THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL

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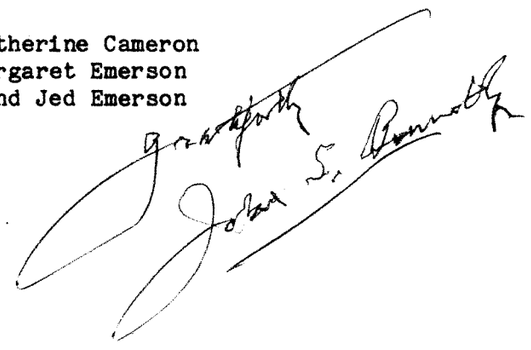

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INTRODUCTION

ROOTS: THE CAMERONS AND THE BONNELLS

It's only in later years that I became interested in family. That often happens. Sometimes you wait until you're beginning to forget some of the early days, but I think that now, in my late eighties, my mind is still quite clear on it.

The Camerons

The Isle of Skye

My mother's people came out from the highlands of Scotland. My grandmother, Margaret McQueen, came from the Braes on the steep slopes of the Eastern side of the Isle of Skye. She was brought up there. My grandfather, Duncan Cameron, came to Skye later, and lived in the little community of Penefieler situated directly across the harbor from the small town and Capitol, Portree. He belonged to the Camerons of Locheil. It is these sturdy Highlanders -- from Skye and Acknakarrie, Scotland -- who gave me my six-feet three-inch stature.

When I visited the Isle of Skye, I learned from an old lady that her mother had known who Duncan Cameron was. She said that he had come from the mainland -- "the outside." (That was the way they described the rest of the world -- anything outside of Skye -- Skye being the center of the universe!) I found the place that Duncan Cameron had lived for 6 years before he packed up again and went to Canada. It was the number one croft. I'm not sure when my grandparents met and married -- probably in Scotland, but it might have been on the boat going to Canada, or after they got to Prince Edward Island. In any case, it was somewhere around 1840.

Lord McDonald owned seven crofts in this particular area of Skye. These were little ten acre lots, and the lower part of each was mostly peat that tenants could dig up for fuel. I made it my business to get in touch with McDonald's factor -- the man who was managing his business and his lands -- and who collected the rents from tenants on the crofts. I told him that I would like to see the old record books if I might. He replied that they were down in the vault, but that I could see them any time after seven in the morning when he brought them upstairs.

So shortly after seven -- bright and early -- I was over to his office and he hauled out the books. And there, sure enough, was the record that Duncan Cameron had been living in number one croft. He'd been paying six pounds a year (roughly $30) rent for the ten acres. An interesting fact was that, although the entire payment should be made in April, tenants usually paid only one pound, or ten shillings and then they'd scatter the rest through the year. But Duncan Cameron -- on the spot the first of May -- would plank down six pounds. He was the only one of the seven tenants living on separate crofts who paid for the year on time.

Apparently, Duncan Cameron had kept sheep at the boggy end of his croft, and had sold them before leaving for "the outside." I had a glimpse at what it must have been like when I talked to an old man -- 91 years of age, born and brought up in Skye -- about herding. He had tended cattle as a boy. I asked him, "What did you have to do?" and he replied, "I'd be out all day watching the cattle to see that no dogs attacked them or that no other harm should come to them while they were grazing." I said, "By the way, would you mind telling me what you got as a boy for that day's work." He responded, "That was about 85 years ago -- and I got one penny a day." "You don't mean that!" I gasped, and he repeated, "That was my wage -- one penny a day." It must have been awful -- the suffering hose peasants went through was just indescribable -- how little money they had.

Cameron of Locheil -- who was my main ancestor -- he had his castle and he

had his retainers. In the early days, they were everlastingly fighting. If they weren't fighting with the French, they were fighting with other Scottish clans. Even in my grandfather's time, the people who lived on the crofts were really very much at the mercy of the Laird of the district. So Duncan decided to leave when he heard that a Scottish laird had made investments, bought a lot of land in Prince Edward Island, Canada, and was helping to pay the passage of people who went over.

On to Canada

Margaret McQueen probably came out to Prince Edward Island on the same boat as Duncan Cameron, huddled together with other passengers on the schooner. They landed in the area of King's County betwen Montague and Murray River. Glen William was the name the place. It's a high land area. I drive over it every summer and think rather nostalgically at what happened there.

Eastern PEI, where they settled, wasn't the most fertle land and they had hard, hard work. Those who landed in what is now Prince county or in Queens county were in clover. It was more fertile open country. In the Kings County area, the men who came over had to fight nature for every foot of land. There'd be stumping parties. The neighbors would gather on one farm and work together to clear it. Then they'd go on to another.

My grandfather Duncan lived in a log cabin. I've seen the two locations on which he lived -- in Glen Williams near Pennet, and in Dover. In both cases there was a little subsidance of the land where a cellar (or rather a small cavity) had been.

The Bonnells

From Elite to Refugee

When I was in France during World War I, I saw a large store in a town near the city of Armentiers in Northern France, bearing the name "Bonnell." That was the first inkling I had that my father's people were originally French. As an adolescent, I wouldn't have been flattered to know I was of that descent. The French people that I knew in Canada were mostly poor and uneducated. The Bonnells in France, however, must have been fairly high class people, judging by what I learned going through Per Le Chez Cemetary outside of Paris. However they had to flee for their lives from the Huguenot massacre.

Per Le Chez was probably the biggest cemetary in France, and a lot of fighting occurred on its edges. It was in 1927 that I visited it with a travelling companion, an able professor of history. He was filling me in on the past. As we were walking along one of the beautiful pathways bordered with memeorials, we noted with casual interest the names of various French families whose dead were laid to rest in this historic cemetery. At a crossroad, however, my attention was attracted by a large Mausoleum -- huge and quite noble looking. When I got around to the front of it, to my utter astonishment, here was BONNELL carved in letters of stone above the doorway. Was I excited? And my friend was delighted at my discovery. I went up to the iron fence that surrounded the sarcoffagus and found the gate completly unlocked and a little open. I went through it and down the steps to an iron door. I took the handle and gave it a litle shove. It opened right up, so I went down a steep flight of stone steps. I found myself in a small room, the walls of which were covered with bronze plaques concealing the tombs of various family members. There was enough light coming in that I could read the names. And here were names that were in our family today and when I was a child, showing that there must have been a connection to that family. This would indicate that the Bonnells, when they were in France, were quite prosperous.

A few years after this happening, an English professor at Dalhousie University, Dr. Archibald McMechan, sent me a book which he had picked up in a second hand book store. It was The Life of James Bonnell, Comptroller-General of Ireland, written by the Archbishop of Armah of the Church of England. Dr. McMechan wrote, "The name on this book arrested me and I thought I should send it to my former pupil." I've been forever grateful.

The book reveals the fact that the family of James Bonnell had loaned Charles II 5,000 pounds (approximately $25,000) at a time when the Royal House of Stuart was in disfavor after the execution of Charles I. That would have been a tremendous sum then, so I have the happy knowledge that one distant day, there was a little money in the Bonnell family. However, I can think of much better uses to which the Bonnells could have put that money than by giving it to the man who later became the dissolute Charles II of England! It may have been because of the Bonnells' friendship with Charles II and the favors that he owed them that James Bonnell was given his appointment in Ireland.

The archbishop who wrote his "Life" included in it several chapters of spiritual meditations by James Bonnell and a collection of his prayers. McMechan said he had seen a remarkable similarity between myself and James Bonnell. It was obvious that my professor hadn't gained his impressions of me from my fellow students!

The Huguenots

The Bonnells who befriended Charles II were descendants of French protestants. They were among those Huguenots who had fled France at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and before the massacre of 1572. Some settled near the east coast of England, in Norfolk. Within ten years of his arrival, one of them -- Samuel Bonnell -- was mayor of the town of Norridge. Others settled in London. Apparently some of the Bonnells who fled France were able business people because they accumulated quite a fortune. One branch of the family became partners in a firm with international business connections. It had established branch houses of business in Genoa and Leghorn, Italy. (This is probably the origin of the Bonnelli family which came from Italy and which produced several notable singers, one of whom became a star of the Metropolitan Opera, New York.)

There was no resemblance, economically speaking, between the prosperous Huguenots of England in the time of Charles II and their descendants who left England for Newfoundland.

Newfoundland

The grandparents of my father, Abraham, came to the New World from England. They settled in Lamalene, a large fishing village on the south side of Newfoundland, near the shore. Their son, Robert (Abraham's father), was born in Newfoundland, as were his sons. He was a slight man of medium height who had a small store stocked with groceries and general merchandise. Like other residents, he also engaged in deep-sea fishing.

Newfoundland is largely just one enormous block of granite -- hard stone. The soil on the top wouldn't be more than four inches. I discovered this in a book Bonnie sent me. Hardly anyone has a garden in Lamalene. You can't grow anything that requires roots. There's not one tree or shrub in the town. There isn't one sewer or water pipe laid because you can't dig down. So they've got a wonderful sewage system -- I don't need to go into that -- to solve the problem. Life was very primative in this part of the world, and still is, according to my "little doctor" (as I call Bonnie's daughter), who worked there one summer.

The postmaster in Georgetown told me that his wife came from La Molene and

he had visited there. He said he went out fishing with the men from his wife's family and they were catching fish to beat the band. He was getting a little seasick and said to himself, "Thank goodness, we'll soon be through." But it started roughing up and the waves were getting bigger and bigger and slopping into the boat. It was going up and down so much that the postman said he felt grateful that there was a good sized dorry towed behind the boat. However, they ran into a good sized school of fish and soon the others pulled on the dorry rope, hawled it aboard, and filled it with fish. He said he never was so scared in his life. He was relieved when the dorry was full of fish and they finally headed for shore. He was never so glad to get off a boat in his life. This story gave me some idea of my father's early life.

Father was brought up to be a fisherman. At 18 years of age, he could take a schooner anywhere. He wasn't a captain and didn't have any papers so he couldn't do it on his own, but when he'd be with the fishermen, the captain would turn the schooner over to him. When I was a boy and wanted to get on the good side of my father, I'd get him to tell me the story of the ship.

From Fisherman to Farmer

Later, Abraham's family came to Prince Edward Island. Half a mile from the fishing village of Murray River was where he bought the farm. The Bonnells came into the picture when my mother, Catherine Cameron, the daughter of Margaret and Duncan, was grown. He and Mother met either in Murray River or Glen Williams and set up housekeeping in Dover about 1881. At the last, my father had a farm of some 60-70 acres (that was all), and he had farm buildings, a barn and so forth. But he was never cut out to be a farmer. Later, he found a far better avenue of service in working with the mentally ill patients at Falconwood. But that is a story we will get to later.

PART ONE

IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS

CHAPTER ONE

MOTHER AND UNCLE DONALD

One of the fiercest blizzards of the winter was raging January 10th, 1893. Since there were no snow-plows available, kindly neighbors were out in force, breaking a road to the door of our little home. The word had gone out that "Kitty Cameron," wife of Abraham Bonnell, was in labor. Soon, out of the storm emerged a "granny" from a neighboring community who shook the snow off her garments as she entered our kitchen to preside at my arrival. It was many miles to the nearest doctor and only rarely was a doctor ever present at a birth. Always there were "grannies" (not always grandmothers) who performed these duties with considerale skill. My own Grandmother Cameron was one of them. I found out many years later that, in addition to others, she had delivered a babe who later became a memeger of the Canadian Parliament.

I was the sixth and last child born to our home. Duncan was ten years older than I, and gave me the only real fathering I had. Jessie was born four years later, and Daniel four years after that. He was two years older than myself, and we were close pals growing up. Two children had died, each at three months and of the same disease, whooping cough. The girl's name was Margaret Anne and the little boy was called Robert Willie. Often in years of maturity I have wondered about those two little babies. What difference would it have made in my life had they survived, and what would they themselves have become? However, it was a heavy enough burden for our parents to bring up four children at a time when most farmers in Prince Edward Island were living near the poverty level.

From Thy Mother's Womb Have I Called Thee

My name definitely shaped me up for the ministry and it was done deliberately by my mother. During her last illness, she said to the minister of Zion church, "There has never been a day that I haven't prayed that God would call Sid to the ministry. I never mentioned it once," she said. "I didn't want to influence him. Someone greater than I was in charge."

She named me after John Sutherland, the family minister, but she had another person in mind. Her brother, Donald Cameron was to have gone into the ministry. He was a student of philosophy and theology at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. He was my mother's hero -- all-round athletic champion at Queen's every year he was there, in sports as divergent as hammer throwing and racing. He was also the star half-back of the rugby (football) team. He and another classmate by the name of Ross wrote the Gaelic college yell which is still used. Mother often told me stories of his prowess. He stood almost six feet four inches in height. All this and then he died on the eve of his graduation. And Mother -- all her thoughts and her prayers had been centered on him. No other member of the family was as gifted as Donald. All this promise and then suddenly he's gone, the one who was going to represent the clan in the ministry. But there's a baby coming up, there's a nephew coming up -- born a year after Donald's death.

The youngest son in a Scottish family was typically destined for the ministry. But I was also a replacement for Uncle Donald. I often wondered why Mother didn't name me after him. She may have thought the message would be too obvious. Instead, she named me after someone who was already a minister. He was our minister as I grew up, and we all held him in awe. I remember that he'd always call me "John Sutherland," and pat me on the head. But he was elderly and had rheumatism. His knuckles were very sharp so I didn't appreciate that part at all.

In 1980, I was speaker for the 100th anniversary of that old Caledonia

church. It seemed almost incredible. There was no change ever made in the interior. Only the communion table was new. I had given it in memory of my mother. I gave my talk standing on the very spot where the Reverend Dr. John Sutherland of Scotland hadstood, close to 90 years earlier, when he baptized me with his own name. Peggy, the wife of my oldest brother Duncan was a small girl in the church that Sunday, but she still remembered as an old lady how proud the minister was. She said he lifted me way up high and intoned, "I baptize you John Sutherland Bonnell." It was generally considered to be a very great compliment to a minister when parishioners would call their children after his name.

When I was 12, there was a momentous happening. It had been my practice for years when school was out to run all the way home -- a distance of about a mile. After I had won a watch in a sales contest conducted by the Saturday Evening Post, I was able to time myself and steadily cut down my previous record. Always I was pretending my name was Donald. I was tall and thin, with long legs, and I almost never walked. (My brother got a big laugh when he said that he was going to show me off at the exhibition as the world's skinniest boy.) On one occasion I flung myself into the livingroom to announce to Mother that I had knocked another minute off my time. I stopped up short, for a man was seated there talking to my mother. "Sid," she said, "I want you to meet the Reverend Sam McPhee. He was your Uncle Donald's classmate and his dearest friend." Immediately I was all attention, and for the next hour listened with thrilling interest to his stories of my uncle's victories.

Then the Reverend Mr. McPhee turned from his talk of athletics and told me the circumstances of my uncle's death. In his last year at Queen's Donald had contracted typhoid fever. As he was recovering, walking around his room, his heart suddenly gave out and he dropped dead. His landlady heard the crash in his room above her and ran up. Apparently he had an unrecognized weakness in his heart, which had been strained by his exertions. The left side of his chest was distinctly larger than the right."

"Everyone who knew your uncle," Mr. McPhee continued, "expected great things of Donald Cameron in the Christian Ministry." Then Mr. McPhee got up from his chair, walked across the room, and laid both his hands on my head. In tones unforgettable in their solemnity, he said to me, "It is for you to take up your uncle's work where he laid it down." That happening made an indelible impression on my mind. In fact, I regard it as my first Ordination to the Ministry. In all the succeeding years, I have never forgotten what my uncle's friend said. Even during World War I when I found myself in some tight corners, the strange persistence of those words came back to me, "It is for you to take up your uncle's work where he laid it down." Somehow, I felt that there was a task that I must live to perform.

When I was fourteen years of age another occurance confirmed the direction of my life. A returned missionary from the foreign field had been invited by our minister of Zion Presbyterian Church, Charlottetown to hold evangelistic services for two or three weeks. My mother encouraged me to attend. I suppose she felt that I put so little time on my studies at home anyway that I might as well be at church. Two other boys of my own age accompanied me most of the nights I attended. We all went to the same public school. The first night or two that I attended I was interested in the speaker's message but felt no particular desire to make a resolve to be a Christian. Then a night or two later I began to feel very definite symptoms of uneasiness with regard to my spiritual state. I had never done anything particularly wicked, but if there was any mischief afoot around our community, I would generally be in the thick of it. After another meeting or two I developed a very strong feeling of anxiety regarding my soul's salvation and when the missioner told all those that wanted further information to go down to the inquiry room in the basement of the church, I went. A personal worker met me there, a man whom I knew in the church. He spoke to me very kindly

about my condition and my feelings and said that I ought to accept Christ as personal Saviour. That step I did not take the first night, but on the second night in which I went to the inquiry room, I committed my life to Christ. The result was a feeling of tremendous exhilaration. A surge of happiness swept over me. As I went home that night alone, the other boys not having gone to the inquiry room, I felt I was treading on air. I prayed most of the way home and from what one of the members of the family said later, I must have prayed a good part of the night. My prayers were those of confession and of thanksgiving for God's goodness in forgiving my sins and setting my feet into the path of righteousness.

We were encouraged to make simple testimonies in the weeks that followed and I had great delight in finding verses in the Bible or in the hymnbook to quote. It was shortly after this time that I made an adult -- rather than a child-like -- decision to give my life to the Christian ministry in fulfillment of the "Ordination" that was given me two years earlier by the classmate of my Uncle Donald. I wrote to my namesake, who was then in New Zealand, and told him that I was going to be a minister. I explained that I thought no other calling would give me a chance to help more people. Sutherland wrote me back, commending me for my high motivation.

I became a member of a group called "Recruits for the Ministry" at Zion Church. The minister had discovered that there were about 15 boys in the church who planned to be ministers. He organized the group, and there was a picture of us taken, that has since been lost. As it occurred, several of those boys never went into the ministry at all. Two of them were killed in the war and another was badly injured in his work.

My mother knew that I had joined the Order of Recruits for the Ministry, but she never mentioned it to me. My mother never praised me for my interest in the ministry, or anything else. Highland mothers don't praise their children. They don't want to spoil them. But I knew by the look in her eyes. They have their way, these Highland mothers, of communicating but it's not with praise. That would be thought to be pretty nearly fatal.

For some months after these happenings, there was a very marked change in my life. In fact the change lasted for several years. There have been times when that life commitment which I made at the age of fourteen grew dim in my mind, but it never wholly ceased to influence me. Across all the years it was an anchor that reminded me that I belonged to God. This experience was so salutary and left so definite a mark on my life that since I have realized the value of teenage conversions.

Many years later I participated in a late night discussion with a group of ministers. It was led by a very able and well-known Scottish preacher who lays much stress on what is known as the social gospel. He said, "If I had it in my power, I would never permit any young person under the age of sixteen to be exposed to evangelistic services." When he finished his very emphatic comments in opposition to evangelism in general and youth evangelism in particular, I told the group quietly of my own conversion experience, and concluded it by saying to this visiting Scottish minister, "If your viewpoint had been followed by my parents and others surrounding me at that time, I might very well not be in the Christian ministry today."

My Mother's Influence

My mother died when I was sixteen years of age, and from my birth until that time she was constantly with me except for several summers when I spent the school holidays on the farm of a cousin who lived some thirty miles from Charlottetown. I can remember going to church with my mother and can still recall the exquisite comfort when the sermon grew monotonous of resting my head against her. She would

put her arm around me and I would sleep soundly during the greater part of the sermon.

The one great and present influence of my early life was my mother. She was a very sensible person, a Highland Presbyterian by religion. Hers was a simple, stern, godly faith with few adornments or embellishments. I can vividly remember going with her to the Highland sacraments in Caledonia, Prince Edward Island, when we would stay at the home of my uncle, her brother John Cameron. The celebration of this sacrament would last for several days, the high point being the Sunday with the Thanksgiving service on Monday morning. The church would be filled to overflowing and an extra service would be held at the same time out of doors under the trees with the preacher using a sawed-off stump as a pulpit. When I was a boy, all the preaching was in Gaelic and the Psalms were sung in the same language. At no other time would my mother sing with such sweetiness as at the Gaelic sacrament, singing the old paraphrases of the Psalms. There was, of course, no organ and no choir, but a precentor would run over the line and then the whole congregation would take it up in a kind of chant. I rather imagine that this practice came from the fact that in earlier years a metrical hymnal was rare indeed.

After the sacrament was over on Sundays the people from a distance would visit friends and relatives in the community. I have seen the dinner table which was capable of seating twelve or fourteen persons reseated and refurnished at least four times in succession, and there would be as many as twenty wagons and buggies in my uncle's yard. It was a great gathering of the clans, but despite the friendliness of these occasions, over them always hung an air of solemnity because they were in touch with the deep things of God. In all my boyhood whenever my mother went to church or on weeknights to other meetings, almost invariably I accompanied her.

My mother was quietly happy at my conversion at the age of fourteen, but when I started carrying a Bible around with me, she checked me at once, "Don't make a display of your religion. You'll have a hard enough time living up to the vows you've taken without parading it about like Queer Dougall" (She was referring to a man who used to be in our old home church). Mother always conducted our family worship, reading a passage of the Bible or having one of us children read it, after which we'd all kneel at our chairs in family prayer. Her prayer was invariably in Gaelic, so that I do not know the words she used except that each day she would mention the names of all the children, one by one, accompanying them with the Gaelic word for "bless" and we always knew that we were being commended individually to the throne of grace.

My brothers confessed what has been my own experience: that the remembrance of those hallowed moments of prayer has come back with power to strengthen and steady us in times of trial or disappointment.

On one occasion I had picked up a leaflet written by the leaders of some fringe sect which laid great stress on the imminent physical return of Christ. It pictured the approach of God's judgment in lurid language and I became gravely disturbed. I was about twelve years of age at the time, so I went into the house and showed this to my mother. She took it from me and said, "It would be better for you not to be reading this kind of thing." I said, "Do you think the end of the world may come within a few days? Will everybody be burned up?" She said, "The men who wrote that pamphlet don't know any more about it than you do. Nobody living knows when the end of the world may come. Only God knows that. You live up to what is right and you don't have to worry about it. Anyway," she said, "while the end of the world may not come for a long, long time, the end of your world and my world may come at any time, and that's the thing to remember."

How solicitous she was always for our welfare. How she would watch over our health. At the same time I'm amazed at the liberty she gave to me. She appeared to act on the principle that if I made my own way in life even as a boy, I'd do

better when I faced the serious problems of adult living because she felt I would have developed qualities of independence and self-reliance.

Never was my mother happier than when she journeyed out into those Highland communities of Caledonia and Glen Williams where the dear friends of her childhood lived. What hilarity and merriment there would be when they'd get together recalling old times. I recall vividly our first visit back to the country after we had moved into the city. I went with my mother. We visited Caledonia and then my Uncle John drove us in the horse and wagon to Glen William to visit my Uncle Sandy and his large family of boys and girls. We drove into the yard and the whole family was in the kitchen talking. No one had heard the horse and carriage enter the yard, so mother quietly went to the back door and opened it, and seeing a vacant chair near the door she told me that I was to slip in quietly and sit on the chair and say nothing. I did this and nobody saw me enter--they were so intent at the table looking at something or other. After a bit one of the family turned around and said, "Who on earth is that little boy?" "Where did he come from?" said another. And then one of my cousins said, "It's Siddie Bonnell." At that moment mother pushed the door open and laughter and greetings and welcomes made the evening glad!

Ambition

Mother was ambitious for us children, moving from Dover to Charlottetown so that we could get a good education. She had a better head on her shoulders than Father. Father was a hard worker, but he wasn't as keenly aware of the importance of education as Mother was. From early childhood, I was ambitious. Everything that I put my hand to was full of this business of "pushing to the front." But my model for taking advantage of abilities and talents was neither Mother nor Father but my Uncle Donald.

Donald Cameron (1859-1892)

Uncle Donald Cameron was a champion. He was also my hero and my model. A table at home was covered with his trophies -- scores of medals and some eight or ten beautiful silver cups that he had won. It was almost like a shrine. His picture always hung in an honored place. I often wished Mother had given me Uncle Donald's name. My older brother was Daniel, but that was for somebody else in the Bonnell line. He came closest to the name but he wasn't called after Uncle Donald. I think I felt glad that Dan wasn't named for him.

I could never equal Donald Cameron or come near him in athletics. The best I've done was to be captain of an intercollegiate, interfaculty team (law, medicine, theology). I was also captain of the theological basketball team and we won the championship. That's the only thing I ever accomplished athletically. As a boy of course I was running all the time and all the time thinking I was Uncle Donald. I could beat just about anyone.

I've got that big enlargement of Donald Cameron's picture in my study up in Canada. I had it made when I was going to Prince of Wales College even though money was extremely short. I was actively preparing for the ministry by then. I had his picture always in front of me and I wanted to bring whatever honor I could to his memory. That's what I really had in mind in getting that picture enlarged. My mother was dead by this time so she didn't know anything about this enlargement, but Donald's picture had hung in her home as I grew up. I would study that picture and compare myself to him. I looked a great deal like Uncle Donald (though he was handsomer). We both had something wrong with our hearts. And my handwriting was unusually like his also. I saved his lecture notes from Queens University and would sometimes leaf through them, absorbing myself in his life.

Uncle Donald -- the Mischief-Maker

Uncle Donald never opened a gate in his life. He just went over them. And he was full of the devil which you know is a good sign! That probably gave me permission to behave similarly. When I entered the ministry, a man who had known me as a mischievous boy remarked, "The Lord must have come to the rescue."

I think George was with me when one particular story was was told me by an old gentleman who was reputed to know more about Uncle Donald than anyone else on Prince Edward Island. He was his closest friend. And so I dropped in to see this little old man, and did he fill me in!

He said Donald Cameron was full of mischief. An acquaintance of his was a great fellow for girls. He had a girlfriend who had her bedroom right over the kitchen. He had made a habit of going around at night and putting a ladder up to the shed below her window. He'd pop in and have a gay time with the daughter in the home. Donald knew he was in there this one particular night and he came sneaking around after everyone was asleep. He got hold of a lamb and slung it around his shoulders. Then he climbed up the ladder and deposited the lamb on the sloping shed roof. All was peaceful and quiet and still. He left the lamb there. The lamb just stood irresolute. There was no danger of its immediately falling off. So he took the ladder down and off he went, probably at a discreet distance to see the fun. Since Donald didn't approve of his friend's behavior, he watched with even greater relish.

The little lamb decided to go along the roof a little and then it started slipping and clattering its hoofs on the sloping roof. "Baaaa, baaaa," and then the lights started to come on. And Donald took off for parts unknown in a hurry then before the final scene. The guy of course would slide down the roof and land down on the ground -- it wasn't a big drop. And the poor girl would The first place her parents would go would be her room to look out the window to see what was going on.

So Donald put everything into having fun as well as into being a champion.

Pushing to the Front

Growing up, I was full of urgent ambition to drive, to accomplish, to achieve. I grew up believing that it was an unforgivable sin for a person to have abilities and not cultivate them, not increase them, not use them. I just felt it was a disgrace. Even as a young fellow in school, I took a special interest in elocution and reading. When I was practicing, I'd imagine myself as a minister -- addressing thousands. I was confident that I was going to be one of the greatest preachers in the world. It never crossed my mind to doubt it. And I had the gifts early. I was the best reader, prose and poetry, in any grade of the school. So the teachers would drag me up to the front to recite every time a visitor came into our room. All I had to do was read a poem twice and I could make a pretty good job of faithfully reciting it. Very, very fast memory. Even that terrible red-haired teacher, in whose hands I suffered so much, would have me read for visitors.

Before I went to Prince of Wales college, I read a book by Swett marden Morrison??? that had an enormous effect on me. It was a big thick book and I think I gave it to George. Chapter after chapter, it preached that you have the ability and you must make use of it. Don't be satisfied with staying at the bottom rung of the ladder. Try and get up to the top. There's a vacancy way up there for you. And so when I went to College, I started to put to use the various things that the author advised. I was vice president of the debating society in my second year, third year I was president. And then when it came to graduation I was selected to give the valedictory which was a great honor. The

very first year at Dalhousie University I became president of the Sodales Debating Society. Then in no time flat I was on the intercollegiate debating team at Dalhousie -- the very first year there. But I put my eye on that team. I said to myself that I was going to be on it -- always "pushing to the front." Soon I became coach for the three intercollegiate debates. We won two of them unanimously.

In Old Age

Even now, at 89, I feel great if I've got a project to do. If I don't, I just feel like a worthless old slob. If I have breath in my body I should be producing. Perhaps that's wrong but if it is, I'll stay wrong! That's the way I feel. I ask myself, "What are you doing? What are you accomplishing now?" If I must answer, "Nothing," it's one of the worst bugbears I've got. I figure I'm a slouch, I'm a loafer. I really do. I'd just crawl in a hole and die if I didn't have some project. Let me put it this way. If all you've got to do is sit and breath for another few years you're a cumberer of the ground. A person that's not cultivating is just a load.

Well, I've got this book now in mind entitled Success. One was written by Lord Beaverbrook on that subject but it's out of print and I think I can use the title myself. The book may never be completed, but I'm working on it now.

I feel great. I feel like working. And when I go back to New York, don't be surprised if you hear that I've gone back to the pulpit, preaching. I think I could do it if I keep the way I am now.

CHAPTER TWO

MY FATHER

A Difficult Relationship

My father and I never, never, never were pals. I didn't get to know him till after I was in college and on my own. Father wasn't someone you could discuss things with. He wouldn't waste time talking to us, his boys. It's strange how little I knew of him. If anybody had asked, "Who is that man I saw coming out of your house?", a truthful response would have been, "He's the man that comes to visit us for one night in the week and beats the hell out of me every time he comes in." All the old scores and any complaints that mother would make against us were the triggers. Before his day off, we'd make that anything he might ask for would be available or we'd be in for it. And that's the memory we have of him.

He was a strange person. The only time I felt he was a father at all was when we got sick. He was very concerned about us then and would move heaven and earth to get us well. I remember Dan was so ill that he was delirious so mother telephoned out to the Falconwood. Father came right home, took a look at Dan's throat and said, "He's got diptheria. We'll have to get the doctor." And of course our doctor was Dr. Carruthers. But ordinarily, we dreaded Father. Even though he was anxious when we were sick, I didn't think he loved us at all.

Avoiding Trouble

There was an episode happened one day when I was a kid that was very revealing, and I think revealing to my father. We were living in the little house then (further down on the lot from the big one). I would probably be close to 7 years old. Dan would be 9. We were playing in the field above our house -- a big field on the side toward the mental hospital which was 3 miles away. There were two big Hawes bushes and we played under and around them a lot, and eating the berries. (Hawes are nearly as nice as cherries but they can be fairly large and mealy and rather nice to eat.)

Suddenly, one of the boys saw Father coming through the fence about 200 yards away, and across the field. He said, "Oh there's your father." It wasn't Tuesday, his day -- the day I hated the most -- but for some reason he was walking in the 3 miles. (That's the way he'd come usually unless there just happened to be a horse and wagon coming in on a routine trip. They had a double-seated wagon with an old black horse. Duncan used to laugh about father's driving them. Father would have the reins and the whole of the time his hand would be on the reins and the poor horse would know when father got on the lines. His mouth would be sore by the end of the journey.) But I remember this day. We all stopped playing and I looked at Father coming in utter surprise. Then Dan and I said immediately, "Let's get out of here quick," and we all disappeared like a shot. I doubt if father realized before how we felt, but he saw us looking up where he was coming. And then we fled off way to the other end of the town, the countryside. Mother later scolded us for disappearing, "It you hurt your father's feelings when you left like that." I said, "It would have hurt my feelings more by staying! That's the very reason I left."

The Sunday School Picnic

The biggest disappointment of my life came when I was six or seven. The

annual Sunday School picnic was a big event of our lives, and I was going for the first time. Father had finally consented to take me along. Mother had overpersuaded him and it was very much against his will. I had 1 cent which I would be spending at the picnic. Finally we set off -- Father and we children. We were going about 300 or 400 yards across the field and down the street to a boat and then down the river. Everything was so exciting. Father was walking behind a bit. He came up behind me and stepped on the heel of my shoe. The shoe came off and he said, "You never should have come at all. You're to go home now." I was absolutely heartbroken. I can remember to this day the place in Charlottetown and the very spot where he stepped on my heel. I knew Father had deliberately done it. He had made up his mind he wasn't going to let me go to that picnic and that was the way he got rid of me. No reason why. I don't think the shoe even came off completely but I had to stop anyway and fix it and the rest of them moved on.

I had to cross a big field and come home in a flood of tears to Mother. She said, "Now don't you feel bad. You and I'll have a picnic ourselves." And I said, "That's not like the picnic that they're going to be on." But she replied, "I'm going to visit some friends and I'll take you along. Oh, was I heartbroken. We visited two places but they were all older people, but at each place I would get cookies and perhaps milk. But, Oh -- I was heartbroken.

My mother, badly as she felt, wouldn't have criticized my father when he came home from the picnic. Any comment would have been indirect. I think she was scared of him. In the early years when we were growing up he could be pretty brutal -- actual physical violence. He'd use a strap and he'd smack us around. I hated him. We were probably getting some of the pressures he felt at work. We were very poor. Father was on a meager salary and Dr. Goodal kept him down. Dr. Goodal was himself the superintendent of the mental hospital at $2000 a year when I was at PWC. He had, of course, lovely quarters and everything to eat, and a horse and carriage any time he needed it. But I'm sure that he was pretty brutal with Father and he kept him down and then Father would get relief with us.

The Father Game

Dan and I had a game we played for several years when we'd go to bed. (We slept together in a big double bed.) It was always, "It's your turn to talk" or "It's my turn to talk." And I might begin like this -- with of course many variations -- except that in all the stories, Father was the villain.

I was walking along one day on the street near our house and I heard a creak, creak, creak behind me. I turned around to look and there was Father coming and he had an ax in his hand. I ran and ran.

Then Dan would say, "Where did you go?"

Well, I ran and ran until I came to a place where there was a big store and I went in. I said to the man have you got any work here for me. I'd like to get a job. "Well, yes, I need a boy around here. You can start sweeping the floor." And after I'd done some other jobs, he gave me three cents. Then he said, "Now you can come into my house and you can stay there. There's a little room upstairs and that'll be your room."

"What did you do then?" Dan would say.

I went up into that room and it was the nicest, neatest little room, about the size of our bedroom here.

"What was in the room? What was the furniture in the room?" Dan would ask.

A little bureau and a little trunk in the corner. And the man told me, "you can have that trunk. You can put your clothes in it." Well, all the clothes I had to put in was what I was wearing so I didn't make much use of the trunk.

