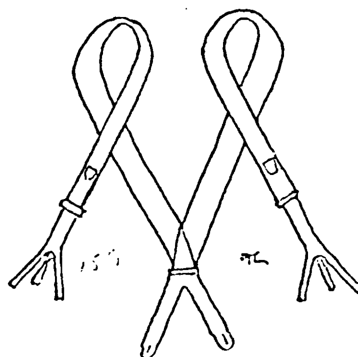
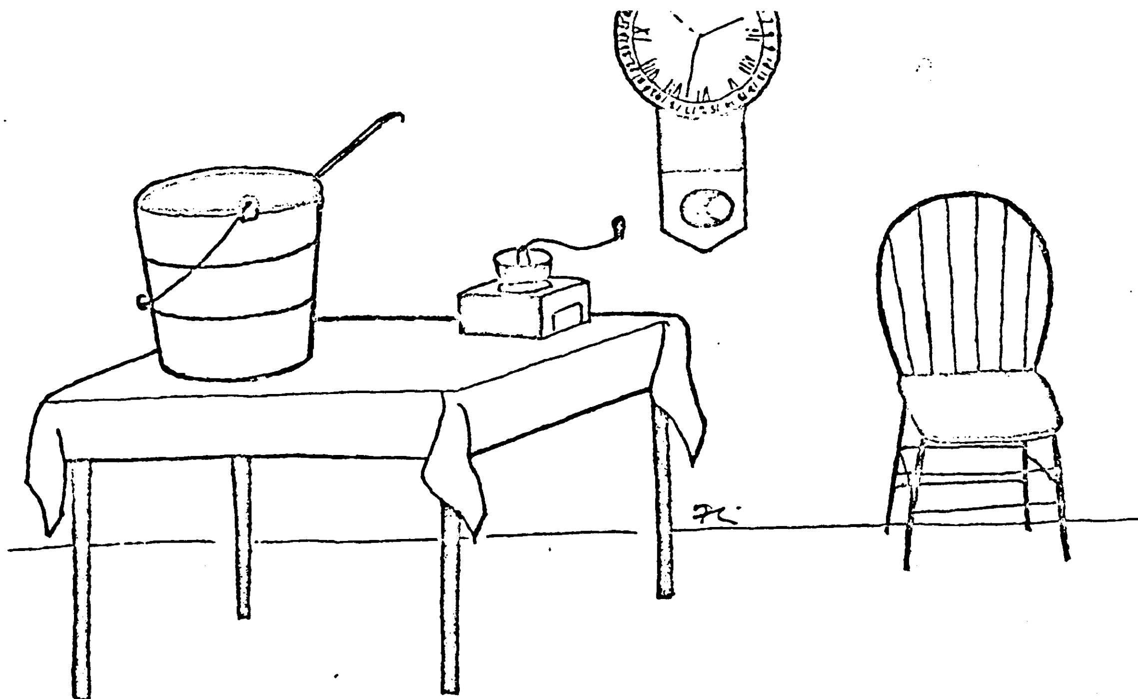
have been possible to salvage some of the cotton from the ground but that central Texas black gumbo soil was so water-logged that no one could get on the land for at least a week after the rains ceased. By that time it was still possible to pick up a few locks of cotton from the ground but the seeds had already sprouted. All cotton that had been open in the fields was a total loss.

Amid such events Herbert left home and Frank's diary proudly records a boy becoming a man. ~~It reported that the~~ For the first time the sixteen-year-old took a two-bale load of cotton to the gin ~~and that he drove~~ hauled by a "four-horse team". ~~for the first time on the public roads.~~ Evidently the roads were reasonably good so extra sideboards could be added to the wagon to hold the double load of cotton. The older brother had left home. A man's work had to be done. It was.

Thus, under greatly improved circumstances, with a mixture of back-sets and good times George and Mary began to breathe more easily. George could dignify his new status by getting up a little later in the mornings and now could ride around the farm on horseback to supervise what was going on instead of helping to do it himself.





VII. Long Branch

After 1880 two types of newcomers, one from the Old South and the other from Germany, moved into the country south of San Marcos so that a community developed around what became known as Long Branch church and school.

Forerunners of the first group had made their way west from Alabama and Mississippi into east Texas as early as the 1830's and 1840's. There they continued the life of the Old South from which they came. They imported Negro slaves and began raising cotton. After the Civil War the immigration of whites to Texas increased as the youth of a demoralized society in the older states sought its fortunes elsewhere. Large numbers of them settled in east Texas but a few journeyed as far west as San Marcos and San Antonio. This latter group found themselves in a radically different society from that in east Texas where labor was still provided by the Negro, where the social customs were those of the Old South and economic life still centered on cotton and rice. Those who reached the Long Branch community met new conditions. Here the

labor supply was Mexican and the economic background at first was that of the open range, but rapidly changed to ranching in competition with the incoming farmers.

The new arrivals from the old southern states still used the conventional covered wagon and traveled in groups (wagon trains) to provide mutual help and for safety. Typical was the family of Mrs. Jones.* As young girl in her teens the mother of the family and her young groom joined a Texas bound wagon train. They had a good team of mules but cou not afford a wagon so they joined forces with another young couple who h a wagon but one poor team only. Together, with reserve animals, they ma a welcome addition to any westward bound outfit. To make room for sleeping in the wagon the young bride's trunk with her hoarded hope chest containing a table cloth, a pair of bed sheets, a quilt or two and her extr clothing was placed in another wagon. Thus the women folk could sleep in the body of the wagon where they were safe from snakes, while the men slept on the ground beside the camp fire.

In east Texas the train divided. Part turned northward toward Dallas, and the rest continued in the direction of San Antonio. A few days later the young bride wanted something out of her trunk. It was nowhere to be found for it had evidently been put into a wagon that went to the north. She was inconsolable but there was nothing to do but go on. Near San Marcos the southern migrants broke up their train. Then it was found that an extra trunk in one of the wagons was claimed by no one. Evidently it had in some way been exchanged for the one that had gone north. There was no possible way to correct the mistake for no addresses were known. By common consent the

*A fictitious name for a real person.

unclaimed trunk was given to the bereaved bride. Hastily opened, it contained little to replace the lamented bedding. The bottom of the trunk, however, looked odd so the young groom pried it loose to find a twenty dollar gold piece secreted there. The financial foundation for new household supplies was at hand. Some twenty years later, about 1890, the family which by then included half a dozen children had established itself at Long Branch, three miles from the farm acquired by George and Mary.

By 1900 Mrs. Jones (her husband had died) was looked upon as an old woman though she was probably about forty-five years of age. Report had it that it was careless use of the common medicine of the day, calomel, that had loosened most of her teeth and caused her to lose some of them. Children watched with poorly suppressed amusement as she attempted to bite the kernels off a roasting ear. Another of her special attributes was the habit of dipping snuff which she had acquired as a girl in Alabama. It was fascinating entertainment to watch her prepare for her indulgence. She first selected a hack berry tree with some newly grown twigs about an eighth of an inch in diameter. The bark was pealed off to reveal the soft wood underneath. Next the end of the twig was carefully chewed (not bitten through) until the wood was reduced to a small bunch of fibers. Such a tool, when the end was moistened with saliva, was ready for use. A little can of snuff, carried in a convenient pocket or handbag, was now produced and opened. The moist twig was twisted around and around in the contents until the powdered tobacco adhered into a small round ball of aromatic brown stuff.

This was deftly inserted between the cheek and the lower gum. As the saliva began to flow there was need for ladylike expectoration.

