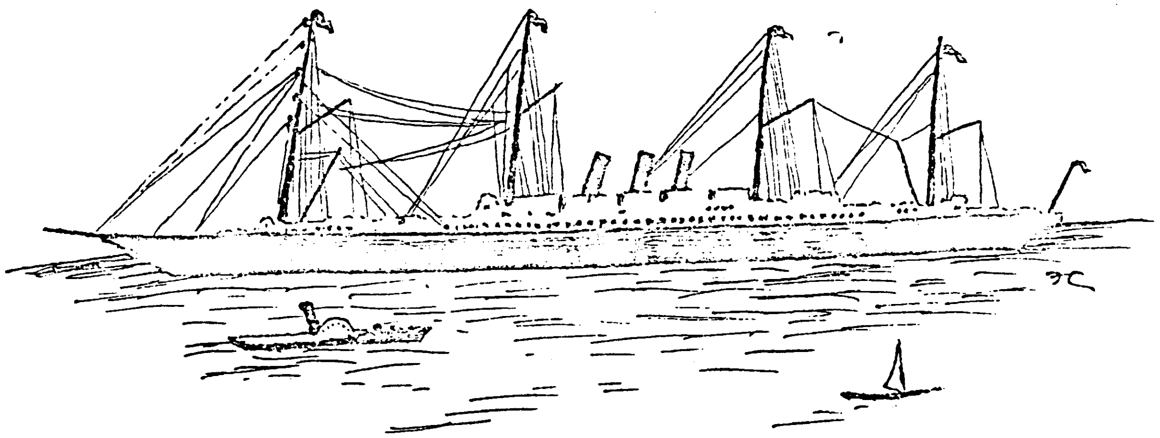

II. Plans Change

The discontinuance of the clerk's examinations only made George more determined to push ahead. Shorthand was demanding so much time that he had to forego French which he called his "chief" pleasure. The offices continued to reduce their staffs and dim hopes flickered out His friends in the literary society might express surprise "that a Porter could do so well," but that was cold comfort. He was lonely. Grimly, he wrote after coming off duty at 2:00 A.M. one morning: "I will not rest until I have risen from my present position. Pollie I am proud. I cannot help it & I love you far too well ever to bring you into a house where you could not have all you needed. Things have turned out very different from what I expected but do not think I am losing my confidence. . . . I should be ashamed of myself if I had to sit down idle with such love and trust as you have for me. Pollie, I shall succeed. I know it."

At this [illegible] family had required her to be up on successive mornings at 2:00 A.M. ar at 4:00 A.M. to start the days' work. A "sick headache" followed--evidently one of the migrane headaches which troubled her nearly all he life. The already heavy housework had become almost intolerable as the aunt showed little sympathy and treated the girl as little better than a servant. Would it not be better for her to forget her own background and enter service? George's answer on December 1st was clear: "I do n like the idea of your entering on the trials and temptations of female service. Do not misunderstand me Dearest, I know you have much to do, far far too much but as for being dependent, you are not. It is your Aunt that is dependent on you not you on her." Please, please, wait until we can talk things over. Maybe he would be able to see her in the spring.

Came the Christmas rush with much hard work and overtime at the freight sheds while outside all was fog and rain. On Christmas Day he got off at 12:00 noon and went to the home of his landlady's mother, a distance of a half hour's walk, for Christmas dinner. "...but it was a dense fog ... so dark that you cannot tell the night from day. All the shops that were open were lighted and all the gas [street] lamps, and yet it was so dense that one could not see a yard before one, and at a distance of 2 yards from a lamp post one could not see a light. Nearly all traffic was stopped and the trams and busses were all led by men [not driven] carrying large torches. But there were laughable things too you could hear voices calling 'Where am I' although you could see no one. You could hear the cabbies calling one another pretty names but you could not see them and you could hear now and again the crash as one vehicle ran into another. The streets were one mass of Greasy mud and the fog got into one's eyes, nose and mouth making one cough, Such was Xmas Day in London in 1879."