Then the next day the store owner said, "Now there is some candy in that bucket there and you can help yourself but don't eat too many because it's not good for you to eat too many candies. But when you feel you'd like to have a candy you can." Then he told me, "Now I want you to deliver these groceries for me." And he'd give me two cents for every time I'd go on a trip and deliver groceries. I went into one house where there was a nice man. He shook hands with me and he said, "Come in!" and so I went in to the house. I gave them the groceries, and the man said to his wife, "Give the boy some cake." And she said, "Oh yes, certainly!" and she went into the closet and came out with the cake.

(And I'm telling this to Dan while we're lying in the bed.)

Oh it was the marvelous cake. It had raisins all the way through the cake and it was a pink color and I cut a slice off and, oh boy, was that a wonderful cake. And then his wife said, "There's an ice box there." (Very few people ever had a refrigerator in those days.) "Help yourself to a glass of milk." I thought, "My, what kind people these are." And so then I went back to the store. And he had another place for me to go.

Dan and I would go on and on -- one of us talking and the other asking questions. Next time it was the other's turn to do the talking. Sometimes Dan and I had real physical battles in the bed over who should do the talking.

each one of us liked to do the talking and the other fellow the questioning. I remember one night Dan and I had a terrible fight in bed, punched each other in the head and pulled the hair and all the rest of it as to whose turn it was to talk. Dan would say, "You talked last night." "No, I didn't. You talked last night." "No I didn't." ... We'd fight in the bed, hitting each other.

But back to the story ... Dan said, "Then what did you do?....Then what did you do?" and I continued with my story:

I got home and I looked in the window and I saw that father had come home in the meantime so I didn't go in at all. I ran down the street and I went down to Isidore Inman's house and I played with him. And Isidore had an uncle who visited that day and he left them a little box of candy and my friend shared the candies with me. His sister was there, she was a very pretty little girl, and I played some games with her.

Now that's all made up, you see. I actually knew the Inmans and went to their house sometimes, but those things didn't happen. There wasn't the candy or the cake or anything else. In my story it was all the way that I would have liked to have it. I don't know that the stories did us much good except stimulate our imagination, and give us an escape.

One night we suspected that Father had come in and stood in the room for a time when we weren't aware that he was there. Hhe never said anything about it, but I often wondered afterward what he would think of how we regarded him. Perhaps with all the psychiatric patients he dealt with, he'd think the two of us were getting a little nutty.

We would do that night after night after night. But in all of them, we were getting away from our father. Now talk to me about happy boyhood, happy childhood.

Understanding with Maturity

Throughout my boyhood, the less I saw of Father the more I liked it. I never had a conversation with him that I could remember till I went to college. Only in the very latest years did father ever sit down and talk with us and tell us what his boyhood was like or what had happened to him. We had our tiffs even when I a ward nurse out at Falkenwood, and of course he was mad at me for going with one of the nurses. That was against regulations. I was working out there but then he was generally bawling me out about breaking the rules of the place.

The difference in the later years was just marvelous. One reason why is that I understood the pressures he had been under when we were children. He was treated very unfairly by the authorities, especially the medical superintendent who was a bit of a bully. My father worked right under him. I think he was under such pressure there that it must have affected his outlook. The Bonnells were drinkers but never father. Father was never drunk in his life or even in the slightest danger of being drunk. I never saw him take a drink of any kind of intoxicating liquor. I remember a visitor came to Falconwood who had a relative up there and when he was leaving, he gave father a bottle of liquor. After the man had gone, father immediately gave it away to somebody he knew would like it and handle it properly. He didn't want it.

Later he was very proud of my achievements -- when it would be in the paper that I was the leader of the Dalhousie intercollegiate debating team and we'd won such and such a debate and so on. And he and my stepmother would come out to hear me speak. We'd have big student meetings, like a mass meeting, and he and my stepmother would come in. But I remember when I went into the pulpit he was very pleased. One time I was preaching in Valley Field (a huge church, later moved to Montague) at a Sacrament and I looked down and saw them in the congregation. He didn't tell me they were going to come out. I think they got somebody, he never did have a car, but I think he got somebody to drive them out by car. And I stood in the pulpit and I looked down and the church was jammed to the doors and even the vestibule was filled with people standing. It was one of the communion seasons and they used to always turn out that way. I knew he was proud of me but the most he would say was on those occasions, "That was a good service."

Abraham, the Man

To other people, Father was very understanding. People from all over went to him to get advice. He was a very wise man on advising other people. He even became an elder of the church later on. Mother said the biggest change in father came when he joined the Masons. She said the Masonic Order did more for Father than church or anything else. Father apparently in the earlier years used to swear a lot when we lived in the country. And really he gained some polish -- and learned to sustain conversation. Mother said, "I'll never cease to be grateful to the Masons. The Masons civilized him." As superintendent of Falkenwood, he had to converse with a lot of people, so that was important.

In his marriage to Mother, he was very old-fashioned. He was captain of the ship and his slightest wish had to be obeyed. Mother had a subtle way later, as she learned the technique of living with him, of steering him around into things without his realizing it. She was a very astute person, understanding Father better than he understood himself. (When I got married, one fear that I had was that I might start using some of father's tecniques and attitudes with Bessie. In fact I know I did to some extent. I'd catch myself at times because Bessie was very much like my mother, very much like her. It's hard not to when you had that model.) Mother and Father had a strong loyalty to her. She defended his authority to us, though she never said he was a good father. I don't think he ever was guilty of anything in the way of flirtation or unlawful relations with any other woman. For one thing he had almost nothing of the romantic in him. He was too practical. After Mother's death, for instance, it was evident that his second marriage was largely a matter of convenience. Louise was living and working at Falkenwood too.

As a man, he was notable for his dependability, hard work -- six days a week, with one day off. In 46 years he had five days off once or twice. And one of the reasons why is obvious. He didn't have the money to spend. His salary was so poor. He was getting $17 a month and supporting a family on that. It had gone up to $26 when I was in my teens. He worked there till his death.

When he had surgery for cancer of the prostate, I came back to be with him and we talked a little then. He knew pretty well toward the end and he found out it was cancer, he knew he was in for it I guess. He died several days after the surgery. It was good to have been with him at that time and to know that we had come to a sense of understanding in the later years.

CHAPTER THREE

MY COUSIN, LACHLAN BRUCE

Among the happiest memories of my boyhood is the recollection of summers spent on a farm in Milltown Cross, Prince Edward Island. I'm sure the problem with father was the reason why, when I was 12, my mother let me spend the summer with her cousin Lachlan Bruce. (His grandmother and Margaret McQueen had been sisters.) I had come home one day at the end of school and found a cousin visiting us, whose name was Effie Bruce. It appeared that she was going to keep house for her brother who was opening up the old Bruce homestead. The farm was run down and the fields were covered with stones. It had not been cultivated for years. Now Lachie was undertaking the tremendous task of cleaning up the farm and putting it into production again.

Apparently before I came home, mother had talked to Effie about the posibility of letting me go down to the farm with her. I can imagine her saying, "I'm worried with school closing in a couple of days. Sid is going to be around the streets here, and there's so much chance for him to get into trouble. In the winter I know where he is." (I was either playing truant or attending school!)

When they broke the news to me I was utterly overjoyed. I turned my newspaper list over to a friend who promised to deliver the papers for me and to pay me a percentage of the returns from the weekly subscription list I had developed. They paid ten cents a week for the paper (by the day it would have been twelve cents). My four cents profit doesn't seem much, but it wasn't bad with twenty customers.

Having completed all my business arrangements, I packed a little handbag and set out with my cousin. We went by train to a small town called Cardigan, about thirty miles from Charlottetown. From there we drove in a wagon with the mailman who took us as far as Montague. Lachlin Bruce met us.

Learning the Gaelic

That's where I picked up the Gaelic. I'd say, "How do you say such and such?" I'd pick up crazy little Gaelic rhymes Lachie would teach me, like "If I had tuppence...." and so on. I remember one day I brought the house down. Effie Bruce had all the women in the neighborhood in for a kind of a sewing meeting and with them was a girl from across the way. She was 14 years old and I was 12. We got to be good friends. She was with those people and there were doing something, knitting or something, a kalay, what they called a kalay. And I remember coming in and, just for the fun of it, I had asked Lachie, "How do you say, 'Will you marry me?' and Lachie Bruce told me. So I went into the big room where all the women were sewing, and Anna, 14, was there with them. I went down on my knee, like a young brat, in front of her and said "Im passa meh, Anna." (Will you marry me?) And it just broke them up. I didn't think it was so terribly funny but apparently they thought it was.

Hardship Farming

Lachie's farm was the home place for the Bruces. He had gone down to California and made money in lumbering. When he came back with a pocketful of money, he took over the old home place. But it was overgrown, full of weeds. What a barren outfit it was! I'd go back in the field, way back in the field, working with him. He had fences that were practically all gone down. Nobody had lived in the house, the barns hadn't been used. I did very little work at all, but I guess he enjoyed my talking to him. Lachie was a man who would listen to

all my prattle. And he was so patient -- very, very kind always. He was a godly man, a wonderful man -- his influence was great in my life.

Lachlin and Effie would sometimes get up at five to finish the milking before breakfast. And I would straggle down an hour later to join them for a huge plate of oatmeal and eggs. Then all day I'd be with Lachie in the fields, helping him fix fences, or throwing small field stones -- round, polished, and hard -- into the cart. Later, we'd make a pyramid in the middle of the field out of them. He never wondered how granite stones got onto a sandstone island. He was only trying to get rid of them. Basically there's no native stone like the ones we found whatsover. Sometimes we would find ones bigger than a desk. There was one on the way to church -- in the center of a field -- and it was as high as a ceiling and I suppose that would weigh about 50 tons. I would ask my cousin driving past in the buggy, "How did that get there? Whoever would put a thing like that on his farmland?" And then when I went to college I found out the explanation. That that is what is called by the geologists "travelled boulder." And then I asked Lachie again (years later), "That's granite. All the stone as far down as you can go is sandstone; there's nothing but red crumbling sandstone on the Island -- not good building material at all. How do you think that huge granite stone got there?" And he answered, "I don't know. I never asked myself how did it get there." So I explained to him that the Island had once had probably 60 feet deep ice on the top of it and this boulder had been picked up somewhere, moved along, and then left there when the ice fields began to retreat toward the north pole. Lachie seemed to be a little incredulous about it but he couldn't give it any better explanation so he had to accept mine.

A Couple of Mishaps

After milking the cows in the morning, Lachlin would drive them "out to the commons," the unfenced fields where the grazing was actually better than on his own farm. My duty was to bring the cows home for milking in the late afternoon. One day I searched for them in vain. I couldn't find hide nor hair of them, and had to return home to report my failure. By the time I set out with my cousin again, it was already growing dark and he carried a lantern with him which was soon lighted. One of the cows wore a bell that was supposed to signal their presence, but we found her resting among the others in a quiet nook under the trees. By the time we drove them home, it was a late milking. We used to put the creamer in the brook, right where the spring flowed into it, about a hundred yards from the house. It was extremely cold water so the cream would rise quickly and the skim milk could be drawn off from below. Always it was my chore to do the churning, though the actual making of the butter fell to Cousin Effie. If the grass was a little poor, vegetable coloring was poured in with the cream. Then the butter would hold its lovely golden color.

One morning when the potato beetles were very bad in the three acre field Lachie had planted, we got up at four in the morning to deal with the situation. Paris green (a strong mixture of arsenic) was mixed with flour and put in tin cans fastened to the crutch of sticks. We had punctured fine nail holes in the bottoms of the cans and they served as sifters. While the dew was still on the potato leaves, we went through the whole field, dusting them with this strong green powder. (Nowadays, a huge tank of treated water could spray the same three acres in less than an hour.) By midafternoon, the potato beetles lay dead on the ground, but I was feeling pretty sick myself. My cousins suddenly realized that, going bare-legged through the fields, I had absorbed arsenic through my pores. I got a good scouring, but was quite sick for the rest of the evening. After that, whenever we Paris-greened the potatoes, I had to wear an old pair of long trousers.

Lots to Eat

I went out there for two full summers before Lachie married. But the thrill of that first summer I'll never forget. I had an endless appetite and revelled in the food. For instance, the wild berries were all over the place in the seasons as they came along. The strawberries! The soil was pretty rich there, never overcultivated. The berries would be very, very good and I would sometimes go out with a dish and come home with enough for our supper. All summer long I never had to worry about the menu or wonder what we were going to have for our main meal. One day we would have salt codfish and pork scraps and another day for variety we'd have pork scraps and salt codfish. And that all through the summer. There was never a meat wagon went through that community. They weren't poor you know, but the nearest butcher shop was five miles away by horse and wagon, and he couldn't afford the time away from his work. Upstairs in one bedroom there was a pile about three feet high of flattened out codfish, all dried. And then there were a couple of sides of pork there. And every single day of the week, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and back on Sunday I never had to guess. It would be salt codfish and pork scraps. There was bread and lots of butter that we made ourselves, and if we had any vegetable at all it would be turnip, nothing else, never anything else. But, Boy! Was it a feast for a king when I'd sit down at the table. Pork scraps, oh how I loved that. I used to tease Bessie: "I told you long ago how I love pork scraps and you're so tony, you were brought up with a silver spoon in your mother, a doctor's daughter." Nowadays I rarely can find any good soul who will cook me dried salt codfish with potatoes and lots of butter and perhaps some pork scraps. Most people think that's too plebeian a meal. In my judgment it's the feast of a king! If good old yellow turnips -- the wonder of P.E.I. -- can be served with it, so much the better. Oh, I've never had meals like Effie served any time or anywhere since. I had a 12 year old boy's and a 13 year old boy's and later a 14 year old boy's hunger that was always satisfied at Lachie's.

Exploring Nature

Sometimes I would leave Lachie at his work and explore the nearby area. Everything was new and interesting to me. Sometimes Cousin Lachlin would take me through the woods to show me a crow's nest, built on a strong foundation of sturdy branches and sticks of wood. We'd spend the morning like that -- perhaps a mile from the house -- and then about 11 o'clock, Effie would hang out a bright towel (called our "flag" at the corner of the house and we'd know lunch was ready. I was watching for it well before eleven, so ravenous was my appetite. Activities like piling stones, chasing squirrels, or gathering wild flowers for the house were appetite-producers.

Now and again I'd run across wild flowering trees. The scents and sounds of summer were always about. By the time the hotter weather came and the locusts were singing in the trees, I knew the location of all the birds' nests within half a mile. I was always impressed with the hawks that came around, especially those that would wing their way in wide sweeps around the barnyard on the watch for some luckless chicken. One day my cousin took me into the woods to show me the dead body of a hawk. That was indeed a memorable day for me. I examined its cruel-looking beak and its strong piercing talons. I cut off one of its feet and enclosed it with a letter to my brother back home. It seemed a good way to convey my news. I don't know how it got there in an ordinary envelope. When the letter arrived, the whole family wondered what could be in it. Apparently they were all convulsed with laughter when the hawk's foot fell out and Dan -- who didn't share my enthusiasm -- read the explanation.

I made friends with Tom, an older boy who lived on a farm across the way. He had a .22 rifle which had a fascination for me. He let me watch him at target practice. That boy was suffering from tuberculosis, and I have often wondered why I didn't contract the disease in our time together. He lived in a little house with his parents and a sister, thirteen years old. (That family had had fourteen children. Ultimately every one of them died of the same disease and the old people lived alone until they were well into their eighties.) One day when we were down near the brook, we saw a red-breasted grosbeak alight in an oak tree. Tom said, "Watch what a shot I've got," and at a distance of about 70 feet, he fired and the little bird dropped dead. I looked at it afterward and marvelled at the beauty of its coloring. But when I told Lachie about it, he looked at me sternly and said, "I hope you boys will be ashamed of yourself for this. That was probably a mother bird and her young will all die for want of her care. We can ill afford to lose our birds. Their songs are so pleasing and they keep down the insects. I trust you'll never be part of such an episode again." For weeks afterward I was haunted by the thought of the little dead birds that lay in the nest because we had killed their mother.

Religious services

One of my vivid memories of this period is of morning devotions conducted by Lachie. Right after breakfast, he would read from the English Bible, but he always offered his prayer in Gaelic like my mother. And Sunday by Sunday we would drive six miles with horse an buggy to the little white church in Caledonia. (Often in later years I've driven over this same road but never without a thrill. Things change slowly on Prince Edward Island. The same church hall is there, but the very steep hill road has been abandoned in favor of one that goes around it. At the point where one turns toward Caledonia, there is a beautiful white birch tree in the very center of the road. With rare discernment, the road superintendents left it standing and built the road around it.)

The church service used to last at least two and a half hours. The minister was the same John Sutherland for whom I was named. There was no organ and no hymns were sung. The first service was in Gaelic, with gaelic psalms and sermon For a few Sundays the only word I recognized was "agus" which means "and." This was followed by an English sermon. By the time the service came to a close there was no doubt that I was ready to quit the hard bench I had occupied so long. I must have had some self-discipline and patience in that I sat through those services without too much complaint. I enjoyed much more the occasional Methodist service held in a hall near the Bruce home. My pleasure was not decreased by the fact that a few young girls my age used to attend the meetings and we would chat afterwards.

The Lady of the House

Lachie's sister Effie had kept house the first two times I went out for the summer. Effie was an awfully kind hearted person. (I wish I'd done more for her than I did. I should have done more for her.) And Janie, another sister would come out and visit too. She was housekeeper for years for Justice Hodgson, who lived in Charlottetown in a house with the glass conservatory. The Judge used to discard books and she'd give them to me.

The last summer I went out to be with Lachie was the summer after he married. I was 14 years old and I immersed myself in the books that Janie had given me. One of them was the story of the Bible with photographs, and that fascinated me. I learned an awful lot about the Old Testament through that book. I treasured it through the years. In the beginning of my ministry (when I was going out as a student) someone said to me, "My, you preach an awful lot of sermons on the Old Testament." And I did, especially about the battles of the Old Testament.

I didn't stay for the full holiday after Lachie married. His new wife was different altogether from his sisters. I couldn't stand her. I'm sure there was some jealousy involved, too. I went back to town early. He made an awful poor choice, poor Lachie. She was lazy as sin -- a great big fat slob of woman. I remember especially one day. Lachie was doing something on the farm but it wasn't anything I was going to help him with, so I was sitting in the shade reading, absorbed in one of the Judge's books. Lachie's new wife came out with an empty pail and she said, "Would you get a pail of water?" I said, "Certainly." So I went down to the brook and got it full and brought it up there and then I went back and got my book and started reading again -- the battles of the Old Testament. She came out and she looked at me. She said, "I think you're the laziest boy on Prince Edward Island." Oh I was furious, furious. She had no patience at all with any book I'd have in my hand. Any boy of 14 who was reading a book was lazy. Later of course, she made a big fuss of me, coming to hear my sermons and all.

Those earlier summers with Lachie, however, were a life-saver to me, and it was an unforgettable experience to spend them with such a wonderful man. If there's a finer man in Prince Edward Island to this day, I haven't met him.

PART TWO

AS A TWIG IS BENT

CHAPTER FOUR

EARLY MEMORIES OF DOVER

Our home was not more than a half a mile from Murray River -- itself not more than a small village of a few hundred people. It was situated on a gently rolling hill about a hundre and fifty yards from the main road. The house was divided into two parts, one of which was occupied by my father's parents until they died. I have no recollection of them, since they both died either before or shortly after my birth. My brother Dan being older, remembers Grandfather Bonnell -- a rough and ready old customer who swore like a trooper. When he was driving the horses, he'd take hold of the reins and yell: "Get on you damn t'ings!" (The Newfoundlanders had trouble with their "H"s.) That's the one recollection Dan has of the grandfather.

Most of my memories of our country days are from the fourth year and a little younger. One very distinct memory, which I have been able to place at about the age of two years, is of wandering upstairs and finding wide open the door leading into the section of the house where my grandparents had lived. I found a package of red dye, and after the manner of small children, decided to taste the contents. It had a sweetish taste and I ate some of it. A few minutes later I started down the stairway that led to the kitchen of our home. My mother was standing by the table talking with a neighbor woman and looked up at me. I can still see the look of terrible consternation on her face when she saw the crimson dye flowing out of my mouth and running down my chin. She rushed up several steps, caught me quickly in her arms, and hurried to the table where there was a pitcher of milk. I can remember her forcig my mouth open and pouring in the milk. At that dramatic moment memory fades. I have learned since that the milk would serve both as an antidote and as an emetic and probably saved my life.

Country Living

My two older brothers and my sister attended the Dover School which was situated some three hundred yards from our gate. On a couple of occasions I was permitted to walk with them as far as the school, and once was allowed to remain in the classroom for a short time. All the grades were taught in one small schoolroom -- which presented, of course, major difficulties for the teacher. On the day tht I visited, I listened with pride to my sister recite:

Now Dolly, and Polly, and Kitty, you three,
Stay here at home and keep house for me;
I'm going to market to buy something good
And will give you a treat if you act as you should.

Unfortunately, Jessie forgot a few words and the recitation ended in a burst of tears that was very distressing to me.

Along the road leading to the school were several acres of swamp, with low alder bushes and rank weeds. The water was generally covered with a green scum. It was a place of dread to us children. I had been warned by my older brothers and sister that this swamp was inhabited by snakes. The warning was somewhat unnecessary since they were the harmless variety. Also, frogs could be seen and heard in this swamp at most any hour of the day or night. I generally passed along this piece of road at a hard run, especially if I were alone.

I have always felt sorry for anyone who was not born in the country or who never had the joy of spending school holidays far from the more artificial life of the city. I can still recall the pleasure of early summer, walking through expansive pasture fields, picking daisies, buttercups and dandelions for bouquets, or clipping off the heads of daisies by letting them run between my toes. From my

earliest years I can remember being thrilled by the beauty of "Brown-Eyed Susans," with their dark brown centers and lovely yellow petals. These grew in profusion through the hayfields and pasture lands. To this day when I walk across the fields of Prince Edward Island and see a Brown-Eyed Susan, the sight brings to me a thrill of exquisite delight and a feeling of strong nostalgia.

In winter we used to coast in a bobsled. The shafts were fastened upright and we would all crowd on, having dragged the sled to the top of the hill just back of our barn. With cries of delight we would go scooting down some hundred yards to the bottom of the hill. In summer there were the unendimg pleaures of open fields, flowers, trees, butterflies, and song birds. Once when I could not have been more than four years of age, I was standing alone by the farm gate. It was late afternoon. A robin began to sing from a tree a little distnce away. As he poured forth his sweet melody, I experienced a surge of pleasure. Something of the song of that robin has never left me. The delight in the sweet notes of the bird were enhanced by an unforgettable sunset.

Grandmother Cameron

Grandmother (Margaret McQueen) lived with us in Dover after my father's parents died. She had considerable difficulty controlling two mischievous boys, especially when we were left with her while Mother went visiting or shopping in nearby Murray River. Gaelic was granny's native tongue. She could make herself understood in English, but she framed her sentences after the pattern of the Gaelic. I recall one evening when I was four that my brother and I were playing at home while Mother was away. Granny lit the lamp in the kitchen and sat down to read her gaelic Bible. We boys decided to have some fun with her. Turn about, we would sneak quietly over to the table and gradually turn down the wick of the lamp until she was unable to read. She would rise, go to the table, and turn up the light, muttering to herself: "Vov! O Vov! that lamp!" The third time the lamp went dim, she got up and said, "Vov, Vov, Vov, is miserable lamp that." The next time we were discovered, and she scolded us with her usual threat, "Wait you till Mammy comes; I'll tell her evry word!"

One morning, as I was standing beside the back door of our farmhouse, a young boy drove his horse and wagon full tilt through our yard, scattering the hens and chickens right and left. When he had passed, I saw that a hen was lying in the road. Grandma knew exactly what to do in such an emergency. She walked into the road and picked up the hen. Then, thrusting her "grannie-trained" fingers into the hen's egg-duct, she drew out and proudly exhibited a large and perfectly fresh egg. Even to this day, if ever I see a magician on the stage produce a hen's egg out of some gentleman's hat, I simply say, "Aw shucks! I say my grandmother do that trick seventy-five years ago!"

And Stern Reality

From these early years comes still a strange memory of my father who seemed always to be punishing us. Apparently my brother Dan had joined me in ignoring one of our father's commands. We had been told not to throw stones over the well-house near the kitchen. Apparently we had come close to breaking a window. One day we found some attractive stones that seemed specially shaped for throwing. We began tossing them over the well-house. Suddenly Father appeared, seized the two of us by the scruff of the neck and hauled us into the kitchen. He took down a long razor strap and said, "Now you boys are going to be punished for what you did, but before I strap you, I'm going to give you a chance to beat me." "Dan," he said, "it's your turn first." Forthwith my brother burst into tears and refused to touch the strap under any circumstances. Then Father turned to me and said, "Here, Sid" -- it was the name I went by -- "you can beat me if you want

to." I seized the strap and with the heartiest good will laid it onto my father's hand as hard as I could. Even at the age of four I was demonstrating that I was far less tender-hearted than my brother. This episode of child disciplining has often made me wonder what special reason our father had for giving us the opportunity to strap him before we ourselves were punished. This took place in a remote region of Canada long before psychology had become a science.

Leaving Our First Home

I was only a little more than four years of age when we left the old farm home to move to the city. In the closing days of his life my father said that the move to Charlottetown was made on the urging of my mother. She argued that the family would get nowhere if we stayed in Dover, and she wanted a good education for the children. Part of the family went on ahead to Charlottetown. My father took a job as a ward attendant in the mental hospital, and Duncan, though only 14, found work. Jessie, Dan and I were to follow with our mother and some remnants of household goods. The livestock on the farm was left under the care of a neighbor before being sold.

Leaving the familiar country surroundings was a tremendous wrench. Before going, Dan and I felt we must say good-by to all the animals. We didn't feel too great an affection for the white mare, Nelly, because she had a nasty habit of taking nips at us if we weren't on our guard. But we bade goodbye to the foal and to our three cows in the stable, and to the calves, tenderly embracing each one. Finally we ended up at the pig-pen where we both kissed the huge sow who put her snout obligingly above the bars of her pen. I can remember telling our mother about it, and the funny look that came over her face. She asked, "Did you kiss all the animals -- even the pig?" "Oh," I said, "we kissed them all. The sow held her nose right up for us to kiss her."

As we started down the lane for the main road, Dan and I stood in the back of the wagon shouting farewells: "Goodbye cows, goodbye horses, goodbye cats, goodbye mice, goodbye barns, goodbye house, goodby hens, goodbye trees, goodbye grass, goodbye everything." More than fifty years after that memorable day I visited a sprightly old lady about 85 years of age who still lived directly across from our old farm. When I began questioning her as to what she remembered about our family, she said, "Ochh, I remember quite well. Your poor mother here -- your father in town most of the time working before you moved. I remember the day you left to join him. I was standing at our front door watching you children climb into the cart with all the furniture. Then as the wagon drove down the lane to the main road, I could hear your high childish voices singing out "goodbyes" to all the farm animals." This old lady was verifying my childhood memory of that day in 1897.

We took a ship, the Jaques Cartier, to Charlottetown. (Years later, I asked an old man where the brush wharf was. He said, "You'll look a long time before you find the brush wharf -- that was washed out many years ago." He pointed to where a point of land used to go out from Orwell. The wharf there had been the departure point for Charlottetown.) I can remember going on board the ship. It seemed that I had to walk along a plank about six inches wide. The water on either side was extremely scary. (Later I learned the gangplank was at least three times as wide as my fears had made it.) Once aboard ship, I fell asleep on a leather couch. It had been an exciting day and I slept most of the way to Charlottetown -- a journey of 25 or 30 miles by sea.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOME LIFE IN CHARLOTTETOWN

Our arrival in Charlottetown opened a complete new page in our family history. We were now faced with a profound adjustment to town life. As I've tried to recall those first few months in Charlottetown, few memories return. I know that we lived on the lower half of Weymouth street, almost across from the old railway station. It was rather noisy. Father had rented the place for a pittance -- he was making only $200 a year. We landed in with so few of this world's goods that it was a problem to pay for food, much less wood for heat and cooking. Mother even had to buy the kindling which had been so plentiful on the farm.

Halloween

One incident from that time is vivid in my memory. It comes like the flash of a picture on a screen. As a counselor I have dealt with the early memories of many people and usually the first five or six years of their lives are rather hazy. Their few recollections generally concern something exciting and enjoyable, or terribly distressing. My special memory had to do with Halloween evening, shortly after our arrival. Older children were roaming the street and making mischief. We three little ones had our noses pressed to the window pane, watching the goings-on. We were thrilled by the weird costumes and masks. When dark descended, it was hard for Mother to pull us away to prepare for bed. Suddenly, there was a tremendous crash. It sounded as if our front door was being smashed to pieces. Mother ran into the hall and opened it. We were startled to hear her laughing with delight. She returned with her arms full of stove-length pieces of white birch. "I was worrying what I would cook with tomorrow because we had run out of wood. See what the good Lord has sent us?" My sister, who never lacked for questions, asked, "How do you know that? It was those rowdy boys who threw it against our door." But Mother replied, "I only know that God sent it, even if the Devil carried it!"

After we had been a year in Charlottetown, we settled into a more comfortable home on a street called Fitzroy. We called it "the little house" and it was that -- cozy but in bad repair. Father got a reasonably priced carpenter, and he himself worked on his day off fixing it up. We bought this house outright with proceeds from the sale of the Dover farm, and we had a little yard and hens.

A Special Pet

My Uncle Rob from Caledonia came to visit us one day to see how we were settling in. As soon as he arrived, he started to pull something out of his cart. I couldn't imagine what it was, though I suspected a gift for us children, so I watched with great interest. It turned out to be a little house, and inside was a red fox. Uncle Rob had found a fox nest in the woods and had taken one of the pups for Dan and me. He put a collar on his neck and built a little house for a home.

The fox was not a pet to play with. He was untamable and would run into his house whenever we came near. But he was fascinating to watch and I soon learned the meaning of "cunning as a fox." We had a rooster and six or seven hens, which kept us supplied with eggs -- a wonderful help. The fox, when he was nearly full sized, would take pieces of the food we gave him and put it out as bait while he hid. One day, the big rooster from the neighbors' came over and our fox just about got him. The fox crouched just inside the door and then pounced out. The

rooster squawked with fright, but the fox was brought short at the end of his chain.

Some time later however, we went out and the fox was gone. The nail attached to his collar had gotten rusty and had broken. About a week after, he ducked into a barn and killed off some hens, so the owner got his gun and shot him. "There's the pelt hanging there," he told us. "You can have it for 25 cents." We said, "What's the good of the pelt? We'd gladly have paid 25c to get our fox back." We felt badly for weeks. Later a neighbor said that the fox had come back for several days to our yard -- hungry and checking to see if we had left out food. He had barked like a dog for our attention. We were so sorry that we hadn't thought to leave out food for him. We had loved our strange pet even though he always kept his distance, and now we felt that he had missed us, too.

The Young Rascals

Whether by selective recall or by the sheer number of occasions, I remember best the times my brother and I were mischievous. One particular episode occurred about the same time as we got our fox. I heard my brother boast about it more than once to his friends. Whatever trouble we had gotten into I'm not sure, but Dan and I had been exiled to an upstairs bedroom in disgrace. As I recall the riot of fun we were having in our imprisonment, I'm afraid that the element of punishment did not loom large, nor was it likely to cause repentance. Unfortunately for Mother, Mr. McPhail, a trustee of the Falconwood Hospital chose this particular time to visit her. As we peeked over the bannister, we saw Mother serving tea and cake to this official. Of course, we were envious and would have liked to have gotten in on the party. Besides, we resented our banishment to the upstairs. Suddenly, we remembered Halloween, and dug out two blocks of wood that were stored in the clothes-closet. We threw them down the back stairs to embarrass our mother. We knew that in her guest's presence she couldn't do more than call up a reprimand. However, it didn't take us long to realize that the guest would leave sooner or later and that spankings would be the next order of business. We shared this concern with our sister Jessie who, at 11, was usually a champion of her younger brothers. She didn't let us down. She found two feather pillows and stuffed them inside the seats of our short pants (in the rather incredible hope that when Mother came to spank us, she wouldn't notice the pillows). I remember our concern as we heard Mother's quick step on the stairs. Still more vividly I recall the expression on her face when she saw the manner in which we boys had been prepared to meet our fate. She tried to look angry while she struggled against laughter. The appearance of her two little boys, one five and one seven, carefully armored in the seat of their pants with a pillow apiece was too comical to resist. We escaped the spanking , although we received a good scolding.

When I was older, Mother decided to use me as an errand boy. I was tried and found wanting. She found that it was especially risky to send me to the market for anything. Once I remember buying a loaf of bread (usually she baked it) and as I carried it home, the warm smell was tantalizing. I started breaking off little pieces from the inside. By the time I reached home, it was almost an empty shell. Another time, pressed by family chores, she entrusted me with the responsibility of purchasing fish for our family dinner. My instructions were to buy a four or five-pound codfish at the fish market. It will be difficult for the modern-day reader to believe that the fifteen cents she gave me for this purchase would be ample.

When I reached the center of Charlottetown where the fish market was located, I went along the stalls looking for codfish. In one of these I chanced to see what looked like a quantity of large red bugs which I had never seen before. "What are those things?" I asked the fisherman in charge. "Lobsters," he said.

"Are they fit to eat?" I asked doubtfully. "Certainly," he said. "They are really delicious." "I'm looking for codfish," I told him. "My boy," he replied. "These lobsters are far more tasty than codfish." I thought to myself, "Here's a chance to show Mother what a smart shopper I am." I produced my fifteen cents, and changed the family menu on the spot.

It was a blazing hot summer day and since there was plenty of time to cook a dinner, I sat down in the midst of a large field carpeted with bright green grass. Colorful daisies and dandilions grew in profusion. I stretched out lazily on the ground and watched the white fleecy clouds drifting slowly across the sky. Suddenly I thought of the lobster. I opened the parcel and noticed that the red "fish" had many legs. I took one off and sucked the juice. It was delicious! It occurred to me that lobster legs would add little to the dinner, so I pulled them off one by one. Then I started to dismember one of the large claws. I thought I might eat it as my share of the dinner. Suddenly realizing that time was passing, I wrapped up the remains of the lobster body and ran the rest of the way home. When I burst into the kitchen and laid the package on the table, my mother remarked, "That's a small looking package for a four-pound codfish." When she removed the wrapping and saw only a half-eaten lobster with all its legs and one claw missing, she was utterly dumfounded. As soon as I saw the gleam in mother's eye, I knew I was in trouble and started for the door. The lobster carcass hit the side as I went through. Dan was in the kitchen at the time and told me years later that mother sank back into a chair and laughed until she cried. "I was just as foolish as he was when I entrusted him to buy a fish for dinner." An hour later we had dinner -- with codfish, of course.