On one occasion after attending Sunday School at Long Branch George's family was invited to dinner with the widow's family. For a number of years the local merchants, especially the local drug stores, had been distributing almanacs to their customers. These contained weather forecasts for the coming year and a mixture of practical information and moral admonitions. Now, however, some of the more progressive stores had replaced the old almanac gifts with brightly colored calendars. One of these occupied a prominent place in the parlor of the hostess' home. It was dominated by the face of a pretty girl with her gaze piously lifted upward. Clasped in her arms was a bunch of roses. Very noticeable to visitors, however, was a piece of white cloth pinned in place between the girl's face and the roses. George asked what the cloth was for. Immediately came the answer: "That girl's dress was so low it was indecent but she looked like such a nice child that I fixed her up so she would be comfortable." The day of bikinis had not come to Long Branch.

The good lady was a great favorite in the community. Visitors were always heartily welcome even though her culinary skill was notoriously limited. Hard corn pone, turnip greens and fatback were likely to provide the meal. By way of explanation the good soul would calmly expound her philosophy: "Well, if the visitor is a Christian, the food is good enough for him; if he is not, it is too good."

The second source of immigrants into central Texas was old Germany. This migration, too, had its forerunners before the Civil War. Most of the early arrivals came by way of Galveston. They had been brought over by large land companies to occupy lands secured around New Braunfels and Fredericksburg from the Republic of Texas. Half a century later these people and their descendants had become substantial citizens. Numbers of them had become so integrated with the English speaking population as to have modified their names (Rhinelander becoming Rylander, etc.) and they had forgotten their native language.*

These communities in the 1960's were still very proud of their Germanic traditions. For instance, annually Fredericksburg enacts its Easter pageant. In 1966 a cast of nearly 500 staged the spectacle on the Saturday night before Easter. This celebrated the occasion in 1847 when the leaders of the German colony were guided to the Indian encampment by fires lit on neighboring hills. The purpose of the meeting was to sign agreements with the Indians to permit a permanent white settlement to be made. When the children of the immigrants were frightened by the fires they were told that they "were lighted by the Easter Rabbit to cook eggs in great cauldrons and color them with the wild flowers the little bunny rabbits gathered in the hills." In the 1960's boy scouts and other organizations kept the old

*For a history of these early arrivals see R. L. Biesele, "The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861," Ph.D. Mss, in University of Texas Library.

tradition alive as they lighted bonfires and scampered around dressed as rabbits to the amusement of spectators. (San Antonio News, April 8, 1966.)

Once the Civil War was over the contacts of these early settlers with the Old Country induced a heavy migration of new families eagerly seeking homes in the golden west. They were attracted by the romance of the new just at the time they sought to flee from the renewed economic and political hardships of the old world. This new migration reached its peak in the 1880's and early 1890's. Some 86,500 Texans of German stock in 1880 increased to over 125,000 by 1890 and to 157,000 by the end of the century.* The earlier German settlers had come from an intellectual and culturally refined class. The newcomers "were almost altogether of the better peasant stock of Germany, of less refinement."**

New Braunfels and Fredericksburg were on the edge of the Hill Country and had become the center of substantial industries such as flour milling, lime burning, beer brewing and the like. Their thrifty merchants served as commodity brokers and engaged in wool and mohair marketing as their communities grew and prospered. The later German settlers naturally gravitated to these same communities as a base at first. They, however, were farmers and quickly moved out from the towns onto the coastal plain south and east of the Edward's

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*Terry G. Jordan, German Seed in Texas Soil. Austin, Texas, 1966. P. 57.

**Arwerd Max Moellering, "A History of Guadalupe County, Texas." MSS in University of Texas Library.

Plateau. This movement soon took them into the country between San Marcos and Seguin.

By chance George had acquired his land just at the point where the new settlers from the Old South, expanding from San Marcos and Kyle; and the Germans from Seguin and New Braunfels met. The Germans, with pertinacity and sheer hard work pressed back the Old South settlers who had a heritage of dependence on slave labor for rough work. Jordan (Ibid., 169-191) quotes one observer as saying: "When the German stops, he is fully determined to make things suit him, and immediately goes to work to that end and accomplishes it." Results soon became evident. In 1880 the average German owned farm in West Texas yielded an income of $2.46 per acre, but farms owned by southern Anglo-Saxons yielded only $2.28 per acre.

Many of the German newcomers had merely enough to get them to the land of promise.* They had known little but hard work in the home land and did not fear it in the new. Once they rented a small plot of ground they confidently expected to farm it successfully, and then to own it shortly. They had no notions about eight-hour days or forty-hour weeks; nor had they heard of restrictions on woman or child labor. When a "person is old enough he does it, and when he does it he is old enough" was a simple and all-sufficient work creed with them.

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*In special cases there were sons who were about to reach the draft age and who preferred to take the chance of migrating to the New World rather than face the possibilities of more European wars — the Franco-Prussian War was just over. One of the newcomer families that settled near the Callcott farm told of getting their sixteen-year-old son out of the Old Country by placing him in a large trunk and then "encouraging" the border inspector not to examine that particular trunk.

On one occasion George came home to report that one of the new neighbors had lost one of his oxen at the peak of the plowing season. The man had spliced a stout pole to the end of the double tree (bar) to which the oxen were hitched to pull his plow. This made one end longer than the other and provided extra leverage when the center of the double tree was bolted to the plow. Now the young wife and ten-year-old boy were hitched to the long end of the contraption and the remaining ox to the short end. The plowing went on.

The women worked beside their men and crops were refused the right not to grow. Before long an old country institution appeared. A saloon was opened where beer was sold. Also available was the Texas favorite, whisky, but few of the Germans were much interested in it. This was kept for "Americans" who could occasionally be relied upon to buy some of it at prices that gave the proprietor a nice profit.

These forthright folk were a source of considerable bafflement to some of their English speaking neighbors. Word spread that one likely young girl was the object of the attentions of a promising lad of the community. Both families were congenial and soon were in agreement. Thereupon the young man began to spend the night at the home of his fiance. In due time it was obvious that nature was taking her course though the girl continued to help her family make and gather the cotton crop. When this was done the wedding took place. A week later the mother of the bride came to see Mary.

When something was said of the wedding the complacent answer was: "Yes. It was just at the right time. All the cotton was picked, and the baby was born two days after the wedding."

The newcomers steadily expanded their holdings. By 1906 George and Mary had German neighbors on the west; two more owned farms on the south; another on the east, and across the road that provided the northern boundary of the farm three German brothers had bought the land. By 1907 the nearest English speaking neighbor was three miles away at Long Branch community.

On one occasion one of the neighbors came through the Callcott farm on his way to the San Marcos road because his own outlet was to the south in the direction of Seguin. He was in his wagon so George casually asked why he was going to town. The answer: "My old Mother is afraid she will die and have to be buried in a home-made coffin. I promised her a store bought coffin but that does not satisfy her. She says she may die when there is so much work on the farm that no one will have time to go to town to buy a coffin. So to stop her from worrying I told her I would go in today and bring it home. Then she can look at it and know that it is ready when she needs it."

On another occasion a neighbor's wife was expecting a baby. The family had sent for a midwife so Mary went over to help care for the family until the midwife came. When Mary asked what she could do to help the answer was that the baby had arrived and been placed under the bed clothes

to be kept warm near the mother. After a few minutes the new mother said she would like Mary to "take up" her bread and put it in the oven, for the yeast had probably worked enough by that time. Not seeing the bread Mary hesitantly asked where she could find it. The answer was that the weather was cool so to warm the bread and let the yeast work properly the bread was in the bed too. The mother was in the middle, the bread at her back and the baby in front. All were thriving.

