broomsage. Then I looked in the other direction and there came Uncle Dick Lewis galloping down on his horse, flourishing a long black snake whip. He must have thought he was at the Battle of Brandy and chasing Yankees again.

I trembled and I was palesied with fright alright. I couldn't even move out of the water and toward those clothes. I had heard terrible tales about Uncle Dick. The darkies said that he could yell and cuss so loud that the Yankees at Thoroughfare Gap thought he was a whole regiment of men—and ran whenever they heard his war whoop. They said he could chop off a Yankee's head with one full swoop of his saber, and that black snake whip looked more like a saber to me every minute. At any rate, there I was in my birthday suit, shaking like an aspen. I thought he would never stop coming, but all at once he did. Then he dropped his whip, broke into the loudest and most uncontrolled laugh I ever heard in my life, and galloped away.
"Relatives" in Virginia were funny things, sometimes the relationship as tenuous and slight as gossamer but always as strong as death and as powerful as religion and politics. Aunt Minnie marriedClinton Hatcher, the nephew of Mr. and Mrs. Thad Hatcher, and the great nephew of Uncle Josh. That made her husband, My Uncle Clinton, and it followed that by the same stroke of matrimony I also acquired Uncle Thad and Aunt Ginnie as great uncle and aunt and Uncle Joshua as Great Great Uncle. When you hear of everybody in Virginia being "related" you can take it with a grain of salt.
Of course visiting occupied a great deal of everybody's life in a Virginia countryside in the gay nineties. It was a regular business, and with some people almost a regular profession, with their work a mere sideline. It was almost as if they said, "Well, we've got to make up for all that lost time in the four years of civil war 25 years ago." Guests came and went, spare rooms were never empty, and tables were long and well filled. Some maiden ladies, friends and family connections, thought nothing of a six months visit. True enough, at the end of the first three months something was generally found for them to do, but that didn't discourage the real visitor. Our house, like everybody's else, was generally a hubbub of visitation. My cousin, Mary Rixey, my mother's favorite niece, lived with us and was just like an older sister to us all. She was young and gay and lovely and always had some charming girls visiting her. Aunt Minnie had her friends. Mama and Papa were related to everybody of any consequence in both Culpeper and Fauquier counties and relatives felt they were neglecting you if they didn't send out an official representative for a visit at least once a year. So you can imagine that those terrible people we have since learned of as introverts had a hard time in the life of the Virginia countryside at that time.

But I didn't. I was the little visitor of visitors. My bag was packed and I was always ready to go. In the first place, I loved old people. I suspected what I have since learned to be so true, that they knew a thing or two, and that the lamp of experience was the best guide to wisdom. Elsewhere I have told of my visits to the Starks in the Lower Neighborhood, always with Aunt Minnie. It was with Aunt Minnie likewise I used to go to Loudon County to visit the Hatchers in a beautiful old stone house built shortly after the Revolution. Uncle Thad and Aunt Ginnie Hatcher, as I was taught to call them,
an old housekeeper called Miss Maggie whose face was as dismal as a stained glass window until she smiled and then it was beautiful and full of light and color, and the oldest of all the Hatcher's in Loudon County and the Grand Patriarch of the tribe, Uncle Joshua Hatcher, well into his nineties and yet able every Sunday morning to hitch up his own horse to his own buggy and drive his own self to the Quaker meeting house at Lincoln. Just imagine, anyhow, a place in Virginia 25 years after the close of the Civil War named "Lincoln." Well, hold your horses, for it had been named Lincoln long before Honest Abe, the product of the Virginia hills who became the Illinois rail-splitter, came on the scene, and was named after that good town in England from which some early Loudon settlers had emigrated to this country. I had a way with old people, but I had a hard time winning over Uncle Josh. Finally, I knew I had triumphed, for one Sunday morning I was hanging around while he hitched up his horse to the buggy, and he very dubiously invited me to ride to Lincoln with him and sit in the buggy while he was attending to the business of the Lord. Sometimes it took a long time for the Spirit to move him and I got very tired, but in my visits thenceforth I never missed a Sunday morning ride with the old gentleman. Other things about those visits I shall never forget: many beautiful peacocks for whom I used to wait to go to roost in the high trees so that I might gather the iridescent feathers lost in their upward flight; the great four poster piled high with softest goosefeathers, mantled in snow white linen, and reached by a flight of steps; and the watering trough, made of hollowed out giant oak tree and supplied with water that gurgled up out of the ground naturally, where I learned to sail my first boats. When I was away from it, as a child, I used to long for that old watering trough, with all the nostalgia
that John Masefield must have felt for the sea, when he wrote that magnificent poem, "I must go down to the sea again, the long grey sea and the ships."