Should he try to transfer to the passenger service of the railroad? Occasional vacancies among clerkships were immediately being seized by a long list of "broken gentlemen" who had a fair education. In the passenger service he would have to start as a porter, but he then might advance to a 3rd class guard, then through the guard ranks to become an inspector at 35-45 shillings per week, and above that was the possibility of becoming a stationmaster. In the way stood rather severe examinations, but if Pollie approved he might "have a go at it". She approved and the application was made.

Results came suddenly. On the 4th of January George wrote from Tingley station, five miles from Leeds "in dear old Yorkshire" that he had been sent north on two days' notice. The station was a small one and the work light though his hours were from 10:30 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. He described Tingley as a small village composed of rough, ignorant colliers. "I really cannot say whether I like it [here] or not. I feel dreadfully lonely. I have not as yet seen anyone with whom I would like to form an acquaintance. As far as I can see they are a lot of very ignorant, and rough people and they do not seem to have a soul above eating and sleeping together ...." But he was out of the London rut.

After going to a Wesleyan chapel he wrote "The children march in and the girls range themselves on one side and the boys on the other. The boys numbered about 80 altogether. They were led by whom I suppose was their superintendent and as soon as they got in he marched up to a corner and took a long cane just like they use in Church on grand occasions, and then began a series of cracking. If one of the boys were unruly he got a crack on the head and of course it sounded all over the place, and perhaps in the sermon just when there was a pause there would be a slight murmur and then crack, crack would go the cane, and the poor boy would rub his head and look uncomfortable, & during prayer they all knelt and instead of cracking them he prodded them like so many donkeys."

By the end of the month George reported that his thirteen-hour days meant that he met trains, booked passengers and the like, but left considerable idle time for there were few trains on this line. He was hoping soon to get a weekend duty change from night to day shifts. This would enable him to be free from 5:00 P.M. on Saturday to 9:30 A.M. on Monday. If this happened, by travelling both nights he could run down to Skeeby for a few hours on Sunday to see Mary.

The arrangement worked out but almost to his sorrow. When he got back on the job he wrote on February 10th that the experience gave him the "happiest day of my life" but "I cannot forget my Uncle and the hard bitter things he said. He did nothing but upbraid me for leaving a service /as footman/ which I hate simply because it brought a few shillings into my pocket at the end of the year. It was the first and it will be the last time I shall ever ask his advice or opinion on anything that concerns me. Our lives ought to be happy dearest when we get together for we neither of us know what it is to have had a happy beginning .... I have no doubt my Uncle will object to that /our getting married/, as he does everything else but whether he does or not I care not. I shall tell him when it is settled and not before. Forgive me my Darling, for troubling you like this, but I have only you to grumble to .... I cannot say much to him because my Mother is wholly dependent upon him. As it is she gets the full benefit of all my shortcomings. I hardly know how she bears with the constant and everlasting and dismal grumbling which she has to bear day after day." Two weeks later a letter indicated that he was still worrying that his uncle had upbraided him because he was still a porter and made so little money.

By the middle of March he sent his regards to Mary's Mother who had evidently been ill. Unfortunately this had meant that Mary had been badly overworked in trying to keep up with her regular household duties and in caring for her Mother also. This George deplored and stated that he would get out of the railroad at the first chance and try to take care of her.

Before he could locate anything else however orders came in early April for him to report at once to the Superintendent's office in Leeds. In fear and trembling before the "Greatest man on the GNR. /Great Northern Railroad/" he was informed that good reports on his work had caused them to post him at once for training as a signalman. This would mean an immediate salary raise to twenty shillings per week, plus uniform. It would also open the way to further promotions if he could qualify. He was ordered to report at once to the town of Retford to begin the six to eight weeks of training that preceded the examination. He now wrote, in effect, "Mary, prepare to get married, I will pass."

Because of the widespread depressed economic conditions only fifteen, instead of the regular group of fifty, were sent to the training rooms — and of these already well screened men only thirteen were to pass the tests. On his way to Retford his train had paused at Doncaster while another train passed. Suddenly George heard his name called from the other train and was delighted to recognise his old superintendent from London, Mr. Poynter. When George proudly reported that he was on his way to the training rooms at Retford the response was: "that is right, Mr. Callcott (although I was still in Porter clothes). I always thought you would push your way. . ." How George treasured that title of "Mr." It was recognition at last that he was something more than a common laborer, and certainly not a servant.