Foods as well as customs were different. At Christmas the Callcott children learned to expect some hard but tasty cookies with a fragrant addition of caraway seeds. In exchange special items were sent to the neighbors on occasion. After making ice cream one summer day about a quart of the product was carefully packed in a jar and placed in a bucket of salted ice. Later Mary asked how the children had liked the ice cream. After a slight pause the answer was that they found it a little cold but liked it fine after it had been warmed on the stove.

The practical outlook of these sturdy folk was everywhere evident in their relations and contacts. On one occasion George asked about the family of one of his neighbors. In return came a similar inquiry. The answer was qualified for Mary had just had one of her violent headaches that occasionally brought on fainting spells. Then came the puzzled but wholly friendly question: "Why don't you let her die? She is sickly all the time and gives you puny little children. If she dies you can marry a strong young woman who will give you some fine workers."

In spite of the differences in outlook a hearty respect grew on both sides. When word spread that George and Mary were thinking of selling the farm one of the neighbors came to ask George that the line between the two properties be surveyed. This was the property that had been sold by John Ireland, partly to George and partly to the neighbor named August Dreibrod. George asked why they should go to this trouble. There had been no disagreement over the line and to bring a surveyor out from town would be expensive. The answer was prompt: "If you sell your farm the new owner may be someone I have trouble with." "But," was the rejoinder, "it will cost both of us money to get the county surveyor and both of us are satisfied already." "Oh," was the response, "I want you to survey it. You have a machine /a transit/ that you use to measure your fields. I trust you. Anyhow, you will draw a better line than some stranger who is likely to make the line go where we know it ought not to be."

It was finally agreed that George was to survey the line with the neighbor accompanying to agree to each step of the proceeding. The fence was put in and when the farm was sold and the official line established the fence was accepted as it stood. At the same time that the southern line was drawn Mr. Dreibrod insisted that he wanted to buy enough land along the west side of the farm to give him an outlet to the north. This would involve the sale of a couple of acres of land and the building of another fence. Again George was inclined to demur, saying that his neighbor could drive through the farm as he had been doing for some years. The response was another

emphatic negative. He wanted to buy the land and have George survey it. This would prevent future trouble. So it was arranged.

In spite of the strangeness of the new land and its customs these German settlers intended to become citizens in the full sense of the word. Their children were sent to American schools even though their accent was queer and their knowledge of English limited; and in spite of the fact that it meant weaning them away from their parents' culture. The old virtues of self-reliance and hard work were never forgotten and when they became eligible to take their new oath of allegiance it was no empty form. The rolls of the United States armed forces in two world wars bear ample evidence that the names Nimitz and Eisenhower were not isolated exceptions. Both at this time and later at Sabinal George and Mary encountered this fact. In Sabinal, indeed, one of the town's leading citizens during World War I could count his nephews in the German army knowing that his own sons were facing them (and one of his boys was killed in the process) on the Western Front in France.

As new settlers moved in, public roads became increasingly important. In that black, sticky soil traveled roads became quagmires in wet weather and mud holes developed at the bottoms of hills where water crossed the highway for no culverts were found on those country roads. Road making machinery such as power-driven shovels and graders were in the future. Instead there was an official obligation that annually

farm owners contribute labor for road repairs in proportion to the land owned. If a man was unable to work personally he was to send a substitute or pay for one. Usually each man gave from one to three days' work (in emergencies the time might be extended) with simple tools and teams. The tools might be a shovel, a hoe, a grubbing hoe and a drag pan (scraper) to be pulled by his team. In case his farm was large the requirements were increased. The time for the work, except in case of emergencies, was usually set by the road overseer for the end of July or the early part of August. This was usually a slack season on the farms and just before cotton picking with its heavy hauling was to begin. Later this annual chore was replaced by payment of a road tax to enable county authorities to do the work with road repairing equipment.

About the time that George and Mary moved to Rattlesnake Hill other English speaking settlers were moving through east Texas to San Marcos and radiating outward from there into the country. The crossroads store at Redwood was a kind of outpost from San Marcos, as Zorn had become an outpost from German New Braunfels. The Rylanders, the Garys, the Watsons, the Ligons and others established a community of scattered farms. Soon there appeared a Methodist circuit rider and arrangements were made for him to visit Long Branch once a month for preaching. On the remaining Sundays there was Sunday School. A small church building was constructed about 1885, and across the road a one-room school house was built.

Soon after George and Mary moved to their modest cabin in 1888 one Sunday afternoon Mr. and Mrs. I. B. Rylander drove four dusty miles over dirt roads to welcome them and to invite them to join the local church. The Rylanders were among the most substantial farmers of the district and lived in a fine two-story painted house reminiscent of the Old South. They represented the élite of the community and their welcome was greatly appreciated. The invitation was quickly accepted. In the Old Country George had attended either the Wesleyan or the Congregational church and Mary had belonged to the Church of England so both readily adjusted to the Methodist organization with its demands for Puritanical living. No dancing, no drinking, no card playing: the prohibitions were absolute and specific. George's London experiences and his family training gave him a sympathetic understanding of such doctrines.

When the new German settlers came into the country side and built a dance hall adjacent to the saloon at Zorn both saloon and hall were roundly condemned by the Methodists as agents of the devil and sources of immorality and corruption. The cultural value of the German song fests and social dances was wholly lost on the neighboring community. Indeed Over the years prohibition became a bitter issue in Texas politics. In general San Marcos was "dry" and Seguin was "wet." When Carrie Nation in 1901 took her campaign to Texas a crowd of pranksters in Seguin had one of their number don a dress and impersonate the crusader. The imposter arrived at the depot, rode around town balefully shaking her two hatchets at saloons and finally

entered one of them to wreck the place. There "she" was arrested and carried to the calaboose. "Never was there such a crowd, such excitement, until the public was on to the joke. All the saloon men have not yet recovered." Thus said The Seguin Enterprise on December 13, 1901.

Chess was a gentleman's game but only George and his boys were interested in it. For the Long Branch community checkers and dominoes were somewhat hesitantly accepted as border-line indulgencies suitable for children, but to be watched carefully lest they too become the agents of the devil. Playing cards were wholly taboo. George and some of the other men, however, insisted that they were a harmless diversion. In fact George was wont to remark from time to time that he had some difficulty deciding why spots on pieces of wood (dominoes) were harmless, while spots on pieces of cardboard were sinful. In the meantime he went along with the community and did not make an issue of the matter.

Gambling of all kinds was likewise wholly condemned. When boys played marbles for "keeps" that was "sin." In view of the cheap chalk marbles that were to be had at 5¢ for twenty it might be a minor matter, but to lose one's "taw" (shooting marble) that frequently was a treasured agate costing 5¢ or even 10¢, and only bought after labored consideration, was serious indeed. In any case the principle involved gambling and was "sin."

The vigorous and sincere sermons had a generous supply of hell-fire and brimstone with total damnation for the sinful as a matter of course. No work was to be done on the Sabbath. No wood was to be chopped

and of course no recreation was to be indulged in. That meant no boy could throw or catch a baseball. Again George was inclined to comment ironically on the fact that there should be no work on the Sabbath yet on those same days the women folk were more or less expected to stay away from church so as to cook for expected friends and the preacher. These same activities conducted by the same women during the week might be work, on Sunday they had somehow become sanctified for while the Lord had commended Mary's "better part" he had not condemned Martha.