There were several neighborhood homes where Gaelic was spoken fluently. When the women came to visit with my mother, I was frequently somewhere in the offing with both ears wide open to hear what was going on. (I'm told that I had a bad habit of reporting what I heard to others -- sometimes with considerable embellishment of my own.) As I grew older and gradually began to pick up Gaelic phrases, I understood much more of the conversation than my mother and her visitors would have wanted. I found it convenient not to inform them of the progress I was making with the language in which they exchanged local news.

The wife of "Policeman Taylor" was of Highland extration and one of my mother's dearest friends. She was a large woman, very friendly and kind. I recall her visitng one particular day when I was eight or nine. It was shortly after Halloween and I had a few fire-crackers left over. While she and my mother were engaged animatedly in Gaelic conversation, I lighted one of the fire-crackers outdoors, carried it unobtrusively into the house, and slipped it under this good lady's chair. Then I took my post at the door of the living room which opened into the hallway. I wanted to be sure of an open road for a fast retreat. I leaned against the doorway, eager to see the outcome of my experiment. Suddenly there was a loud explosion and the stout lady leapt out of her chair -- crying "Oh, Good Lord!" -- with her hands upthrust toward Heaven (where she doubtless thought she was headed. I didnt wait to hear any further comments, and before my mother could turn her head, I was out on the sidewalk. I took care to remain out of sight for the rest of the afternoon. Fortunately, Mrs. Taylor was a good sport and apparently insisted that I be dealt with leniently.

Some 25 years later I visited this dear old lady in the hospital. She had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and was very close to death. Her eyesight had failed until she was almost totally blind. When I explained who I was, she gave me a warm embrace and asked me to pray with her. Afterwards she talked nostalgically about her affection for our family and especially for my mother. Then she sank back from weakness into a half-conscious state. Suddenly she rallied and called my name. I bent over the bed and she began to shake with emotion. I said to myself, "Poor thing. This talk about my mother is too much for her." But she was laughing. She beckoned me closer and whispered, "Sid, do

you remember the time you put the fire-cracker under my chair?" Within a week she had passed away. I'll always remember her courage and humor in the face of death.

Years ago, after I had gone into the ministry, my brother and I went to see an old man for whom we had run errands in years gone by. He sat looking at the two of us. He had known a good deal of our pranks and mischievous doings in boyhood, and his home had been a rendezvous when we were in trouble. "Well," he said, "it's wonderful how you boys have got on in the world. It's just wonderful." And then he looked at me and said, "Now, there's Sid. Think of it. Can you just imagine -- he's a minister!" He paused, meditatively, and added almost to himself, "There's only one explanation -- the Lord came to the rescue."

Margaret

The Taylors had a son who was one of my chums during our preteen years. They also had a lovely young daughter named Margaret. When we were about ten, I vividly remember falling in love with Margaret. I thought she was the most wonderful creature in all the world. Every time she came out of the house, I would be there worshipping at her shrine. I never could be quite sure how she regarded me, because she had already developed a technique more often seen in adult females -- she kept me on tenterhooks. We skated together in winter, and in summer occasionally went picking flowers or berries. I recall the ache of affection I felt for her. At that time, I began selling newspapers and would occasionally use a penny of the meager profits to buy her candy or gum. Once I spent a full three cents on a stone bottle of "spruce beer" for her.

On her birthday, I was nearly sick with anxiety wondering what I could possibly give her. Then I remembered something I'd seen for several weeks in my sister's bedroom. It was a beautiful lace-edged handkerchief in a little box. It occurred to me that it would make a very good gift. My sister had never had enough interest to take it out of the box, much less blow her nose on it, so I wrapped it up and presented ito Margaret. Mrs Taylor was a very sensible person, and apparently when Margaret showed her the gift, she explained to her that it probably belonged to Jessie and would have to be returned. In later years I learned that Mrs. Taylor had given it back to my mother, but neither woman ever made any reference to the episode.

A few months later, I had saved enough pennies to buy my love a really substantial gift. But I was at a loss to know what to purchase for her and then I ran my mind over the things that would give me the greatest delight. I finally settled on an apple pie. I can remember as if it were yesterday crossing a wide field leading to Longworth Avenue where there was a grocery store that sold pies. I invested all my eleven coppers and the pie was duly wrapped up. I hid it in my bedroom and then when I saw Margaret playing in the street, I took the pie out and presented it to her. Certainly our family must have learned of this episode very quickly, yet I have no recollection of having been teased about it. I do recall, however, that very shortly thereafter we had applie pie for dessert; a part, at least, of my gift must have been returned to our home. I was about twelve years of age and spending the summer in the country when the news reached me of Margaret's death from tuberculosis. It was a severe blow to me and for years afterward the image of this little girl was firmly fixed in my mind. Until my late 'teens I never ceased to feel a heart-emptiness over my loss.

Rich and Poor

We were poor even though prices were low. Eggs at that time would be selling for only about four or five cents a dozen. We ate oatmeal porridge and rolls for

breakfast. If we ran short of anything at other meals, the standbye was porridge. People often say, "I can't stand this, we ate so much of it when I was young." But the day I don't get oatmeal porridge, I'm fit to be tied. I have it every living breakfast. It was a terrible privation in the army to do without it. (The French didn't know what porridge was; at a restaurant, they wouldn't know what you were talking about.)

There were occasional times we felt rich, however. Anytime visitors would come, they were supposed to leave some liittle thing with the children. That was the ritual of the community. It generally was a penny. The women had pockets in the side of their dresses and they kept a litle purse there. Once a visitor gave Jessie, Dan, and me a penny apiece, which was a fortune to us. We went happily over to the store with our pennies in hand. After looking over the wealth of merchandise available to us, I was attracted to a long candy, with a paper wrapping twisted at both ends. My sister and Dan each bought a tiny toy animal selling for a cent. (You wouldn't believe the prices then!) They brought their little animals home and put them on the mantle where everyone could see and admire them. Then I came cheerfully in with my long candy and put it on the mantle too. My brother said, "That doesn't belong there. Why didn't you buy a little dog or something?" And I was so disappointed. There was nothing to do but return it, so I started trudging back to the store. But I was looking at my candy and thinking, "My goodness, there is a lot of candy here, isn't there?" I looked at the way the paper was twisted around it, and found I could undo it, exposing about half an inch of the candy. "What's the difference," I thought, "the store man isn't going to measure it." So I nipped off a bite with my teeth and carefully twisted the paper back over it again. The storekeeper took it back without examining it, and I got a tiny animal as my brother and sister had done and brought it back home. But I did have a snippet of candy in the deal as well.

Family Crises

There were several memories from the time I was about ten that were not amusing. One was a near tragedy at our home. I had already gone to sleep one night when the house took fire. My father fortunately happened to be home. The fire got in the wall and I remember waking up to shouting and rushing downstairs. I say my father in the kitchen battling the fire. We had no running water, so he was running back and forth to the outside pump and sloshing pails of water on the wall. But he got it out. Years later I said to my mother, "It would have been a terrible loss if the house had burned down, wouldn't it?" She said, "It wouldn't have made a great difference because we had so little to burn." And that was about the truth of it.

I was ten when I got Rheumatic Fever, and was terribly ill. I can still remember the anxiety in my parents faces as they watched me through the crisis. That illness, undoubtedly, was the origin of the dysrhythmic heart that has puzzled doctors over the years. We went through a similar crisis when Dan took seriously ill. Mother sent a message to Father at Falkenwood that he was urgently needed. She didn't know what was the matter. He rushed home and I can remember watching from the doorway as he examined Dan's throat. He looked up at Mother full of concern and pronounced the dreaded word, "Diptheria." The only time I really saw him behave like a father was when we were ill. Then he would turn heaven and earth to get us well again. He and Mother had lost that battle twice when little Robert and Margaret died of whooping cough.

My bout with Rheumatic Fever occurred the same year we lost old Grandmother Cameron. When we left the countryside, she had chosen to stay on. She visited among friends and relatives, staying a month with one family and two weeks with another. Welcome in any of these homes, she would simply walk over with her small knapsack to the next farm when she took the notion. But one day in her 94th year

she never arrived. She apparently sat down in the woods against a tree trunk and drowsed off. Feathery snow flakes began to drift down and before long, a thick curtain of white obscured any sign of the path. Whether she woke and tried to find her way no one knows. Her hosts had believed her safely with other relatives, and they -- in the absence of phones -- didn't know she was on her way. A chance meeting between the families three days later resulted in a search party. They found Grandmother's body seated and covered with snow. My mother and the other relatives were devastated by guilt. I was 10 at the time, but even I never spoke the circumstances of her death for 75 years. When I told my daughter Catherine, she suggested that perhaps it was a good way for a sturdy old Highlander to go. Grandmother Cameron had maintained her health and independence till the end.

Helping with the Family Income

When I was about ten or twelve I sometimes helped the butcher and was paid in kind. It was a gory business. When he was preparing to slaughter a bull, its head would be pulled down to the floor by the rope through its nose-ring. Then he would hit it a crashing blow between the eyes with the back of an ax. While it was unconscious, he'd cut the neck artery. In return for my work, I'd get some of the leavings from the carcass. Mother especially liked it when I would bring home the ox head in a wheelbarrow. I would take it out into the back yard, skin it and hack it into pieces for boiling. She would get a fair amount of meat and gelatin to make wonderful head cheese. I can still remember how good that tasted.

Another job was with the cinema. There was a five cents admission charge to see a still picture. I got a job which paid five cents for two hours work and could see the picture as well. I put in the afternnon watching the picture in reverse from behind the screen. I was seated at a table creating what they called "effects." When there were horses on screen, I would hit the table with two half coconuts to sound like hoofbeats. And for a sea scene, I'd rub a scrubrush across sandpaper as each wave came in. And I got to see the pictures for free. I was about 11 at the time.

Being a newpaper boy was my main occupation for many years. I used to find something sensational to advertize -- a murder in some American town would be fine. I would call out, "Read all about the terrible murder." But it was my brother Dan who introduced me to the trade when I was only eight. Two years older than I, he was into selling newspapers before I was. I'd go around and help him deliver about 60 of them. We got about ten cents for the night. We became rather innovative in adding to these meager profits. Sometimes when a suscriber cancelled his paper, the business office failed to send word to the pressroom and we newsboys didn't feel it was our duty to encroach upon the responsibilities of the business office. Consequently we'd have an extra paper to sell. Occasionally, also, we would neglect to leave a paper at several homes and then we could sell them. (We didn't take a chance on a cranky subscriber who would call the office and say, "We didn't get our paper." We'd get a bawling out the next day. We'd pick on the peaceful, lawabiding citizens!) If sales were slow, we'd let the paper go for a penny instead of two cents. After all, we hadn't paid for it ourselves.

Dan decided to sell one of these "extra" papers to an old cobbler named McIntyre who lived on a corner. One of his eyes was blind and completely shut. He'd squint at you out of the other. The first time Dan took me there to sell a paper, he warned me that the cobbler would offer us one cent instead of two. And sure enough. We walked in, closed the door behind us, and Dan showed a paper to the wizened old gentleman, who was nailing a new sole onto a shoe. He never spoke, but he held up one bony finger. Dan turned ot me and said in the most matter-of-fact voice, "Will we sell this old bugger a paper for one cent?" I

started retreating toward the door, expecting the cobbler to throw his iron lathe at our heads. But he didn't seem to mind at all. He dug in his pocket and exchanged a penny for the paper. I was utterly mystified till I found out a few days later that the old fellow was stone deaf.

Special Times of the Year

Christmas Boxes

The big day of the year for newsboys was Christmas eve. Everybody that you delivered to were supposed to give you a Christmas "box." It might be five cents, or even ten. A few tight-fisted people would give you two cents. If they didn't remember, we were not a bit backward at asking, "Have you got a box for the paperboy?" Two episodes stand out from those days. One involved a tough-looking woman whom my brother and I had regarded for some time with suspicion. There was no box for us, so I rang the bell. She came to the door and I asked, "Have you got a Christmas box for your newsboy?" Her answer was not encouraging, "You come within reach of my fist and I'll give you a Christmas box on the ear." (Perhaps she had been a victim once too often of our keeping her paper to sell to someone else.) Dan and I gave wide berth to tough-looking women after that.

The other instance was at the home of Mr. McDonald, a conductor on the P.E.I. railway. He had a gorgeous baritone voice, something I specially noticed because I loved recititation in school. He came to the door and said, "Christmas eve, isn't it? Well, we'll have to remember you." He reached into his pocket and gave me a quarter -- the only twenty-five cent piece I ever got from a customer. Then he shook my hand warmly and firmly and said in his rich resonant voice, "I hope you'll have a wonderful Christmas -- and good luck to you, my boy." And I said, "Oh thank you, Sir." Although it may sound surprising, the warm handclasp and good wishes he gave a young newsboy meant even more to me than the quarter of a dollar he put in my hand.

I'd come home Christmas Eve with my pockets sagging with dimes and nickels -- mostly nickels. I can remember clearly how I'd empty out my two side pockets and pour the coins in a heap on the kitchen table. Then Mother and I would count it up. It would come to between five and seven dollars. Well, that to me -- and to our family -- was a godsend. I turned that right over to my mother for housekeeping and she'd give me a little back for myself. After all, we had a family of six and Father's salary wasn't very large. One time, people had been especially generous to me. I had nearly $7 -- and added together with money Mother had been saving for a silver watch, it was enough to let her buy it. She loved that watch and wore it on a chain around her neck. To the day of her death, she prized it. And I was so happy that I had a big share in Mother getting it.

The Exhibition

The big event of each summer was the Provincial Exhibition held just on the outskirts of Charlottetown -- the same place they're held today, though there have been many improvements made. When I was a boy the fair was held around the 25th of September. I think the main reason was because the potatoes and turnips were harvested in the fall (earlier than they are now), and the farmers wanted to have them ready for the show.

There was a high board fence running all around the Exhibition fairgrounds, enclosing the exhibits and the horse racing course. I was pretty agile and if I waited until two of the guards separated far enough, I could scale the fence, and disappear before either of them could reach me. As a smaller boy, however, my favorite entry was through the gate where the agricultural products entered.

Loads of hay would come in for the animals and sometimes horse-drawn trucks containing crates of pigs or calves for exhibit. Generally there were two men guarding that gate, who would stand on either side of the load. I discovered that there was usually a moment when the two would need to confer. It was then I moved past the cartload like a shot, putting a couple of hundred yards between me and the gate before I stopped running, and mingled with the crowd. (I had seen one boy -- with the same idea -- start ambling along too soon. One of the men on guard ran over, caught him by the scruff of the neck and threw him out the gate. "What a dopey kid," I thought.)

The entrance ticket cost 25 cents. (It allowed you to see all manner of fine animals and produce, such as oats, wheat, potatoes and cabbage. My preference went to the livestock. Even at that early age I was very much interested in cattle.) It seemed to me the height of nonsense for any boy to pay his way into the grounds when there were so many other ways to get in. I had a school chum whose father once gave him a pass. For several days, after he entered, he'd push his pass through a crack in the board fence, and then I'd walk in with it. This mode of entrance didn't appeal much to me, however. It lacked the challenge and excitement I was used to.

When it came to the grandstand, it took all of 50c to see an afternoon of sulky-racing. And it was more difficult to get in. Guards were posted closer together. I found one entry over the rooves of the racing stables that backed up to the grandstand. One day, however, they put guards up there also, and it seemed I wasn't going to get to the races. I wasn't that I was particularly interested in them, but I felt I should savor every experience. I decided to explore some rooms under the grandstand on the side away from the races. They were used for meals or special exhibits. I found one room that was completely empty except for some lumber. Luckily, I noticed that a board was loose near the ceiling of the room. I got a long stick and pried at it, but found I had to climb up closer to reach it. Finally I got it to open about nine inches and by climbing on spikes in the wall, I could go through and drop down on the other side, unobserved. I landed under the bleacher seats and looking up, I could see all the men's and women's feet. I walked along under the bleachers and then I climbed into the grandstand to enjoy myself with the rest of them.

On this afternoon, the races were only beginning when I got there. I watched them for a while, but since I didn't care who won, I soon got bored. I left the grandstand to returne to the grounds, picking up a readmittance card at the exit. Once outside, I had a bright idea. People were lining up at the ticket office to pay 50 cents apiece. "Well," I thought, "I could put that return ticket to good use." I looked over those who were waiting till I saw a fellow who looked like a sensible type. I asked him, "What are you paying for the ticket?" "50c," he said. "It's too much. A quarter would be enough." "Well," said I, "would you like a ticket for a quarter?" I held up my receipt, which was marked, "Admit one." "How do I know this isn't a trick?" asked my new friend. "I'll go with you till I see you get in," I answered. So that's what we did.

Then I walked around the fair for an hour or so and sampled various shows. The two-headed calf, the five-legged dog, the fat lady, the thin man -- very wonderful things -- were all under canvas but available to anyone who would pay the required fifteen or twenty-five cents. It was never my practice to spend such sums on these shows. I used to check out the placards out front and if I found something interesting, I'd go around behind the tent, lift a flap of canvas, and join the paying patrons.

After a while, I said to myself, "Oh by the by, it's time to go back to the races." So I went back to my shed, and repeated the process. I watched about 10 minutes and then went out again with my receipt. The man at the exit looked at me in a funny way this time, but I was off.

It is always a joy to me to go back to former haunts and renew the memories

of boyhood fun. A few summers ago, I drove my car down around to the gate where the agricultural produce still enters the exhigition grounds. There wasn't a single boy in sight near the gate. Perhaps the youth of th e Island are less adventuresome today -- or a little more honest?

CHAPTER SIX

SCHOOL DAYS IN CHARLOTTETOWN

Starting School

It was not until I was six and a half years old that I got started at school. Of this period I have many vivid memories -- memories of the classroom and of the school grounds where we played games and got into minor fights. It was the time of the Boer War. Naturally, I had little understanding of what the issues were, but I did learn to sing with the other children, "We'll hang Paul Kruger to a Sour Apple Tree as we go marching along," Paul Kruger being a leader of the Boers in South Africa.

One day when I was in the first grade there was a heavy pounding of feet in the room above us and our teacher brightening up said, "Oh, that must be good news about the war. It probably is the relief of Ladysmith." A few minutes later there was a knock at our classroom door and the Principal entered. He said, "Boys and girls, I've got some very good news about the war in South Africa. Ladysmith has been relieved." We thought that he was referring to a person rather than a city. Of course we pounded our feet on the floor and clapped our hands gleefully. None of us had the remotest idea who Lady Smith was but it seemed the appropriate thing to rejoice that she had been relieved. An hour later the whole school paraded up to City Hall. We threw our caps into the air and cheered lustily for the relief of Lady Smith and the progress that had been made toward victory. A little more than a year later I was allowed to go late at night to the Market Square where a tremendous display of fireworks was set off to celebrate the end of the Boer War and a victory for British arms. The rejoicing was somewhat tempered by the fact that two fine young Prince Edward Island boys had been killed in that war. I studied their pictures in the newspapers and was filled with sadness at the thought of the loss that their families had sustained. I little knew that before many years had passed, I would see friends killed in yet another war.

Model School

When I had finished my school year at Prince Street School, one of my friends told my brother and me that he was attending the Model School. If we could convince our mother to let us attend this school we wouldn't have to prepare lessons at all. So we used all our persuasive powers on her.
mother to let us enroll in this school. Naturally, we didn't stress the point our friend had raised. She consented reluctantly because she was somewhat suspicious of our unwonted enthusiasm for school! So we transferred to the Model School. We soon discovered that this school was far from a model of anything except incompetence. When we had demonstrated that we knew nothing at all about the lesson for this day, the teacher would send us out to the lobby to be tutored by a boy whose name was Tom. We all liked him because he confined our lessons to playing marbles and pitching cents. We always had a diverting time. When we wearied of these activities we went back to the classroom and Tom reported that we had completed our studies.

One day during recess an Italian came along leading a big, black bear. The Italian in our town was almost as great a curiosity as the bear. It was the first time any of us had seen a bear, and we were terrified at the sight of the huge beast. The Italian would go round the crowd with his cap and when a certain required sum, probably fifteen or twenty cents, had been deposited in the cap, he would order the bear to climb a telegraph pole. We were fascinated and, as the Italian and the bear went down the street, we followed. Suddenly we realized that

the recess time was passed, and it was agreed that all of us would stick together and not return. Until lunch hour we followed the Italian and his bear around the town and he was not displeased at having so large and enthusiastic a group of spectators helping to draw others to the scene. I cannot recall that we received the slightest reprimand from the Master for having absented ourselves for the greater part of a school day.

It was about this time that potato-bug racing came into vogue. The official name of the bug is the Colorado Beetle. It was the fall season and we used to go to a potato field and collect bugs. We took them to a smooth piece of road on which there was very little traffic and we lined the bugs up for racing. Each of us developed one or two quite speedy potato bugs. We'd mark out a course of about a foot and a half long and start them off. We were allowed to tap them on the back with a straw to speed them up. At this time I had found one potato bug that could outrace any of the bugs that the other boys had on the street. It gave me more than a little fame.

At War with Teacher

After one utterly futile year at the Model School, I was transferred to West Kent and when the teacher gave me the simplest tests, I failed them. I recall distinctly that she gave me some figures to subtract and I promptly added them. Naturally, I got off on the wrong foot with that teacher, and while I was in her room it was one constant battle. My head often ached from the impact of her knuckles. I told my mother that I should fight back like one of the boys named Jimmy who used to seize her around the waist and kick her shins. Finally she left him alone!

One day when I was still a new scholar in the third grade at West Kent School and playing out on the schoolground, I noticed a long chain which went through the head of posts at the front of the lawn and I sat on this chain and swung back and forth. While I was enjoying myself, the Principal came along. He gave me a stern reprimand and wrote down my name and my teacher's name. He said I should have known it was forbidden to swing on these chains, though I had never been informed of this. That afternoon at about two o'clock the Principal knocked on the door of our room and asked to see me. It was obvious that I was in some kind of difficulty. As I walked out, there was a buzz of conversation in the class. In the hallway outside the door, the Principal gave me a thorough dressing down for what I had done. I was eight years old at this time. Having warned me not to repeat the offense, the Principal sent me back into the classroom. Of course, every eye in the room was fastened on me as I returned. I started down the aisle between the rows of benches, and just as I was approaching my seat near the back, full of confusion and nervousness, I stuck out my tongue. Immediately two or three girls shot their hands into the air and waved them, saying, "Please, teacher, Sid stuck out his tongue." The teacher had an intense dislike for me--doubtless with some reason. She didn't stop to inquire when I had stuck out my tongue or if I had done it at a person but she immediately rushed out of the room to the Principal and informed him that I had stuck out my tongue.

The Principal, of course, assumed that I had done it as soon as I entered the classroom in contempt of him -- though it was only a childish gesture of self-consciousness. Within two minutes he was back at the door again and called me out. He had a heavy ruler in his hand. It was about twelve inches long and made of thick black mahogany. He ordered me to hold out one hand and then the other. I can still remember with the utmost vividness that experience of punishment. He brought the ruler down with considerable force on my hands. Resentment was boiling within me with such intensity that I used every bit of self-control not to cry. By the time he finished with the second hand, I was on the verge of tears, but I mastered myself. When he opened the door of the

classroom and sent me back to my desk, both my hands felt as heavy as lead. I had made the interesting discovery that after the first two or three blows my hands became so numb that they didn't hurt nearly as much, so that I was able to keep back the tears. Among some of the boys I was a bit of a hero in the room for having withstood this punishment, and they all sympathized with me heartily because they too felt it was unjust.

From that day forward it was war to the death between the teacher and me. I hated her with all the intensity of my being. I finished out that year and she failed me. So I was compelled to take the year over again with this teacher. It was a repetition of the first. I would play truant two and three weeks at a stretch and at the end of the second year she graded me "on trial."

What a difference!

The teacher in the fourth grade was Miss Ada Wadman, and as long as I live I shall remember her with gratitude. She was a widow and resumed the "Miss" for professional reasons. The boys called her "Mother Wadman" because she was such a kind person. She thoroughly understood boys, and I came to have a deep affection for her. On one occasion I was selected to clean the brushes after school. Oftentimes that's a punishment meted out to boys and girls, but in Miss Wadman's room she never used it as a punishment -- it was a privilege -- and on this particular day she asked me to stay in after school and clean the brushes. I took them down to the schoolyard and pounded them against the brick wall of the school building to get the chalk out of them and then brought them back. As I was coming through the cloakroom quietly into the schoolroom my previous teacher was in the room warning my new teacher about me. I overheard her say, "He was always a source of trouble," and I heard Miss Wadman reply, "Well, I've had no trouble whatsoever with him here." I gratefully blessed the name of Miss Wadman. When I stepped into the room, the conversation abruptly ceased.

On one occasion only, and for one day, I played truant in Miss Wadman's room. She immediately inquired of our home the reason for my absence, and when she discovered that I had played truant, I was sure that I was in for trouble and dreaded going back the next day. But I went back, and after the roll had been called Miss Wadman said, calling me by my full name intead of the shorter nickname Sid, "Sutherland, I want you to stay in after school. I have something to say to you." I knew exactly what she was going to talk about. I felt badly that I had disappointed her and awaited with dread the interview at the close of school.

When school was over and the pupils had gone, she said, "Come up to my desk, Sutherland," and I stood before her. She said, "Sutherland, you know why I have asked you to stay in after school today. I don't need to tell you. I want you to know that what you did was a great disappointment to me, but I'm sure that it is not going to happen again. Now you may go home." My heart was swelling with emotions as I left the classroom and started home alone. I did a lot of thinking on that homeward journey, and knew that Ada Wadman was right. That was the last day I ever played truant.

I hadn't been particularly industrious about my lessons but when the end of the year came, out of thirty-four pupils, I received a diploma because I stood in fourth place. I felt at the time and have felt ever since that it was a rather remarkable showing for a boy who had spent two years in the previous grade and then was graded on trial. I suspect it reveals more about the two teachers than it does about the pupil.

A Special Talent

During all the years at school, the one subject in which I was most interested was reading. I borrowed books from the Public Library and studied them

when I was supposed to be studying my lessons. Sometimes I would be discovered with a geography book half-way across a copy of Dickens that I was reading. I cannot recall any room in West Kent School in which I did not receive first place in reading. When visitors, parents or others came to the room, invariably I was called upon to stand up and read. Apparently from the commencement of my schooling I had a special gift for reading and declamation. Oftentimes I would sit in the classroom and dream of the time when I would be addressing vast assemblies. Up to that time I had not specifically thought of the Christian ministry. Every book I could get hold of that dealt with orators I would read, and I pondered often on the self-discipline of the great orator Desmothenes who mastered his stammering by putting pebbles in his mouth and daily addressing the ocean. It was only later that I realized it would be necessary to do some hard study in many other lines of learning before one could become a truly accomplished public speaker.

It was my good fortune when I graduated from the fourth grade to enter Miss Flora McKenzie's room, because she was an excellent elocutionist. She immediately recognized my special gifts in this area and stimulated my efforts, so that on occasions I recited before our entire school. Once a very special assembly was held in conjunction with Prince Street School, which had an enrollment made up almost wholly of girls. On that occasion I recited a poem called "England." It began:

"England, England, England,
Girdled by ocean and sky."

I knew that it was a very special event and that a good deal was expected of me. I put everything I had into the recitation, and the storm of applause was most gratifying to me. The following day I passed Prince Street School on my way home and a crowd of the girls spotted me. They began to shout out, "England, England, England." I could have cheerfully wrung their necks! However, I wasn't overly depressed, because that morning the principal of the school -- not the one who had given me such severe punishment, but his successor -- came into the classroom and publicly thanked me for the recitation I had given the previous day. His words spoken with real sincerity were balm to the wounds that smarted still in my memory, and the feelings of injustice that I still nursed with respect to his predecessor.

Hooky and Other Outings

In my boyhood I did not show other of the characteristics that are supposed to distinguish a prospective minister, such as setting a good example. During the year when my brother and I played truant, we resolved to put our days off to advantage and set out to make some money. A creek ran in from the East River just behind the Exhibition Grounds, and we knew that quantities of smelts swam up into it, especially during the spring just after the ice had gone out. The smelts would be delicious coming as they did from the ice-cold water.

This was our procedure: We would hustle around and find some fairly heavy wire. This we would bend into a circle and thread around the mouth of a potato sack. Then we would roll up our short pants and one of us would step down into the cold creek at a narrow bend while the other would enter it further up. The latter would drive the smelts down ahead of him to the point where his partner was waiting. Just as the swarm of smelts reached the narrow bend they would rush into the potato sack now inflated with water. Quickly the waiting boy would lift the net and empty it onto the grass. It was always a thrilling and beautiful sight to see sometimes as many as two dozen sleek, silvery smelts leaping on a carpet of emerald green. When we had taken about a peck of the smelts we would carry them from door to door in a basket and sell them for five cents a dozen at the kitchen doors of homes.

I recall on one occasion on Pleasant Street, Charlottetown, calling at the home of a man who was employed in the railway. We would always go, of course, to the kitchen door. His wife being thrifty purchased two dozen smelts. While she went to get her purse, I was standing in the kitchen and spied a platter there which somebody had carried back from the table after a late breakfast. I was feeling pretty hungry after our exertions at the creek and on the platter were lying three strips of bacon. They looked utterly enticing. One was a little longer than the others. I became more and more depressed at the lack of symmetry in the slices of bacon, and finally with a quick motion I broke off the longer piece so that the slices were now symmetrical. That dainty morsel didn't do much to allay my hunger and it was a good thing that the lady arrived with the ten cents for the two dozen smelts, or I am afraid the bacon would have been out of balance again.

For many years through our boyhood the great event was always the 24th of May. School children used to sing,

"The 24th of May
Is the Queen's birthday;
If they don't give us a holiday,
We'll all run away."

The Queen at that time was Victoria. Well, we didn't have to run away because they always gave us a holiday. Without fail, my brother and I would have saved during the winter from the sale of newspapers a little over a dollar. Then at day-break on Victoria Day, as it is still called, we would set out for the baker's. Generally we had to wake him up. We'd buy a Washington pie, a pound of cheese, an apple pie, and all manner of rolls and cookies of one kind or another. Then, barefooted, we'd trudge out the road into the country. Our destination called for a six-mile hike. On many a morning of the 24th of May I have seen the sun rise and felt its warmth on our backs as we walked along the dirt road with the soft, red dust oozing up between our toes.

There was a special stream, beside the railway, at a place called Union Station about six miles from Charlottetown where we always fished. My brother had worked there for one or two summers with a family that lived beside the track, and he knew all the neighbors. On one occasion we were busily fishing at that pool when a man came running down shouting to us to get away, but when he discovered Dan, he was all apologies and told him to fish all day if he wanted to.

One year the 24th of May happened to fall on my father's day off and he had his own ideas as to what he wanted us to do that day. We protested and pleaded to no avail. Mother interceded for us but got nowhere. Our father's word was law. Nevertheless, my brother and I resolved that we would take our lives in our hands and go on our usual holiday. We had put fishing poles out in the shed and had our money tucked away in our clothes. Usually we were late sleepers and mother would have great difficulty in rousing us at seven o'clock. How we did it to this day I haven't the remotest idea, but we woke at four o'clock that morning. Whoever woke first immediately roused the other. In quietness and stealth we dressed hurriedly and with great care descended the stairs because our parents' bedroom was right next to our own. Apparently we didn't make a sound. Just as quietly we got out of the house, got the fishing poles from the shed and then ran with full speed up the street. We had to go like the wind, because if father had wakened and called us we should have had to return. But there was no sign from him and at five in the morning we pounded on the outside of the baker's house. He put his head out the upstairs window. We asked him to come down and sell us some pies and cheese and cake. He pulled on his trousers sleepily and came down.

We had good fortune fishing that day and, by the middle of the afternoon when we started homeward again, we had a string of brook trout numbering about twelve, suspended on a gad which we had cut from a willow tree. When we reached home we weren't quite sure whether or not our father would have left for the hospital; so

we stole quietly around the back way and hung up the beautiful speckled trout on a high nail in the shed. There is nothing more delicious that can be served on any table than properly fried brook trout freshly caught. The pink, white and reddish spots on their skin and the grace and symmetry of their form also makes them a joy to watch as they swim in the water. We finally discovered that father had gone back to the Institution, so we went into the house and received a reprimand from our mother--a gentle one, as always. Then she asked us how we got along, and we told her the story of getting up and leaving and how we had waked up the baker and of our long walk to the fishing stream and other happenings of the day. She asked us to do one or two errands. Then, "You know you shouldn't have gone fishing when your father told you to work, but since you did go, bring in the trout and we'll have them for supper."

"Wait till you see them, mother," we said. "The best catch we ever had." My brother said, "Sid, run out and get them." I darted out into the yard and just as I neared the shed a big, black cat leaped out of the open window of the shed. My heart sank. When I opened the door, there was the gad and the dozen trout lying on the floor, and every one of the twelve chewed and mangled by that wretched cat. The gad of trout that I carried into the kitchen was a sad-looking spectacle, and my brother and I were ready to cry with vexation and disappointment. Mother was sympathetic but said, "Well, that's probably a 'judgment' on you for going off fishing when you were supposed to stay at home and work." At that moment we weren't very receptive to her philosophy.

Strange how we are affected by the happenings of our boyhood and youth. Even to this day when the 24th of May comes 'round, I have a feeling of restlessness and a strong urge to get out the fishing rod, line, bait, hooks and sinkers, and of course the basket of goodies.

Those early days of our fishing expeditions were, of course, before the time we even heard of fishing with artificial flies. Brook trout fishing requires a technique and skill that is scarcely second to that of fly fishing. Even when my brother and I had a holiday together as adults, we'd love to go to a brook with a can of worms and throw our hooks from under a tangle of alder bushes.

A Neighborhood Bully

Of course we had the usual round of scraps with other boys. Generally my brother and I, unless there was a feud raging at the moment between us, got along wonderfully well and if any other boy tackled either one of us, he had to face both. Even in that quiet town set in a completely agricultural Province, there were some pretty tough boys who used to prey on smaller boys and forcibly take from them their hard-earned pennies made by the sale of papers.