Now came two weeks of intensive day and night training, for George actually completed the course in two (instead of in the usual six to eight) weeks. This was doubtless due in no small degree to his long preparations in London. His chief new problem was the Morse telegraphic code which was an absolute prerequisite for all signalmen. Success at last.

In a few days came his assignment to a signal box on the main double-track trunk line near Retford. The salary on the main line was twenty-one shillings per week, or a shilling above the regular minimum for beginners. This was for twelve duty hours for six days per week. The hours were from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., with trains passing in each direction at fifteen minute intervals during the busy hours. "After smoky London and Black West Riding I have got to a place which I like."

Rambling over the countryside on his day off each week he learned to love every part of it. One cross-country walk to Lincoln was planned for a twenty-mile hike but he and his companion got lost and ended up in a tramp of nearer thirty miles. But it was lots of fun and his letters rambled joyously on.

In one of these letters he edified his future wife with a soliloquy: "I am now going to give you a full & particular account of the Great & mighty City of Gamston [where his signal box was located] together with a full true & particular account of myself. Now as I like myself best, I will try to write about that interesting person. When I read or hear about a person liking other things better than themselves, What gammon it is. I like myself better I think even than you & I like you *very* *very* much. I like you so much that I could not be happy without your love. So you see I try to keep your love so that *I* may be happy because I know that if we had to have a quarrel you would be miserable and that would make *me* miserable. Does that not carry out my theory [?] If you do not understand it quite I will try to explain better. If you were miserable I should be miserable, and if I was miserable how should I be happy? So that by loving myself I must make you happy so that I may be happy...." On May 22 he wr~~i~~ote enclosing some violets. He had started writing the letter at midnight when he got off work on a special shift and finished it at 1:00 A.M., only to go outside to hunt the violets to send her.

One difficulty was Mary's family. Evidently these substantial farmers were not at all enthusiastic about a railroad worker who was the son of a wandering ne'er-do-well father. Repeatedly George asked Mary if he should write asking about ~~writing to~~ ask her Mother to consent to their engagement. ~~but Mary~~ Evidently ~~must have~~ Mary considered the time unpropitious for the letter was never written. Certainly Mary's Aunt with whom she lived was antagonistic to the match.

One letter described George's lodgings where he shared a room with his signal box mate. Their duty hours supplemented each other so each had sole use of the room for their non-duty time. He commented that the house was a very old fashioned one with three rooms below and three upstairs. The ceilings were "so low I can almost touch them with my head....we have to travel all through the rooms /downstairs/ before we come to our bedroom which is at the fartherest end. Mr. & Mrs. Unwin occupy the middle room & very nice they look with their two nightcaps on" as we pass through. He was sixty-three or sixty-four years of age and almost totally blind; she was about sixty and almost deaf, but working together they controlled a reasonably complete set of faculties.

Now began eager planning for his first leave — a whole week — after fourteen months of steady work during which he had not missed a single day for any reason whatever. The world continued to smile and wedding plans were discussed though the date remained uncertain. On August first he wrote saying that at two-week intervals his work shifted from day to night duty. Also he planned to ask for a three-day leave for the wedding. He asked that Mary set the wedding date so that he would have day duty for the first two weeks of their life together. This meant that the wedding should be either on October 21st, or ~~two~~ four weeks earlier or ~~two~~ four weeks after that date.

He wracked his brains to try to think of all possible complications in setting up housekeeping and finally wrote: "This business Darling is so new and complicated that it is almost a pity one of us has not had some experience. If you had been a widow now, or better still me a widower how easy it would have been." He regularly carried a memorandum book so that whenever he thought of an article they would need he could "pop it down"; "for instance, when we take possession we shall probably want some tea, we cannot roast our eggs in our hands, neither can we boil water in our mouths. Oh that reminds me ... I have thought of kettle, pepper box, flat irons, blacking pot, &c. Talking about water reminds me we shall want a bucket, I must put that down." And so it went. He also asked Mary to do the same and to send him her list so that he could acquire what he had overlooked.