The preacher lived about seven or eight miles away and once a month came to the Long Branch community on Saturday evening (afternoon) to spend the night in the home of some member of the local church. After preaching the next morning he would drive home after a good dinner with some other parishioner. He was a worthy descendant of the frontier circuit riders of the early part of the century. One was a Confederate War veteran who had never learned to refer to his ex-enemies by any other term than the single word "damnyankees." After a good supper on a Saturday night he would regale his hearers with tales of the war days which one suspects had lost little of either glamor or blood from the passage of time.

About 1904 or 1905 the General Conference of the Methodist Church (which met at four-year intervals) was reported to have recommended that an Order of Worship be followed by all member churches at the regular Sunday morning services. This was to replace the old spontaneous and irregular procedure that might result in half a dozen songs, a prayer or two at haphazard

intervals, and other activities that the preacher suggested on the spur of the moment. Instead, it was advised that invocation, songs, prayers and sermon follow each other at specified intervals. The discussion quickly became acrimonious. This was "rank Popery," formalism run mad, and an effort to replace personal worship with mere ritualism. With some difficulty a serious split was avoided in the small congregation. The suggested Order of Worship was <u>not</u> adopted, but careful observers slowly became aware that Sunday after Sunday the preacher was inclined to announce each step of his still "spontaneous" program in about the same order as that recommended by the hierarchy in the first place.

Sunday school met at 10:00 o'clock in the morning, with preaching at 11:00 on each third Sunday of the month. About fifteen to twenty minutes before the time set the congregation began to arrive. Until about 1902 George's family attended in a hack with two seats on a light, square body, drawn by two horses. At that time they bought their fine new carriage. This had extra heavy springs and glistened handsomely with brilliant varnish. The accompanying new harness had brass trimmings on the hames and bridles and demanded admiration. Incidentally, blacking the harness and polishing the brass was a new job for the boys on Saturday afternoons.

This pride in a fine equipage was to cost dearly. Unkempt animals were a subject for snide comment. Mules might be driven in carriages but in all cases the animals were to be curried carefully and their manes roached and trimmed. At one time George's outfit was drawn by a

handsome pair of mules, but one of them became frantic at any effort to trim his forelock. The only way to get the job done was to toss a rope around the animal's neck and under one front knee. When this was pulled taut the uncomfortable animal would lurch or stumble. At this point a skillful jerk on the rope would trip up the off-balance animal. Once on the ground his head was seized and the clipping done quickly. The job had been performed as usual on Saturday afternoon but a small tuft of hair straggled free. The next morning Herbert noticed the oversight when he went to hitch up the carriage. Something of a perfectionist and a quick worker, he seized a rope, rigged the sling around the mule's neck and tripped him up. By some mischance the creature got his head under his body as his full weight came down. There was a sharp crack as his neck snapped. A $100 mule was dead.

Another Saturday afternoon chore in preparation for Sunday was to chop and bring in stove wood, and to polish shoes for all the family. Next a galvanized wash tub was installed in the boys' room and three or four buckets of water were pulled up from the twenty-foot cistern. The water was refreshingly cool at all times, though in winter weather it might be made more attractive by a kettle of hot water heated on the kitchen stove. In case of serious drought the water allowance might be cut down or two of the boys might be expected to use the same water. Scrubbed for another week they faced the Sabbath.

There was no prohibition on talking inside the church building — though Mary's Episcopalian up-bringing was never reconciled to such casual lack of respect for the sanctuary. On arrival the girls and women filed dutifully to the right side of the building. The men and boys remained outside to talk about the weather, the crops, the latest purchase of vehicles, horses, or land; and the ever-present problems of drought, rain, the price of cotton, corn and the like. The boys stood around and learned "man talk" from the oldsters. Two minutes before the appointed hour the superintendent of the Sunday School would drift away from the men and enter the building. Soon thereafter he would "pitch" a tune in a good firm voice, with the women joining in emphatically. About 1905 the congregation bought an organ and thereafter this assisted in the call to worship. At the first notes the men discontinued their conversations and moved in a body to the door and then sat on the left side of the building. This congregation practiced segregation of the sexes in worship.

Most of the men disposed of their chewing tobacco, flipped aside half-smoked cigarettes, or knocked the dottle out of their pipes as they entered the door. A few, however, insisted that they could not keep awake during a long sermon unless they had their chewing tobacco to work on. Unfortunately, tobacco stimulated the flow of saliva and few enjoyed swallowing the surplus fluid. The building had a wainscoting about four feet high around the inside of the sanctuary. A glance quickly identified certain seats as the property of specific individuals by the tobacco juice on

the adjacent wainscoting. In fact, on one occasion the Callcott family attended church in town. Coming home the youngest boy commented on the beautiful town church and added that those people must spend a lot of time cleaning up since he saw no tobacco juice on any of the walls.

Each fall when the cotton picking season was over a revival service was held. At times this became a camp meeting when two of the congregations on a preacher's circuit chose to combine forces. Many of the families bought tents, usually 16' x 16'; and collapsible cots for sleeping. The preferred camp ground was on the San Marcos river near Fentress or Staples. There wild pecan groves provided shade near to good water. The families repaired to the selected site taking food with them for a week. Coffee making and simple cooking was done on a portable charcoal furnace that was used at home to heat flatirons. Mosquito nets were essential for D.D.T. and other insecticides had not yet been heard of. About the middle of the week a man from each farm would make a hasty trip home to check up on Mexican tenants who had been left in charge of affairs. Usually they found things in good order for the caretakers were proud of their responsibilities and appreciated the free milk from the cows and the extra dollar or two of income that came with the occasion.

The regular minister of the circuit was regularly assisted by a visiting evangelist well known for his eloquence. Morning and evening services were supplemented by sunrise and afternoon prayer meetings in the woods. These camp meetings must have been among the last of their type.

Shouting by those under the influence of the spirit was still encouraged but a more sophisticated and self-conscious younger generation was beginning to feel vaguely uncomfortable about, and superior to, these spontaneous demonstrations.

What caused irreverent amusement among the younger generation was the obvious enthusiasm from an unexpected quarter that greeted the prayer meetings in the woods. That part of Texas in mid-summer was infested with voracious redbugs, or chiggers, that swarmed to greet the worshippers. After about two such services amid the beauties of nature the sessions were adjourned to the regular center of worship where the pests could be expected to be less numerous.

The place of worship itself had been specially constructed for its purpose and was called an arbor. In a convenient cleared space in the woods poles ten feet high were erected at ten or twelve foot intervals in each direction to encompass a space about 30' x 50'. To these uprights cross poles were lashed to provide parallel supports. Across these parallel poles and at right angles to them more poles were laid at about eighteen inch intervals. Next the whole was covered with brush and branches of trees. The arbor remained open on all sides and so was cool if any breeze was blowing and remained reasonably dry in case of rain. A platform at one end was built for the choir and the preachers. After a week, tired and a bit grimy the family would be ready to return to home activities once more.

Other social affairs such as an occasional dinner-on-the-grounds centered on the local church. During the preceding day or two each housewife quietly determined to outdo her neighbors in baking pies, cakes, frying chickens and the like. On the selected day as soon as Sunday School was over dinner was served picnic style on clean table cloths, usually white, spread on the ground. The children walked around sampling each lady's offerings until they could hardly stagger. By four o'clock in the afternoon weary parents and half sick children were ready to make their way home to feed hungry livestock and milk the cows.