One of the toughest of these boys was a young fellow who had been orphaned for quite a few years. He was brought up in a poor quarter of the town. On more than one occasion he robbed my brother of his paper money. One evening as we were going home with the coppers in our pockets, this young fellow, whose name was Joe, stepped out from Prince Street School grounds and demanded that my brother give him the money. He was bigger and older than either of us. Dan declined to let him have the money, and he struck my brother with his fist. He followed it up with a few more punches and said, "Hand out that money." I stood watching for a minute. Then a great surge of rage swept over me, and I suddenly flew into the older boy with both fists flailing. I must have landed a blow or two, and he started to back away. I tore into him like a demon and after about a minute or two he turned round and yelled another boy's name and ran up the street as though he were meeting someone else. My brother Dan was very proud of my pugilistic prowess and told the story when we got home, so that I became quite a hero. In later years when I asked Dan about it, he said that apparently I had let my fists fly with such a fury and flailed my arms in such a way that the bigger boy

couldn't get a blow home at all and I must have hurt him a couple of times or he never would have run awary from the fight.

It was only about six months after this that the tables were turned and this time my brother came to my defense. We were up at the market square not far from the weighing scales where the carts loaded with coal were weighed. My brother was standing a little distance away when a fellow, whose nickname was Puddinhead, a big fellow and a bit of a bully, saw me standing there, and either he didn't notice my brother or he ignored him, for he started to push me around with his shoulders, making a noise like a rooster. He gave me a couple of bodychecks and I said, "Cut that out." My brother, hearing me shout, looked around and came on the run. He said, "You get away from my brother or I'll lay you out cold." "Will you?" said Puddinhead. "Well, try it." "Okay," said my brother as he took off his coat and handed it to me. And Puddinhead said, "We can't fight out here in the Square. We'd be arrested. Let's go behind those buildings there where Carter's bookstore is." My brother said, "Okay, that suits me." So around through the gangway we went to the back door of the business houses on Queen Street. He said, "All right, step up now, and I'll beat you to a pulp."

Whether it was my brother's hostile gestures or his even more threatening words that intimidated him, I don't know, but Puddinhead then began to plead that he didn't want to fight him and never did intend to hurt me anyway. He was just giving me a little bodycheck, and he appealed to me. Well, for my part, I was quite excited at the prospect of a good scrap and felt that my brother could lick him. So I said, "You had no business shoving me around the Market Square." Finally he apologized to me and to my brother and he left with my brother's threat ringing in his ears. "You lay a hand on Sid again, and it will just be too bad for you."

Summer Fun

Invariably, each successive spring we children begged our mother to let us take off our shoes and stockings and go in our bare feet. What greater joy can a youngster know than that of wandering through hayfields and clover patches filled with buttercups, dandelions and daisies, of walking through the grass and letting the stem of a daisy slip between his toes and with a quick flip of his foot sending the top of the daisy flying upward and catching it in his hand? There were tens of thousands of daisies in the field and one or two less made little difference.

A colony of houses in which we and our neighbors lived nestled at the edge of a section of wide-open countryside. Half a mile away was a swamp filled with small alder bushes growing out of the rich soil. In winter this swamp was frozen, providing us with an expansive skating rink. In summer it was a rendevous for all boys in the neighborhood. When fall came one could quickly fill a quart dish with blueberries from the bushes that grew in profusion. The whole area was only about five acres, but as I think back into childhood, it seemed a great forest. There we often "played Indian." Indeed, there was a tribe of Micmacs about a mile away; so we were close to reality. One day we discovered some red, chalky clay that would leave marks on our faces. That was all we needed to transform us into a band of savages. We painted red lines with the chalk and black marks from the peat mixed with water. We stripped off all our clothes and hid them under a wide-spreading bush and then, with fearsome war cries, tore through the bushes, catching and scalping one another. When we returned at last to the hiding place of the clothes, to our utter consternation we discovered that they had vanished. How on earth were we to find our way home without clothing -- not a stitch remained. It looked as if we would have to follow the example of Adam and Eve and see what could be done with some branches of the alder bushes plentifully covered with leaves. However, that recourse was not needed because we finally located the

clothing hidden in another part of the woods. An older boy of our community had heard us playing Indian and had hidden the clothing as a prank.

As we got older, we often used to go to what we called the C.A.A. grounds; that is, the Charlottetown Athletic Association grounds. They had built a big bleacher with rooms underneath it for the athletes. The doors were always open and we used to wander in there frequently. The track was a quarter mile in circumference and we used to train there by the hour. I believe I was at my best in the quarter mile run and tried from time to time to cut down my running time. On several occasions we had competitions with a group of boys who lived about half a mile away on Olebar Street and upper Hillsboro. We would practice the hundred yard dash, the high jump, putting the shot, quarter mile, and so forth. All these events were played in a huge field, most of which was used as a pasture for cows. When I returned a little time ago to look over the old scene, I found that it had been entirely divided up into building lots and some fine homes were standing where we used to spend so many days and hours in play.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE END OF CHILDHOOD

Leaving School

Right up to the time of leaving school in the middle of Grade 8 when I was fifteen years of age, I never ceased to dream of being a public speaker. Especially after my conversion experience at the age of fourteen, I used to think of the multitudes of people coming into a church where I would be preaching. They would be laden with all kinds of problems and difficulties such as some of those I experienced myself, and I would stand before them and talk to them about God and His power to help people.

At this time I had not learned that when one dreams of great achievements one should at the same time be working constructively for their fulfillment. For some reason or other I had a feeling that it was sissy for a boy to be seen carrying books. If I did take any textbooks home to study, which was very rare, I carried them under my coat tucked well under my arm so that they wouldn't be seen. However, all the while I was reading other books. I remember the thrill of the stories of Captain Marriatt -- highly diverting stories but seldom read today. And Charles Reade -- I read several of his novels. Bulwer-Lytton's books also fell into my hands. The one that thrilled me most was THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII. I lived those ancient scenes over and over again in vivid imagination, and when in the summer of 1927 I visited the ruins of Pompeii, I enjoyed their exploration far more than my companions because of the pictures I had carried in my mind through the years. I read also some of the volumes of Dickens and of Scott. The school readers -- I've never seen finer -- were what led me to much of this better class literature. They stimulated my taste for good poetry and prose. (I have a collection of the school readers that I had used throughout most of my period at public school. When I was a pupil in my wildest imagination I couldn't conceive of collecting these readers. Today they are very precious to me and I still enjoy turning back and reading familiar stories taken from various novels.)

If I had been able to establish a fairly readable and smooth-flowing style, it is because of the quality of reading I did as a boy when I was firmly hostile to all other studies. Another stimulus to good reading was the practice of most of our teachers to devote the last hour on Friday afternoon to reading interesting stories to us. Many times the teachers would call me to read. I remember my mother laughing heartily at a comment by one of the neighbors who said that I read like a lawyer. Mother knew that I would never pause at a word but would give it a very firm pronunciation even if it were quite wrong. On one occasion I was reading a story that contained references to a marriage ceremony. When I struck the word "officiate," I didn't pause a moment but spoke of the minister offisicating. I heard a slight noise behind me and out of the corner of my eye saw the teacher shaking with laughter. I suspected that there had been something wrong with one of my pronunciations. However, I got away with it since the class didn't know the pronunciation any better than I.

By the time I reached the middle of Grade 8, I was taller than any other boy in school and very conscious of my height. It used to irritate me no end to have smaller boys passing me on the street say, "Long fellow, throw me down a match." Little did I then realize that the day would come when I'd be proud of every quarter inch of height I possessed and that it would be a great asset to me as a public speaker.

I finally announced to my father and mother that I was leaving school. They realized that I was not accomplishing much and that it would probably be best to let me have my way. I gained my point all the better by suggesting that maybe later on I would go back to school again or start in a higher grade by studying at home. That I was quite inattentive in the classroom is amply established by a conversation that I had with one of my teachers. In after years when I was in college and doing quite well with my studies, I was skating with her in the rink in Charlottetown. She asked me how could I account for my tremendous interest in scholarship now that I was in college in contrast to my hostility to all studies in grade school. I remarked that I thought I had learned a good deal in school even though I didn't study my lessons at home. I said to the teacher, "You know, a student picks up a lot in the classroom, more perhaps than the teacher realizes." And my former teacher replied, "That may well be when they pay attention to what is going on, but you never did that." Thus the last poor shreds of my alibis were torn from me!

Another factor may have been the capstone to my leaving school. An infirmary was established next to Falconwood Hospital, where my father's duties were, and the medical superintendent asked my mother if she would become matron of this institution. All the children were grown up and had gone away except me. I am sure that my mother welcomed this chance to become somewhat independent economically and she accepted the offer. I went to board at the home of my older brother and his wife. They were kindness itself to me, and my brother encouraged me constantly in my studies. However, the pull from school was already strong and I found the change in my home situation unsettling. Perhaps I felt I was now too adult to be a schoolboy. I left school, and since my father insisted I must take a job, I worked in a dentist's office, earning two dollars a week, learning to make artificial plates, partial plates, and gold inlays. I was just starting at chair work when the job as attendant opened up for me at Falconwood Psychiatric Hospital. I was then seventeen years old. Meanwhile, a devastating experience intervened.

Mother's New Job

I had never seen my mother happier than she was with her responsibilities as matron of the infirmary. She was the soul of kindness to the patients and both men and women alike loved her dearly. I can still recall her standing in the doorway of the institution when I made my first visit to see her there. I had skated over the ice of the East River which is a wide river flowing past Charlottetown. (Three rivers meet there -- the East, North and the West -- all emptying into the Charlottetown harbor.) The ice all the way across the river, which was about a mile and a half wide, was quite firm, and as there had been no heavy snowfall, the skating was excellent. When I reached the shore, I took off my skates and boots and put on shoes for more comfortable walking on land. My mother gave me a great welcome, and I am sure it was a comfort to her to have me back with her. Proudly she showed me all over the institution even to the kitchen and pantries and then took me to the private dining room where meals were served to the staff. I stayed overnight and loved every minute of the time I spent there. I adored my mother. She was the supreme inspiration of my life. Never once did she say directly to me that she hoped I would go into the ministry, but she had spoken to many of her friends of this hope and it was a constant subject of her prayers.

She was so pleased to be earning her own money. I remember that her first purchase was a blue silk coat summer coat, very light. It was a duster type. She looked like a million dollars in it and she knew it. Oh was she proud. I can picture of her now walking around the grounds with that coat on. She was just like a little child who had been given a marvelous gift. But she had bought it with her own money. She had nobody to thank but herself for it. Sadly, she didn't have long to enjoy it.

My Mother's Death

Never shall I forget the terrible shock of receiving a message one day at my elder brother's home that mother was seriously ill. Several nights a week I spent visiting her. She was running a high temperature and the attending physician mistook the symptoms and diagnosed her illness as pneumonia. Consequently blankets were piled on her, according to the treatment of that day, and she was given medication to induce heady perspiration. It was exactly the wrong treatment. The weather was terribly hot anyway and she said, "These blankets are killing me." And they were. She should have been in ice blankets. I begged Father to get another doctor's opinion. But working directly under Goodall, he felt it would be a serious reflection to bring in another physician.

It was about ten days before Goodall suspected his diagnosis. The temperature with pneumonia drops on the ninth day, indicating that the illness had passed through the cycle. Usually the patient starts getting quite a bit better after that. But nothing happened. Instead, mother's temperature started climbing and that was the signal that something was wrong with the diagnosis. So Goodall went into Charlottetown and got Warburn to come out. When Warburn looked at the temperature chart, he said, "This is not pneumonia. It looks like typhoid fever. Let's take a sample and send it to Montreal," which they did. And when it arrived back, he said, "Typhoid fever."

In the infirmary, there was an unfinished clay basement with a water pump. One warm summer evening, I was out visiting mother and she said, "The water in the basement well is the coldest, far colder than you get from the tap. I'd like to have some." She had me get her a pitcher of that water and I remember it felt quite cold. So she poured out a glass for herself and she said, "Why don't you have one." I answered, "Thanks, but I'm not thirsty. That perhaps accounts for why I'm still here today.

The problem was that the infirmary was a carelessly built building. The man who built it saved a lot of money on the shoddy workmanship, material, and the joining of the sewer pipes. The sewage disposal from two buildings was to go down and be emptied on the shore and into the channel of the big river. Apparently, the sewer pipe had sprung a leak through poor workmanship, and it had drained into the well under the building from which she got the ice cold water. That's where she got the typhoid fever. A young woman who was a cook there came down with it shortly after mother. But she was young and strong and she recovered. Of course they shut the whole thing down. Closed the well off, took the pump up and everything. But that didn't save mother.

She was sick five weeks. She got weaker and weaker, and of course her strength had been further sapped by the wrong treatment. Mother went through a 21 day period, the routine period of typhoid fever, plus half way through a second before she died. She was down so low that she took typhoid the second time. How she was reinfected I don't know because it seemed that every precaution was being taken. It might have been careless nursing. She had a registered nurse -- I remember her name was Miss Murley. Mother reported that there was a bottle of scotch whiskey on the shelf in the closet. She had a registered nurse, Miss Murley, an older woman -- and there was a beau who used to come to visit her, very sweet on her. Mother told Jessie that this fellow visited the nurse in the sick room when they thought mother was asleep. Miss Murley went into the closet and gave him a drink of the Scotch whiskey that was there for emergency purposes.

Every moment I could beg off from the dental office I was at my mother's side. Always I shall treasure the memory of the talks I used to have with my mother. They have had a permanent influence on my life. Somehow she seemed to know that this illness would end her life. Without my knowledge she expressed to my oldest brother and my sister her wishes about the arrangements to be made in the event of her death. She was worried also about my future and was concerned

because with the money made working in the dentist's office I had been able to buy some rather sporty-looking clothes. This disturbed my mother's inherently conservative outlook.

While I was sitting by her bedside talking with her she said, "Sid, do you know where that passage is found that speaks about passing through the waters and God being with you?" I had to confess that I didn't know. To this day there is an ache in my heart when I remember that moment and a wish so strong that I might have had some of the knowledge of the Bible that I possess today. (Perhaps that is one reason why, in later years, I had available for instant recall hundreds of comforting verses to meet any need.) The passage that she wanted read to her was the one found in Isaiah 43, portions of verses 1, 2 and 3: "Now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: ...For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Savior." What would I not now give had I been able to read that passage in its entirety to her.

The family was tremendously encouraged when, on the twenty-first day, which marks the full course of typhoid fever, her temperature went to normal, yet I believe my mother still felt death was not far away. After all, she knew that typhoid had claimed Uncle Donald's life. Within forty-eight hours she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. After all she had been through -- a stroke.

I visited her now for a few hours every day, and as I walked that three miles between the dental office and Falconwood Hospital -- through the woods and along the main road, I devoted every step of the journey to prayer. At that time I had not known that the highest concept of prayer is to seek and to find the will of God for us and those dear to us. Then for me it was that the thing that I desired more than anythiung in my life might be fulfilled. I pleaded with God. I even threatened God that He must not let my mother die, and a conviction began to grow in my mind that He wouldn't, that somehow, despite the critical nature of her illness, she would yet recover. She was conscious, and as I sat at her bedside, I massaged her right arm and hand which were paralyzed. I used to vainly hope that somehow the massage would help to bring life back into it, little realizing that the damage was not in the hand but in the brain on the opposite side from the hand where a deadly clot of blood had formed.

One of the high moments of those last few days was the visit of the pastor of Zion Presbyterian Church to mother. She revered all ministers, and when she knew that the minister was coming, she showed a very definite improvement. He said, "You're feeling better, aren't you?" She said, "Much better." Those were the only two words I heard her speak from the time she suffered the stroke. He read the bible to her and offered a deeply-moving prayer not only for mother but for all of us who were there at the time.

My dear mother died at ten minutes past two on the afternoon of August 6, 1909. The last four days she had been in a coma, completely unconscious. I would holding her hand and take her pulse. It was irregular and getting weaker daily. Even then I sat for hours at her bedside, vainly hoping for a moment when her eyes might open. Then it came right close to the end. I had run over breathlessly to tell my father that she was sinking fast and then the doctor came too. We were all standing around the bed. Our family was there and the doctor and the nurse. We were watching her and I think I was holding her hand. Within one minute of her death a change came over her. She rallied and came out of the coma. Her eyes went to each of our faces with a look of recognition. She gave a heavenly smile of complete trust and love -- and was gone. I've seen many people die but I never saw a death like hers. Never. She was perfectly clear. She seemed to be her old vital self again. She just stopped breathing, closed her eyes, and that was it.

That day the bottom fell out of my world. What was there to live for? My

faith was sorely shaken, for I had prayed so hard that her life might be spared. I walked across the golf links, going from Falconwood back into Charlottetown to be with Duncan. Mother's death nearly killed him, too. He had adored mother as I did.

The funeral service for my mother was held in Charlottetown at Duncan's home. I was only sixteen but in that bitter experience I learned to know what Tennyson meant when in his poem "In Memoriam" he speaks of the friends who brought their consolations, who spoke their well-meaning phrases and described it as "empty chaff well-meant for grain."

As I glanced around the house and at the crowd filling the hall and outside the door, my heart leaped as I recognized one special face. It was an American businessman who had come to Canada some months before to do volunteer work for the Y.M.C.A. He had a large part in my conversion at 14. He had encouraged me to go to the mission and talked to me about my feelings with respect to Christian decision. That was almost two years earlier and now somehow he had found his way back to Charlottetown at the very time when I was stricken with grief. He walked across the room and sat down beside me. He didn't speak one word but gripped my hand in a warm clasp. I felt that here was one heart that was beating truly in sympathy with mine. Here was one who was feeling something of what I felt and who was sharing my grief. At the close of the brief service we shook hands in farewell without a word. I have never seen him from that day to this, but to the end of my life I shall remember with gratitude his presence when I was most in need.

The interment service was held in the country from the home of my uncle, John Cameron. There were ninety carriages in the funeral procession -- stretching from the Cameron home to the cemetery. The whole countryside was there. How she was loved! Kitty Cameron she was to them. At the cemetery the coffin was opened again so that some persons who had just arrived after travelling a long distance might look for the last time on the face of their friend. Once again I looked on my mother's face and tried to engrave on my memory every line of her features. Even now I have only to close my eyes for an instant and that selfsame dear face rises up before me. That was 75 years ago, but I relive the whole thing whenever I talk about it.

Through all the years that have passed, my mother's influence has been the greatest factor in my life. I well recall during World War I when we were in a difficult and very dangerous situation with casualties increasing each day. At night my sleep was interrupted by the sound of oncoming shells, and I received great comfort from recalling words that one night I had read to my mother from the 121st Psalm: "The Lord is thy keeper. He that keepeth thee will not slumber." When I had read those words, she said, "Sid, do you realize what those words mean? I want you to remember them always." I have remembered them and at certain crucial periods of my ministry when I greatly needed spiritual help, somehow the paraphrase written on the Psalm would usually be sung:

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes
From whence doth come mine aid?
My safety cometh from the Lord
Who heaven and earth has made."

Almost a decade later, I experienced one of those strange turns of fortune that we call fate. When I looked at the program of graduation ceremonies as I had completed my work in the seminary, to my astonishment I saw the name of my mother's minister printed on the calendar. He was the one who was to give the address to the graduates. He lived in another part of Canada, and he was about the last person I expected to see at that ceremony. In the course of his address he said, "There is one young man graduating here tonight whom I have known as a boy in one of my churches. I was minister of his home church when he found Christ and dedicated his life to the Christian ministry. Well do I remember his sainted

mother and frequently visited her during her last illness. She said to me, 'I have not spoken to Sid about the ministry because I want it to be his own choice, but one prayer I offer every day of my life is that he may be moved of God to go into the Christian ministry.' Tonight," said the speaker, "that mother's prayer is fulfilled."

A few months later in a little country ch urch to which I had been called in Price Edward Island, the members of Presbytery gathered round and laid their hands upon my head in the act of ordination. More real to me than the brethren who touched me was the presence of my mother, whose prayers that night had come to full fruition. It wasn't within my power to believe that God would deny her this knowledge.

PART THREE

SO GROWS THE MAN

CHAPTER EIGHT

WORKING AT FALCONWOOD

E.O. Brown

Within a year of Mother's death, I became a ward nurse under Father at Falconwood Hospital. I learned a great deal about mental illness and Father was a natural when it came to handling patients. But I had another interest that was more compelling than my work at the institution. I was studying in any spare time for college. A woman patient, who had been an elocutionist, gave me some excellent suggestions on readings to practice, and another patient, E.O. Brown tutored me. He had run afoul of the law through embezzlement. There had been a scandalous court case, and he ended up in Falconwood as a mental patient. Recently, there had been complaints that he'd been seen walking on the golf course so he had to have somebody to look after him. That was one thing that Father did for me that was wonderful. He put me in charge of Brown. We built a kind of roofed bower on the banks of the shore, up in the edge of the woods. I could study in there while he walked around. That gave him some freedom.

I kind of stumbled onto the idea of tutoring. I had been asking Brown questions from time to time and suddenly thought, "Here's a chance to have the help of a brilliant man as I get ready for Prince of Wales College." (Goodness knows I needed help since I had left school at 14.) He was a brilliant man and it was a satisfying diversion for him. The fellow that had been out with him previous to me used to buy dime novels and ask Brown to read them to him. Can you imagine? So it was such a relief for him to get a different companion in me.

I'd got him helping me with algebra and geometry and with the Latin. He was basically a very serious man, but we had some fun, too. He was telling me that when he went to school, the boys would be teasing the girls and they'd say, "Hic haec hoc, huggus, huggus, huggus." And then, "Quick, quick, quick.", wasn't it? Later, when I entered PWC, I'd go back to Falconwood for his help. Trigonometry bothered me a good deal. I'd get my assignments and take them to Brown. Father was pleased that I was in college so, even though the ward was locked at nine, he'd give me the keys for the ward and for Brown's room. I'd sit with E.O. till after 11 o'clock at night, getting his help on the trigonometry. He'd say, "Let me see your book there. I want to get the scales, and the various formula." There was a sequal to that relationship with Brown. Twice in my life later, our paths crossed in important ways.

We Meet Again

The first time was when I was a student at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. Brown ran away from Falconwood. He made a key for his bedroom door and the ward door and just walked down the stairs and out one night. I was in my room at college one day and heard, "Bonnell! Bonnell! Visitor to see you." I called out, "Send him up." The door opened and in walked Brown. Was I amazed. I never did find out how he got money for the passage to Nova Scotia on the boat and then the train to Halifax. But he went into a law office and got a job doing odd jobs as a clerk. Once, E.O. heard the lawyers discussing a case in the office and he told me, "I knew right away they were on the wrong tack. And I said to the lawyer, 'It's none of my business but I think if you took this route ...' And I used the lingo. The lawyer looked at me in a funny kind of way and said, 'Yes, I guess you're right.' And they changed the whole system of the case." But he was getting very little money as a clerk. He'd rented a room for one dollar a night and hadn't even had proper meals.

I got a letter from my father to say, "You'll be interested to hear that E. O. Brown escaped and somebody from Charlottetown has seen him on the streets of Halifax. In a day or so two constables are going over to capture him." I handed the letter right over to Brown and his hand began to shake while he was holding it. I immediately sent a telegram to Father in Charlottetown saying I had met E.O. Brown in Halifax, and that he had left that night for England. I wanted to head off the constables that were going to be sent over and set them off the track. But now he had to get away. He told me that he wanted to get into the army. So I said, "I'll help you to get enlisted."

I called up a colonel who was in charge of enlistment and I told him that I had a man for him. I said, "He's a very able man, a scholarly man, and will make a very good Canadian soldier. But I have to tell you that he'll not be enlisting under his own name." The colonel said, "Don't lose any sleep about that! We've got lots of those who are joining now." So Brown went down and had his physical which he passed with flying colors.

I asked him how he was off for money and he said, "I haven't any." He had no change of underwear. He had only one shirt and the socks he was wearing. At night he'd have to wash things out. And then I gave him the money he needed. I wasn't flush, I'll tell you that, but I was so glad to be able to do it. We got him a clean shirt, a clean suit of underwear, and a ticket for Ottawa where he had a cousin. He wanted to get away as far as possible from the Island, so nobody would recognize him. I had given him all I could spare, $33 or $35 altogether. For me that was a lot of money. I was just hand to mouth myself at Dalhousie. A few weeks later I got a post office money order for every cent I'd spent on him.

I went down to the train to see him off. We got a second class ticket to Ottawa and we stood talking while we waited. "Well Sid," said Brown, "if I come back from this voyage, it'll all be different. A different kind of a world. I'll asked to be discharged in the far west, to start again. If I don't come back, my record will be all wiped out." Those were the last words he said. And there were tears in the eyes of both of us as we shook hands. And I watched him until the train disappeared.

The second meeting took place after I had finished that year at Dalhousie, and had enlisted in the artillery. After early training I was shipped overseas by boat. I was walking the deck one day, in the middle of the ocean, and came across three sergeants striding along side by side. The center one was E.O. Brown. He excused himself from the others and we found ourselves a spot where we could away. He brought me up to date. Apparently, the army tried its best to get him to take an officer'sa commission because his marks on a test had astonished them. Of course he probably got a 99 or one hundred percent. But the commission might have involved some identity checks and his real name might have got out. It was too risky, he felt, and he was getting enough money for his needs anyway.

Later, when I was in France, I wondered, "Would there be a chance of our paths crossing?" But I got a letter from my father, saying, "You'll be very sorry to hear that your dear friend E.O. Brown was killed in action." I shed some tears, I'll tell you. It hit me hard.

Heartbreak

Another important relationship began and ended at Falconwood. There were a number of other ward nurses -- male and female -- who worked with me there, but there were rules against dating. When I was eighteen, I fell desperately in love with Kate Heatheridge, who was a year older. The feeling was returned, though we were too shy to talk about it. I worshipped her. She was like an untouchable goddess to me. We used to go for long walks and talk for hours. It was pure bliss. One day we were down in the boiler room of the institution and the attendant stoked up the fire through the open door. The light struck her long

blond hair and illumined her face. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. Here was this angel before me. I'll never forget the passion I felt for her.

A new nurse, however, came on staff and apparently she was interested in me. She deliberately set out to break up my friendship with Kate. She told me critical things that Kate was supposed to have said about me, and she did the same to Kate. She was a clever lier and kept dropping these little comments. Kate and I were both shy and somewhat unsure of ourselves in the romantic sense and we began to believe what was said. We never checked it out with each other. I was heart-broken as we grew apart. It was only about six months later that we found out what had happened. We happened to be both going to town in the wagon, and began to talk. She asked me if I had said certain things about her, and I said, "No, of course not! I respected you too much to have said anything negative." And I asked her about comments she was supposed to have made, and she said that she could never have even dreamed such things. We both felt so badly at what had happened, but the damage had been done. Through no fault of either of us, the magic was out of our relationship, and nothing could restore it. I continued to respect and admire her, but our romance was over. How I hated that other nurse for the malicious way she behaved! I never got over the pain of so much caring. It seemed such a terrible waste -- to end up in all that bitterness. As a young adult, I couldn't get greatly attracted to other women. I felt such a sickening over the smashup of my love affair with Kate Heatheridge. I didn't really date for about six years, and never again felt the passionate love I had felt for her.

At 13, 16, and 19 I had suffered tremendous losses in the deaths of my little friend Margaret, of my beloved mother, and now the death of love. I was hurting badly from the repeated losses. It is not surprising that I chose to fling myself wholeheartedly into work for some years to come.

(MATERIAL FROM PASTORAL PSYCHIATRY NEEDS TO BE INCORPORATED TO COMPLETE CHAPTER ON FALKENWOOD.)

CHAPTER NINE

BEFORE THE WAR

Prince of Wales College

My father was the only male nurse who has ever received a diploma from that Falconwood Hospital, and I would have been proud to have possessed one as well. However, in the fall of 1912 the examination for entrance to Prince of Wales College was being held, and I was eager to get on with my schooling. The first two years of PWC constituted the last two for high school. Since I had left school in the eighth grade, I was well aware that there were many gaps in my knowledge, and as I had anticipated, I failed in the examinations. In one important subject, however, I came off with flying colors and that was English. Fortunately for me, however, there was a regulation that anyone who had reached the age of eighteen years could enter the college and take the full first year's work. Passing the examinations at the end of the term meant that one would be numbered among the regular students, and receive a high school diploma for grade 11. Since I was almost 19 years old I was able to apply.

Back In the Classroom

It was an exciting day for me when I attended my first class at Prince of Wales College. I found it hard to keep up with my fellow students in the various subjects. My special difficulty was mathematics. Indeed, it was almost impossible to complete the preparations for the next day's study while studying alone. Consequently I had to wait until the lesson was reviewed in the class so that I was always one day behind in my preparation. However, I loved every moment of my classes and even the homework -- with the sole exception of mathematics. Never before had I sat through 50-minute class sessions, and then moved to another room to study a different subject under a different professor. It seemed so utterly different from the usual routine of a school room that it thrilled me to the core.

Here at last was my first real opportunity to glimpse the long road ahead to the Christian ministry and the chance to use my powers of public speaking. I was older by two or three years than the average student, but I wasn't there more than a month before I began to be elected to offices. The debating society was not open to first year students, but when a group met for the purpose of organizing the second year debating society I was elected vice-president, and then almost immediately, president. That was an exhilarating experience and a spur to my ambition. When I reached third year -- the equivalent of first year Arts -- I was again elected president of the debating society. The tradition of a debating society was importan, and the principal of the college always attended the debates which gave them status. He was Sam Robertson, Bessie Carruther's uncle. A great man, a great, wise man. A real Latin scholar. He didn't rub much of the Latin off on me! Needless to say, through the three years attendance at Prince of Wales College I never distinguished myself by scholarship, but in English and Public Speaking it became obvious that I excelled. When I finished Prince of Wales College, I was chosen to do the valedictory -- quite an honor. So you see the debating society presidency had an influence in a public way on my career.

In the middle of my second year at this college came an event that proved to be another powerful stimulus to my ambition. During the Christmas holiday a great missionary convention of the Student Volunteer Movement was held in Kansas City, Kansas and I was elected as the student representative of P.W.C. It was during this journey that I took my first step off the little island known as Prince

Edward, and it was a long step.

A Thrilling Convention

It was my first introduction to some of large metropolitan areas in both Canada and the United States. I spent my first night en route at the Toronto University dormitories and was allotted the bedroom of a student who was away on Christmas holiday. Later we had a stop of some hours in Chicago and then on to Kansas City. The great assembly hall where the convention met seated 7,500 persons. I was surprised to discover that I had been given a seat directly in front of the platform. I wondered about that until the chairman at the first meeting of the convention asked me to stand up, announcing that I had come the greatest distance of any delegate to the convention. That was quite a thrill. There I heard addresses by the greatest missionary speakers in the world. The chairman throughout the convention was Dr. John R. Mott. William Jennings Bryan's address was one of the highlights of the conference. What a thrill was this for a young man who had for years been dreaming of one day addressing great meetings. Bryan held the audience, metaphorically speaking, in the hollow of his hand, and was given a tremendous welcome. Before he arrived on the platform the director of the convention asked that everyone present take out their handkerchief and when William Jennings Bryan advanced to the platform to wave the handkerchief in all parts of the hall as a welcome to this distinguished visitor, who almost became a president of the United States. There were others who addressed the Convention with messages not much less powerful than that of William Jennings Bryan. It would be difficult to conceive of an experience more designed to stimulate my desire to become an effective public speaker than this convention. From time to time the emotions of the audience would be deeply stimulated, and we would be alternately moved to laughter and to tears. On my return to Prince Edward Island after this unforgettable experience I had more invitations to speak about the convention than it was possible for me to accept. I think I made a greater advance in the art of public speaking through that convention experience than from any other in my lifetime.

A Special Regret

My greatest regret in life had to do with my Uncle Rob, brother of Uncle Mark whose son is a senator in Canada. Uncle Rob was a favorite of our family. He was a dear. I was very fond of him and he was of me, but Uncle Rob was sick. I had just gotten into Prince of Wales College by the skin of my teeth. I got in only because I was over 18 and there was a regulation that you could be admitted on trial for a year. If you passed the examinations at the end of the year, it would be presumed that you would have passed the entrance examination. I was working like a demon, and each day was crowded.

Dan went down to see Uncle Rob and reported that he was very ill. "He's looking forward to seeing you." "I certainly want to see him," I answered, "but I don't know when I'll get the time." After some weeks had gone, I still hadn't seen him and he was pretty sick. But I was on committees and I was working on building up the debating society at college and so excited to be back in the academic atmosphere. Grade eight had been my last year in school. And so I had all that pressure and that pressure prevailed. I'd just got my first taste of academic life and this other seemed, at the moment, so external and extraneous -- but it wasn't.

I didn't get to see Uncle Rob and then one day, my father called me to tell me he had died. It just hit me like a ton of bricks that I hadn't gone to see him and I've regretted it bitterly ever since. I'd say that's the grossest sin I've committed. I'm like the ancient mariner who had to tell a story over and over

again to give him a little piece of mind. I have to tell this over to myself. I haven't told it to others because it's so sore that I couldn't bear to tell it. But I bitterly, bitterly regret it. Uncle Rob was the kindest man ever -- there's no excuse for my selfishness. I'd put a thousand dollars on the table if I had another chance to make that visit. But time can't be turned back.

Bessie Carruthers

Almost a Sweetheart

I was halfway up the path towards the college and I glanced over my shoulder. Here was Bessie Carruthers coming along. She was a young cute-looking blond girl with long curls right down her back -- fair hair -- I was always partial to girls with fair hair. I knew I should say "Hello," so I waited for her and we walked together right up to the door of the college. That was the first time we had ever walked together. A few days later, the school had a box-sled ride with two horses, and then there were porbably 15 students packed like sardines into that box sled -- singing our heads off as we drove around Charlottetown. I didn't remember Bessie ever hearing me sing, but suddenly she suggested, "Sid, sing that song, 'I lova you.'" And a hoot of laughter went up from the crowd, saying, "Oh Bessie, you mustn't push him too hard!!"

If I lova you, and you lova me and we lova both the same,
I lika say -- this very day -- I lika change your name.
Cause I lova you and lova you true and if you lova me
One isa one and two isa two under the apple tree.

This was the song. We'd never dated even once, and poor Bessie was blushing -- She didn't realize all the words.

Later of course, we were engaged five years while I was finishing school. Meanwhile, the war intervened. Isn't it strange? It would never have occured in my wildest dreams if I had thought that someday we might be friends and then on a social plane so high above me that to imagine dating her would be like pitching a tent beside the Eiffel Tower. Yet the Carruthers were not socially minded people at all, and Bessie had nothing of that in her. While we were at PWC I had thought of calling her and suggesting we work together on English. She was good at that. I wish I had done so. But the reason I didn't was because I wondered what her father would think. Sid Bonnell was pretty much of a nobody at that time. I've often wondered what difference it might have made in the life of the two of us -- perhaps we would not have married.