On August 9th he wrote that there was not a single house for rent in the village of Gamston where his signal box was located. Accordingly he had asked for a transfer. Meanwhile he was busy rooting cuttings of geranium, musk, etc. etc. for the new home. Again he urgently asked Mary for a list of necessities and ended with a plea that she let him know how much money she would need for the household things that she was buying. "Now, obey me in this."

A fairly extended sample of George's writing and an insight into his love of Nature and the romanticism of the time is seen in a letter of July 4, 1870 ~~1780~~. He commented on his night work in the signal box saying:

> It is a beautiful sight to see the setting sun ... but even the sunset sinks into insignificance when compared with the sun rise. The former is the close of a brilliant day and heralds the approach of dark night and silent gloom. The sunrise on the contrary enlivens and cheers that which was but a short time ago dark & dreary. And I think that our [signal] box is situated in a very good position for witnessing the sunrise.... It is not pleasant here during a rough night. It is in a very lonely place and the wind whistles around finding all the stray cracks in the door & windows & the rain pattering against the glass nearly drowns all the other sounds, but as I happen to look out at a passing train I notice the sky over the wood looks a little less heavy than around the other parts of the globe & then gradually & very slowly [as] it gets more & more lighter the wind begins to sink and the great dark masses of clouds roll away to the South & we see quite enough blue sky to cut a man a pair of trousers & then in the wood one hears a peculiar twittering sound as if hundreds of birds were just awakening and were stretching their bills. It still gets lighter & clearer & by & bye the others follow & then

there is a glorious choir singing praises to their Maker. All this time the sky has been gradually changing color and appearance and the edges of the clouds which hang about the east acquire a beautiful gold color. The air is sweet & refreshing & when everything is prepared as it were the sun comes & gives the finishing touch. The birds are in full song. All traces of night is gone, except the heavy rain drops which hang about the bushes. The heavy storm clouds have gone, the mournful wind has ceased, and all nature turns smiling through its tears to welcome that glorious orb as it burst upon the scene, once more to give the signal that another day has commenced & it is time for busy man to resume his toil & care — and what is more welcome tell me that it is jolly near time for me to be in bed & snoring.

By the end of August he was reaching the philosophical stage: "I am one of those who believe in 9 cases out of ten it is the wife's power to make or mar the happiness of the man she calls husband."

The requested transfer orders came through for the railroad company was glad to have its workers married and settled down. He was assigned to a signal box at Holmfield, a few miles from Halifax. He had known the place before and was delighted as he wrote about the thinking of green hills, valleys and beautiful landscapes but said saying nothing of the coal smoke and grime of the industrial midlands which he obviously overlooked after living in "smoky" London.

Halifax was located just north of the Pennines where the industrial towns of the day were reaching a peak of prosperity as they flourished on textiles (especially woolen goods) and took advantage of coal mined in the valleys nearby. Out "over the tops" stretched the moors with their bracken, heather and occasional peat bogs ~~up to~~ even on the hill tops where the clouds cuddled down on the ground and kept it oozing wet even when a few days passed with no rain.

~~By the~~ In ~~middle of~~ mid September he reported that several cottages were available at 3/6 to 4 shillings per week (about 75¢ to 1.00). The one he selected was at "No. 6 Livingston Terrace, Holmfield, Ovenden, Halifax, England, Europe." It "contains /a/ cellar, a very nice one, then downstairs is the house and kitchen. The kitchen is a good size containing copper and sink. There are front & back doors and a very small garden in front .... There are 3 rooms upstairs one very small .... The house is papered but I shall white wash the ceiling and repaper it before you come. I shall also rewhiten the kitchen and cellar."

And still there had been no formal acceptance of the wedding plans by Mary's family. George wrote that he was going to the local parish church and also writing to the minister at Easby Abbey (the parish church a few miles from Skeeby) to have the banns published on September 6th. Later he wrote that he had heard from "Mr. Thompson (the minister at Easby) stating that he would do as I wished so it appears whatever objections your Aunt had — and they were not serious ones — they were overruled by his good sense." "But when is your Mother coming /from her visit to friends/ it will be fun if she should come just in time for the wedding and not know anything about it before .... I only hope she will have no objections. If she does I suppose it will fall to my lot to talk to her."