It wouldn't be fair to old Loudon, to the Hatchers or to anybody concerned, if I failed to mention two other things, unforgettable things about those visits. As I look back now they must have been deliberately timed so that we might be there for the "Bush Meeting" at Purcellville and the darkey celebration of Emancipation Day called "Jubilee".

The Bush Meetings were literally just that, held in the fields under a tent with a stage for much God-fearing, hell and damnation oratory, and long rows of plank seats without any backs for the yeomenry of Loudon County. But, brother, you haven't heard the half of it. First there were the teams. Everybody took the occasion to show off their finest horses, carriages and general equipment. Then above everything there was the food, great hampers of fried chicken, country sugar cured ham, potato salad, devilled eggs, cakes, pies, coffee, lemonade and cold tea. There were whiffs of other things for the Lords of Creation, but in those far off days that didn't either bother or allure me, though on one of them I was proffered by a neighborhood Circe and accepted with alacrity a glass of home-made dandelion wine, with no appreciably disastrous results. Neatly folded, yellow with age and now carefully preserved in my , is the following recipe for the stuff:
I also had two places in the town and county seat of Culpeper where I was not only a frequent visitor—but where I was a visitor in grand style and alone. One was Cousin Mag Wise's and the other The Misses Wager's. They were in the same street, not far from one another, that dear old street at the north end of which was the turn to Rixeyville and the Vass house and at the south end the turn in the road to Madison, with a world all its own in between, including such landmarks as the old Waverly Hotel, the Rixey place with its tall white pillars then lived in by the Russell Smiths, the Chinese laundry, Ashby's shoe store, Gorrel's drug store where they made the best chocolate ice cream sodas in the world, and of course the Wise and Wager houses.

Cousin Mag Wise was a little shrunken up bit of a woman, with large flashing brown eyes and a sharp beaked nose, but with all her wits about her. And they were considerable. She was the soul of kindness and her house was used as headquarters for the entire Rixeyville connections. All packages were left there to go to the country and all packages from the country for everybody in town that could not be actually distributed on the trip at hand. Her husband, who was smaller even than she was, in those days was scarcely ever home. When he didn't travel, he was drunk, and when he wasn't drunk, he travelled. Anywise, it was fun to visit in the home, for besides Cousin Mag who kept up a sprightly conversation at all times and was always thinking of something nice to please you, there were two charming young girls in the family, Mary and Margaret. There was a third, but I really never knew her. She was away at school on the occasion of my visits. Mary was a slim, tallish blond with oriental almond eyes of great dignity and constraint. You felt she was well laced in. Margaret was a whole hearted, enthusiastic, friendly and companionable child whom everybody liked.
The women were not idle, for pastimes, nor the children. The long winter afternoons, when snow and ice and frozen mud kept them close to their immediate neighborhood and their open fires and king heaters, they met and appropriated the wool that had been garnered at sheep shearing mostly to the purposes of sleep—the beautiful countryside "comforts"—generally made of "silkaline" in pastel shades dotted with little flowers, but sometimes of actual silk or sateen. First the wool had to be "picked" and here the children were called in. Then it had to be "carted" into light, fluffy, downy oblongs about the size of shingles. Then the frames were set up, the material stretched out, the wool laid deftly and certainly upon it,—and the tacking began. In the meantime, there was tea and coffee and home made cake and a great clatter and chatter.
Speaking of rabbits, I must mention two other methods we young rascallions—and old ones, too, for that matter—employed to get them into our power, and stomachs. There was the rabbit trap, a simple box with a door that dropped from the unsuspecting sky when the rabbit was bold enough to enter and touch the little stick and spring the lever that held it. This was my favorite way of catching rabbits. Not only did it conserve time and energy, and let the rabbit do his part, but, as it seemed to me, made the victim particeps criminis in the affair.