Social Distance

Even little Charlottetown had its social levels. The Carruthers family was right at the apex socially. Bessie's father was a highly revered physician who had taken special work in both Scotland and the United States -- interrupting his practice to do so. He was both a physician and a surgeon. I was was close to the bottom socially, but on the way up. My sister told me that she said to Duncan one day -- after the war when I was going with Bessie -- "Don't you think it's very wonderful that Sid should be dating the daughter of Dr. Carruthers?" And my brother -- a very successful merchant -- said, "Oh, I don't know. Right now their social position is quite different, but that's not going to last long. Sid's going far," He said. "He can take his place anywhere."

Even Bessie's ancestors were well known, whereas mine, at the time were not. The Calbecks were among the British Loyalists who left the American colonies for Canada. They lived in Prince Edward Island. Bessie's great-great-great uncle, Phillip Calbeck, was acting governor and he lived in Government House, which still stands outside of Charlottetown. Then came the American Revolution, and into the

port at Charlottetown came a ship -- part of George Washington's navy. These boats were usually partially manned by patriotic Americans fighting the British and partly by pirates taking advantage of the war. This one was a privateer. The sailors pillaged Charlottetown because there were no soldiers there at all. They pillaged Government House and took the Great Seal of PEI, with the name of King George the III on it, back to the ship. (A search by the American and Canadian governments never found a trace of the seal. Probably the gold was melted down.) And the sailors stole all the furniture they would like to have had. They even took the family food that Mrs. Calbeck had preserved for the winter. Most important, they kidnapped Phillip Calbeck and brought him to the American colonies. The news got out and Washington heard of it and he personally intervened. He punished the ship captains who had instigated the pillaging and kidnapping. He gathered what he could of the materials together and sent them back to P.E.I. with Calbeck. There's a cemetary in Charlottetown and on the far side of it is a stone pillar to Phillip Callbeck put up by a descendant. [An interesting sequel to this adventure was that the same ship picked up another prisoner -- an ancestor of Stuart Oskamp (my daughter Catherine's husband)]

Early memories of Bessie

I can remember Bessie coming into church when she was about six with her brother Bruce and their father. Their mother was an invalid -- I don't believe she ever came -- but her father would visit his patients and then be down at the church at eleven. Their family pew was not far from us, so I could see Bessie. She had lovely big long curls, blond, that came over her shoulder. Dr. Carruthers was highly revered. He never had a head or heart for finances -- left only $12,000 when he died. He often spent his own money on the medicine he gave to poor families, including mine. And I still remember an event one Chrismas eve. I was delivering a paper to the confectioner's store and Georgie, Bessie's older sister was there, buying a whole lot of candy. Her father wanted her to make up gifts for the children of poor families where he was their physician. I thought what a wonderful thing it was to have enough money that she could buy all that candy. My Christmas story wasn't in that league.

Bessie's Home Situation

Georgie wasn't really a sister to Bessie -- she was her mother. She just picked it up. Phoebe Calbeck was ill for years with leukemia. She died when Bessie was 12, and Georgie was 21. Early on, Georgie just picked up the role of mother and chose Bessie's dresses, just everything, directed what things she was to do, where she'd go for the holiday period. Her father was immersed in medicine all the time. Bessie later told me, "I saw little or nothing of my mother. She was always sick upstairs. I only saw her downstairs twice." So the older daughter almost invariably has stamped on her some part of the person of the mother.

After the death of their mother, Georgie went abroad with her father whom she adored. (Perhaps she was his "little wife" with her mother so ill. She also had had a nasty fall on a picket fence as a child, and he had treated her over the years. That drew them closer, too.) While they were in Europe, Bessie stayed with relative. On the return to Canada, Georgie was on the deck of the ship as they docked. Suddenly Dr. Carruthers pointed to a woman in the crowd, "There's Louise Coffin. I've been writing to her, and we plan to be married." That was first Georgie knew about it. Loiuse moved in and Georgie moved out. She went west and had a nervous breakdown. Later, Georgie married Will Reid, who seemed like a go-getting young farmer who had been to agricultural school.

My sister Jessie had the greatest admiration for Georgie; she said she was the most wonderful person. When Dr. Carruthers remarried, Jessie said to me,

"It's a very hard thing for Georgie to have this woman coming in to take the place of her mother." And Aunt Jessie had to face the same thing a year later. I came home from college classes and found her bathed in tears. She said, "Father is going to be married to Louise." (Both Georgie and Jessie were older sisters in their families, and "in charge of the household." Jessie had actually been the housekeeper holding the family together.) She said to me, "It's all very well. You and Dan have your own plans, but I'm out of everything. She had had some nursing training, so she went off to Boston and was very successful. It hit her very hard, but she handled it well.

Bessie always felt the death of her mother and her father's remarriage was a major trauma for her. Her father and sister-mother left shortly after the funeral for Europe, and when they returned Georgie was replaced with a step-mother. She had been first in her school class every year till that time. Her father also was against praise. Once she was startled to hear him read one of her compositions over the phone to a friend. She mourned the fact that he never came out to any of her school functions. She did poorly at college, though later at McDonald's Academy in Quebec she did well in Home Economics.

But all this I was to learn years later. Before our first date my time at Dalhousie and my summers on the mission field intervened. Before our engagement, there was World War I.

Early Ministry -- the Mission Field

In the vacation period of 1914, I was allowed to work on my first mission field the summer before I went on to Dalhousie. Fullerton, who was in charge of placements made an exception for me and gave me the full wage of a theological student. They strained the regulations that required a summer missionary to be a second year theological student, and assigned me to a field had been a failure for six years. The national missions board of the Presbyterian Church of Canada had built the church in one of the most needy districts in the province. The field was in the western end of Prince Edward Island, about 20 miles west of Summerside. The farmers there were fated to work hard and with poor resuts from the infertile soil. The church was only open in the summers when there were student pastors assigned. But even their presence had been unable to get the people out to church. I didn't know there was in prosperous Prince Edward Island any community quite as backward and as poor as that one.

When I was getting ready to go out to that community, I stopped over in Pine Valley to visit an old gentleman whose daughter had been at Prince Wales College when I was. He was a very fine old man and an elder of the Presbyterian church in Pine Valley. He said, "You're going to a very difficult place. You'll get your eyes opened when you see the poverty." And he gave me words of advice: "You preach the gospel to them, they need it and it will help them. And when you're going around visiting, do a job that'll get them out to church. The students who preceded you neglected to visit the homes of the people. But remember, when you're in a home and there's a baby sitting on the floor, never to ask, 'Whose baby is that?' More than once you'll be running into that. Illegitimacy is prevalent in that kind of a community." "However," he continued, "There's a lot of decent people there, too. My last words to you are be as wise as a serpant and as harmless as a dove and you'll get through your summer very well. I think you're going to do well there." I thought about the whole thing carefully, and what he had said. That summer every item of my energy and every ability was dedicated to making that mission field a success. It became such a success that it was turned into a congregation.

Getting Settled In

After talking to the old gentleman, I went to the place where I was going to board. It was owned by a mature man and his brother. His brother was weak-minded and did all the work around the barns for his keep. He never went out to any meetings of any kind but was a faithful worker. Then the man had a daughter, whose name was Minnie. Minnie's specialty was a cake with pink icing. (Later, the standard joke in our family was my aversion to anything that had pink icing on it.) That was one of her two masterpieces. (She knew how to make only one cake.) The other was her bread. Her father said, "That's a special 'east it's made with -- it's from the World's (Af)fair in St. Louis in the United States. A friend of mine was down there and he got this recipe for how to bake this wonderful World's Affair bread." After I left their home at the end of the summer, one thing I asked the Lord fervently to spare me was any more World's Affair bread. It was something awful, that bread. You could eat it but that was it.

However, the sun shone before the summer was over because a my host's cousin came and stayed for two weeks. That was heaven itself. She took over the kitchen and she apologized to me quietly saying, "Minnie has never had a chance. She knows only one thing and that's pink frosting cake." Believe it or not, she told my host, "You've got to feed this boy here. He's going through college and he's just beginning." (I was really only in high school, my second year at Prince of Wales was the last of high school.)

It was heaven while the cousin was there. I knew when she would leave and I was counting the days. She had a 17 year old daughter with her, the cutest little thing you ever saw. I just lost my heart to her completely. And she and I would be around a good deal together and when we had a night service at the church, the congregation would disperse and the mother, very discreetly, would go off with her cousin and leave me to take the daughter home. I was very shy and I remember one night, I was bold enough to put my arm through hers. The mother used to talk to me seriously about "the problem bringing up children nowadays" -- she should be living now! She was fairly well to do, and her daughter was in a girls' school. She said you'd be surprised that one of the problems that has bothered me is that these girls fall in love with one another. She told me, "I'm so glad that you're here because my daughter is interested in you now." It's funny, as I look back now I'm positive I was too shy to kiss that young girl -- she probably was hoping that I would. They were both a breath of fresh air and I hated to see them return home.

Building Rapport in the Community

I was the only student missionary who had ever gone into the homes and I visited in the course of the summer every home in the community. I had bought a second hand bicycle, and it had taken most of my money. I swear I carried that bicycle around the field more than it carried me. I had to have a repair kit because it was always blowing out punctures and everything like that. But I got around anyway and saw the people. There was an immediate increase in attendance because of the fact that I went into the homes.

Then I got a bright idea. I sent word out to the school that, right after school on Thursday, all the children in the community would be coming to the church to learn to sing. And do you know who the choir director was? Me. And I couldn't sing for beans. There was a dear old lady in the congregation, Mrs. Stewart, who had an organ, and I used to visit her place. (She was a good cook, she'd bake bread. I wanted to get away from world's affair bread so after supper I'd sneak away and visit these people and I'd eat 3 or 4 slices of this lovely bread.) After special pleading, she let me have the loan of her organ for the summer. Then I found the only girl in the congregation who knew how to play an organ. But she had to have all the hymns that were going to be sung on Sunday on the first of the week so that she could practice them. She must have had a very

deeply hidden genius in music! Frequently, in the course of playing for the children, there'd be a squack come where she'd hit the wrong note but it didn't make any difference.

So I got the children. I had a choir of children. Well, that was a stroke of genius because when Jackie and Mary were going to be singing in the little blue church at the corner, the least the mother and father could do was come over and hear them. The children didn't know any hymns -- not even "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know." I was certain at the end of the summer that the choir would never be allowed to sing in Westminster Abbey but it could sing in that community and the parents began to be proud that their children were singing in the choir. I had about 15 of them. So more and more people were coming out.

The seating arrangements in the church were dreadfully poor. The "pews" were nothing more than ten-foot-long planks with legs fastened to them. Since they were built by farmers in the community, they were varying widths -- some would be no more than six inches wide, and others a foot and a half. Consequently, it was a precarious arrangement for the congregation. When I'd look out at the congregation sitting on these things, it reminded me of hens going up to roost. And woe betide anybody who fell asleep while I was preaching because they'd lose their balance and hit the floor for sure.

Then week after week, I'd go around and ask the men I visited, "Will you make a bench for next Sunday for church." More and more. And before I was through the summer, that hall was filled with those benches. The families came out to sit on their own benches. It was really marvelous to see them and particularly at night. And then the word got around that there were interesting meetings going on in this little blue church. They came from the shore, about 6 miles away, younger men and other men, little by little filtering in. Before the summer's end, the church was filled with benches and it was rare for even one vacant seat to remain at the service. Indeed, usually there would be a dozen or twenty persons standing.

Evangelistic Services

As the congregation began to build, I put on a series of evangelistic services and there were many decisions for the Christian life. Indeed, one of the most notable conversions that had ever occurred in the western end of Prince Edward Island happened in this little mission church that summer. A man who was notorious not only in the community where the churchwas located, but also in surrounding areas, was converted. He was a heavy drinker and a terrible fighter in the community -- a dirty fighter at that. He had eight children in his family and half the time they didn't have anything to eat. Alex Biggar would drink everything instead of getting bread for the children. So at one evangelistic service, blessed if that fellow didn't come forward. His conversion was followed by a complete change of life, and I used to call on him to give his testimony. He had a natural eloquence of speech that could deeply move an audience. And word spread all over the countryside, "Alec Biggar has been converted and he's now testifying for Christ." More and more and more people came to hear this remarkably transformed man. We had a good congregation in the morning and at night we were packed to the doors.

I was able to bring to that little church something of the ferver and glow of the Student Volunteer Convention in Kansas. Sunday by Sunday the congregation grew larger and larger. Oh, the excitement for me from all that. This was the humble beginning of what I hoped would be a ministry to larger churches. It gave me a vision of what lay ahead for me in the Christian ministry.

Over the Winter

When I went back to college for the winter, the little church community

carried on Wednesday night meetings with Alec Biggar always present and one of the top organizers. I told them I'd come back the next summer and so that held them together. They'd give testimonies and some would read a verse of the Bible that they liked. Well, there were some boys from the shore, some mischievous boys, fishermen's sons, who heard about the services and the full church and they said, "They haven't got a minister, nobody's in charge there. Sometimes there's just a woman conducting the service, so let's go up and we can have some fun." They congregated at the back, right against the wall, and started making comments and scraping their feet when any of the local residents rose to speak. Alec Biggar had lived at the shore, and he knew every one of those boys. And they knew Alec Biggar, which was equally important. One of the men in the church told me the following summer that Alec Biggar jumped to his feet and he looked at each boy in turn, never said a word, and sat down. There wasn't a sound after that. Those boys knew that Alec had got the gospel in his heart but he also had the kind of a face that was dreaded by a good many people. They had reason to remember him.

Alec of course was so grateful and proud of having stopped drinking and all that. An atheist guy tackled him once, and said, "I hear you got religion. Come on up and have a bottle with me and forget all this nonsense. I suppose you'll be telling me now that you believe Christ turned water into wine." Alec said, "I can tell you a bigger miracle than that. I can tell you that Christ turned booze into food and clothing for my children." That was Alec's testimony. On Wednesday night people would come from a distance to hear Alec Biggar. And every winter meeting he'd give some part of his testimony.

Second Summer

The following summer, 1914, I was again appointed to this charge and with the aid of the moderator of the Presbitery, the little mission hall was transformed into a fully established church of the Presbyterian denomination in Canada, with two elders and a tiny session.

That summer, we held a public picnic at which people paid for their supper and had the opportunity to purchase cakes. I had learned -- it's almost unbelievable now -- that there was a local firm that made pews. They were good pews, comfortable pews, with a back on them and an arm rest. For $160, they would make enough pews to seat the entire church of 150 people. The picnic was held to raise the money.

So we had a tremendous picnic. I had sent word out to the Ladies' Aid in about four or five communities that I would greatly appreciate it if they would be good enough to send cakes from their churches to our picnic. We were going to have an auction sale of any cakes left after the picnic was over and the proceeds would go to the new pews. And of course everybody knew about Alec Biggar and they knew what was going on at our church, so our picnic was a terrific success and we took in, if I remember correctly, something like $180. You'll notice my brother Duncan's hand in this. I learned so many of these tricks of advertising from him. The people that gave cakes from these churches came over and paid to eat their cake. So the church, before the summer was ended, was completely filled with comfortable pews instead of benches.

Just before the picnic, Alec Biggar's brother -- a man on the north shore -- died. He was a very very popular man, not a drunkard like Alec had been. I put a notice up at the picnic that a memorial service for this man would be held the following Sunday night. You couldn't get near that church the following Sunday evening -- the biggest congregation ever seen in that community. I pulled in people from the shore that hadn't been in church for years, hadn't dreamed of going in. They all respected Alec's brother. And then I noticed some of those faces in the congregation other Sundays. Practically every Sunday night that church would be packed to the doors. Then little by little the Sunday night

service would have a queue at the door. We didn't have enough seats, so they'd stand right through the service, outside the open windows. So that was my first church -- called the Mt. Pleasant Church after a nearby community -- at the beginning of my ministry. Mel Aitken took it over the following summer, and I went to Tyne Valley.

Tyne Valley Church

The ladies in Tyne Valley sent cakes to my picnics and they got to know me. Once or twice, I was invited to address their associations. I remember that with great gusto. I used to like to get down there for the great food. In my earlier charge, I paid all of $3 a week for board and lodging, and that was $3 too much! And my room was so tiny! Dan with his exaggerations and his funny speeches said that I had the tiniest bedroom he'd ever seen. "Right at the foot of the bed is a window and when Sid lies down on the bed, he can put his heels on the window ledge." And the bed took up almost all the room. When Dan visited me, he didn't know how he was going to get into the room to get into bed. And he teased, "When I woke in the morning, my bare feet were out that window and there was a rooster sitting on my toes." That was Dan's contribution to the place. Dan was awfully amusing. He had a chance to get some of the World's Affair bread too.

The third summer -- at Tyne Vallley, I boarded with the Hugh Smiths in their lovely new home. They had a little baby, Margaret. I brought up that baby that summer -- taking her out in the carriage to help her mother out. She wasn't too strong and she was young and inexperienced and the father was out working on the farm all the time. She could do the housework while I kept an eye on the baby. I'd be reading a book and sitting near the carriage. She was a kind of a fussy baby. I'd get her sound asleep and then a confounded turkey would come around the corner of the house and "gobble, gobble, gobble." Oh, I could have wrung his neck. The baby'd wake up with a scare and then I'd have to get her off to sleep again.

I had been warned before coming to Tyne Valley that the church was split into segments by two women who were feuding. Mrs Jones (we'll call her) was moved by a service and talked to me. She realized that her enmity was splitting the church and she decided to go and apologize to Mrs. Taylor. She visited her home and said, "I want to talk to you. I've been very wrong and I want your forgiveness." Mrs. Taylor's response was, "You certainly have been. It was all your fault." And instead of bristling up, the visitor said, "Yes, I'm really sorry for what I've done." At that Mrs. Taylor burst into tears. They made up with each other and forgave each other and that was a big step for the church. In that country community everybody knew about it. It had a great affect on the spiritual life of that church. That was one of the memorable events in my ministry.

Things went increasingly well at the church. The people didn't turn out so well in the morning, but at night I'd put on addresses on interesting topice. I found that one woman had really an incredible voice, a beautiful singer, and I'd feature her every Sunday night. The evening service used to be out in an outlying place one Sunday and a different one the next. I said that's got to be changed. Every Sunday night must be in Tyne Valley. And I'd have that huge church packed. They'd come from other communities all around so they'd get a big collection, too. I can still see myself standing in that pulpit and the country people coming from the farms. Tyne Valley, the place where the church was, was a large village but what stores they had there were kept up by the farmers. It was really an agricultural community. That was a great experience. That summer in Tyne Valley.

And when I left at the end of the summer, they gave me a big reception at the home of the soloist. All the elders and their wives were there and as many of the congregation as that big house could accommodate. I was going to Dalhousie for

the next year. They gave me a purse of money as a gift -- very much needed then. When I had a chance to count it, there were $83 in that purse and that was one terrific lift -- especially on top of my salary.

I have had many wonderful experiences in the ministry, but I'm not sure many surpassed the satisfaction of my early mission churches.

Dalhousie University

By the time I left my little congregation, war was raging in Europe, and I had a strong urge to enlist and join the Canadian expeditionary forces in France. However, the medical doctor who examined recruits turned me down on the grounds of a heart murmer. As a consequence, I decided to cross the Northumberland Straits and journey to Halifax, Nova Scotial where Dalhousie University had achieved for itself an enviable reputation. I stayed for the winter of 1915 and the spring of 1916, finishing second year Dalhousie. (Prince of Wales College had been the equivalent of first year.)

Just as I had been thrilled to attend classes at Prince of Wales College, an even greater thrill awaited me in Halifax. After enrollment in the university, I attended the meetings of the "Sodales Debating Society." On my second visit, I participated in a debate and at the close of that session was elected president of the society and was appointed to the intercollegiate debating team, representing Dalhousie. At my first debate, we were defeated, but several years after graduation, I served as coach for the team and in that capacity I had the great pleasure of securing a unanimous decision in favor of our debating team against the self-same college that had defeated us a few years before.

At the end of my year at Dalhousie, I decided to try again to get into the Canadian Armed Services.

CHAPTER TEN

WORLD WAR I

Enlistment in the Artillery

I wanted to get into the war and I didn't want to get into the infantry. I have no end of admiration for the guys that went into the infantry but, when I saw what the war was, I thanked my lucky stars that I wasn't with them. Meeting in the trenches -- I don't know how I could have done it -- ripping the body of a German with a bayonet. I would have had an advantage in height. Before his bayonet could get me, I'd have had him. Fighting was that way, you know. (Later on, in the army, I was cleaning my gun and the bayonet hit me below the eye. I had a blackeye out of it. I wasn't used to rifles and bayonets -- the artillery keeps you away from all those nasty weapons.)

I had been turned down earlier only in an unofficial sense. I had secured a private appointment with Dr. Jenkins, wanting to know if I could make the grade. My heart, I knew, could be an obstacle. (Probably because of Rheumatic fever when I was ten, I've had this funny thing with my heart. I don't know what it is but it certainly hasn't shortened my life.) Dr. Jenkins had gone over me carefully and every time he had stopped at the heart. He had told me that I wouldn't get through an army physical examination. That had been a year previously.

I wanted very much to be in the battery they were forming with Colonel Peak. So I want back to the recruiting officer and I said, "Would you like to get three men -- all over six feet tall?" "Would I?" said he, "That's what I'm after. The 105th regiment took up so many of the Island boys that there aren't many left who are elegible." So I said, "Well, okay, I'll bring two other six footers if you can get me by the doctor. Jenkins thinks I've got something wrong with my heart, but its all stuff and nonsense. My heart is as good as anybody's around. I've been playing basketball and I was the captain of the winning team in our whole section of Dalhousie University. You put a little bug in Jenkins' ear so that I can get in and I'll bring with me two men."

So he said, "Okay Ill see what I can do." This officer then notified me by telephone that I had an appointment with Dr. Jenkins, so I knew right away that he had been after Jenkins. When the doctor went over me again, it was official. He hardly put the stethescope on me at all -- a second or two and he moved on. "Well," he said, "I think you're in pretty good shape. Now we'll see about your height!" The artillery needed tall men. I brought my brother Dan and Miller Campbell to the recruiting officer. He was delighted when I , reported, "Okay, you've got your three six-footers."

The joke of it is that it's true that I have something funny about my heart. But I got in the artillery and did what anybody else could do -- all the route marches -- nothing stymied me at all. I went through the war and the gassing and was wounded, yet D.A.H. (disorderly action of the heart) is on every paper. I asked a doctor what it meant and he said, "It simply means there's something wrong but we don't know what it is." I'm on pension now for D.A.H. -- the thing I had when I joined up! (It was accentuated of course by the gassing.)

It was strange to know I had something that could get me out of the army any time I wamted. It gave me a great feeling. All I had to do was report to the Medical Officer and say, "Look I'm having a little trouble with my heart." There's something in my heart alright, but I've buried a lot of other guys that <u>didn't</u> have anything wrong with theirs!

When I was sworn in I was accompanied by my brother Dan and by my roommate from Dalhousie, Wendall McKenzie. We had two months intensive training in Charlottetown before going overseas.

First Date

My first date with Bessie Carruthers began with fear and trembling. It was announced that the battery was going on a moonlight sail. There was going to be a band on board the ship and there'd be dancing and singing. This was before our uniforms had arrived. The major was there and his wife and the lieutenants and theirs. At Dalhousie, I hadn't been dating anyone. I was still disillusioned after my experience with Kate Heatheridge and, having missed so much school in my teens, I was sticking pretty close to the books. So when this event came up, I didn't have a girl. I was walking down Kent street, and began to wonder who I could get to go to this event with me. I thought of a librarian, but I scarcely knew her. I thought of others, but suddenly, I saw Bessie Carruthers sitting on the top step of her home fifty feet away. I said, "My soul, would I dare ask her?" I just couldn't bear it if she turned me down. I didn't know what she'd think of soldiers anyway. I decided to go over, and I asked, "What are you doing out here." She said, "Oh, I'm just waiting for my father. He's going to bring the horse and buggy around, and I'll drive him around to see two or three patients. He wants me to hold the reins while he's in seeing them." We talked about one thing and another and she asked, "What're you doing in the battery now?" So I said, "Well, that's the reason I came over. Would you by any chance be willing to take a date with me? Our battery is going to have a band and a moonlight sail up the river." "I'd love to ," she said. "Well that's great," I said, "I'll come to the house and get you." (Having got my courage up, I thought, why not keep rolling.")

Bessie wore a fashionable navy middy and pleated skirt on the sail. Years later she told me that Dan's girlfriend, Ruth (whom he later married), had chided her for not wearing a frilly dress. Apparently Bessie had said nothing, feeling smug that Ruth was not aware of the latest mode. We had a good time that evening, but unfortunately, couldn't date any more before my battery left for England. Bessie had to go up to Summmerside. She was supervisor of all the Women's Institutes on the Island -- going round showing the women on the farms how to cook fancy things they mightn't know too much about. She said, "Actually, I'm ashamed of myself. A lot of these women know a great deal more about cooking than I do. But this is my job and I'm getting paid for it so I go through with it."

Overseas, I didn't write her all the time I was in France. When I got in hospital after the gassing, I began to wonder. So I wrote her and got an awfully nice letter back from her. Then I sent a French postcard -- it would have finished our romance if I'd sent her some of those -- but this was a little French boy and a little French girl in a dotty dress. It was all in French -- saying something like, "I think you're nice." And I put, "Comprendez vous?" She wrote back, "Thank you for your postcard...I'm not very good at reading french." After she died in 1976, I found that card -- sent from France 59 years earlier -- in her bureau drawer. I still have it.

On to England

After our initial training in Charlottetown, using dummy guns, our battery sailed on the car ferry to Pictou, Nova Scotia. From there we journeyed by train to Halifax. Our embarkation transport was part of a convoy of six ships guarded by a British cruiser en route to England. It was on this boat that I met E.O. Brown for the last time.

Before beginning serious training in England, our entire battery was given five days leave to visit London. Practically all of us went, two by two, to see the wonders of this great city including Westminster Abbey, the houses of Parliament, and the Tower of London. We attended the crowded theatres and a few

visited the famous art galleries.

Heading For the Front

After three months of intensive training, we had our first "qualifying shoot" on the artillery range at Lydd, England and then, within twenty-four hours, we were shipped to Bologne, France. Our huge eight-inch howitzers were hauled by tractors while the gunners rode in lorries onto the wharves of the French city. We were marched right up to the fighting zone. We camped in fields along the road, in tents that would be used the next night by other units moving toward the front. I'll remember one unforgettable morning as long as I live: It was right around April 1, 1917, and the weather was cold. There was snow on the ground and mile after mile of tents. Our unit had ten or more grouped together. About six o'clock, I was wakened by loud cheering. Opening the tent flaps, I looked out and saw a dispatch rider sticking his head in the door of each tent and shouting some news which was received by the soldiers with loud cheers. I started running out to meet him, crying, "What's the news? What's the news?" He shouted back, "The United States had declared war on Germany." I was almost lifted off my feet by a surge of joy. We cheered ourselves hoarse. Now we knew that ultimate victory was assured. This was something very much in doubt only a few weeks before. Speedily we spread the news to our English and French comrades tenting nearby. There was joy everywhere. Ironically, I remembered that, in England, I had been in a druggist shop and the owner asked me if I had ever been to the United States. I said, "Certainly, I've been down there several times." "Well," he said, "do you think they'd be any good as soldiers?" I answered, "You bet your bottom shilling. You can pit them against any of your English soldiers." I'm sure that it's different now with television but in 1916, I found in England the most collosal ignorance about Americans. They really didn't know what the country was like or its strength and vigor and power. They just couldn't grasp it.

After two days travel we reached the battle zone at nightfall. It was an eerie experience. As the darkness deepened, we could see that the sky above the trenches was lightened bright as day by exploding star shells and the intermittent rat-tat-tat of machine gun fire told us that death was on the wing. Our battery personnel was quartered in the buildings of a French farmer located about two and a half miles from the trenches. I spread my blankets on the plank floor of a stall that had been occupied during the preceding months by a large draft horse which was then out to pasture. It took me some time to get accustomed to the stench left by the huge animal, but when a heavy rainstorm flooded the countryside our second night at this billet I was thankful for even this shelter.

A few days later I was looking across the farmer's fields when I spotted a huge straw stack. Immediately I recalled my boyhood when one of my pals and I had made a comfortable nest for ourselves in a similar stack in a farmer's field in Prince Edward Island. I confided my discovery to a fellow sergeant and after nightfall we crossed the fields and began to burrow into the stack. As I neared the center of the pile, suddenly I found myself in a room some eight feet square framed with new boards. Two bags filled with oats stood against one wall. During the balance of our time in this gun position my pal and I slept with the scent of sweet hay in our nostrils -- a blessed relief from the horse stall.

One morning we were awakened by the rattle of machine gun fire. Startled beyond measure, we crawled out to the entrance of our stack and in the air directly in front of us, not two thousand feet away, two pilots, one British and one German, were locked in mortal combat. Round and round, back and forth they twisted and turned their planes each hoping to get his adversary into his gunsight. Suddenly the firing ceased and the German pilot slowly began to descend in wide circles. Apparently he had given the signal to his enemy that he was capitulating. In five minutes his plane was on the ground and the German pilot

was removing his helmet. A half dozen of our gunners were now climbing into his plane and he was placed under arrest.

Suddenly we heard the deadly whistle of incoming shells. An observer in a German balloon had seen the fight and was now directing the fire of German field guns in an effort to destroy their own plane, which was relatively unscathed, to keep it from falling into enemy hands. Not a few of our troops had been thrilled by this dramatic spectacle and were thinking "this isn't half bad after all." Before many weeks passed they would have plenty of reason to change their minds.

Anyone who has served as a combatant in World War I in France will carry through life the memory of the almost complete disruption of the normal routine of the country. It was difficult to realize that those intricate networks of trenches were dug across wheat or potato fields and that the sheds and barns now used as billets had recently been occupied by the farmer's livestock. Occasionally some farm homes still sheltered women and children. During the months that followed these happenings, we were shifted from sector to sector along the fighting front, wherever the help of heavy guns was needed to blast a way through stubborn enemy resistance. In the spring of 1917 our Battery was quartered in the little village of Le Preal near the town of Buvory in Northern France. I rented a bedroom in the home of a motherly little widow and shared it with a fellow sergeant. Her husband had died five years before this time and left her with a sixteen year old daughter, Ermos, and four sons. All of her sons were called into service for France when war broke out with Germany. One son was badly wounded leaving him partially crippled. He was drafted for work in a nearby coal mine, returning each evening at six o'clock and bathing in a washtub in the kitchen to get rid of the heavy coat of coal dust. Two sons had been killed in action and the third and last was in the fighting near Verdun.

A water pump near by the house served to supply the needs of some four or five families. A score of soldiers billeted in a nearby loft also got their drinking water at this pump. During the first week or two in this small village when Ermos would appear at the pump with her pail, some of the gunners were sure to make passes at her. Instantly this teenaged girl would turn savagely upon them such a torrent of oaths and obscenities drawn from the English, French, and even German languages that made the boldest of her annoyers quail.

Shortly before we were ordered to transfer our six inch guns to Armentieres, some twenty or more miles to the North, I walked a quarter of a mile to our gun position on a routine inspection. Completing my assignment I started back to my bedroom in the hospitable home of Mother DuFresne. As I walked along the road lit by fitful glimpses of the moon and an occasional star shell fired from the trenches, I saw looming up out of the shadows a towering wooden wayside cross bearing the image of the crucified Christ. As my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, I discerned a shadowy form kneeling before the cross. Stooping closer I suddenly recognized Madame DuFresne. She looked up quickly, then flung her arms around me while her tears ran down my face and neck. A moment later she passed into my hand a crumpled half sheet of paper. Taking a small flashlight from my pocket I saw that it was a telegram from the French Government regretting to inform her that her son had been killed in action at Verdun. Now there were three sons killed in action; a fourth crippled for life. At that moment the moon broke through the clouds and side by side in silence we knelt looking up into the sorrow-riven face of the Man on the cross. Taking this heroic mother by the arm, I led her back to her now-so-empty home.

Fortunately there is a happier sequel to this sad tale. Exactly ten years later--in 1927--while attending a convention of Rotary International at Ostend, Belgium, I met an American businessman who had been born in Canada. His brother had been a gunner in our Battery and became a gas casualty. When we met he said, "I have been on the look out for you the last couple of days. I would like to see some of the places in France where your Battery had served and where my brother

had been." "Well," I answered, "You supply the car and the driver and I will show you the very lofts in which your brother slept." Within twenty-four hours we were rolling along the French highways toward one location after another where our big guns had been dug in and saw the barn lofts where his brother had slept. Finally we came to the little village of Le Preal. I immediately inquired about my dear friend Madame DuFresne. (ENDING MISSING)

Armentieres

It was not until we were ordered into action in the city of Armentieres, France, that we suffered our first casualties. This experience shook each of us to the very core of our being, shattering our easy going complacency. Major Peak was with us. We had placed our guns on either side of a stone wall. One day, shortly after our arrival, enemy shells rained on our gun position all day long. Evidently a German battery had been badly stung by the accurate fire of our eight inch howitzers. Now it was our turn to get a drubbing. Immediately, the colonel had ordered every man back about 200 or 300 yards.

The Germans were the most accurate gunners if they had a target, and they were using 5.9 armor-piercing shells that could sink a battleship. Their target was our two great big 8-inch guns. The shells came raining in. Every one of those shells almost grazed the guns but then landed harmlessly until there was a great hole about 15 feet behind the emplacement. The Germans kept shelling till you could put a room in the cavity -- way down 12 or 14 feet. Artillery shooting is all approximate. A shell may land as wide away from target as 25 yards. And that's the reason why you pour on far more than should be necessary. All the rest of the shells went down that hole and hurt nobody. They gave us about 40 shells altogether -- all wasted.

When they pounded us we reported to headquarters that we were being shelled and headquarters evaluated the situation. They went out toward the trenches a bit and got a bearing on the German battery. Each side knew where every battery was. Then headquarters sent word to an English battery to open up on the German battery to neutralize it. The Germans ran from the guns to save their necks when that pounding came. (They might as well have let them pound. They were doing no harm to us.) Later the Germans returned and fired the one shell left in the gun before they cleaned it. They thought our battery was destroyed since we weren't firing back, and never gave a thought to what that last shell would do; it was just to get rid of it. And that shell did a hundred times more harm than all the others, as you'll soon learn.

Peak and I Are Wounded

After the original shelling had stopped, the men wanted to go forward to see the damage. Ordinarily this would have been fairly safe. But Peak gave orders not to go up to the guns till he said so. We would have lost almost 90% if the men had all gone forward. The colonel then ordered me to come forward with him for inspection. It's funny -- Peak and I were intimate friends. I was more like one of the officers to him and instead of asking the captain or one of the lieutenants, he told me to accompany him.