Next came a quasi-declaration of independence that let it be known who was to be the final arbiter and judge in the life that was beginning. "I must tell you that — altho against your express wish — I have let my beard and whiskers grow & really Pollie I have been told by some very good judges that I do not look such a monster after all. However, I beg your pardon and I won't do so any more. And I sincerely hope you will not jilt me now because I am afraid that I might be so nervous on the morning of the 21st that if I had to shave I might cut my /blank/." Then follows a casual statement that he will bring his lunch basket to use in carrying her kitten along on the train as they returned from the wedding. "Had it been any other cat but yours I should have seen it at the bottom of the sea before I would have brought it. But I suppose one must give way...." A fair exchange: he kept his whiskers, she kept her cat.

The great day came with the wedding set for 10:30 A.M., October 21st at Easby Abbey church. The groom provided two carriages. One carried Mary, her Aunt, her cousin George Ireland who was to give her away, and George's sister Carrie who was to serve as bridesmaid. The other took George, his Mother, his Uncle George and his brother, Frank. Mary's mother, one must conclude deliberately, was not present. Immediately after the ceremony the young couple left by train so they could reach their new home by nightfall. The bedding Mary had bought and her clothing had been boxed and sent on ahead. The cat accompanied the newly-weds in George's lunch basket. On reaching the new home Mary found that George had provided a handsomely leather-bound and gold embossed photograph album [still in the family] awaiting her from George to carry a record of their new life together. ~~This is still in the family.~~

Life on the railroad continued much as before. Unfortunately for the record the marriage interrupted the regular exchange of letters. On one occasion the young couple stole away for a short honeymoon trip to Liverpool. Long afterwards Mary used to comment that they went to a kind of street carnival and entered what might be called a side-show. After stepping inside a tent they were told to sit on a bench until a small crowd drifted in. Then the doors were closed to exclude all light. After some mysterious noises an evil odor pervaded the room, then a little red and luminous wire appeared in a glass bottle to cast a wierd glow over the observers. This was thought to be the first incandescent light ever displayed in Liverpool.

While in London George had taken part in one debate in which he took the negative side on the question of smoking. In spite of this he thoroughly enjoyed his pipe. In the spring after his marriage, however, he decided to give up smoking and apparently became short-tempered in the process. Just before his twenty-fifth birthday he went to Liverpool on some business or other. When he returned he brought along two water color paintings that he had found and bought. They depicted scenes in Wales and in north Italy. George had no training in art but he had an instinctive appreciation of it. This may have been inherited from Francis Hardy or from Sir Augustus Wall Callcott who George always thought was a brother of his own grandfather. Be that as it may the two pictures were to become valued possessions through the later migration to the New World and are still among the cherished heirlooms of the children. The incongruity of such paintings on the walls of a leaky frontier cabin in Texas must have been a bit striking.

On his return from Liverpool there were joyous greetings and enthusiastic admiration of the paintings. Then the young couple repaired to the table where a birthday supper had been "laid on" by the young wife. On the table Mary had placed a new pipe and a canister of tobacco. George never again tried to forego smoking but used a pipe for the rest of his life.

Almost a year after the wedding George took Mary back to Skeeby for a visit, then returned to his job. On September 6th he wrote, every inch the worried husband of a beloved and pregnant wife: "You had better make the best use of your time. It will be a long time ere I consent for your staying behind again." "Whatever you do mind you come by the 11:45 /train/ on Monday do not stop till the 3 o'clock. If you do you will have to perform half the journey in the dark ... be careful whatever you do. I am very anxious about you .... Take great care of yourself Popsy, especially in getting in and out of the /railroad/ carriages it is so dangerous ... I was sure Carrie was coming this time or I should not have left you."

He also reported on his housekeeping efforts:

Monday morning breakfasted on Love and expectation, dinner Bread & Bacon & water; ditto, tea; ditto, supper; ditto, Tuesday Breakfast; ditto, dinner. Tuesday night a glorious set out consisting of Marmalade, Bread, butter and mutton, Tinned spice cake, cream, &c, &c. & eggs. I had another try at hasty pudding. I don't know what was the matter, but I could not eat it, neither would the cat. However Patience & Perseverance overcomes difficulties and I had another try this morning & achieved splendid success. The cat liked it too.