On a crisp December morning, with the hoar frost throwing a mantle of white lace and silver sheen on the sparkling landscape, and the tree, the bush, the broomage and the briar, aye, even the stubble of the ground beneath the foot, all crystalline in the ardent sun, was there ever such fun, such surmise, such adventure, at least for a seven year old boy, as stealing North before breakfast for a round-up of the rabbit traps? And when the trap was first glimpsed, with its little pole still taut in the air, what disappointment, mingled with persistent hope! But, ah, at the very next one, the little door is down, the little pole carelessly flung helter skelter, and at approach the squeal and scamper of the furry prisoner!

Besides the gun and the dog and the trap, there was the sling-shot and the good right arm. You had to get up in the early dark and saunter through the rubble of lately cut corn or wheatfields and catch porr old molly cottontail in the midst of her early morning nap. There were two colored retainers at Rosedale, Dan and William Hall, who were such experts at this that I don't remember ever seeing them miss. They despised the slingshot and sneaking up on a rabbit in the bed, let go with their arms at varying distances, but generally from not over 15 or 20 feet. It was always considered a red letter morning in winter when Dan and William would allow us to tag along at their heels with our slingshots.
Rixeyville could boast of at least one genius. She was a small, crippled up, brownish little woman of sixty who lived in the oldest house in the village with her two grown children, Annie and Moss. From her gabled cottage porch she looked right across the road to the Chapel and cat-eye-cornered to the right at our store and house.

Annie was a good daughter, but Moss was a black sheep. Hunting, trapping, fishing and liquor, and never a day's honest toil, Moss lived out his life, short and sweet, and utterly disdainful of neighborhood critics. He was supposed to be a little wicked, but like most wicked people, he was very pleasant, and easy to get on with. It was rarely that we ever found him at home, but on those occasions he was somewhere between the woodpile in the backyard and the lovely old spring at the foot of the hill and the orchard—whittling away on odd pieces of wood for his traps, cleaning up his guns or going over his fishing paraphernalia.

It was Mrs. Jamieson herself, however, who single handed could have made any village memorable. How my old friend, Miss Mitford, would have adored her! And the dear ladies of Cransford would have eaten her up! Little and brown and beginning to wrinkle, her simple percale or calico of soft color and dotted with rosebuds, with collar of white tulle caught at the throat with either an old gold anchor or a white and blue cameo, her swift bird-like eyes of deep hazel danced about in her head and her easer, talon like little hands fluttered in the air—until she could find needle and thread. And then, oh then, the artist in her flowered, and the flowers, the most exquisite moss rose buds of shaded pinks, great pale yellow Marechal Neile's in open bloom, lilies, yellow and white, sprays of lily of the valley and violets, all burst into bloom right before your very eyes on pieces of satin and velvet and silk saved from the hundreds of best dresses in the county.
For every family that dressed at all in satins, silks and velvets, sent their "pieces" to Mrs. Jamieson to be embroidered, to be returned to them and made into "silk quilts" for the "spare room". Most families of any consequence in all that part of Culpeper had at least one, and some of them three or four, of these marvellous coverlets, generally lined in a solid color of silk and sometimes padded with a very fine layer of wool. Border, as a rule, with a six inch band of velvet, between those borders there was a garden to delight anybody's soul. One could like down for a nap literally covered with blossoms. These quilts of Mrs. Jamieson have long since become heirlooms and collector's items, handed down in families and fought over at sales.

Yes, little Mrs. Jamieson was an artist of which any village might be proud. She has long since been gathered gently up and laid upon the ivy and the Virginia creeper and the trumpet flower and wild violets of the old family burying ground; but the almost endless procession of buds and leaves and flowers, enough to fill an hundred gay gardens, she created and fixed on silk, satin and velvet, these live on, giving pleasure and comfort to many hearts—and will live on for many, many years to come /
I always think of her as Cornelia and of her boys as the Grachii. "These are my jewels," she used to say, in her dear, deep rich voice, especially when the tides of fortune might be running a little low. I also like to think of her as the Jasmine Lady, because in the glassed porches under her front piazza she kept great tubs of what she and we called Cape Jasmine, but now best known as Gardenias. They were always in bloom. She was the only person in all my childhood who seemed to really love them. There were several kept in my great aunt's garden at Rosedale, but nowhere were they in such profusion as at Cousin Willie's. Add to this that she could quote poetry and philosophy, the best of it, set a table that was God's gift to the sense of beauty as well as of taste, never miss the opportunity for a deed of loving kindness, and fight like a tigress for her children, her faith and her dreams—and you have perhaps discovered why it took Grant four years to get to Richmond—the Virginia gentlewoman at her very best!
Pleasant Hill