We had just reached the guns and were looking at them, "Isn't it wonderful -- they're in perfect shape. But we'll have to get them out of here." We were talking about it when all of a sudden we heard the roar of an approaching shell. We flattened right out on the cobblestone street. We knew what we were in for. I was about 25 feet away from that shell. I should be dead now. And I saw that shell coming in as a blue streak arching downwards and I saw it hit the stone foundation of the building -- a bright-as-daylight flame blossomed out with blue and red colors. I was flattened down but I looked sideways to see it. It's the

only time in my life I had a clear view of a shell bursting -- red hot flame and the ball instantly dissipated as it sent the pieces flying. (A lot of people just think I'm talking.) I was deafened by a thunderous explosion and a blast of heat struck my face. Four or five French civilians who had been standing nearby fell, riddled with shell splinters.

Two British soldiers repairing an overhead wire dropped to the ground. One was dead and the other had his leg shot off. (Now see the wisdom of Peak. We could have had 20 men killed there if they'd all done what they'd wanted to do.) The Major and I leaped to our feet and ran at full speed down a street leading away from the guns. We were met by a group of anxious-faced officers and men. Only then did I see the blood running down the Major's arm and hand. His right shoulder was badly shattered. In ten minutes he was on his way to a military hospital and never again saw service in France.

"Have you been hit, Sergeant-Major?" a Lieutenant asked me. "No, thank goodness," I answered, since in the excitement I had felt nothing. Then, just as I opened my jacket, a tinkle of glass sounded on the cobblestones and I saw my watch hanging from a fragment of belt. Then, too, the blood began flowing. Quickly an officer examined the wound and said, "This is unbelievable! Only a piece of flesh has been gouged out and there's a bad bruise, but your watch has been battered to bits. Even the frame that held the crystal is completely torn off its thread." Instead of entering my bowels, the shell fragment had shied off after smashing into the watch.

At the Casualty Clearance Station I received tetanus shots and had the wound dressed. The medic attending me showed another man the watch and the abdominal wound, saying, "Take a look at this." Then, turning to me he shook his head in amazement, "You're sure loaded with horse shoes." Lying in hospital that first night, I remembered how the Rev. McPhee had "ordained" me: "It's for you to take up your Uncle Donald's work where he laid it down." I felt even more strongly that God had work for me to do in the Christian ministry.

I was about two weeks convalescing -- walking wounded. I couldn't take a long breath and I couldn't straighten up. The muscles were so damaged by the force of the blow and the pressure of the watch nearly driven into my bowels. I had that watch for years in my bureau till is was stolen with some other things. I've regretted that I hadn't sent it to the Waltham people, suggesting that they run an ad: "Waltham watches not only keep good time but they save lives." I'll bet they would have sent me a check for $500!

Our Battery Gun Is Hit

Peak had been invalided home. He was badly hit in the shoulder and could never again lift his arm higher than the level of his shoulder. We had lost our commanding officer. A far more terrible experience awaited us. I had been at Division Headquarters on a mission for our new commanding officer, Captain Bagnall. When I returned to the battery, I found the Captain busy measuring the arc of fire of our guns. He said to me, "Sergeant Bonnell. I shall need your help here shortly, but first of all go over to the Sergeant's mess and have your supper. Then come right back here." I saluted and left. I was just finishing my evening meal when I heard a loud explosion. At that moment, Sergeant MacKenzie strolled into the mess. "Was that shell going out or coming in?" I asked him. "Coming in by all means," he replied, laughing. We were accustomed to constant, intermittent bombardment. I walked out into the quadrangle leading to our guns. Suddenly a gun man came racing from the gun position, his face white as death. "Sergeant," he gasped. "A shell has hit our position and killed almost all of the gunners there." I rushed full speed through a building that led to our guns. The air was thick with brick dust and shell fumes. I saw a young gunner running toward me, whom I knew intimately. He was one of the finest men in the Battery.

He dashed at me and tried to speak, but suddenly dropped into my arms, dead. Other gunners lay on the grass, dead or dying. A little to one side lay Sergeant McLellan who had come out of the mess as I was entering it. Sergeant McKenzie, who had rushed back to the guns, was giving first aid to his friend. My first look at the wounded Sergeant revealed that he was near death. A three inch long jagged piece of shell had torn right through his helmet carrying bits of steel deep into his head. It was a sad-hearted group of noncommissioned officers and gunners who gathered in the basement of our billets that night talking with deep affection of our well loved comrades. The next morning, six silent forms wrapped in gray "issue" blankets were laid to rest in a large cemetery--to the accompaniment of the prayers of those chaplains of their faith. There were many tears at Armentieres.

The Gassing

One morning in Armentieres I wakened with a strange feeling of apprehension. It was not due to the fact that we were being shelled, but rather because no shells at all were dropping on the city. In all the time that we had been stationed at Armentieres this situation had never occurred. I remarked to one of the sergeants that I had not felt so uneasy since we came to France. The deathly silence reigned until well past midnight. I was sleeping on the ground floor directly under a window from which all the glass had been blown out. Not a breath of wind was blowing. Suddenly the silence was broken by the shriek of approaching shells. They were fired by the German artillery and our troops called them the "whiz-bangs." We were in an old building that used to be a hospital -- four or five stories, and a cuppola on top of it. The story above the main floor was made of concrete. Well, you couldn't have imagined a better shelter if a bomb came through the other floors.

Shells -- literally hundreds of them -- were bursting seemingly harmlessly in our courtyard though their splinters flew in all directions. Suddenly, My attention was arrested by a new sound intermingling with the high explosives. It was a hollow "bong" and I began to smell mustard. I remembered picking up a Headquarters' letter warning of imminent danger from an attack with what was called "mustard gas." Such an attack had already taken place in the Ypres area and had caused many hundreds of casualties. Each shell had enough explosive in it that when it detonated, the deadly liquid would cover an area as big as a room and saturate it. For about five hours, it would give off vapor. I had thought, "That's something to look out for."

I rushed to the "gas attack" alarm -- a triangle of especially resonant steel that hung from the ceiling in my room, and I pounded it like fury. I knew that several dozen of our men were sleeping in the basement and were in immediate peril of their lives. I quickly donned my own mask and put the big blob in my mouth. I sucked in air through charcoal and that protected myr lungs. Those who scorned to keep a gas mask on long enough were all in their graves, within two to five years.

There was a serious lack of training in our unit. And that was largely our officers' fault. We had never been given a gas drill and made to put the masks on and made to leave them on for a given period. As a result, about 90% of our battery were gassed that night. They didn't put their masks on soon enough and they didn't leave them on long enough. Two fellows in the basement had not bothered to obey the order at all. They died as they slept. I had mine on right away, and kept it on well after several of our officers came by without. I felt kind of foolish, but whenever I lifted it, I could smell the gas still. It was sheer folly -- very blameworthy -- that our officers set a poor example for the men.

The next day, we assembled the gas-damaged men. Nearly every man's eyes were

a clot of blood. They couldn't see. Orders from headcquarters were to wipe the eyes of these men, so I went along a line of 40 men with a basin of bicloride of mercury and cotton batting. Then the men clasped hands and one man who could see led them down the street to the first casualty clearing station. From there they would go into hospital.

Derilicẗion of Duty

We were, of course, terribly depleted in ranks. There was not enough men to man our gun. Other units were asked to send five or six men, and -- I suppose it was human nature -- they sent their bums to be our replacements. (Every unit had men they would like to get rid of.) Miller Campbell came to my bed, and said there was a call for action, and we were supposed to engage a German batter. But the whole replacement gun crew was drunk. I put my bare feet in my shoes and, as I went down the corridor, I heard the racket louder and louder. These men had raided the winecellers of people who lived nearby, and it was hard liquor. I took one look at them. I was never so angry in my life. I felt pure rage. I could have murdered them all when I thought of the fine men who had died, whom they were replacing, and of the others who had just gotten off duty -- exhausted after 24 hours. I yelled "AttenTION" at the top of my lungs. -- and that got through even their addled brains. They jumped up the whole lot of them, weaving. I saw right away that they couldn't man a gun. They wouldn't be able to site it. So I turned to Miller Campbell, and told him that our Island boys would have to take another shift, tired though they were, so that we could shell that German battery.

The next morning I got these other men lined up, and told them: "I'm in a quandry. We need your help desperately, yet every man standing here now is subject to courtmartial. You were drunk on duty and unfit to take the gun we were called to engage. Men who were 24 hours on duty had to go on again. You'll be tried by one of the top judges of the English army and you'll get HELL! You fellows come out to serve your country and you fall on your faces. How many infamntry men got killed by the fact that you weren't there to help protect them? The guns were there, the shells were there, the explosive charges where there -- everything but YOU to man them. I'm just debating whether to send in this report."

They were scared stiff. Only two of our men had been convicted under English army law and they were sent to one of these places where every move they made had to be on the double. They came back saying: "We're not afraid of hell any more -- we've been there for three weeks." I told these fellows. "I may be delinquent, but if you fellows don't come through, GOD HELP YOU, because no man will! I'll restate the charge and you can take what comes." Tough as they were, they came up and thanked me for not pressing the courtmarshal. If it had come up to the commissioned officer, he'd have sent them up in a flash, but there were none around till later that day.

I absorbed a good deal of gas even though I kept my gas mask on. They all leaked a good deal. And then after you took the mask off, there was a residue in the area. There was saturation of the dirty stuff in the ground because the shells were lying around on the ground. Some were duds of course. We sent them to headquarters when we found one. I picked up a shell and shook it. I could hear the liquid inside. They would usually explode with just enough force to fling the liquid around and every drop would give off gas that wouldl eat your lungs out. I guess that from our building there were only three of us (we had kept our masks on) who weren't sent to hospital the next morning. Everyone of them got sent to England. After a few weeks their sight came back.

After the Gassing

After the gassing, everything went wrong. We had to move out of the place we were in because it was stinking with gas. I was going around with a new officer -- all of ours were casualties -- looking for a new position. I was getting more and more tired and I said, "Wait a minute. I want to sit down." "Sir," I said, "I can't go any further." And then I collapsed. I remember only vaguely the officer hailing an ambulance and his saying to the driver, "Take this man to the nearest casualty clearing station." And I can just remember getting into the car because I was falling asleep. When we got the advanced clearing station where they had a lot of men, they took my temperature and so forth. I guess I was a mess. They sent me further back till I was two miles behind the trenches. The nurse put me to bed and I fell immediatley to sleep. But I had the most horrible nightmares. I remember them vaguely all night. In the morning, a man in the next bed said "What in hell have you been doing with yourself?" I asked,"Why?" He said, "You kept this ward in an uproar all night long." "I didn't," I said. "I slept through the night." "Did you?" said he, "Well, nobody else did! You just yelled and bounced around the bed all night." But that one terrible night was the only bad one I had and that passed off.

Hospital

The next day, I was still feeling pretty wobbly, and I had to get a medical. Well, right away the old heart thing came up. The doctor said, "This man should be hospitalized." So I thought, "Alright, I'll have a bit of a rest. I've been through the gassing and through the major bombardment and I've had some of my best friends killed right beside me." But they sent me from hospital to hospital -- almost like a relay race - and each time the doctor said, "D.A.H." They sent me down the line, down the line, till I landed in a big Canadian hospital right on the coast.

That was a starvation hospital. There was some guy somewhere making a mint of money by cutting all the rations. We never got enough food. Nothing you could do about it. In the army, you don't complain about higher-ups and you don't sign petitions. Sargeants are pretty chummy, so after I was there for a while, I asked one, "Would you lend me your greatcoat to go over my hospital blues? I'm starving and I want to go into town for some food.". "Sure thing," he said, "and I'll give you boots too because they'll hide the bottom of your hospital pants."

It was a mile down a steep, steep hill to town. The Hospital was right at the top. I got down to the big "Estaminee" there and I said: "I want eggs and french fried potatoes -- a generous order." The waitress brought in a mound of fried potatoes and the eggs and I just polished it off. She came to bring me my check and I said, "Just hold that. I want a complete repeat on that order." So she brought in the second order, with roles and everything. I polished off the whole of both those orders and two or three cups of coffee.

I went to the counter and got every pocket of my greatcoat crammed with rolls and cookies for the boys in the beds around me. I wrapped myself up to leave. Oh, but I was scared! I hadn't had any exercise for several weeeks on the line to the hospital, and there was that steep hill going back to the hospital. Going up that hill was something. I would rest periodically and I had to cover my hospital blues. If any military man came along I'd be courtmarshalled. Somehow, I got up that hill and the sentry was going back and forth and back and forth. I waited till he was three quarters the way to the far end and I ducked under the wire and back to the ward. I gave back the greatcoat and boots to the sargeant. And the fellows on both sides of me around my bed had a feast that night. "You're a real brick," I said to the sargeant. "You've really done me a service." "Well, he said, "if one sargeant can't do something for another, were pretty badly off."

Later, I was sent to a hospital on the shore. There was one marvelous dotor there -- he was too tender hearted for the good of the army. I was the only

Canadian in the ward. The rest were English. The word was that this doctor had a habit. He'd watch a man for a week after examining hin, and if he felt he needed further treatment in another hospital, he'd free the bed for another patient. He'd wait till he'd completed the examination, and then he'd walk a few paces away, saying over his shoulder, "Send him home, Sister, send him home." That meant the man would go to an English hospital. And he said those magic words of me, "Send him home, Sister." I remember the motion of the ship going back to Dover, and then they put me on a train. In the bunk above me was a poor guy who groaned and growned -- he was in awful pain. So we got to an English hospital, and then a Canadian hospital.

In one wing of that hospital, as I got better, I'd lead a discussion each evening. The other sargeants called me "The Professor." They'd say, "Well, Professor, what'll it be tonight?" And I'd tell them everything I knew about some part of history or literature. None of them had ever gone further than high school and we enjoyed it. I was by then able to walk around and I'd gotten to the nearest town and brought two books home from the library. A young girl there -- we used to talk about books -- had let me take them back to the hospital.

Now, we had a certain sargeant major -- oh how we hated that guy! He'd never been to the front -- he'd never smelt powder. He had a kind of resentment against the men. He was rigid. "Nothing on the top shelf of your box. Shoes underneath," etc. I had my books on top and he started ordering me around. I said, "Those books are going to stay there. I don't care what you or anyone else says!" "Well, he said, you'll get it when inspeciton time comes The next day, the head Medical inspector came thorough and stopped to talk to every patient. When he came to my bed, he looked down and here the books were. "Oh," he said,"you got Soldier in Arms. Is it a good book?" "Yes," I said, "It's a good book and I've read others by the same author." The other book was on Shakespeare. "How'd you get these out?" "Oh, a very lovely lady who's working with soldiers let me bring them back. "Oh yes, Miss Williams -- I know her. She's a fine person." And so went this little chitty chat with the commanding officer. There was a broad grin on every soldier in the place to see our bully humiliated. That was one of the biggest triumphs I ever had in the army!

Leaving for Canada

Finally, I was ready to be sent home to Canada, and the ship was waiting at the dockside. I had a lot of souvenirs in my dufflebag that never should have gotten out of France, much less England. There were airplane photographs of the German lines, maps, charts, a fuse from a German shell, and the nose of another shell -- plus a whole lot of other souvenirs. You weren't supposed to take any of them. There was an inspecting officer standing by when I was going aboard the ship to take me to Canada. Some men were being carried on but I was walking and there didn't seem much wrong with me. With some men, the officer would feel the uniform to see if they were taking anything out, but in my duffle bag was enough stuff to hang me. The officer was stopping one after another of those going on the ship and taking things away from them. But just as I came abreast of him, a man came up and spoke to him. He turned his head and I walked right past him with my bag and up the stairs. It was as easy as sneaking into the fairground as a kid. The rules were unnecessarily strict. I never took anything that would be detrimental to the war office or to the army. But to me the letter of the law wasn't that important. And was I delighted that I got all that junk to take home! But most of all, I was thrilled to be actually going back to Prince Edward Island.

PART FOUR

EARLY MINISTRY

CHAPTER ELEVEN

FROM THE MARITIMES TO WESTERN CANADA

Bessie Carruthers and I were engaged not too long after my return. It would be a five year wait, but we were quite confident we could make it. Everyone else was certain we wouldn't. We didn't announce that we were engaged, but of course it got out. I didn't buy the ring till 3 or 4 months before we married. I was finishing arts and then went through theology, and one year in the ministry. I wanted to get my feet into the work, and then I wanted to get some money. I was nearly stone broke when I got through college -- one thing that hasn't changed!

Finishing My Education

On my return from overseas I found myself back in the classroom of Dalhausie where I really settled down to work and achieved results much more satisfying to me than at any previous period. After graduation I spent three years in the theological seminary of Pine Hill Divinity Hall. During this period, I never failed to take advantage of every chance to address meetings or church services. Everything I had learned in the art of public speaking was given expression. I even anticipated appointments and made far-reaching preparations for them. Winston Churchill once said that so-called extemporaneous speeches if they were of any value must have had careful preparation. It is true of Churchill himself that if he ever were attending any meeting where he would probably be called upon to speak he would most certainly prepare for the occasion.

It was announced at Pine Hill that a dinner meeting would be held in memory of the men of our seminary who had died in the war. It had been the practice to throw such a meeting open when the formal speeches had been ended to remarks by students. I knew that there was a strong likelihood that my name would be called by a few of the student body. I decided to make preparation in case this happened. I spent the entire afternoon of the day of this dinner in Point Pleasant Park, Halifax. Sitting on a bench in the park I wrote out the last one-third of the speech that I might be called upon to make. I gave to it my very best and then spent an hour or more rehearsing. When the time for the banquet came that evening, formal speeches were made by the principal of our seminary and one or two professors, and then the president of the seminary said, "The student body will now have the right to call upon any student they care to name to make a few remarks." Two students were named and spoke very well. Mine was the third name to be called on by the student body. I spoke in quiet tones about the men who had gone from Pine Hill to the battle front and who had died. Then I swung into the prepared part of the speech. I question if in my lifetime up to that moment I ever gave a better prepared or better delivered speech. It touched the hearts of the entire body of students including my own. In many ways it was one of the best speeches I have ever made in my life. (In that post-war time I hoped it was the prophecy of still greater things ahead.)

Before leaving the seminary in my third year I entered a competition known as the Oratory Contest. The winner of this contest would be awarded a prize of $100, which in those post-war years was a substantial reward. I chose as my topic "The Unknown Warrior" and again put all that I had into the preparation. For this final contest, three prizes were to be awarded: first, second, and third--$100, $50, $25. My topic enabled me to utilize material that would move the hearts of many people. It wasn't a surprise when I was awarded the No. 1 prize. This again stimulated me to work harder than ever toward perfecting my preparations for my life work.

Within a month of that oratorical contest I was called to a fine country

congregation where I had already served as interim pastor for two summers. This was the parish from which came John Geddes who was the first missionary in the British Empire to go forth to the South Sea Islands. This was also the home church of Lucy Maud Montgomery, the author of Anne of Green Gables and a whole series of "Anne" novels. She is buried in the Cavendish cemetery near the United Church of Canada. Cavendish is, today, the most popular tourist resort in the province of Prince Edward Island.

The Cavendish Church

Right before our marriage, I boarded two summers and the next winter at Artie Moffett's in the New Glascow area. He and his sister Janie were wonderful people. I was in quite a demand for lectures around the island and every one that I'd go to, Artie was sure to be there. Everywhere I went, every lecture. He was quite a speaker himself. It was a great pity that man, Artie Moffit, hadn't gone into politics. He'd have made an ornament of the House of Commons. He was an able speaker.

That first full year of ministry, Cavendish was on the circuit, and we regularly held the Sunday evening service there. Cavendish was an historic place -- one of the earliest settled on Prince Edward Island -- and the people had a reputation for intelligence there. They had the biggest circulating library (except for Charlottetown) in that community. But they didn't have any form of recreation whatsoever in that whole area -- Cavendish, New Glasgow, and Rustico (the fishing village). Some of the boys created problems at the back of the church during services. An elder would have to go back and quiet them.

After my first Sunday, I gathered the boys of the community together and said, "I'm going to teach you to play baseball." I got the New Glasgow boys together and then later I got the Rustico boys together. The French boys from Rustico had come to see the Cavendish and the Glasgow boys play baseball and one of them had asked, "Could we get in on this?" And I told him, "Certainly you can, it's a community enterprise." So two or three of them played and initially the priest was a bit disturbed. But then he saw that there was no prosyletizing or religion preached -- just the game. So the priest showed up one night to watch them, perhaps learn something about it. They lived of course about 6 miles apart but they'd come together in a big field. They didn't know a thing about baseball. Not a thing. There wasn't a bit of equipment. We started barehanded even though we had a hard ball. It was all new to them, but I got them going. I'd pick two fellows, the smartest two, and let them pick their teams. And were they interested!

So then after that when they came to church they were quiet -- they were my friends. And then I got them taking up the collection. That was a big help too. I think one or two of the older men weren't enthusiastic about that move, they thought that was their province. I said, "Well, you've got the communion and that's the most important service in the church. Nobody but you people will be serving that. You ought to give the boys a chance to take the collection. It will make them feel more a part of the church.

But I couldn't have taken a second Island winter with six miles to go with horse and sleigh. I was terribly thin and nervous still from the war experience -- shell-shock and gassing. It was often blustering, bitterly cold, and seven feet deep snow. I bought a pair of snowshoes. That summer, a friend was driving with me and I pulled the car off by the side of the road. He wondered why we were getting out, but I wanted to show him something. I pointed out a particular electric pole. "Would you believe that that 25 foot pole was 6 inches below the top of the snow last winter?" And do you see that barn, that's where the road went. The main road was abandoned to the heavy snows, and the road men were entitled to cut any farmer's wire fence to make a bypass. I was to give a lecture

one night -- the winter I was alone out in that country. I had an old man with me, and I asked his advice on how to get where we were going. He cocked his head on the side and said, "Well now, I'll tell you. You'll not make it on the highway, its no use trying. You go down that gap there until you come to Archie McGinniss's fence. Drive along the fence till you come to to Roddy McCloud's farm and then you can get on the highway again." And I said "Where in the blazes in Archie McGinnis's fence?"

After Marriage

When the five years of engagement was coming to a close, my brother asked me whether we'd set a date, and I admitted, "I'm scared of the whole thing. I don't have a stick of furniture to my name. What will we live with?" He said "You just go right ahead as if you had everything, and you'll be surprised how it will come out." He, of course, was a furniture man and he wrote to our father -- our stepmother might be slow coming across -- he said, "As head of the furniture department, I'll be able to get gifts at cost for anyone who wants to give furniture." And he suggested they give us an oak diningtable and chairs with leather seats. By the time we were married, we had enough to set up housekeeping.

We had a June wedding -- the 23rd of the month -- in 1923. It was held in Zion Presbyterian Church -- the one Bessie was buried from 53 years later. All the friends and relatives were there. Doris Muncey, her cousin and close friend, even came up to our hotel room for an hour after the ceremonies had ended. I remember Bessie was sitting on a chair brushing her hair while we chatted. Somehow, Doris's presence made our first evening together begin on a very natural note. Bessie and I were very shy new married people.

Of course, Bessie was with me that last summer in the Cavendish circuit. We loved the area and, although I took the call to St. John, New Brunswick, that fall, we later bought a little summer house near the church for $150. When a carpenter and I knocked off an old shabby porch off, and added a bright new one (enclosed for sleeping), it looked 200% better. The man who sold it to us was sorry, I believe! Long after I had gone on to other churches, our family were drawn back each summer to that little home. Its name was "The Spruces," but to the children it was always "Ca'dish House."

Bessie would often have Island friends out to the Cavendish house in the later years. She was awfully kind to Janie, Archie's sister, whom she had gotten to know before our marriage. In those days, Janie was always helping Archie, and they got along well. Then their sister came home from Boston and just took over things at the farmhouse. She was a sergeant major. She'd been married and divorced and was a tough customer. Bessie noticed how unhappy Janie was and she wondered what it was. And then she saw for herself -- the woman even bossed her brother in his own home. And Archie put up with that. He was sometimes a little crude. He wouldn't bother with the butter knife. And she'd take a spoon and crack his knuckles. Her big 6 foot 4 inches brother, hit him across the knuckles! So you can imagine what she'd do to poor little Janie. Oh what a boss she was! She ordered Janie around something terrible. Bessie would say, "I'd like to pick you up tomorrow and take you out for the day in Cavendish with us." (This was when we were in St. John but back in Cavendish for the summer.) Janie had the time of her life with Bessie. She'd talk to her in such a kind way, and tell her interesting things. It was a real lift to Janie. That was a whole day's reprieve, and a nice dinner and all that. I didn't suggest it, it was Bessie's idea.

St. John, New Brunswick

Near the end of my second year in this country church I was called to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in St. John, New Brunswick. It was an historic congregation, having been established as the mother church of Presbyterianism in the province of New Brunswick. Here Bessie and I really started our life together. St. Andrew's in St. John was a big city church. No more country pastorates. Before going there, I decided that my full name, John Sutherland Bonnell was a more dignified for the ministry than J. Sidney Bonnell. Strangely, some people thought I was putting on airs now that I was "moving up in the world." They didn't realize that Sidney had just been a nickname. All through my life, however, "Sid" was my name to friends. I was Mr. Bonnell, or Dr. Bonnell later, to most parishioners. It would have been impolite to use the first name to a minister in those days, and especially in the East. In addition, I always had the feeling that a minister should keep some distance and formality between himself and his parishioners. It was part of the role, and something that stemmed from the Scottish reverence for "the cloth." Occasionally, some man would think to show off his familiarity with me by calling me "John." But my friends and I knew what was happening. Anyone who really was close called me "Sid."

Those who thought my "new name" was an affectation had some basis for being critical. I was never meek or self-effacing. And not always tactful. Sometimes I rubbed other ministers the wrong way with my church ads. In St. John -- as attendance began to boom -- I called attention to the fact that people would need to come early if they wanted seating. That wouldn't set well with pastors who were struggling with small services.

When I took charge of this congregation in 1923 its fortunes were indeed at a low level. The membership had fallen sharply and the attendance at services was pitifully small. I was happy to enter into this kind of a situation in the knowledge that there was only one way the church could really move if it moved at all and that would be upward. For six years I was minister of this congregation.

During my time there, I flew to England and took post-graduate studies at the University of London. Visiting the main cities of Europe, I paid particular attention to the art galleries and the study of paintings. I heard the ablest preachers of Britain, including Dean Inge and Dick Shepherd, famous rector of St. Martin in the Fields. On that visit, while I did no preaching myself, I was inspired by the messages of the renowned men whom I heard. One of them was Dr. Kelman of Free St. Georges, Edinburgh, who afterward was called to be paster of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church and therefore was one of my predecssors in that pulpit. From each and all of these men there was much for me to learn.

I was working terribly hard -- long evenings as well. From our apartment, Bessie would be able to see the light on in my office at the church, and when she noticed it go out, she'd put on milk for hot cocoa. It would be steaming ready when I walked through the door. We'd sit down and talk before sleeping. I was a very restless sleeper, sometimes needing to spend the night tossing on the couch so as not to keep her awake also. My nerves were badly shot and nothing that her home economics course had taught her could put fat on my bones.

A Family is Begun

George Carruthers was the first born -- in 1925 -- and Bessie's father was still living. Grandparents were somewhat traditional among Scottish people, so it was natural that the baby be called after him. Besides, I admired Dr. Carruthers as much as anyone. He died about a year later, and Bessie found it a difficult loss. Our next child was a girl, born in 1927. Bessie had wondered if we should name her Louise, after our two stepmothers. She was always concerned about people's feelings. I never seriously considered it, however. She was named Catherine Cameron after my mother. Bessie began labor before I left for Easter morning service at the church. When I returned home at lunch, George was with a

friend. He met me at the top of the stairs with the news, "Mummy all gone." The baby was born before my evening service on Easter Sunday, and I muffed a story about King Canut. I told the congregation that he had hung his throne (instead of his crown) on the cross! In those days, I would not have mentioned something personal -- even the birth of a child -- from the pulpit. But that service, they must have known something was up. I also avoided humor in the pulpit -- I was a very serious young preacher. But once in St. John the congregation burst out laughing. I was describing a ship voyage, and seeing a school of porpoises playing in the waves. By mistake I said "porqupines" and people started to titter. Then I began to stutter, "I mean p-p-p-p-p-p-..." Suddenly a small man in the balcony couldn't bear the tension. "PORPOISES!" he cried, in a high squeeky voice! I never heard a crowd laugh so hard.

Shortly after Catherine's birth, I left for my eight month study tour in Europe, and Bessie was alone with the two children. She had a lonely time, and a difficult one. Our landlady was very dominating -- always at Bessie, and while I was away, she even accused her of stealing some of her napkins. We decided to move, but because we were half a day late giving a year's notice on the lease, she held us to contract for another 12 months. Bessie, typically, did not want to worry me in her letters with the problems she was having. I came back a week earlier than she expected, and walked into the living room. I can remember how startled she was -- she went white as a sheet and I was afraid she would faint. But it was great to be together again. She had talked to George (almost three) about me while I was away, and I was delighted to have him call me "Daddy" as soon as he saw me. After a few minutes, I noticed large brown eyes watching me from the playpen nearby, and I picked up the husky baby who had been so tiny when I had left.

Elizabeth was on the way when Bessie and I had a few months in an old brownstone on the west side of New York. We had a walkup flat, and poor Bessie was exhausted managing two small children and expecting another. I didn't know till later how overwhelmed she was feeling. We were back in St. John for the baby's birth. I'm not sure which birth it was, but I can remember bending over to kiss Bessie before leaving the hospital after one of them. Her eyes rolled backwards in utter weariness. In those days, the doctors encouraged mothers to push down throughout the whole of labor. Bessie chose "Elizabeth" for a very dearly loved aunt, and Louise was her own second name as well as a common name in the family.

Margaret was named after both Duncan's wife Peggy and my sister Jessie. Bessie preferred Margaret -- she liked that very much. Jessie was pretty old-fashioned. She was born in Winnipeg. She was our "Prairie Chicken." I can remember my urging the doctor to bring her birth on faster in a long labor. I had reservations to go East to be with my father for serious surgery -- from which he shortly died. Margaret came quite quickly after the doctor ruptured the water sack. Since I stayed on for my father's funeral, Bessie had a friend take her home from the hospital. It was 1930 -- depression time -- and the hospital almost refused to let them take the baby home until payment was made.

Calls to Other Churches

My ministry in St. John went very well and I had at least four separate calls to other churches while I was there. That was very unusual for a young minister. But I felt I owed it to the people to stay longer. St. Andrew's is a great church and besides, I wanted to see them go into church union. This was the time when the United Church of Canada came into being. The Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists merged. There was a lot of strong emotion on both sides of the issue, but I felt that a united protestant voice in the country was important. Fragmentation was an enemy of Christianity. Our church voted for union under my ministry. I stayed on for two years after that for a total of five years. Then I

had calls to Ottawa, Winnipeg and somewhere in Saskatchewan at the same time. I had reason to believe that Winnipeg would be forward-looking and ready to go.

I recently came across a letter from my dear, dear friend Justice Forbes, who was 93. He loved me as if I was his grandson, the dear old man. When I had decided on the call to Winnipeg, I phoned over to his house -- riding on the crest of the wave, so I went over to tell him. I would have to leave within three or four months after the news was out. I said, "Justice Forbes, I have many dear friends, and none dearer than yourself. But I feel an important call to an immensely greater work -- Double size church, double the congregation, and I feel I have to go. Justice Forbes, if you were in my place what would you do?" He laid his hand on my knee, tears streaming down his face, and he said, "I'd go, I would accept it." It broke his heart, but he knew it was right.

Winnipeg

We were about five and a half years in Winnipeg. The opportunities were great. What stands out most in my memory, without a question, is the Sunday night series of sermons. It would be 25 degrees below zero, and a hiss of steam coming up from the radiators all around -- and every pew would be packed right up to the pulpit with about 1250 people. And many, many of those nights there was a hall in addition packed. We had it fixed with the latest of equipment, so peple could hear the service.

From St. Andrew's Church in St. John I received a call to Westminster Church in Winnipeg. While the church and congregation were not a flourishing institution, one could not point to any serious decline, with the exception of the evening service. The congregation was down to 75 to 100 persons in an auditorium that held 1250. The session had seriously discussed the possibility of abolishing the evening service and the incumbent pastor was in full agreement with such a move. It appealed to me greatly to have the privilege of preaching in a city with a population of a quarter of a million people.

We got off to an excellent start when I undertook this new responsibility. The church was filled to capacity at both services. Knowing that the evening service was the one that needed the most help, I announced immediately a series of five sermons on the general topic of Science and Religion. I made sure that the list of topics would be posted at the University of Manitoba where I could draw upon the student body. The church was packed to capacity the first Sunday and even more filled the following week because we had an overflow congregation. The main auditorium seated 1250 people and there were two large halls in the back which could seat a total of an additional 600 people, so we installed a completely up-to-date and efficient loudspeaker system. Once in every five weeks the use of the chief radio station in Manitoba was available to Westminster Church. I preached the first sermon in each series on the day we had the radio station. That gave me the opportunity to present to the whole city the titles of all the sermons in the series.

One of the notable features in my judgment in my ministry to Winnipeg was the mass meeting we organized backed by a young men's club of 200 members. We had one meeting in the middle of the afternoon at 3 o'clock p.m. in the main auditorium of the church with a vigorous plea for world peace and the cooperation of the nation in the newly founded League of Nations. The chairpersons of the meeting were a Roman Catholic Supreme Court Judge, the Rabbi of a large Jewish synagogue, and I. We packed the church for that meeting. Both overflows were completely crowded and we strung a wire across the street to a theatre where an additional 800 persons met together.

Winnipeg also marks the point at which I began to seriously develop a counseling ministry for the help and guidance of my parishioners and visitors to my church.

We had dear friends in every church, but never dearer than our friends in Winnipeg. Across the streets were the McLeods, who lost their eighteen year old son to the flu epidemic in 1918. He was the youngest ever to win the Victoria Cross -- for rescuing a seatmate from the wing of their airplane in mid-air (among other heroics). He survived the flu and came home to a hero's welcome, only to die a week or so later. Even his doctor father couldn't save him. Dr. McLeod and his young interns frequently gave our two oldest children a ride to the Mulvey School on icy mornings, so that family were friends to all of ours. Elizabeth, as an adult, wrote Mrs. McLeod till her death years later.