Also every spring one of the Rylanders could be relied upon to get a "yen" for fresh fish. The suggestion would be quickly endorsed and a date agreed upon. The night before the day selected the boys spaded up the moist earth beside the haystack to collect a supply of earthworms for bait. On the appointed morning the family was roused at 5:00 o'clock to feed the stock and chickens, milk the cows and dress for the day. By ten o'clock half a dozen families could be expected at the site selected. Then the fishing began. A few white perch, sun perch, a small trout or two and an occasional catfish might be caught but what were they among so many? Of course the housewives had brought along plenty of food so a good time was had anyway and that was the purpose of the affair.

As soon as dinner was over the boys began to get restless. Then came the query: "Can we go swimming?" Bathing suits were unknown so

the suggestion was almost indecent in itself when girls and women were in the neighborhood. Usually some man could be found who would affirm that the boys should learn to swim so he would agree to sponsor the event. Gleefully the boys faded behind the bushes in the direction of the swimming hole while the women folks remained wholly ignorant of what was going on. Later suspiciously wet heads were properly ignored as families prepared to go home.

Also about once a year some lady would propose a quilting bee. Husbands were put under assessment for cotton samples, or even a few pounds of lint cotton that they were expected to bring back from the gin. Then the women of each household started the tedious job of carding the cotton If the lint was used and put in the quilt as it came from the gin it would rapidly form hard lumps. Cotton cards were to be bought in pairs at the stores. Each was a flat rectangle about 4" x 8" in size. From one side of each card there was a handle about five inches long that could be grasped firmly by the hand. Imbedded in the face of each card were a multitude of small flexible steel hooks, which projected about a quarter of an inch from the card. All of these were slightly bent from the top toward the bottom of the card.

The first step was to place a small amount of cotton lint on the sloping hooks on one of the cards. Then grasping a card in each hand the empty card was scraped over the face of the first one, but with the hooks

facing in the opposite direction. The meshing of the opposing sets of hooks straightened out the knots in the cotton fibre and combed out dirt and knotted fibre. This left a smooth, fluffy lint not unlike the absorbent cotton that can be bought in drug stores for surgical dressings. This product was ready to be stitched into quilts with the confident expectation that it would stay in place. Meantime, for weeks in advance scraps saved from preceding sewing of shirts and dresses and from worn out clothes had been stitched into fancy designs. All was now ready. New cloth was used as a base, the carded cotton was laid in place and the fancy designs placed on top. The three layers were quilted together with intricate stitches frequently done with colored threads that added to the beauty of the whole. Here were bed covers to last for future generations.

Across the road from the church was the school house. It too was built about 1885, though in the desperately hard days of the early 1890's Herbert and Ethel had little opportunity to take advantage of it. Each year Mary made a strenuous effort to get the children off to school for a few weeks but Herbert could seldom be spared from the farm and a three-milk walk was hardly advisable for Ethel unless her brother could go along. Mary taught the children to read and write and to handle simple arithmetic. George encouraged the process but his impatience with mistakes made him so feared by the children that they seldom sought his aid.

About fifty yards to the north of the school house was a three-room residence with a small barn to accommodate a team, a corn crib and a

pig pen. Back of the house and adjoining the school yard were six or eight acres of land that went with the house. In the house lived Professor Thomas*, his wife and three children. The house was his, rent free the year around, and he was at liberty to use the land for vegetables, corn for his animals or anything else he chose. His salary varied slightly but was about $45.00 per month for the four, or if possible for five, months of the school year. In addition, neighboring families from time to time gave him an extra pig if one of their litters was unexpectedly large. This could be raised in his pen. Also from time to time he might receive a load of wood for his stoves or a load of corn for his animals. Of course if the pig litters were small and the corn crops poor chances of such largess were seriously impaired.

His own professional training was limited and he frankly stated that he had never become acquainted with algebra or geometry and that he made no effort to teach children such theoretical subjects. Each child progressed in any one subject as fast as his and the teacher's inclinations justified. The result was that if any of his twenty more or less fortunate neophytes later transferred to other schools they were likely to find their knowledge of arithmetic three or four years out of step with their knowledge of English grammar, reading and spelling. Also in spite of the obviously practical and immediate value of both German and Spanish in such a community neither was allowed to contaminate the classroom. However, regardles

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*Another fictitious name.

of later business or professional success if one of his old pupils is to meet and recognize him in the hereafter, one can rest assured that the only proper mode of address that would occur to him, or to the old teacher, would be that of "Professor" Thomas."

Even at the County Seat, Seguin, the high school could only report forty-one graduates in the seven years from 1895 to 1901, inclusive, though the next two years did boast of thirteen and ten graduates, respectively. (The Seguin Enterprise, September 4, 1903.) Local shortcomings were so obvious that the Long Branch school board decided to make an effort to organize the children into formal grades. The professor was replaced by a Miss Mamye Sanders who was expected to introduce new methods. The most striking difference was that she was a woman instead of a man, and school "masters" only had been employed up to that date. The change did not mean that the rod was to be discarded as a tool to aid in the impartation of knowledge. Frank's diary for January 6, 1908 joyously records that two boys got a whipping that day, "ha. ha! ha!" Then comes the comment that the teacher had proceeded with such enthusiasm that she had broken her weapon, so at least one of the culprits escaped with a light punishment.

With the coming of the woman teacher there was no longer a need to maintain the teacher's residence. This relieved enough school funds to extend the school year about a month. A few years earlier, the fall session opened on October 15, 1902 and closed on March 26, 1903.

This remained about the customary schedule though crops were so late in 1903 that school did not open until November 2nd. Unfortunately, even then many of the older boys could not be spared from farm work. For instance, in 1907 Frank did not start school until December 30, after the Christmas holidays. In addition the boys had to expect interruptions at frequent intervals. In 1903 the twelve-year-old Frank commented: "Ground corn for chickens until 10:00, then walked [three miles] to school." Evidently all the teams were at work in the fields. The boy simply considered himself lucky that his own services could be spared and that he did not have to stay at home to handle a plow.

On an average morning the children began to arrive at school about 8:30. They ranged in age from seven to about fifteen and pursued subjects scattered through six years of a normal grammar school curriculum. Only half a dozen lived near enough to walk to school regularly. A few came in groups of two to four in buggies and the rest appeared on donkeys or horses. The first job of each driver or rider was to select a tree as a hitching post for his animal. It was a case of first come first served. The trees were mesquites and little more than bushes. The animals were tied there from 8:45 a.m. to at least 4:00 p.m. In case some culprit was "kept in" after school another thirty minutes or so might be added to the animal's wait. Children were not often kept after 4:30 for the day had already been a long one. Also to keep a child ~~more than thirty minutes was calculated to bring~~ after that time was likely to incur parental home repercussions when home chores were waiting.

Every boy was trained to care for his animal. The rope around its neck was to be tied so that it would not slip and choke the beast. The other end of the rope was tied to a tree limb at such a height that the creature, weary of standing in one spot for hours, might lie down close to the tree trunk. If the rope between the limb and the animal's neck was more than the distance from the limb to about eighteen inches from the ground there was danger that the animal would get his foot over the rope. In that case when it raised its head the rope, foreshortened by running under the leg, might not allow the animal to stand erect. It would then start plunging and either break the rope or burn an angry place between the leg and the body that would make walking painful for a number of days. From time to time during the school day some boy located near a window would announce that so-and-so's pony, mule or donkey had stepped over its rope. That meant one lucky chap could leave class to take care of his animal — and this was likely to be a lengthy affair, especially with some boys.