White pillars on a hilltop, with the Blue Ridge, blue as the blue of a Cimabue Madonna robe, stretched out like a giant stage curtain to the west. The fertile fields, the little streams and the dells, the old rail fences, the ultimate woods on every side beyond, the stone springhouse in the orchard, the apple trees in bloom and the peach and the pear, the old family burying ground on the crest of the hill hard by the ancient and now forsaken entrance road, the horses in the meadow and Uncle Bird's log cabin utterly alone in the field save for one giant tree, the cattle against the green of the hills, the great barns and outbuildings, the tenant houses, and pigs, chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, lambs and cats and dogs everywhere—a place alive and vivid and green, full of noise—the noises, the smells, the warm throated calls, the animal cries, the great strength of growing things and the quiet dignity of toil.

A word picture of Pleasant Hill that does not even attempt to do it justice. Founded in 1801 by a branch of the Rixey family that had moved on west from Prince William, it was a long high rectangular center hall building of home made brick, simple, solid and substantial. It's woodwork was good but not remarkable in any way. It was in fact without architectural pretense of any kind. And it was not until my dear Cousin Rose Robinson of Smithfield, West Virginia, and Jacksonville, Florida, married Cousin Jamie Lewis of Rosedale, and the newly weds went there to live that Pleasant Hill blossomed forth into its neo-classic loveliness of to-day. With infinite pains and no inconsiderable expense Cousin Rose "did over" the old mansion. She gave it a new face of tall, white Virginia columns, and surrounded it with boxwood, the two improvements, other than modernization of electricity and baths, that were to last and stamp the place with her personality.
and charm.

Pleasant Hill then and ever since has lived up to its name. Cousin Rose was an indefatigable worker and a gracious and efficient housekeeper and host. Against her effervescent gaiety and dynamic personality, Cousin Jamie supplied just the necessary quiet, kind, gentle level of good husbandry. Of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy, Cousin Rose came to be known to me in after years as a great wit and a great woman. My view of her at the time, however, from my childhood corner was that I liked her better than any cousin I knew. I liked to go to her house because she always had something funny to tell and something good to eat, and because of all the Lords of Creation (the grown-ups) she seemed to be the only one who treated children as persons in their own right.

But Pleasant Hill had another attraction for me—and for everybody. Cousin Rose and Cousin Jamie had one child, a girl named Margaret, several years younger than myself but smart as a whip and blithe as a lark. She was always fun—was Margaret. We were pretty close together as children, both liked to eat the same things, play the same games and act out the same roles. We both loved parties better than anything else and it seemed Margaret was always having parties. Margaret was in our tenderer years called "Marweet" and later "Peg". Her love for horses and all dumb animals (pardon the dumb animals, for it is my considered belief now and was my instinctive feeling then that animals could speak and speak very effectively to anyone with sense enough to attune themselves to them) created a still greater bond between us. One story about this little girl I will always cherish in my own heart while she may have long since forgotten all about it. One summer day when we were following the mowing machine in the great golden field of wheat to the west, a beautiful little patridge hen failed to get out of her nest and away in time, and was badly injured. Margaret was heartbroken. Her distress was so genuine as to be pitiable. Everything that could be done was done for the little broken winged
creature. Day after day and far into the nights the little girl watched by the stricken bedside of her little feathered friend. It was to no avail. The tender, gentle little fledgling of the field and stream and its gossamer spirit drifted back into the great cosmos from which it had emerged. Reluctant to accept the hard, cold final fact of death, even in a bird, none the less took her eggs, recovered from the nest, and set them under an old domino hen. In due time they hatched and both the hen and Margaret did everything in their power to raise them. But the deep, instinctive call of the wild was in them. Proud little wings whose ancestry had known long sweep of meadow and bright heraldry of broom and brush, were ill content in the domesticated atmosphere of a chicken house. Of the five, two I believe pined away, and the other three escaped to the fields.
The Newhouses would have been a remarkable family in any village. Against the quiet backdrop of Virginia gentility run down at the heels in the post-Civil War days they were a veritable theatrical troupe who played the boards day after day and never failed to put on a good show.