The children had a lot of freedom to roam in Winnipeg. The streets and alleys were quite safe. They would often visit church members in their homes, and were welcomed with cookies and milk. They would sometimes join their mother at a quilting bee at the church, or drop into my study. I had a study at home, also, and Elizabeth occasionally kept me company, playing quietly while I worked. We had a live-in maid for $25 a month, so Bessie had more freedom to leave home. When the children were sick, however, she stayed close at hand. One winter, she saw them through both measles and chickenpox, and was much wearied. I sent her for a week to Minnesota for some quiet rest and a change, and that retreat was repeated a couple of other times. The children somehow got the idea that she took these trips to Minnesota for "Pumpkin Pie." She was an over-busy mother with four children in five and a half years. When George was eight, Bessie was struck by a car and her knee was so damaged that there was danger she might not walk. She was in bed with a cast for three frustrating months. In later life that week knee was partly responsible for some serious falls.

There are comical, as well as serious moments in any church. I'll never forget one Easter when Mrs. Gordon came into the front of the church -- just after services had begun -- wearing a plaid suit. I said to myself, "My goodness, look at the Gordon plaid!" One of her daughters came in, then another, wearing the same plaid suit. And I said, "Good grief! Three of them now." And then the last three daughters of varied ages followed, every one of them in a Gordon plaid suit, strung out in their pew near the front of the church.

I was minister of Westminster Church, Winnipeg, for six years and in all that time I never preached to less than a crowded church, morning and night. In the evenings we always made use of the overflow. It is impossible for me to describe the exhilaration that was mine as I preached to these great congregations. I felt that the dream of a lifetime was now beginning to be fulfilled and that I was pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. It was a foretaste of what ultimately would happen in the great city of New York.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CALL TO NEW YORK

A Special Telegram

I had been about five years in Winnipeg. Well do I remember one January morning -- the weather was crisp and clear and about 20 degrees below zero. I was shaving when the doorbell rang. Bessie answered it, brought a telegram up to me, and went back to her work. After I finished shaving, I opened it and read, "The worship committee of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church desires to have you preach before the congregation on Sunday, February 23rd, 1935. All expenses paid." A strange feeling came over me as I read that telegram. Somehow I intuitively recognized that it very probably meant a revolutionary change in my life. It is difficult for me to say why I felt this way, but I have the most vivid recollection that I knew that this church was vacant and that the telegram was sent to me because they wanted to hear me preach with the possibility of calling me to become their minister.

Bessie had begun to be concerned. A telegram during the depression years usually meant trouble of some kind. She returned, and said, with a touch of alarm in her voice, "Who is the telegram from? What does it say?" I smiled reassuringly and asked her, "How would you like to move to New York?"

She laughed, "Oh that would have to take some thought! Why? You haven't received a call have you?" she asked.

"No, I haven't," I said, "but I have a feeling that, if this invitation is all that I believe it means, we may be invited to go to New York. Can you guess the name of the church that is mentioned in this telegram? It is the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church." I told her that the chairman of the pulpit supply committee had asked me to preach. Bessie was pleased for me, "I think you should accept." "Okay then, I will," was my response. There had never really been a question in my mind. Later on in the day, I sent a telegram that I'd be very glad to preach. In West Kent School years before, I had dreamed that one day I would be the minister of a great pulpit in the midst of one of our vast modern cities and would be privileged to preach to a large congregation. This idea had become almost an obsession with me.

It was only about a year earlier that a call had been extended to me by the Metropolitan United Church of Toronto and I had declined it. There were many reasons for this decision. While it was a magnificent church situated at the heart of one of the largest of our Canadian cities, it had only a relatively small number of members on its roll, and being so completely a downtown church there would be great difficulty indeed in building up the membership. In addition, while it was a beautiful church--one of the most beautiful in Canada, and of cathedral proportions -- the acoustics were bad and the use of an amplifier made preaching less effecive.

About a year before that I had been approached by the pulpit supply committee of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. Several members of that committee attended one of our morning services and the chairman of it inquired whether I would be interested in a move to Minneapolis. He gave me a strong impression that if I would consider such a move, then the go-ahead signal would be given to his committee to extend an invitation. I was fully aware that Westminster Church, Minneapolis, was one of the truly great Presbyterian churches of the United States. He mentioned the fact that my salary would be nearly double what I was receiving in Winnipeg, and that the manse in which we should live had cost the congregation $84,000 -- a fabulous sum of money at that time. There was also an up-to-date hospital attached to the church. I gave him no encouragement

at all in his inquiry. I did not feel that that pulpit had enough to offer in contrast to that of Westminster, Winnipeg. However the New York Church was a different matter.

An Historic pulpit

At this time there was no church in the United States more familiar to me. From my earliest days in seminary and even in pre-college days I had heard of The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, probably because it is the best known Presbyterian church among the people of the British Commonwealth of Nations. For more than half a century its pulpit had been served by ministers who were called directly from the British Empire and Commonwealth.

During my years spent in Pine Hill Theological Seminary (Halifax, Nova Scotia), our principal, Dr. Clarence Mackinnon -- himself one of the most eloquent preachers in Canada in this century -- spoke often of this famous pulpit and of the men whose preaching had made it world renowned. When he lectured he analyzed the qualities of preaching manifested by Dr. John Henry Jowett, by Dr. John Kelman, and by Dr. Henry Howard. He declared on more than one occasion that he regarded it as the greatest pulpit in the English-speaking world. In pronouncing this judgment he had in mind not so much the historical fame of The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church as its reputation as a mighty preaching center.

The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church pulpit had traditionally been the sounding board of New York City. Its importance is evidenced by the fact that a man of the caliber of John Henry Jowett -- the greatest preacher of the 20th century was there -- with a queue stretching around the block. Its great auditorium seated 1700 people, and when the church was built, the pews downstairs were bought for $5000 apiece -- an incredible sum -- by the families who wanted them. There were lower rates for pews in the gallery. I had always been interested in everythng about Jowett, but had never heard him preach.

However, a year before my graduation from Pine Hill Divinity College, Halifax, we were having an assembly in a downtown church. All the students and faculty were to be there with their families and friends for graduation. There were about 1200 of us. Dr. McKinnon learned that John Henry Jowett of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church was on a ship of the Cunard line -- going back to England. The ship had to put into Halifax for coal because there was a strike in New York. What did McKinnon do, but get a friend with a motorboat to take him out to see Dr. Jowett. He said to him, "Now Dr. Jowett, I want you to come and address our graduating seminary class and a churchful of people." "I'm sorry," said Jowett, "I'd love to, but you see I'm leaving my work in New York, which has been the most wonderful experience I've ever known, because the doctor has told me I must ease off. He said that the pressure of the New York Church was too severe. With failing health, I felt I wanted to spend the closing years of my ministry in my own homeland." "Well," said McKinnon, "you did preach your farewell sermon last Sunday, didn't you? I thought you might want to extend your ministry one more Sunday when I tell you that practically every man in the graduating class is a veteran of the war that is just closed. And they were willing to give their lives for the motherland. I believe you have a particular message for those men." That was too much for Jowett. McKinnon had hit where the armor was thin, and he came.

I can still remember two or three sentences at the start of his sermon. Oh the sheer eloquence! He had a voice like a bell. He said, "We have been comrades in a common resentment of an international crime. The sacred dust of our holy dead is mingled in a common grave." The beauty of language! I already was bursting with ambition anyway, and this experience just sent me up like a kite. Little did I realize I would preach from Jowett's pulpit about 15 years later.

A Trip to New York

When I received the invitation to preach in the New York pulpit in February, I told my Session in Winnipeg and let the word out among the congregation that the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church was hearing a series of Canadian ministers (which the telegram to me had indeed indicated.) They had already heard Dr. George Pidgeon and Dr. J. R. P. Slater. No unusual excitement was caused by this announcement. It was taken as a matter of course by my Winnipeg congregation.

Some further information about the services reached me from Mr. Robert Anthony, who was the "acting assistant minister" of the church. (His title sounded like that of the lowest rank of N.C.O. in the Canadian artillery --"acting bombadier." That is a one-stripe man but only acting in that capacity.) He told me nothing whatsoever about hotel arrangements, and I gathered that I should have to make those on my own. I couldn't recall the name of a single hotel in New York. Of course I realized later that I should have sent a wire to Mr. Anthony or to Mr. Darlington and asked them to recommend one. The only name I could remember was that of the Plaza Hotel, which I knew was only three or four blocks from the church. What I didn't know was that it was considered the swankiest hotel in New York, and I understand that some mild amusement was aroused among the members of the Session of The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church that I chose to go to this hotel.

Apparently Dr. Jowett's arrival had been more heralded than mine. He had already achieved world fame as a great preacher. The papers were full of information about his coming to New York. When he and Mrs. Jowett arrived, they were put up at the Gotham Hotel, which is directly across the street from The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. The hotel management had kept the kitchen staff on the job so that they could adequately receive this famous guest. The chef went up in person to the bedroom where Dr. and Mrs. Jowett were emptying their suitcases and putting things to right. He handed Dr. Jowett a very elaborate menu and said, "Now, sir, will you tell us what you would like to have?" Dr. Jowett replied, "Please send us up two bowls of milk and some bread."

It was late at night when I arrived in New York and a bowl of milk and bread would scarcely have satisfied my appetite, which at that time was almost boundless. I went down to what was then the Grill Room in the Plaza. I took one look at the menu and nearly passed out. The cheapest meal was $4.50. (It reminded me of the story of a man who went to a similarly expensive hotel and asked the waiter to bring the cheapest meal he could furnish. The waiter responded, "How would you like to have it--on rye bread or white?")

I have forgotten what the exact rate per night of my room was but the figures sounded astronomical to me. After I had unpacked my suitcase, I discovered that I had left my clerical vest in Winnipeg. I called the "acting assistant minister" of the church and he procured a clerical vest from a minister who was of approximately the same build as I. I needed it because from the beginning of my ministry I have always worn clericals in the pulpit.

After arriving in New York, I confirmed my suspicion that the pulpit of the Fifth Avenue Church was vacant and had been so for approximately two years. They had been hearing men for two years from all over -- from Scotland, from England, from Australia and from various parts of the United States. They couldn't agree and the congregation was drifting away and drifting away. Oh, it was demoralizing. Later I learned that the only one on whom there had been any measure of agreement at all was Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo, who was at that time minister of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C., and who was later called to the St. Nicholas Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue, only seven blocks from my own church.

In Jowett's Pulpit

As I walked into The Fifth Avenue Church on that Sunday morning in February, mounted the pulpit stairs, and sat in the center chair of the three huge pulpit chairs, I had a feeling that before that day had come to a close decisions profoundly altering the order of my life would be made. My first impression was the immensity of the church. According to the plan drawn up at the time the church was built, it seats 1846 persons. At special seasons when the church is thronged to the doors, six people are often put in pews intended for five, and so on throughout the church, so that approximately 2000 persons can be seated with a considerable degree of comfort.

The morning I preached in that pulpit there were not more than 500 persons present. This number made a very poor showing. Also the slender turn-out was a considerable letdown to me, in view of the fact that Westminster Church in Winnipeg seated 1250 persons and was always filled to capacity. (Occasionally on Sunday mornings and invariably Sunday evenings one or two lecture halls were employed for an overflow.)

At the close of the service I was greeted most cordially by members of the congregation and from their remarks the sermon appeared to have made quite an impression on them. For that occasion I had chosen a sermon with which I was quite familiar and had preached in several churches other than my own. This was not only because I thought it was an effective sermon but also that it involved the least burden of preparation.

At the afternoon service once again the congregation was small -- smaller even than that of the morning. To me it seemed incredibly small. Once again people expressed themselves with great cordiality. Perhaps my feeling of the warmth of the reception I had gotten was due to the fact that I lacked a knowledge that I later learned of the generous way in which Americans express a welcome to their guests. This was brought forcibly to my attention some years ago when a prominent German pastor visited the United States. He was in the country for only three weeks and in that time addressed congregations from the Atlantic to the Pacific. His final meeting was held in New York and I happened to be chairman at the meeting. Speaking of the very cordial way in which Americans expressed themselves with respect to his addresses, he said, "I feel that I am beginning, at the end of three weeks, to understand a little of your language. For instance, I now know that when an American gentleman comes up to me at the close of a service and says, 'I think that was the finest sermon I have ever listened to in my life,' that means, 'You haven't done too badly.'"

I was informed on Sunday after the vespers service that the Pulpit Supply Committee would like me to remain over until Tuesday and that on Monday night they wished me to join them at a dinner at the Union League Club. At this dinner I met with six or seven members of the committee. They asked me many questions about my work in Winnipeg and about my views on several topice, but especially on the importance of preaching. Later I was told that there was one member of the committee who had had his eye on another minister. His enthusiasm for this other minister was not shared by the committee but they greatly feared that he might prove quite stubborn and insist on this other man. When at the close of the Monday night dinner this member of the committee suggested that he should drive me back to the Plaza Hotel, all the committee members were delighted. This was what they had hoped for. I had a pleasant conversation with him on the way to the hotel and he said he was delighted with the services of the previous day.

The following morning I received a call shortly after nine o'clock from the Stated Clerk of the Session, Mr. George B. Agnew, asking if he could come to see me at ten. He came up to my bedroom in the hotel. He reported that every member of the committee was enthusiastic about extending an invitation to me to become their minister. He told me that Dr. Jowett, in the contract he made with the church, had stipulated that he might go back to visit his beloved England every

summer and preach in some of the pulpits there. Consequently they had given him an annual holiday of four months. The church, he said, would be glad to give me three months vacation each year. He stated that the congregation would pay me a salary of $10,000 a year and supply me with a house or an apartment. The outside limit of rent to be paid would be $3500, which sounded to me like a substantial sum of money. I was soon to learn that it might be difficult enough to secure an apartment in New York for the maximum sum mentioned.

One of the misgivings I had had about possibly coming to New York was the fact that there would be such an extreme contrast in the salaries given in the Canadian churches and the New York one. (It was not unusual for American churches so I had no misgivings on that point. Later I was to learn that with a salary of $10,000 a year it would be almost impossible for me to pay for the education in private schools of our four children and some kind of an adjustment had to eventually be made.

Mr. Agnew asked if I would be willing to become minister of the church on these terms. I told him that I would first have to go back and consult my wife and also discuss the matter with the officers of my church in Winnipeg. In addition I wanted to go back by way of Toronto and talk to Dr. J. R. P. Slater, who had made a great impression on The Fifth Avenue Church and whose recommendation had led to my being invited to supply the Fifth Avenue Church. I assured this elder that I would give very careful and prayerful consideration to the call and that already I felt very much attracted to the challenging opportunity of New York.

Advice From a Friend

I took the train the following morning to Toronto and spent the whole evening with Dr. Slater of Old St. Andrews Church. We talked over every aspect of the New York situation. He granted fully that it was a very difficult post, that the officers of the church were not the easiest people to deal with, that they were very conservative in their theology, and that neither Dr. Jowett nor Dr. Kelman had an easy time. "Indeed", said Dr. Slater, "Kelman was pretty much a broken man when he left the congregation. The fact that he had accepted a post on the Board of Governors of Union Seminary got him into difficulties with the conservative members of the Fifth Avenue Church." It had to be remebered as well, he said, that Dr. Kelman never caught on in New York. He didn't draw more than a fraction of the congregation attracted by Dr. Jowett's preaching, yet nevertheless he had a most effective pastoral ministry. Dr. Slater knew little about the ministry of Henry Howard, who was an Australian, but he knew enough to be sure that Howard, too, had his times of difficulty while minister of this exacting church.

Despite all these considerations, he said that he thought very definitely that I ought to accept the call when it would be extended to me. "Probably never again in your lifetime will an opportunity as great as this be presented to you," he said. "Don't close the door."

I spoke of the greatness of the men who would become my predecessors and said I didn't know how on earth I could ever think of following in the footsteps of John Henry Jowett or John Kelman. They seemed to me like vast and luminous stars in the vault of heaven far beyond my reach. Dr. Slater replied, "That may be so; nevertheless it remains that they are not calling you to be a Jowett or a Kelman. They are calling you to be what you are, a Bonnell, and they wouldn't be giving you the invitation after all this period of vacancy if they were not attracted to your message and your manner of delivering it. I think if you will be content to be yourself, you will have a great ministry in New York. After all, it is no mean ministry that you have exercised in Winnipeg. This is your supreme chance."

Getting Ready to Go

The days that followed in Winnipeg were truly trying. I couldn't share the information about the prospective call because it had not yet been put in my hands. Mr. Agnew had said that there should be no press notice till they had had a meeting of the congregation, and of course this plan was for my own protection also. The call would have to be passed at a congregational meeting of the Fifth Avenue membership, then sanctioned by the Presbytery of New York and sent on to Winnipeg where, if approved, it would be placed in my hands by the Presbytery.

After the congregational meeting had been held in New York, the news leaked out that a call was being extended, but the newspapers did not know the name of the person who was called. The enterprising religious editor of the New York Times, Rachel McDowell, however, did a little sleuthing on her own. Nobody in the Session would give her my name, but Miss McDowell managed to attend an afternoon tea given by a prominent member of the Fifth Avenue Church. Recognizing some wives of the elders, she decided to try some psychology on them. She made a statement to one of them that appeared to indicate that she knew the identity of the person to whom the call was being extended and slyly asked, "Do you think he will come?"

"I don't know," the woman answered, "but they say he has done great work in Winnipeg." Miss McDowell then went back over the weekly calendars of the church till she found that a minister from Winnipeg, John Sutherland Bonnell, had preached there in February. With this information she confronted one or two officers of the church and they capitulated, so she was the one who got a scoop on the story. The editorial staff of the newspapers began scurrying around looking for a photograph of me but not one was to be found in the whole metropolis nor had anybody ever heard tell of me. I was a complete unknown.

This made it quite embarrassing for me. I immediately called together some of the leaders of the church and then within one week informed my Session. Since a call hadn't been approved by the Presbytery of New York or of Winnipeg, I told them I couldn't give an answer as to what my decision would be. A half dozen of our church leaders came to the manse that night and they were the first church members to whom I broke the news. They were completely stunned because none of them had visualized such a happening, but when my resignation was formally presented, the best friend I had in the Winnipeg church, and one of the wisest of churchmen, said, "I think you ought to accept. Had it been any other church in the United States except the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian, I should have demurred, but I can see only one possibility now -- you should go to New York."

I received a telegram from New York, saying: "Meeting of the congregation last night with complete unanimity extends you a call to become its minister." When the call at last was approved by the Presbytery of Winnipeg and placed in my hands, I gave the decision that everyone expected and began to prepare to leave for New York. However, I still had a couple of months' ministry in Winnipeg and conducting the last services in the beloved Westminster Church was one of the greatest ordeals that I had undergone up to that time. When the farewell meeting was held for Mrs. Bonnell and me, we were presented in the church with a complete sterling silver service, and Mrs. Bonnell was given a banqueting cloth that we used for our daughters' weddings many years later.

My ministry in Winnipeg came to its close with services that crowded Westminster Church to the doors and many tearful farewells. One of the Winnipeg papers carried a large picture taken in the railway station on the day I set out for New York. I stood on the back of the train waving to a great body of people that filled the waiting rooms and platform. Just before the train pulled out, I saw someone coming with garments flying in the wind hurrying to the train. The latecomer turned out to be the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Winnipeg, Archbishop Sinnott, who himself was a native of Prince Edward Island. He showered me with good wishes.

So our family had to leave our wonderful friends in Winnipeg and go to a whole new congregation in a new country.

PART FIVE

FIFTH AVENUE CHURCH

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE DIFFICULT YEARS

I preached on the first two Sundays of June 1935, at the 11 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. services in the Fifth Avenue Church. Mrs. Bonnell and our four children aad journeyed directly to our summer home in Cavendish, Prince Edward Island. They would remain there until the furniture for our New York home was settled in the apartment rented for us. I was glad to have no family responsibilities then so that I could devote my full attention to getting acquainted with the church and a few of the officers who were still in the city. During my first few years at this New York church I discovered that after the middle of May some sixty percent of the entire congregation moved out to summer homes and remained there until the middle of September.

On arriving back in New York, I found a group of the officers of the church, Elders and Trustees, waiting to welcome me. A member of both those boards, Mr. James Sutton?, volunteered to take me into his home on Park Avenue until I was ready to depart for our summer home on Prince Edward Island Canada.

The officers of the church were pleased with the congregation that greeted me on my first Sunday morning as the elected minister of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (though not yet installed by the Presbytery of New York). I was sorely disappointed. The contrast with the packed church in Winnipeg was rather painful to me. I suppose there were 900 persons present in a church auditorium that seats 1800. The New York Times gave a full column to my reception and sermon and they quoted me as saying, "I've left a great work undone in Canada, but I feel that an even greater work awaits me here. This church has had a glorious history, but no church or other organization can live in the past. I hope you will believe with me that under God the best days of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church are yet to be."

Summer Holiday

After that brief two-week period in New York, I journeyed to Prince Edward Island, in Canada, to join my family at "The Spruces," our summer cottage. The cottage itself is worthy of some attention. Mrs. Bonnell and I had over a period of time wrestled with the problem of getting a summer home in Cavendish which of course had been our first congregation. This was some years before Cavendish had become a National Park.

When I was still minister of the St. Andrew's Church in Saint John, New Brunswick, I asked a member of that church who was an experienced architect to draw a plan for a little cottage that we could hopefully use during our holiday periods in Cavendish. He did a wonderful job on it but the cost would have run to $2,000. This was back in the year 1923 and we had been married only a few months; so this small outlay was still too high a price for us.

We had my father with us over a week-end at Cavendish in the house we had rented for the summer months. Father was a very practical man and he spent an afternoon wandering around the countryside trying to see what might be available. Coming back for supper, he reported an interesting discovery. "Do you know," he said, "that in that field just beside the 'Lake of Shining Water' there is a very old but solid house? The cellar walls are built of excellent stones and the beams supporting the house are as firm as when it was built -- I am sure almost a hundred years ago. I wouldn't be surprised if you could purchase that house at a bargain. Then you could have a carpenter come in and fix it up to suit you.

I accompanied my father down to the little cottage and found that all he had said about it was true. A few hundred dollars could make the house completely

livable and also provide us with a full acre of land. An additional fact that appealed greatly to me was the discovery that a brook flowed through the corner of that property. Not only so, but I had seen some beautiful speckled trout swimming in that stream. I drove down the road a half mile and called on the owner of the property. In brief, he named the price and a deal was closed for a payment of $300. That property became, for thirteen years, a most delightful summer home.

Across the raod a farmer and his wife were living on a farm property they called "Green Gables," which has now become world famous because of Lucy Maude Montgomery's delightful story, "Anne of Green Gables." We procured our milk from the owners. Our children often played during the summer around the barns on that farm. Mrs. Webb laughingly told us of one happening. The girls they had been horrified that the kittens and calves were nameless. They asked if they could baptize them, proving that they were truly preacher's children. They requested a bowl of water and invited Mr. and Mrs. Webb to come out to the barn while they held a service and baptized the calves. The joker was that they were the leading lights of the Baptist church in the Cavendish community. Green Gables has now become a shrine visited by tens of thousands of people annually from many parts of the world. A celebrated musical called "Anne of Green Gables" has been written and performed in every province in Canada, in New York, in London, England, and even in many cities of Japan, where Anne became a beloved idol. When the entire area where our summer cottage was located was made into a National Park by the Dominion Government, we had to move to another location.

The Highlands

By a supreme stroke of good fortune, at this very time another property went on the market. It was a huge farmhouse containing nine bedrooms and located on eleven acres of ground, the greater part of which was wooded. Later we learned that it had been on the market for two years and no one appeared interested in it. I made them an offer of a cash price. To my surprise they accepted my offer though it was only sixty percent of the original asking price. It was fully furnished, stocked with a splendid set of dishes, mugs, blankets, towels, and everything imaginable for housekeeping went with the property. The most valuable asset of all was a huge recreation hall in perfect condition with ceilings high enough to accommodate badminton games. At the north end of this hall was an immense fireplace taking four-foot logs. There was An unfailing spring on the property that I later developed into a private trout farm.

Our family of four children spent their holiday time on that 11 acre property. Frequently schoolmates came up from New York and spent a week or ten days with them. In the main house, which was in excellent condition, there was a tower with four windows in it. This I transformed into my summertime study. It was on the third floor and somewhat isolated from the rest of the residence. It became known as the Prophet's Tower, because in the prophecy of Habbakuk as recorded in Bible it is said that "the prophet went up into his tower to commune with the Lord."

That summer home where so many years of the children's youth were spent had much to do with the molding of their characters. On their arrival each summer each of the three girls took over a Sunday School class and our son had a group of boys in his charge. This practice continued for some years and was part of the reason why our children were never deeply affected by the sophistication and class consciousness that too often characterizes the life of New York children.

At the end of the summer, the other members of my family joined me for the first time in New York.

The New York Experience

My work in New York did not really get under way until the second Sunday of

September, 1935. By that time our furniture had arrived from Winnipeg and was installed in the apartment rented for us by the church. At 1010 Fifth Avenue there were ten rooms in the apartment but three of them were designed for servants and were rather small.

The entrance to our apartment building was directly across from the front door of the Metropolitan Museum with its rich stores of paintings, sulpture, archeology, and other historical treasures valued at many millions of dollars. While our children were becoming acquainted with New York, we did not send them to any school, public or private, for the first couple of years. Instead we had a cousin of Mrs. Bonnell's come and serve as governess. This was an excellent, though temporary, arrangement. One of the most valuable assets of being in New York was that the world of art and sculpture revealed its secrets to our children at a formative period of their lives.

When I began my ministry and the excitement of the first few months had passed and the floods of visitors from other churches to hear the new man in Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church became reduced to a trickle, the congregation settled back into what was its normal condition at that period of time. For a period of four or five years I had to face the greatest ordeal of my ministry. My immediate predecessors in the pulpit at Fifth Avenue were Dr. Howard of Australia and Dr. Morgan of the U.S.A. The congregations were a far cry from those under Dr. John Henry Jowett. The morning congregation averaged between five and six hundred persons and the Vesper service at 4:30 p.m. drew some 150. These men stayed on as assistants for a year to help the transition.

It had been suggested in the press that the membership of the church was somewhere near nine hundred to a thousand persons. What they did not say was that that figure included the membership of an eastside mission church called the John Hall Memorial. The actual membership was under 700, slender indeed. There had been practically no growth at all and some decline during the dual pastorship of Drs. Minot Canfield Morgan and Henry Howard. Two years of vacancy had been destructive of its life and vitality. Many families had moved out of the city and many others had transferred their membership to other churches. For quite a while, no one at all sat in the gallery. I remember one woman talking to me in a rather patronizing way about how "impressive" it must seem to me to be in such a great New York church after my Canadian church experience. I answered that it was indeed a contrast. In Winnipeg, we'd had a Sunday School of 400; here we had none. Our church was packed every service with over 1000 people. And so on. She didn't find the comparison quite so flattering after all. It will not be difficult to imagine my feelings on each Sunday morning facing a congregation made up of the numbers I have mentioned after the Winnipeg experience. At times I was depressed by the slowness of the build-up I had anticipated in the church. It was a lonely experience, and I chose not to burden Bessie with most of the problems I confronted.

However, one commendable feature in the church's life was that its officers and people had called to its pulpit preachers of different denominations. Dr. John Henry Jowett was a Congregationalist and never ceased to be a member of that denomination. Dr. Howard was a Methodist. So ecumenicity had commenced in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church before it had become a familiar word in the vocabulary of New Yorkers.

We Have Always Answered "NO"

The most disconcerting facts I discovered when I actually began my work at the church was that the age level of the Board of Elders was high and that it was exceedingly difficult to have younger men elected to the Board, because the office holders jealously guarded their prerogatives. The situation in the Board of Trustees was similar. The same group of men served year after year on the

Trustees Board with a year off between terms. They were very conservative in their outlook and resisted even the smallest item of change in their routine or their prerogatives. The cost of the building of the church had been taken care of largely through the sale of pews, many of which sold at $5,000 each and the purchaser was given a deed for his newly acquired property. The last of those deeds was not turned in until the close of my ministry. There was considerable reluctance on the part of pewholders to share a pew with visitors, which did not make the preacher's task any easier.

One of the older members of the Session -- basically a good friend of mine -- used to call for me with his private car and chauffeur and drive me to the Session meetings. Despite his goodheartedness, this man was a sore trial to me. Invariably he'd begin by saying, "Of course we may never again encounter the kind of leadership we had in Dr. Jowett. None of the ministers who succeeded him could possibly match his abilities, but it is good to recall what the church was like under his leadership. Now, you -- you're doing very well and I hope you are not going to get discouraged. Your job must be very formidable to you, coming from a small congregation to the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church of New York. But I'm sure that things will improve and that you are going to make good." Time and again I reminded people who expressed such views as this elder that I actually came from a great congregation in Canada to a small one in New York.

The intentions of the aging elder who drove me down to the meetings were of the very best and he had the kindest feelings for me but he had no understanding whatsoever of what an ordeal it was for me to ride down to Session meeting in his car. Many a time when I'd go up to my study before joining the Session I would have an inner spiritual struggle and only after a period of prayer would I be ready to face the ordeal of still another Session meeting. Often on my lips were the words, "If God be for me, who can be against me?" which I would repeat to myself before entering the Session room.

For a number of years in the Fifth Avenue Church I found Session meetings a very great trial. I discovered that the members of my Session were far from progressive in their awareness of what the real needs of the church were. They were forever harping back to the "good old days" under Dr. Jowett. Days, of course, that can never be repeated. They had told me when they proposed the call to New York that what Session and the people of the church were looking for was someone who could come up with new ideas and a fresh strong leadership. It wasn't long before I discovered that that was exactly what they did not want. They were opposed to both. My greatest trial was the monthly meeting of the Session. It would be a constant repetition of turning down new ideas and opposing the fresh projects proposed by their new leader. It was a painful contrast for me that I had exchanged the alert, eager, receptive minds of my Winnipeg Session for the closed minds and the firm opposition of the Session I now presided over.

It usually took three to five years to get any progressive change instituted. For instance, there was the matter of the way in which the offering of the people was taken at Sunday morning services. When I would announce that the offering was to be received, elders would get up in various parts of the huge auditorium and come down different aisles, making their way to the communion table where the collection plates were resting. They would receive these plates and then carry them back to the communion table in a body up the center aisle. I tried to persuade them to meet at the back of the church and march in a body up to the communion table to receive the plates. The reply was uniformly, "But this is the historic way we receive the offering at this church and it is better that we maintain our tradition." The afternoon offering was taken up by the board of Deacons and they had already adopted the more modern method of receiving the offering which I had proposed to the Session. In reply to that piece of information which I gave at the Session meeeting, a senior elder said, "Many of those members of the Deacons are new to the church and they know little about our

age old traditions. If they were courteous toward us they would have followed our method. It is difficult to see why we should now adopt their way."

The Envelope System

I was minister of the church for five years before I discovered that the church every year was suffering a deficit in its finances and the elders and trustees were dipping into the invested funds of the church at a rate of from fifteen to twenty-five thousand dollars a year. On making that discovery, I presented to the Session and Trustees the policy of working from a budget and adopting the envelope system of contributions. This suggestion was strongly opposed. When I said that we were about the only Presbyterian church in the nation that operated without a budget and we were numbered with the few Presbyterian churches that had no envelope system and were now operating on a deficit, it had no impact. It took five years to bring them around to preparing a budget and soliciting pledges. After they had reluctantly adopted the envelope system, we decided to promote it in the congregation. I had informed the Session that almost invariably new members coming to us would ask me, "Where do we get our envelopes?" I called a meeting of all the Trustees and Elders on a week day and we had lunch at the Church. In a brief speech I told them how the envelope system worked in all former churches in which I'd served. "Now," I said, "before this meeting is adjourned those pledge cards should be signed by every single member of the Trustees and Elders so we set an example to the church as a whole." The meeting at this point broke up and the pledge cards were placed on a table so they could be signed and picked up by the Treasurer. The whole group of members of Session and the Board of Trustees went into a huddle. Then they stepped up and signed the cards. I knew that if this offering was to succeed we had to get a substantial number of pledges from those leaders of the church. As I strode past the table with the signed pledges I glanced over two or three and I saw that every card that was visible had on it a pledge of $500 for one year. I was fully aware that if that situation were not changed we might well fail to meet the budget. I went to the table and secured a card and in the space for the pledge I wrote $1,000 and threw the card on the table with the other pledges. The Treasurer spotted it and I saw him examining it. He immediately came to me and said, "You cannot give that much money." Apparently the word had got round very quickly for two or three of the Elders came and said that it was really too much, that I couldn't afford it on my salary. My reply was, "Gentlemen, I can't afford to give less for, with you, I am one of the spiritual leaders of this church and we have to set an example." As a result of this remark, which seemed to demoralize them, the officials of the church altered their pledges and every card was marked $1,000.

When the decision was made to change our mode of financing the man who had been the most reluctant to change the old system was made chairman of the committee. There were fifteen men on the committee and we met for dinner in the Union League Club. Always engraved in my memory are the opening words of the Chairman of the Finance Committee as he rose at his place after the dinner had ended and said, "We are going to have the envelope system instituted for the first time in the long history of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. I have been asked to lead in this campaign of advertising and solicitation. I've agreed to do this, but I want to make it clear that I had hoped I would never live to see the day that the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church of New York would adopt the envelope system." With those inspiring and encouraging words, the campaign was under way!

When the returns came in to the astonishment of the Session the congregation had pledged some nine or ten thousand dollars beyond what was asked for in the budget. Actually, there were some on the Session who endeavored to defeat the idea of informing the congregation with respect to the budget. One speaker said

that he didn't think it was the business of the local members of the church to be acquainted with all the finances -- that's why they have trustees and elders. I informed them that unless the congregation was given all the facts and presented with the budget I would drop the whole thing.

The last and most difficult hurdle to get over was that of a rotating eldership. Some elders had been in office for many years. With the new system the time limit for each elder would be three years. He would then retire for at least a year. The system was so worked that always there would be a continuity of at lest two-thirds of the Session. It took us some six years before this system was developed. It might seem from the foregoing that I had a very intractable Session. Some might even think a rather hostile one. But that was not true. During all these discussions I do not believe that I lost one friend from among the elders. And while we differed sharply in our views as to the necessity for change, yet the proceedings were carried out with the best of good will. The last real controversy that I can recall with the Session was with respect to my visit to Great Britain during the second World War.

Money and Spirituality

There is no slightest doubt in my mind that the spiritual vitality of a congregation has a decisive influence on the church's finances. There should never be a financial crisis in the church and congregation. In the course of my ministry we had, by the action of the Trustees and Session together, instituted several "drives" for funds at significant anniversaries. Once we had established the envelope system, for the next period of more than 20 years there never was a deficit in finances. The surplus from the giving of our people grew larger every passing year. From the many new members moving into the church we drew competent additions to our Trustee board and the Board of Session. We continued one or two members of the older regime that did not believe in envelope subscriptions or the pledges of our people.