Most of the children brought a mid-day meal in their "dinner" buckets (never called lunch boxes). The girls were allowed to stay in the school room but the boys hastened outside to sit on the woodpile (or cower behind it on a cold winter day) to munch their sandwiches. Frequent swaps took place as slices of cake or other coveted luxuries changed hands. So long as Professor Thomas lived on the grounds his two boys were stuffed with cake from the whole community. They first rushed to

gobble their own somewhat meager meal at home. Then they hurried back to the woodpile with two or three pieces of hot corn bread liberally spread with butter and molasses. When cold sandwiches were swilled down with cold water this hot corn bread was in clamorous demand, in fact bargains were frequently struck for it several days in advance.

The old woodpile also served another valuable educational purpose. Ten to fourteen-year-olds inevitably had arguments which, under the school boy code could only be settled by physical encounter. The professor was expected to keep the peace, but he well knew that what he did not know was not likely to hurt him. He never bothered the boys while they were eating for he went home for his own dinner at the same time. Also, if for any reason he had to return to the school house before 1:00
he regularly had a coughing spell as he left the house. Once at t[he] school
o'clock when school again "took up", he at most glanced out of the window toward the woodpile. Safe on the backside thereof trial by battle could be pursued to its varied conclusions. If an occasional shirt was torn, or a bruised face showed up the accident was glibly explained as the result of a fall — and no one asked what caused the fall.

The woodpile itself was replenished from time to time by one or the other of the fathers of the school children. This hard, scrubby mesquite could be cut but seldom split. The gnarled and twisted limbs of that precluded anything of the kind. The older boys took turns chopping the wood and the younger ones took it into the school house to feed the pot bellied heating stove. Even when a new "box" stove accommodated longer

sticks of wood refueling meant opening the front door to put the sticks in the fire box. Immediately smoke and fumes belched out into the room to the pretended fright of the girls and the amusement of the boys. On a day when a keen norther was blowing any wood stove provided scant heat in a barn-like room 20' x 35'. Even if the stove was red hot it only warmed one side of each of a score of youngsters who frequently kept mufflers around their necks to supplement overcoats. Coughs and colds were taken as a matter of course.

Preparations for the school year were a serious matter. Parents went to town to buy the proper "reader" for each child. No free books were thought of but old books, if in good shape, might be traded-in on new purchases by the bookstores which allowed a credit of a few pennies on each. In addition arithmetic and spelling books were needed. For the older children there was an almost indecent physiology book which carried ludicrous and veiled references to bodily functions well calculated to excite the curiosity of thirteen and fourteen year olds.

For writing each child was provided with a copy book in which he traced laboriously the fancy writing provided as a model at the top of each page. Absolutely necessary was a slate and a box of slate pencils. The slate itself was about 8" x 12" in size and was composed of a smooth piece of the stone encased in a frame of wood. On this a pupil could "do his sums" by scraping the slate pencil on the flat surface to leave a white mark as he traced his figures. If he made a mistake he simply spat on

the slate and rubbed out the error with the heel of his hand; then started all over once more. A final piece of equipment was greatly prized. This was a 5¢ tablet of writing paper. It was soft blotting-paper like stuff on which it was impossible to write with ink because the fluid spread quickly through the spongy and uncalendared paper. Ink tablets cost a dime each. Most parents also invested in some unpainted cedar lead pencils which could be doled out as needed. These cost ten cents a dozen. Occasionally an extravagant parent would buy some fancy colored (painted) pencils at the rate of two for a nickle but the plain cedar variety was standard equipment.

And in these very pencils lay one of the proud, or shameful, features of any boy's school life. No pencil sharpeners had yet been heard of so each self-respecting boy considered himself an expert pencil sharpener. In the first place no boy attended school without a pocket knife, he would as soon think of attending without his shirt. With this trusty tool he first marked a ring around the pencil about an inch from the end. Then with a sharp blade he gently whittled down the wood to reveal the lead about an eighth to a fourth of an inch from the end. This was then smoothed down to a fine point. The best way to a little girl's heart was through the ability to sharpen her pencils so that she would not have to dirty her fingers doing the job for herself.

Friday afternoons were the high spot of the week. At that time came spelling and cyphering matches. These took place in front of the whole school and on the stage which was about twelve feet in depth and extended

across one end of the room. On this, raised two steps above the room floor, the teacher sat looking over his charges. The urchins, with boys and girls in each class, were called from their seats to the stage. They had entered the building by separate doors and had been seated on different sides of the room. Now they were desegregated to line up alphabetically with bare toes just touching a crack between two boards in the floor. The teacher would then "gave out" the words from the spelling book in the order in which they were listed on the page. If all had studied their lessons properly they could be relied upon to spell the words that were due to come to them. In case some benighted youngster had miscounted or been remiss he was likely to stumble over his word and precipitate disaster. The missed word was "passed" to the next in line who was sure to know nothing about it. Why should he, it was not "his" word? Then it went on to the next and on to the end of the line and from there back to the head. When all had missed it the correct order was reestablished and the recitation proceeded smoothly.

Occasionally there was a regular spelling bee, or match. On these occasions two children were selected to head the two sides; then each in alternate order selected pupils from the whole school until all had been chosen on one side or the other. The two sides then lined up facing each other. The words to be spelled were directed by the teacher first to those at the heads of the two lines. If a word was missed the culprit took his seat while the word was passed across to the other side, and on

down the lines alternately until it was spelled correctly. The last pupil standing was the victor.

The cyphering matches were also a case of choosing sides from among the upper classes. The teacher would write some figures on the blackboard at the back of the stage. These were to be added, subtracted, multiplied or divided, at times even by long division. As rapidly as a pupil finished his "sum" on either paper or slate he dashed to place it on the teacher's desk. When all the papers were in the teacher solemnly "did the sum" correctly on the blackboard; then turned and graded the papers. If the top paper (the last one handed in) was correct it received a grade of "1"; the next, if correct, got a "2" and so on to the bottom of the stack where a correct answer received a substantial "10" or "12". After a dozen rounds of this the scores earned were added up to determine individual and team winners.

At the end of the school year came a community function. Each student was expected to "say his piece" over which he had been laboring for some weeks. This was usually a selection of sentimental poetry or a declamatory oration. Most of the boys half sheepishly gabbled through their selections as rapidly as possible ~~so as to get~~ and rushed back to their seats. Some of the girls were trained at home to "elocute" their pieces with elaborate gestures and intonations designed to reflect passion or sentiment. When Miss Mamye took over the school she introduced a new note by adding a number of drills, marches and counter marches, to the closing activities.

There was no musical instrument in the building so the march cadence was established by the teacher emphatically counting: "one, two, three, four; one, two, three, four." The proud youngsters also wore sashes and carried American flags. The purchase of these flags required a special meeting of the school board to discuss at some length whether to spend $2.00 for such trimmings and unexpected expenses. In part it was a question of principle. Should a reckless teacher be encouraged to engage in such extravagance and to waste public funds? All agreed that she had been working hard and had spent much extra time on her pupils so the expense was approved in the name of patriotism. The marches went merrily on as the school reached out toward modernity.

One year all precedents were broken when it was decided to put on a home talent play. The post-school young folk of the community were enlisted. A letter was despatched to a supply house which forwarded a selection of half a dozen comedies and dramas. A committee of three, including the superintendent of the Sunday School, was selected to choose the play to be staged. The collection of plays was then circulated among the three, one of whom was a woman. Then came an agonizing committee session to determine the final selection. One complication lay in the fact that the language employed by playrights was inclined to be rather free. Also the limitations of the prospective actors had to be considered. Finally one play was selected with the proviso that the language used should be

adjusted to a more proper vocabulary. Six copies of the play were ordered and each was carefully edited before being handed to the actors. The original expressions have been lost in antiquity and in the confidence of the actors who saw the original expressions when they studied their lines. Two substitutes were "Great Jehosaphat" and "Gee Whiz". These were forthwith adopted to add flavor to the vocabulary of the younger fry who eagerly seized upon them as perfectly proper.