For goodness sake come home I can't exist much longer. I am getting thin and I know it is through pining for you if you don't look sharp I am sure galloping consumption will set in.

He commented that a few days earlier he had gone on duty on Monday morning at 4:00 A.M. for a special three hour shift at the signal box. But at 7:00 his relief failed to appear. To leave a box on the main line unattended would have been a criminal offense so he stayed on the job. He got a passing boy to bring him some bread and bacon. Monday passed, so did Monday night and Tuesday until 7:00 P.M. Finally when his relief appeared he had been in his box for thirty-three nine hours. This entitled him to a day and a half overtime but instead of paying him the money the central office sent word that he was relieved from duty for an additional twenty-four hours. To add insult to injury the nice piece of beef he had bought for his

Tuesday dinner had spoiled by the time he got home. He was about "fed up" with the railroad.

Shortly before this experience word reached George that his Grandmother Callcott's brother, one Thomas Dixon of Wendover near Aylesbury, had died. A first report indicated the deceased had left a bequest for his nephew, Robert Dixon Callcott. Next a letter from W. L. Wooster, Esq., trustee of the estate, corrected the impression and reported that the bequest was for the children of Robert Dixon, and not for the Father. After the passage of some time the property which was in both houses and lands was duly advertised and sold and the heirs, a number of whom were reported to be overseas, were located. The joyful news came to George and Mary that his share of the estate was a cash sum of Ł413.4.6. (about $2,000). Good-bye to the railroad.

Neither George nor Mary had had experience in retailing but for some reason they decided to invest their new funds in a delicatessen and fine foods shop at Slaidburn, a suburb of Halifax. The exact location of the shop is unknown but apparently it was not far from one of the plants of the Dean Clough carpet mills, for Mary later talked of the high walls of the mill as towering over the shop. Woolen mill workers apparently had limited money for fine cheeses and delicatessen offerings but the pattern makers, among the aristocrats of the workers, seemed to have more cash.

About this time the young couple formed a life-long friendship with one of the younger executives of the mill, A. W. Wilson and his wife. Through the future years the two couples exchanged periodic letters. Even half a century later, when each of the couples had lost one of its partners, annual letters passed between the widow, Mary Callcott, in Texas and the widower, Arthur Wilson, in Halifax. When all four were dead the correspondence was kept up by the next generation until the 1960's when direct contact was again established by the descendents of each couple.

In due course children appeared. Herbert Hardy was born on February 1, 1882 and his sister Ethel arrived on September 25, 1884. Life was pleasant. In July 1882 Mary made another trip back to Skeeby. George gleefully wrote: "What do they all think about our changed position in life...?" On the shop he reported: "Last week our turnover was not quite up to average, this week so far we are doing remarkably well. There is scarcely a person comes in the shop but they ask after you." "I have just got an order of 40 gallons of paraffin." On August 1st he wrote that the July receipts had exceeded the June total by £ 3 ($15.00). Then, I am sure the "Young rascal Bertie will be thoroughly spoiled. Give my brother Frank a hearty invitation to visit us next month."

Meanwhile letters were arriving from Mary's parents in Texas about the good life out there. The cloudless days and clean air they talked about in such glowing terms were in striking contrast with the fog, rain, smoke and all-pervading chill of the northern slopes of the Pennines where tuberculosis was so prevalent.*

Typical of the glowing reports was one from John Ireland that had been written to his daughter Mary from his home in Luling, Texas on March 24, 1878. He said: "We have had a beautiful winter; little or no frost, a little white frost once or twice. I have potatoes in flower now. I expect to have new potatoes by the end of the month, March. Oats are shooting [heading], rye is shot, wheat will not be long. I [am] expecting to be harvesting by the first week in May. I have planted 80 acres grain. So far we do all [for] ourselves except washing our Sunday shirts, these I hire out. We do all our own housework even to baking and making butter. I milk 3 cows to new calves and one not. The thermometer stands at 80 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and we do not have any fire except to cook, not even night or morning. Grass is as good hear [sic] as you have it in June and has been for a month or more...."