There was first and foremost, the Colonel himself. "Mort" Newhouse, cut down from the resounding name of Mortimer but carrying his tall, well-set body as proudly as the generalissimo of any man's army, literally stalked the village and the countryside, and even the county seat itself, with pride, pomp and circumstance. People who didn't like him—and they were few—wondered out loud where he got the "colonel" from and hinted that he had been only a "private" and "behind the lines" and "held officers' horses" in the Late Unpleasantness. His more ardent admirers insisted in return that he had been in every battle from Bull Run to Appomattox, a firebrand of initiative, inspiration and courage. He didn't go to church, he drank Bourbon, he liked a good stiff poker game and he didn't give a damn. But he had married a Rixey—and all his sins were forgiven and he was elected to the State Legislature time after time. Of course he was a Democrat. The only man who wasn't a Democrat in Rixeyville or in any other Virginia village I ever heard of was certain to be a low, base fellow whose father had "showed the Yankees the short cut round the mountain" or "turned Republican to get a post-office."

The Rixey he had married, Cousin Molly, was a cousin of ours. She was a little woman, as pretty as a picture, as pert and active as a Cat Bird and as smart and witty as she was amiable and pleasant. She was like a Madame du Deffand pigeonholed out of time and place and tucked away for safekeeping in a small American village. She had a mind of her own and became the first Christian Scientist ever heard of in RIXEYVILLE. It was even rumored that she had made trips to Boston and was a personal friend of the "notorious" Mary Baker Edy.
The Newhouses--2.

She must have taken a keen delight in shocking the more serious minded and sedate of her very level minded cousins and neighbors. They couldn't understand why she looked so young, and why, even in later years, she never had a wrinkle in her face. Neither could they understand why nothing ever worried her, why she always had a smile and a pleasant comment for every occasion, and why even when disaster and tragedy came, she bore up with such poise and equanimity. When her eldest daughter, Lizzie, shot herself on the eve of her wedding and was "laid out" in her lovely wedding gown of lace and tulle, the oak of her character trembled but it did not fall. Afterwards when her eldest son, Charles Henry, the good looking, the popular, the debonair, the apple of her eye and the pride and hope of the family, went to Baltimore with a "load of cattle" and disappeared off the face of the earth, Rixeyville was rocked to its smallest timbers, including me, but not Cousin Molly. She said he was alive and well and that in due time she would hear from him. It was said she had gone to Washington and consulted a "slate writer" or a "spiritualist" (the tale differing a bit here and there) and that she had "word" from her lost boy. It was four years, however, four long weary waiting years for a mother, before her faith was justified. Charles Henry was alive and well and making money hand over fist in the fabulous country of South Africa where diamonds as big as saucers if they didn't grow on trees at least sprouted in the ground. He had written his parents a letter and a post card to my father, the postmaster. By one of those curious chances of fate, the postcard got to Rixeyville first. It was in Charles Henry's flowing script and called my father "Captain Slick", as was his own peculiar nickname for him which nobody else could have known.
The Newhouses—3

You will pardon me if even to this day there is a catch in my throat as I recall that postcard and its arrival, followed by my father's floating coat tails as they flew up the Rixeyville road to Charles Henry's house. It must have been one of the great moments of his life, and of Cousin Molly's.

There were many children in this big, hospitable family,—girls in the order of their arrival, Beena, Fannie Belle, Eva, May, Willie and Georgie, and one other boy, Hamilton. They were all individuals, in their own right, and grew up to marry, make lovely homes of culture and happiness, and, as the countryside would put it, "do well." Warm hearted, generous, pleasure loving and pleasure giving, they were bright and lovely threads in the tapestry of childhood—and now of memory.

The two younger girls, Willie and Georgie, and Hamilton were around my age and my devoted playmates. Their house was a long, high rectangular affair with huge brick chimneys at either end, and oh, so much fun, in between them. Cousin Mollie believed in fun. Sometimes, I suspect, she had fun herself with us. One day in particular I remember she caught us trying to smoke some sort of devices that passed for "cigarettes" in our minds, made of dried corn silk and rolled in the dried out but tenderer part of the corn shucks. How she kept a straight face I don't to his day know, but she did, and ceremoniously invited us all to her sitting room for real cigarettes, as many as we wanted. All of us were so sick from the experiment that I for one never smoked another cigarette until I was 21 years old.
The second episode of the thrust the village into turmoil. A great diamond ring. Weeks ago was over at our house playing the widow Fant jumped up, ran over her hand and yelled, "There's my earth did you get it, Frances? Who didn't know a diamond from flabbergasted. "Why, Emma got Frances, "for dressing her dome little colored maid my mother's house, mostly for atmosphere I"