The selection of the actors and the assignment of roles was a difficult task. In the first place, should the school teacher, a likely and evidently able young woman, be included? Grave discussion reached an agreement that such a step would be unwise. She could hardly be expected to command proper respect on the part of her pupils after making herself a laughing stock on the stage. Finally the parts were assigned. Then ensued hard study on the part of the actors, a number of rehearsals under the direction of the school teacher as stage manager, and finally the great night. Memory indicates that the production was more comedy than drama but the story involved has long since been forgotten. In any case the community loyally supported this cultural venture by paying twenty-five cents each for adult admissions and ten cents for children.

The boys of the community had no idea of education beyond the offerings of the local school. A very few of the girls went on to San Marcos to attend Coronal Institute. This church related institution provided a

high school program and an approach to college type instruction which terminated in a diploma for its graduates. All envied students so privileged whose activities became a matter of community pride. In fact George and Mary took their children to see the graduating play of the Institute one year. This employed excellent lighting effects and presented a classical play depicting the old Greek gods. In itself the production was only a part in an elaborate three-day Commencement program.* The family also attended a Commencement sermon of the Institute when the preacher announced that his message was so important that he was going to read it. He then produced a solid black composition book and read steadily for an hour and ten minutes as he turned the pages from the front to the back of the volume. His weary audience was in a hot and stifling room and so watched eagerly as he approached the last page. Finally this was turned. Then, without a pause the speaker turned the book over and began to read from back to front. The sighs and rustle of the startled audience may have had some effect for after another twenty minutes he closed his masterly effort.

On another occasion the family went to a basketball game between girls' teams of the Institute and the Normal School that had recently been opened. Here for the first time the children heard synchronized school yells and saw girls legitimately displaying their bloomers. One of the yells, remembered after more than sixty years, caused much head-shaking and comment. It ran:

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*See The Hays County Times for May 19, 1905 for a typical Normal School Commencement. The Normal School was a state school also located in San Marcos.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven!
All good Gypsies [the name of the Coronal team] go to heaven!
When they get there they will yell:
Tigers, Tigers, [the name of the opposing team] — Well! Well! We.

It is a pity that those present did not realize that they were witnessing a change in social mores that would lead to the majorettes of the 1960's.

Though none of his friends had gone to college Herbert at twenty years of age began to talk of such a possibility. After extended discussion plans were made for him to go to Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College. Of course he would have to start with preparatory courses but he would be in the college atmosphere. He secured information and worked diligently to be ready in the fall. Then disaster struck. Drought came on. Corn "fired up" as the leaves shriveled and turned brown on the stalk just when the tassel was ready to show. The cotton crop was a miserable failure. All hope of college faded.

As a next best effort the lad turned to the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton, Pennsylvania. Arrangements were made and lessons in writing, grammar, arithmetic and book-keeping were sent. His arduous cultivation of beautiful scrolls and curlicues in the writing exercises quickly became the envy of his younger brothers. Today such a program is largely forgotten but at the time it was a godsend and helped to open a door to at least one boy who otherwise would have had a much more limited opportunity because other doors were closed.

While George regretted that Herbert's plans for college failed he never did feel that the boy had been discriminated against. Personally he

had had even less formal education and had become a recognized leader in his community and was in increasing demand as a speaker at church and fraternal meetings. Herbert could do the same. At the same time George refused to try to influence any one of his children in favor of or in opposition to any one career. He had resented his Uncle's pressure in his own case and insisted that every boy should make or ruin himself. In the same vein he refused to have any of his boys named for him. He did not want any one of them to feel that he was a favorite or should be influenced by his name. Instead, when his youngest son left for college the father's sole advice was: "Don't forget that you are a Christian gentleman."

Before a child could go to school it was necessary for him to be able to ride horseback. The distance of more than three miles was too much to walk along muddy roads and in winter weather. If the children tried a short-cut through some pastures the distance was slightly less but Texas range bulls were not to be taken lightly. Few men cared to face them unless on horseback and certainly children were not safe in the same pasture with one of them. The younger children used Old Pet, a black Spanish mustang pony that had been hand raised. Her disposition was a far cry from that of the ever unpredictable range mustang that seemed composed of equal parts of vinegar and caloric acid. Always nimble on her feet, she Pet would walk fast or gallop easily. By 1903 she was about fifteen years of

age and was slowing down considerably. Even so, if she were suddenly startled by an unexpected noise or if she saw a coyote skulking along the side of the road, she would suddenly leap, sideways three or four feet. This gave any rider a nasty jolt and was quite enough to tumble a small boy from his saddle. If he fell off Pet would trot off for a few feet, then return to stand beside the fallen rider until he could collect his wits, and his temper, and remount. Such an ignominious incident, of course, was never reported either at school or at home.

As the children came home from school they picked up the mail at the R.F.D. box and brought it to the house. And here was another lesson in respect for the other person's privacy, even within the family. No letter was opened by anyone other than the person to whom it was addressed. Never did George or Mary open letter or package carrying the name of one of the children. If the child so desired his letter might be read by other members of the family but only on the child's initiative. It was a matter of great childish pride that if he was to be away from home for a few days he could formally request another member of the family to open any mail that might come for him — and no one smiled even though the child was not likely to receive more than one or two pieces of mail in a year.

Suddenly in 1907 Pet died. The other animals were needed on the farm, with the possible exception of Kate. She was a mule of uncertain old age who had inherited freely from her asinine ancestors. Her "tough" mouth was completely unresponsive to a normal pressure on the bridle bit.

The ten-year-old youngster on her back could stand in his stirrups and pull on one bridle rein with both hands until Kate's head was pulled far to one side and her lower jaw, subject to pressure from the bridle bit was three or four inches further over than the upper part of the head. In spite of this if Kate had a mind to do so she would continue steadily in the direction she had originally chosen. After school home was the only destination she considered. If her unfortunate rider had instructions to call at some neighbor's to deliver a message, Kate was likely to have other ideas. More than once the youngster tugged in one direction when Kate travelled in another. As the pair approached a corner, the result was likely to be a compromise as both ended up against a fence.

To get a saddle on her back so that it would stay in place was another problem. To keep the saddle from slipping sidewise on her round body the girths had to be uncomfortably tight. Kate responded by holding her breath with her lungs fully inflated and her belly distended. After the girths were secured and the rider on her back she would relax comfortably while the rider's seat was seriously endangered. After a couple of falls there ensued a contest of wits. The boy would saddle the animal leaving the girths tight but not cinched. Then he would stand to one side until the old mule had held her breath as long as she could and had to start breathing. At that instant he would yank the girths so tight that probably the poor animal really was uncomfortable.

Another of Kate's tricks was to start groaning as she fadged along between a walk and a trot — in itself a not uncomfortable gait and one that made fairly good time. The result was a series of grunts: "uh-uh, uh-uh; uh-uh", each step accented by a sound accompaniment. After grunting for about fifty yards, Kate would gradually slow down to a walk, then pause, sink to her knees and slowly roll over on her side. It was done wearily and gave ample time for the rider to dismount. The first time this happened was one morning when the pair was about half a mile from the school house. The worried rider scrambled off, and finally coaxed his mount back on her feet. Then he walked and led her to the school yard where he tied her so that she could rest on the ground if she wished to do so. Strangely she stood up all day, ate her hay and a few ears of corn greedily and seemed perfectly well. The boy saddled her gingerly when school was out and climbed aboard. At once she started gaily for home and got there in record time. The next morning the attack came on a full mile from the school house. Again the boy walked her in, and again she recovered with the day.