Mary and later George had no way of knowing that this was an exceptional year and represented boon conditions. On May 18th The Luling Sentinel reported on excellent rains. "The grain crop is now considered made, while cotton never looked more promising." Luling indeed was on a boom. The number of farms in the county rose from 357 in 1870 to 1,421 in 1880. John Ireland's evident interest in grain and cattle was soon replaced by enthusiasm for cotton culture. In fact cotton bales ginned in the county rose from 1,692 in 1870 to over 7,600 in 1880 and to 38,710 in 1890. Cattle reached their peak in 1891 when Caldwell County reported over 37,000 head, a figure that declined by two-thirds in the next five years. (Maurine O'Banion, "The History of Caldwell County," M.S. in Univ. of Texas Library, pp. 166-175.) Indeed, careful reading of John Ireland's letters should have inspired caution. Eighty degree temperature in March portended 100 degrees in July. But on the rain soaked and chilly slopes of the Pennines such a thing as drought was scarcely credible to people who could look out on peat bogs that encroached within a few miles of the city itself.

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*George's letters to Mary repeatedly mention this scourge as the touch of death. Just before his marriage he referred to his landlady's daughter

At this point British excitement and interest in America was at a peak. British and Scottish investment companies had poured money into ranching and land investments in the far west. The first such company was formed at Edinburgh in 1873 with a capital of £1,500,000. Others followed fast. "By the late 1880's," Professor R. D. Ochs concludes, "the folklore and legends of the far west had saturated Great Britain as much as it had the eastern half of the United States." ("British Ranching and Land Investments in the Far Western United States in the late Nineteenth Century." Paper read at Southern Historical Association at Memphis, Tenn., Nov. 11, 1966.) This infatuation reached something of a climax when a fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, capitalized on a four-year experience in the American west to teach "all of his Oxford

The greengrocer's shop was paying its way and the young family could live in reasonable comfort, but neither of the proud parents could see much chance for substantial improvement. The result was a family conference. Ever since the shop had been opened George had kept a detailed record of daily sales, as well as of the expenses of the family. From these figures was calculated the exact sum the store should gross on an average day to provide the family with the income that would make possible the kind of life the parents wanted for their children. A study of daily receipts indicated that Tuesdays at this season represented the average day's income that could be expected throughout the year. So be it. If the gross receipts on the following Tuesday equalled or exceeded the exact sum adequate to provide for their planned way of life they would stay in Halifax — otherwise they would sell out and move to Texas.

On the following Tuesday morning the shop was opened at the regular hour. Sales proceeded much as usual — neither partner counting the money in the cash drawer until the end of the day. The last shift of mill workers passed on their way home, buying their last few shillings and pence worth of sugar and cheese. The doors were closed at the predetermined hour and two anxious persons huddled over the cash drawer. The amount required had been set at seven pounds, six shillings and eight pence. The first hurried count of the cash was so close to the figure that it could not be believed. The ha'pennies, the pennies, the six pences, the shillings, the crowns and the pound note or two were placed in separate piles. Each was counted, then re-checked. Then the totals were added up. The receipts amounted to seven pounds, six shillings and seven pence---one penny short. That settled it. Texas! For good or ill!

The decision was typical of ~~all~~ the future life of the couple. They firmly believed in using their best judgment to reach a proper decision. Once this was done there was no repining. For good or ill the decision was accepted. "Tis no use to cry over spilt milk," George often said. The game was now to be played out on the new basis.

In the following hectic weeks there was little time to think. The shop was sold, limited household goods packed, clothing prepared for the great venture, transportation arrangements made to sail from Liverpool, and good-byes said to friends and to the Old Country.

George was always parsimonious on personal expenses even though he might be almost extravagant on gifts, or other items that marked the gentleman. He would stint himself and his family through the year but spend freely on an occasional vacation. Accordingly, he determined to make the trip by steerage so as to hoard their limited capital for New World needs. George and seemingly frail Mary with the whole of her 5'2" and her two babies climbed the gang plank and descended to the noisome odors of the steerage compartment for the journey. But George himself told this story in his own words in an account written in 1926.