When George heard of this second illness he promptly said: "The old rascal is fooling you. Don't let her get her head down. No mule lies down with her head in the air." But the injunction was easier for George to give than for a ten-year-old boy to carry out with a mule with a cast-iron mouth. However, the rider hit upon a solution of his own. The next morning he cut two extra long and limber pomegranite switches. This

time the groaning started after about a mile. Forthwith the boy went into action with a switch. In surprise the mule continued on her way for about half a mile. Once more the groaning. The first switch broke but number two was at once put in action. That day the two got to school earlier than usual. Thereafter many a battle royal ensued and neither mount nor rider was ever sure just which was boss.

Every week came wash day when one of the boys was kept at home to help. It meant getting up half an hour early and starting a fire under a fifteen-gallon wash kettle in the back yard. When the water was boiling the first batch of clothes went into a brand new washing machine which was operated by the boy. Then a second and third batch followed as additional water heated.

In the winter the process was likely to be complicated by the fact that recent hog killing had provided a lot of extra hog fat that was to be rendered into lard or made into soap. Now that the fire was started was a good time to do this other job also. When the clothes were all washed and while the pot was still hot the accumulated grease and lard was dumped into it, accompanied for soapmaking by a can or two of Red Devil lye that had been bought at the store. After the mass had been cooked for a time it was allowed to cool. The soap floated to the top and congealed as a greyish-white mass. It was cut in pieces weighing half a pound to a pound but turned yellowish as it dried out and lost much of its weight. This coarse lye soap was used in the kitchen for washing dishes and clothes during the year. It was harsh

on delicate hands and face but it used surplus grease and was good for laundry purposes. When the work was done and the soap left to cool the boy was free to go to school. Usually he was only a couple of hours late but he resented being kept at home for "woman's work.".

One day about 1907 the trip home from school became exciting. Occasional reports and pictures in newspapers and magazines had aroused talk of strange new machines called automobiles. "No pullee, no pushee, but runnee like hellee" was widely quoted as an appropriate description of the machines, one or two of which had been seen in San Marcos. They were understood to be thoroughly impractical vehicles, owned by wealthy playboys, that were a menace on the highways, but were worth seeing if the occasion arose. One afternoon as Wilfrid left school he saw in the dust of the road two tracks that could not possibly have been made by any horse-drawn vehicle. Reaching home he burst in with the news that he had actually seen an automobile track.*

At once George issued careful instructions. In the remote case that one of the strange vehicles were encountered on the highways, the rider or driver was to get off his horse or out of his vehicle to hold the head of his animal or team and talk to them quietly as the monster made its way

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*In October, 1903 the first continuous trip had been made by a gasoline buggy from Chicago to New York city in seventy-six hours. The "cyclometer" on the car showed a distance travelled of 1,177 miles at an average speed of fifteen and a half miles per hour. Two days later (October 4, 1903) The New York Times reported that the dare devil Barney Oldfield had covered a measured distance of fifteen miles on the Empire City Track in 14:35 minutes — more than a mile per minute!

past. If the animals were so frightened that they were unmanageable the motorist was to be asked to pull to the side of the road and stop his engine while the animals were led safely past.

About the end of August or in September of each year came a scourge of gnats to pester man and beast. They had a peculiar liking for the eyes of any creature and it was next to impossible to keep them away. Just at this time of year there was the annual outbreak of "sore eyes" (conjunctivitis). The gnats would visit the victims of the disease and then spread the highly infectious ailment to others. Since the infection was usually short lived there was not much that was done about it. It was hardly worth making a long trip to town to secure alleviating medicine though mildly disinfectant eye-drops were to be found in most homes.

Houseflied were everywhere. DDT was half a century in the future and window screens were an unknown extravagance in the country. When guests were expected one or two children were frequently delegated to keep the flies from the dining table. When ten or twelve persons were seated a child would stand near either end of the table and on opposite sides. Each was armed with a three or four-foot length of a tree branch. This he would wave gently back and forth to keep the flies in motion and prevent their settling on the food and on the plates of the guests. Without this service each diner needed to keep one hand free to frighten the pests while he fed himself with the other. The incredible thousands of the insects

can only be explained by the protracted hot weather and the fact that cow lots, pig pens and barns were ideal breeding places.

Each Wednesday and each Saturday during the last few years on the farm the butcher made his rounds in the community. Uncured meat could not be kept for there was no refrigeration. The butcher bought up young calves from the farmers, slaughtered them the night before he was to sell the meat and set out on his rounds before daylight. He used a vehicle called a trap specially constructed for the purpose. It had a frame (chassis) like a buggy with a box about two-feet deep built behind the seat and extending across the rear axle. Doors as covers were hinged to each side of the box to keep the sun off the meat. On each visit Mary gave her order for the following delivery. Roasts were regularly sold at ten cents a pound or three pounds for a quarter. The same was true of steak. Soup bones were given away but Mary preferred to buy one for a nickle, of course with the understanding that it would carry about a pound of good scrap meat with it. When the price of meat went up to a straight ten cents a pound for roasts and steak housewives complained vigorously but there was not much they could do except grumble. Even at the new price it was better than no meat at all during the long summer and until hog killing weather temporarily relieved them of dependence on the butcher.

One of the joys of country life was the visit of the tin peddler who appeared periodically. He would come jolting up to the farm house in

his hack with an amazing array of pots, pans, gadgets and patent medicines. Naturally he arrived just before dinner or supper so was automatically invited to stay for the meal, which at the better homes (he made sure to arrive at them at the right time) meant supper-bed-breakfast. In return he paid his way by relaying the latest news and gossip: talk heard in town of the progress of the Russo-Japanese War, reports that a Chinese family had actually passed through San Marcos on their way to San Antonio, and other items from local and foreign sources. One such item was the fact that Hays County (San Marcos being the county seat) had recently decided to macadamize three miles of the highway leading south of town toward Seguin. This meant the use of the new road graders or scrapers, each drawn by four or six mules to throw up a road bed and provide drainage. On this road bed was spread a layer of coarse gravel, covered by a layer of small gravel and a clay top to bind the whole together. Here was progress and the modern day.

By way of an addition to sophisticated living the peddler also brought that mysterious commodity, chewing gum. This last contribution spelled the doom of a cherished childhood custom in the country. The boys had long been used to go down to the pasture to locate a sweet-gum tree (It was locally called "chic-a-dee" which probably came from the Spanish word "chicle", vide "chicklets"). One of the boys would take his pocket knife and carefully trim off the outer bark of the tree to expose the white layer of sap wood. Next the sap wood was shaved in slivers half

an inch wide and two to three inches long. A sliver was put in the mouth and chewed. The wood fiber would break into bits and could be spit out, leaving in the mouth a gummy residue. Another process was to chew the wood until the wood fiber was thoroughly broken up. Then taking the mass between the thumb and index finger of each hand it was stretched while the middle finger of each hand flipped the gum lightly to cause the bits of wood to drop out. The flavor of the remaining substance was sharp and almost bitter but provided a chewing gum with lasting qualities and left the mouth with a clean feeling that was pleasant. Now the tin peddler with his bland and sweetened stuff had ruined another of the simple ~~source of joy~~ pleasures of a boy's life.