On three different occasions we went out on drives for needed improvements in the church and sometimes for causes outside the church. One of these was the Restoration Fund collected from all Presbyterian churches in the nation. The Restoration Fund was designed to buy books for ministers in various countries of Europe whose libraries had been totally destroyed and in other cases for seminaries that required funds before they could organize a teaching staff for the training of young men for the ministry. Some thoughtful people, even in our own congregation, thought it very unlikely that we could reach the amount allotted to us by the committee entrusted to raising several millions of dollars for the Restoration Fund. We actually exceeded our allocation which I believe was the highest among the Presbyterian Churches of the U.S.A.

In later years I had the joy of seeing some of the results of that fund raising. When we arrived at the 75th anniversary of the building of our church on Fifth Avenue, which was the third structure erected by the congregation, I thought it fitting that we should have an additional drive for one hundred thousand dollars to make some needed repairs and to put a new copper roof on the church instead of the slate one that had served ever since the church was built and which now was leaking at several points. The chairman of the Property Committee of our church was the president of a great oil company and one of the new and much more progressive businessmen who had come into our membership. He was all for putting the new roof on the church but ran into a stone wall. The obstacle proved to be one of the original men who opposed the envelope system and the every-member canvass. Finally he came to me in despair and said, "I'm afraid we're going to be completely blocked by this man." I asked him to wait and we would see what I could do in the matter.

I went into the office of this man and stated my case as convincingly as I could. He said, "Even if that work could be done, we should wait one year at least. Business will be better by that time because it will not be easy to raise $100,000. I'm convinced that a wait of twelve months will see an improvement." I pointed out to him that the 75th anniversary of the church building would be over and we would lack the impetus that could bring to our drive for funds. But to no avail. Then I played my final card. I said to him, "In that case, I will put the whole matter in the hands of the congregation, which as minister of the church and moderator of the Session I have a right to do. Next Sunday morning you will hear me read from the pulpit the announcement of a meeting of the congregation. The final court of appeal in the Presbyterian Church is the people. I know what their answer will be, and so do you." We instituted the drive and it produced $106,000, without any fund-raising agencies taking part in it. A beautiful new copper roof was installed. Now, as to this businessman's prediction of a better time for a fund-raising drive in the succeeding year, I can report that it would have been a serious mistake if there had been a postponement. Just as the material for the copper roof had arrived at the church, the Korean war broke out and the government put a clamp on the sale of all copper except for war purposes.

Some Important Funerals

Strangely, there had to be some funerals at the church before we could make any real headway against the tide of conservatism. Mr. S's was one of them. He had opposed all the changes I instituted in the old regime, such as abandoning the budgeting from session donors in favor of an Every Member Canvas. After his funeral, I was waiting in the mauseleum for the undertaker to drive me home. S's casket had been put in the wall opening. The door had gun metal on it -- it was a beautiful thing. Everyone had gone home, and the workman was tightening the door bolts when I said, "By the way, would you give an extra turn on each one of those nuts?" He turned around to look at me, but he went around the door again. Then he looked at me strangely again and I said, "Thank you. Thank you very much." Oh dear! I got such a satisfaction out of that. Metaphorically, it was the end of the domineering of that man.

This must be the experience of every minister. I was visiting another city where I had had a pastorate earlier when I received a phonecall from my successor. He said, "Could you do me a real service?" "Well," I said, "I'll do anything I can." He told me that Mrs. Wallace's funeral was the next afternoon, and he just didn't trust himself. "I dislike that woman so much that I'd feel like a hypocrite to take the service. I'll take the opening part, and a few verses. But if you could take the rest of it...?" Well, I laughed and said, "I'm always ready to do a favor for a friend!"

They had a very elaborate casket and great floral tributes. Mrs. Wallace -- a sanctimonious person who had survived a prince of a husband -- had quite a few friends among the enlighteneed like herself. The sons and daughters had the flowers put all around the chapel, but they told the undertaker to leave the bare casket in the vestibule by the elevator for a couple of hours and then to take it in. The reason they did that was to display the magnificent casket. The wood was fantastic and the people couldn't see it when it was covered with flowers. It was wheeled it into the chapel just before the service.

The grown children were seated in the front pew -- all six of them -- and they were in high spirits. They knew that each one of them would be receiving positively a quarter of a millian a peace. Anyway, they were laughing...the six of them strung out like sparrows on a telephone wire. My successor finished his part and I started in, "I knew Mrs. Wallace throughout my ministry here and she gave herself with a great deal of love and devotion." "Moreover," I said, "I knew Donald Wallace..." And I talked about him, and described the time we went on an auto trip together. Each night, Don would say, "Now Sid, we'll have our little

worship serviece and some prayer. Would you take the Bible and read a few verses." And I told how we prayed together and I said that Donald Wallace had a great love for his children and he prayed for each one of them when we were at this trip. I happened to glance at the family pew and I saw that all six of them were melted into tears. All the laughing and joking and elbowing each other at the start was gone. I thought I'd made a good job of the funeral so far, so I didn't mention Mrs. Wallace again. I just went right on and pronounced the benediction. I half expected someone in the congregation to get up and say, "Wait a minute! Let's see who's in that coffin?" -- thinking they'd gotten to the wrong funeral! There was a look of bewilderment on the other minister's face. I hadn't sung any eulogies to the old lady at all and I had dismissed her awful fast.

Highlight Experiences

There are always compensating experiences in the ministry that more than make up for any problems.

A Healing Ministry

Despite the many hours I spent on sermon preparation, I always managed to find time for hospital work and home visitation of those who were really ill. In the course of this ministry I had some remarkable experiences of recovery, at least temporarily, and sometimes permanently. It would appear that the Christian faith embodies tremendously therapeutic elements. The minister who has not visited the seriously ill in his congregation has missed significant and very great opportunies of serving his people. I distinctly recall the circumstances of the recovery of at least a half dozen persons who appeared to be marked for death.

In one case it was a middle-aged businessman who was ill in the Presbyterian Hospital of New York. He was suffering from cancer. The medical prognosis was that he would have approximately two weeks more of life. However, he sank into a coma during which it was impossible to make any contact with him. Having over a period of forty-eight hours no communication whatever with his wife and family, it was assumed that they would never be able to speak to him again. I recall my visit to the sickroom, when practically the entire family of sons and daughter and his wife were present. I moved my chair up beside him and began in quiet, even tones to recite to him what I knew to be his favorite passage of Scripture. After I had done this for some ten minutes I addressed him by his name, saying, "I know your whole trust is in God. His presence is with you now." As I continued reading him the Scripture verses, I noticed a flicker of his eyelids and as I continued ministering to him his eyes opened and he returned to complete consciousness and spoke clearly to his wife and children. They had fourty-eight hours opportunity to talk with him and to commend him to God. The family has never forgotten that experience.

An even more remarkable occurrence was at the home of a Scotsman who was born in the old country but made a successful life for himself in New York. He came down with a serious illness that was akin to leukemia; gradually he sank into a coma. Two physicians were caring for him. One of them predicted that he would probably last until one o'clock the next day. His wife was not able to be in the sickroom, for she was herself seriously ill in another bedroom. The daughter of the home telephoned me about the situation and made some inquiries about the possibility of taking the father's funeral. I told her that I would be over to visit them within an hour and we would talk things over. When I entered the home, in the downstair hallway, I was able clearly to hear his unconscious stentorian breathing. I went to the sickroom and was told by the nurse that he had a rather severe nasal hemorrhage. There was a pronounced swelling of his chest -- a

symptom of the climax of the disease which gripped him. I went to his bedside and spoke quietly about the healing power of God and especially about the peace that could be in our hearts, and I began to recite the 23rd Psalm. The stentorian breathing ceased and as I continued ministering to him I observed a flickering of his eyelids. So I continued ministering to him and then went down another floor to the family living room. I told the people there that he might very well return completely to consciousness. After we had been talking for a little time the nurse came down and reported that her patient had opened his eyes for an interval and had spoken to her. I went back to his room again and again read the passages I had given him before and as I held him by the hand I felt the pressure of his fingers on my hand. Within a half hour he returned to consciousness. When he was visited by the doctors the following morning, to their great surprise they found their patient sitting up in bed. Shortly after this I left for Canada and my summer holiday. I took time out on my way south to address a mass meeting of ministers and to visit my parishioner. I found the father at the head of the table enjoying dinner. He lived some months thereafter, but never could he forget the memory of a night when he found, he said, "some spiritual power like a warm glow coming into my heart and life." His wife and children have never forgotten the remarkable manner in which, by the grace of God, their father was given an extra lease on life through the action of spiritual forces within his body.

Becoming an Author

In my second year in New York I was pursued by Harper and Row to consent to supply them with sufficient sermons for a volume. That was a mistake. While there was a good sale for the book I've never been happy about it. I have wished that I waited several more years before publishing. In 1938 I wrote my first significant book. It was entitled Pastoral Psychiatry. In it I gave a brief history of my psychological and religious interviews with individuals in both Canada and the U.S.A. Even in the brief period of three years after coming to New York I had formed a deep and abiding friendship with a well-known psychiatrist, Dr. Thadeus Hoyte Ames. He wrote the forward of the book and when I suggested that perhaps it would be better to use the title Pastoral Psychology lest it was presenting myself in a role to which I was not entitled Dr. Ames stated that he would have nothing to do with it unless I used the word "psychiatry." He said that after all, a large part of my training had taken place in a psychiatric hospital and I had taken the nursing course there for a period of more than two years. In the forward Dr. Ames justifies the use of the word "psychiatry" so that I had the backing of an eminent New York Psychiatrist. Harper and Row also favored the title also.

There was some criticism of the title from psychiatric writers. There were also warm words of praise. The only real criticism came from fellow ministers who were doing counselling work. But it in no way hindered the sale of the book. It went through some fifteen or sixteen printings and provided me with some much needed additional money as I struggled with the unwanted expense of living in New York. Some four or five years ago my vindication was made complete when an able and authoritative American dictionary devoted almost a half page of discussion to pastoral psychiatry as a branch of psychiatric practice usually performed by ordained and specially trained ministers.

Since Pastoral Psychiatry was published at least four more books on a similar theme followed, all published by Harper and Row. These titles were Psychology for Pastor and People (with a second edition somewhat augmented) No Escape from Life; What Are You Living For; and Do You Want To Be Healed? Of those volumes over 100,000 have been sold to book clubs. Several of the books on ministers' counselling have been used in at least a score of seminaries across the nation and, I'm told, have led to the formation of courses in seminaries which would

afford a training to pastors to be better shepherds to their flocks.

The Equitable Talk

One of the highlights of my experience in New York was when I gave the opening address on life insurance in Madison Square Garden on the 100th anniversary of the Equitable Life Insurance Society -- the largest insurance society in the world. The worldwide president knew of me and had issued me the invitation. And actually, the curious part of it is, I was the only one who talked about insurance. I had a year to work on the address. I've got a picture of the president of the Equitable Insurance Society, the worldwide president, and myself and Hyde standing in front of the church. Hyde was very pleased to know I was actually giving that address. His father had founded Equitable. But when the time came, Hyde near death. He was getting frailer and frailer, and he died on the exact 100th anniversary.

I stayed for a week at the University Club as the guest of Equitable. That was luxury -- all my meals there and everything. When we were going on the stage for the big meeting, the secretary of Equitable passed each of the speakers an envelope and we all just stuck it in our pockets. I forgot all about mine till just before the four o'clock reception for the speakers. I was washing up back to the club and I said, "My goodness, I haven't looked at that envelope yet." In it, I found $1000, but I didn't feel I was overpaid. It was the keynote address and I worked on it for a year.

President Eisenhower's economic advisor was one of the speakers. He talked on the worldwide outlook for economics. And all the presidents of the great financial structures were there. There were five of us in all who spoke and another was the Treasurer of the United States, Ivy Baker Priest. I was sitting beside her on the platform and we had a great talk between times. She said, "If you ever get to Washington, be sure to come in and see me." I asked if that would be right at the Treasury and she said, "Yes." And I told her, "That's a great responsibility you have there." "Yes," she said, "we're supposed to be making money there." I asked if there was any chance of my getting some samples of her workmanship. "Well," she said, "that's another matter."

Strangely, I was the only speaker that dealt with the topic of insurance. (This was unlike the Veterans of the Foreign Wars who occasionally talk about the battles they've fought and the victories they've won!!) One of my most gripping illustrations was the story of a dentist's widow whom I had known in St. John. He had had no insurance and she was scrubbing floors to hold the family together. I told the Equitable audience that some member of their profession had been delinquent in not helping that dentist to protect his dear ones. All the salesmen in the audience loved that! I also told them about a minister friend who didn't believe in life insurance. He said he had made various provisions for his wife: "I told him the story of my own experience, and suggested, 'John, if I were you I'd make provision for your wife to learn how to scrub floors.'"

One insurance company requested 100,000 copies of my address. We printed more than a quarter of a million. When my daughter Bonnie was in insurance later, she asked me to send her as many copies of that address as I could. She had given the president of her company a copy and he had asked if she could get some more. The only printing that surpassed it was a leaflet of about six pages, <u>How to read the Bible</u>. The printers said they didn't believe there had been anything ever printed in the numbers. At one time 30 million had been printed.

Radio

Another highlight of ministering in New York was the opportunity to do radio broadcasts. Our church had the first religious services broadcast ever, and we

did it weekly. We had a special choir, an excellent quartet, and I gave an address. It came on at ten on Sundays, in time to hear it before leaving for church in the morning. It was put on by the National Broadcasting Company and there was great excitment about it. It was managed by an able man on behalf of the National Council of Churches.

Some time later, I took over Harry Emerson Fosdick's program, <u>National Vespers</u>. That had a tremendous following. Duncan and Peggy could hear it in their car on the way to their evening service all the way out in Vancouver, Canada. Every week there would be a flood of letters from across the continent.

Bessie saved clippings from every event. There are a stack of albums in the bottom of the living room bookcase in New York. Everything that was in the newspapers about me from the time we were married onward was saved by Bessie. I sometimes pull a scrapbook out to look at it.

The thrill of these experiences, gradually increasing, eased the pain of my earlier days in New York.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE TRIP TO BRITAIN

In 1941 I received an invitation from the Moderator of the Church of Scotland to address the General Assembly of that church meeting in Edinburgh in May of that year. This invitation had a powerful appeal to me. I felt strongly that I should accept if there was anything that I could do by flying to Britain and addressing church assemblies and congregations and bringing them the good wishes and loving sympathy of the American people for the British people in their hour of grim ordeal. I brought the matter up before the Session of my church. I stated that I did not want a vote taken at that time, but only wanted to present the project to them. I advised them, of course, that I was all for making the trip.

A few weeks later at a full meeting of Session, I asked for a vote of approval of my mission to Great Britain and for the necessary one month leave of absence from the church in order to complete the project. The mission was approved, but the vote was not unanimous. This was another disappointment to me in the Session's attitude. A highly influential elder who had reluctantly promised to give me his approval absented himself from the Session meeting. He sent me a letter later saying that it was a big sacrifice on the part of the church to permit me to be absent for an entire month of services. He added that there was in addition a hazard to my life of such a war-time trip. Incidentally, he said, that since I had a wife and four young children this also was to be thought of! This did not discourage me too much because this highly conservative man was opposed to every new measure that spelled progress for the Fifth Avenue Church.

Because I was still a Canadian citizen, I made a formal declaration of my intention to become an American. Shortly after Great Britain entered the war several Canadians who were ministers returned to Canada from the United States as the newspapers said "to support their country in its hour of need." In two periodicals printed in Canada, sarcastic references appeared suggesting that I should follow the example of these Canadian ministers. It was impossible for me to make a public reply to the charges made against me by my fellow Canadians. I wanted no lessening of the impact of my visit to England simply because I was not yet an American.

I had no intention whatsoever of returning to Canada. I was certain that I could make a far greater contribution to the war effort of the Allies by remaining in America. Dr. John Henry Jowett, the former minister of the Fifth Avenue Church, was compelled to do this throughout the First World War, much as he desired to return to his Homeland. He, too, had no small influence on public opinion in the United States -- though at no time did he suggest that America should enter into World War I on the side of the Allies. It was during this crucial period that the President of the United States came to New York by special train and attended the services of worship at the Fifth Avenue Church and heard a powerful sermon by Dr. Jowett.

As the word got out that I was planning to go to Britain, requests began to come in for me to include different religious organizations among the backers of this project. Among these were the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, the provisional World Council of Churches, the Protestant Council of New York City (which at that time had a different name) and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. For the period of three months I lived and worked under an immense strain waiting for the various visas to arrive that would permit me to enter Portugal and from there to fly to Britain. The last visa to arrive was the one from the Lisbon police. Without their consent, I could not set foot in Portugal. I had to wait for six weeks for that document. I shall never forget the anxiety of that period of time and the eagerness with which I would check the mail every day looking for an official document. At last it came and I made the final preparations.

Departure

At ten o'clock in the morning of May 10, 1941, twenty-nine passengers and I boarded a Pan American Clipper plane. The plane itself had a crew of eleven officers and men. There was a moment of hasty and somewhat tearful farewells as one by one we passengers filed through the doorway to take our seats on the plane. After we had taxied a mile and a half on the Atlantic waters the clipper flying boat turned into the wind and roared across the waters, sending sheets of spray against the cabin window. As I looked out the window of the plane I could see a cluster of people on the upward deck of the airport waving farewell. A tiny spot of red amid the blur of upturned faces revealed the position of my three little daughters in their crimson coats, standing with my wife and son. I was at last away on the great adventure. We stopped for a brief period in Bermuda.

There wasn't a passenger on board that plane that did not have a story to tell. They wouldn't have been there at all had they not been journeying on some type of governmental or representative business. One of the passengers was a businessman from New Zealand. He was much concerned about several million carcasses of mutton and lamb that filled all the available space in cold storage plants in New Zealand. He said also that they had twenty thousand tons of butter ready for shipment. And the new season's "make" coming on. Twenty refrigerated ships would be used to carry this valuable food to Britain. To me the most interesting passenger on board was a commander of the United States Navy assigned for duty at the American embassy in London. He had served already in various parts of the world and his cheerful and infectious manner was a tonic to everyone. When I first met him I little realized that he would render a service to me.

At a height of 8,000 feet we moved along with a good tail wind. There was a brilliant moon lighting up the clouds and occasional breaks in the same clouds revealed the blue waters of the Atlantic far beneath us. The passengers on board had no knowledge that at this very moment, by the light of the same moon, London was getting the worst blitz it had ever received. The Nazis unloaded their bombs on the very heart of London and one stage the roof of Westminster Abbey went ablaze. A London minister told me that the flames leaping from the oak beams from the abbey were so bright that he could have read a newspaper in the streets below. Five of the bombs fell on the House of Parliament. Among the buildings destroyed were the Library and Chapel of Lambeth Palace and other historic shrines of Old London. The second special happening of that night on our flight to Lisbon was that this self-same moon was guiding Rudolph Hess, deputy under Adolph Hitler, was on his way to Scotland. This flight would cause a sensation in Germany as well as in the Allied world.

We by-passed the Azores and in the morning landed on the waters of Lisbon Harbor. When we booked into a Portuguese hotel we discovered a little later that the head of the German Gestapo in Portugal was staying at the same hotel. We had a wait of almost a week for a plane that would carry us to Britain. It looked as if I would be arriving too late for the appointments in churches and perhaps even at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. When my dilemma became known the American naval officer who was with our party promptly notified the British embassy in London that he was surrendering his naval priority in favor of me. Later, when I reported this to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland they broke into enthusiastic applause.

On to England

It was quite an adventure, flying over to England in a small Dutch plane. When we were half way to our destination, the plane attendants shuttered all the windows so that we would not see the route by which we approached the embattled Island. It was not until some time after we landed on English soil that I learned we were in the city of Bristol. We had to pass an inspection by the British authorities who quizzed us unmercifully. Every document, every scrap of paper we carried, every personal wallet, every suitcase was inspected with meticulous care. Even the American bank notes were counted and recorded on a special form which I was asked to sign. This was followed by a second examination. Every article in the baggage was examined. Still another examination was in store, this time by an official who was known as the Censor. I started to enter a small room where I saw a young woman seated at the table. I turned to the sergeant who was conducting me and I said, "I'm sorry but there is somebody in this room." He said, "Go right in, that is the Censor." With meticulous care she opened and read all letters in my possession, including letters of introduction. She examined minutely page by page the manuscripts of addresses that I carried with me. Suddenly I noticed that two officers appeared in the shadows. One of these now inquired whether I had seen any German planes in the air field. I answered affirmatively. I was the last member of our party to be examined and I wondered if that officer was checking up on the answers given by other persons.

On my way to the railroad station I was driven along the streets in a taxi and was saddened by the sight of destruction on every hand. There was ample evidence around us as we motored through the streets that Bristol had received a very heavy pounding by Nazi bombers a few days earlier. by the heavy raids of After I had purchased a ticket for Glasgow, Scotland, I asked advice of a guard concerning my journey. This is my first day in Britain, I said. "Do you think I should stay over and go up to Scotland in daylight? Or go right through now on a train to Glasgow?" "Well," he answered deliberately. "You see what has happened already to this city, and Jerry may be back tonight. Of course," e added meditatively, "the Midlands have been raided also so what does it matter which train you take? It's like this, we're here today and gone tomorrow." Frankly this wasn't very comforting to me and I told him I'd like to be here tomorrow also. I elected to take the first train to scotland, which meant sitting up all night. It was already growing dark when we pulled into a station in a midland city. Everywhere soldiers and civilians were hurrying to and from trains. After an anxious search I found the train that would go to Glasgow. A Scotsman from Edinburgh was in the compartment ahead of me. His calm demeanor somewhat allayed my uneasiness. "Excuse me," he said, "I always like to put my slippers on when I spend a night on the train." It was still a half an hour before leaving time. As the minutes dragged by my uneasiness increased. "Does the train usually leave on time?" I asked the Scotsman. At that moment, my answer came through a loudspeaker: "All aboard for Edinburgh, Glasgow, and all points north." My travel companion was soon asleep, but I must confess that I slept but fitfully as sirens wailed in the communities our darkened train traversed during the long night.

General Assembly

For a Presbyterian minister from any part of the world, a visit to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is truly an unforgettable experience. The Assembly opened with great formality. It was meeting, of course, in Edinburgh and I was there as the official delegate of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. While the opening ceremonies were shorn of some of their pageantry because of the war, they were nevertheless most impressive. The city fathers of Edinburgh were the first to enter the great General Assembly hall and to take their places on each side of the Moderator's chair. They were

arrayed in scarlet robes with ermine tapes and gold chains. Then the surviving moderators sat in front of the moderator's roster. It has never been the practice in Scotland to elect younger ministers as moderators; these were all venerable grey-haired men. The youngest of them would be about 55 years old and the oldest was over 90. The moderator on this occasion was the Rev. Dr. Forgan of Ayre, dressed in knee breeches, silver buckles, and plenty of snow white lace on his shirt bosom and cuffs. With the entire congregation still standing, the Moderator took his place on the platform and solemnly bowed first to the right hand side, then to the front, and then to the left. Each of these sections of the assembled congregation bowed in turn to him. This ancient ritual of the Church of Scotland is centuries old.

The Assembly united in singing the well-loved psalm without accompaniment either by choir or organ and led only by a precentor. The opening psalm was "All People that on Earth Do Dwell. Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice." The congregation of a thousand ministers and elders sang as only Scotsmen can sing the psalm. I felt that 400 years of Scottish church history was passing before my eyes. It is an interesting fact that the king's representative called "The Lord High Commissioner" was not ushered into the Assembly until after it had been officially opened. This procedure was intended to remind everyone that the State exercised no authority over Scotland's greatest church. The Lord High Commissioner read to the Assembly a message of congratulation from the king, signed and sealed at the Court of St. James. Still later the moderator, on behalf of the General Assembly, read a loyal address to his majesty. The Church of Scotland is, of course, the only established church of that land, and takes precedence over all others. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, if he should make an official visit to Scotland in any State procession, must take second place to the Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

My Work Begins In England

My assignment for Britain was an extremely difficult one. Wherever I addressed the congregation in Great Britain the church would always be packed to the doors. People were eager to hear what type of message to the British people would be carried by a visiting minister from the United States. I had to be very careful in every word I would speak because after all I was a messenger on behalf of a great body of persons in Christian churches that were friendly and eager to be helpful to the British people, but whose government was still neutral.

No one in the British Islands was more helpful to me than Lord Beaverbrook. He was at this time Minister of Aircraft Production by appointment of the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. His contribution to the war and to victory was scarcely second to that of any other man in Britain, with the exception, of course, of the Prime Minister himself. His genius for organization and his tremendous drive revitalized the manufacture of airplanes when it was in the doldrums. When aluminum was running short he made a dramatic appeal to the British housewives and he had that challenge printed in every newspaper in Britain and plastered on the billboards. It read like this: "Give us your pots and pans and we will turn them into Spitfires and the Hurricane." There was an overwhelming response on the part of British women and millions of pounds of aluminum were quickly made available. Later Beaverbrook was made head of the war effort in the area of supplies and he was elevated to the Inner War Cabinet. I was very happy to receive a message at the Dorchester Hotel in London asking me to go to 12 Downing Street to meet with Lord Beaverbrook on the following day at noon. It is impossible for me to record the tremendous impetus that was given to my visit to Britain by the fact that Lord Beaverbrook opened for me many a door in Britain that otherwise would have been closed to me.

When I reached Downing Street by way of Whitehall, I found a policeman in

charge of the entrance to 12 Downing Street. When I told the policeman that I had an appointment with Lord Beaverbrook, he detailed an officer to accompany me to an opening in the barbed wire stretched across the street in front of the entrance to Beaverbrook's office. I noticed a constant stream of dispatch drivers going to and from the Prime Minister's office at 10 Downing Street only about fifty yards away. I was keen to see Lord Beaverbrook for his name was a household word in Eastern Canada. He had lived from the time of early childhood in New Castle in Brunswick, where his father served as a Presbyterian minister.

Beaverbrook was a little taller than medium height, with a strong face and bushy eyebrows. He walked with a slight stoop in his shoulders. He was then 62 years of age. I noted that Beaverbrook sat in a chair only a few moments at a time; usually, with his hands locked behind him he strode swiftly up and down the room talking with great animation. The early part of our conversation had nothing to do with the war, but it was about his father and the Presbyterian church where his father ministered. When he learned that I was to visit the Archbishop of Canterbury that same afternoon he said, "You probably don't know that he is really a great orator, which is not always true of Anglican preachers." I replied that I had never heard him spoken of as a great preacher. "Well," said Beaverbrook with a mischievous grin, "You won't be so surprised at that when I tell you that the Archbishop was brought up in a Presbyterian manse." Beaverbrook never once referred to his own tremendous contribution to Britain's military effort or to the swiftly growing air armament that owed so great a debt to Beaverbrook himself. He talked enthusiastically of President Rosevelt and Mr. Wendell Wilkie. Apparently Willkie had spent considerable amount of time with Beaverbrook when the former visited London. When he learned that Mr. Willkie was my neighbor at 1010 Fifth Avenue, New York, he entrusted me with warm greetings to his friend.

"As a maritimer" (the term applied to anyone born in the Maritime Province of Canada), Beaverbrook said, "you should be interested in Bonar Law's apartment." He led me through a series of rooms, showed me the bedroom and study and the large livingroom and den. Mr. Bonar Law was the only Canadian man who ever became a Prime Minister of Great Britain. It was through the influence and exertion of Lord Beaverbrook that he gained that high office. As I have read and pondered on the career of both those men, I marvel at the veneration Lord Beaverbrook held for Bonar Law. Law was not a great prime minister, though he was acknowledged to be one of the most fair-minded of men to the public life. He exerted a strange and mystic influence on Beaverbrook. When Lord Beaverbrook was showing me through the little apartment that Bonar Law had occupied, he pointed to a large leather covered chair and said, with deep emotion in his voice, "Bonar Law used to always sit in that chair when we would be together here conversing on the affairs of the nation."

One morning on my second visit to 12 Downing Street a secretary came in and said something in a low voice to Beaverbrook. Then Beaverbrook turned to me and said, "There's a man waiting out there that I want you to meet." In a moment a quiet mannered man in civilian dress, who had been waiting in the outer room, was ushered in. Beaverbrook said to him, "Sir Hugh, I want you to meet Dr. Bonnell who is in Britain as a good-will ambassador from the American Church. You are one of the people he should know." And then he added, turning to me: "This gentleman is Sir Hugh Dowding. He is Air Chief Marshall and since 1936 he has been commander-in-chief of the Fighting Division of the R.A.F." Beaverbrook continued, "This is the man who fought and won the Battle of Britain last year when Goering sent over his thousands of bombers and fighters. It was this man's battle skill backed by the valor of the R.A.F. that defeated the best that the German Air Force could do." It seemed incredible to me that this gentle-appearing, kindly faced, mild-mannered man in civilian dress could have commanded the Battle of Britain. "At the height of that battle" said Beaverbrook, "the prime minister and I went to the field headquarters of Sir Hugh where maps were spread all over the walls and

tables. The headquarters were located far underground; while Winston Churchill and I were waiting and watching tense with excitement, Sir Hugh was constantly occupied with urgent telephone messages plotting the position of Spitfire and Hurricane squadrons, and issuing orders regarding their disposition. At the end of the six hours stay we had there, Sir Hugh relaxed and exchanged a few words with us. We felt by his manner that the Battle of Britain was now well on its way to being won. He is our ablest air force strategist." Later I learned that Sir Hugh Dowding had received from King George five of the highest orders that the British monarch could confer upon any of his subjects. As Beaverbrook was talking of Sir Hugh's brilliant defense of the British Isles I happened to glance momentarily at him. I have seldom ever seen a man look so miserable and embarrassed. He shrank down in his chair and squirmed around as if he wanted to find a hiding place. By the expression on his face one would almost think that Lord Beaverbrook had been saying "that man is the biggest cad in England." Before I left 12 Downing Street several cabinet members entered and I was introduced to them by Lord Beaverbrook. A quarter of an hour later the Inner War Cabinet met to discuss the Battle of Crete.

Another high point in this visit to Britain was a visit to the Canadian forces stationed in a secret location in England, under command of General McNaugton. He told me what at that time was a deep secret. He said that the Canadian corp stationed in Britain was already on board transports to go to France when he learned that the British Expeditionary Force was in full retreat toward Dunkirk. Fearful of what might happen to the Canadians he secured a military plane and surveyed the British and French positions. He saw that the situation was quite hopeless and that the Allied armies would suffer severe casualties and also lose practically all of their mechanized equipment. He flew back to England and ordered the removal of all Canadian guns and tanks from the ships and barges that were crowded to the rails with fighting men. He flatly refused to throw the Canadian army into the fight where their losses would be colossal and where they could accomplish practically nothing. The Canadian army and its mechanized units then became the main reliance of British defenses during the critical months that followed the collapse of France.

The Chief of the Canadian forces drove me out by car to Cliveden, the home of Viscount Astor and his wife. Seven years before this time I had been a guest at the Astor Gardens which sloped from the stately residence down to the banks of the Thames. At that time in this Taplow area the grounds and flower gardens were beautiful to behold. Now on this wartime visit the lawns were uncut and untrimmed and great expanses of flower beds were uncultivated. Help was impossible to get and the Astors gave up the battle against the weeds. Even in wartime, Viscountess Astor was very gracious and served tea to us in their living room. Lady Astor gave each of us one saccharine tablet to sweeten our tea. Milk and cream were almost impossible to obtain. Lady Astor was the American-born wife of Viscount Astor. She entrusted me with several messages to American friends and especially to Mrs. Roosevelt, Sr. whom I had personally met on my first visit to Lady Astor in the summer of 1934. Lady Astor and her husband both were optimistic in the matter of final issue of the war and hoped for increasing help from the United States.

One of the greatest thrills I received during my visit to London was an appointment with the First Lord of the Admiralty. While I was in Lord Beaverbrook's office, I stated that I would like to get some information on the naval affairs and that Wendell Willkie, with whom I spent a whole evening before journeying to Britain, wanted me to gather some materials on the 1930 naval disarmament conference. He said, "You know, the United States was urging Britain and Japan to cut back on their large battleships. Britain," said Lord Alexander, "agreed to scrap five frontline battleships while the United States would scrap three and Japan one." I said to Lord Alexander, "Can you possibly give me the

name of the ships which Britain scrapped at that time. I have a very important use to which this information can be put." He said, "Yes, I can tell you. There was the Iron Duke, the Marborough, the Emperor of India, the Tiger, and I can't remember the name of the fifth." He pressed a button and a young man came in. Mr. Alexander turned around and looked at the young fellow and then said, "Oh, you wouldn't know!" "Who would know, Sir?" said the young man, smiling. "Tell Admiral ??? that I wish to talk with him." In a few seconds this Admiral stepped into the room. I learned that the man who now stepped into the room was First Lord of the Admiralty. He was the man who was that very moment the highest Admiral in the British Navy and in full command of its operations. Lord Alexander said to him, "I've been trying to recall the names of the five battleships we scrapped in 1930 in order to establish parity with the United States. I can remember only the first four (and he named them over). I can't recall the name of the fifth." Said the first Lord, "Wasn't the fifth the Benbow?" "That's right," said Lord Alexander. And the first Lord then saluted his superior and left the room. Lord Alexander looked searchingly at me and said, "What couldn't I do with those five battleships now in maintaining our lifeline to North America. They are exactly what we need for convoy duty. We are under a very serious strain without them." He opened a drawer and pulled out a memorandum.

"Well," I said, "it looks to me as though we in the United States are partially responsible for the fact that you lack them now." "I remember well," said Lord Alexander, "that Mr. Churchill 'way back there in 1930 made a vigorous speech in the House of Commons against the terms of the London Naval Conference, which he said would reduce the British Navy to the point where in any time of peril our supply of food and war materials would be seriously endangered on the sea lanes."

Lord Beaverbrook had told me that Alexander was vitally interested in religion. He said, "Yes, I am. I have been a Baptist lay preacher for some years and have conducted religious services frequently." When the time came for the end of the interview I said to Lord Alexander: "I've always had a great desire to see the room in which the oceans of the world are on the walls and the position of British ships." "Oh" he said "you mean the room where the position of all the naval vessels are indicated. We call that the Map and Chart Room of the Admiralty. That is one of our top secrets but we shall see what we can do about it. I'll go along with you now." So he stepped out and held the door leading down the corridor and said, "We go this way." But I said this is not the way we came in--that's in the opposite direction. "Let's try this way in any case," he said and after we had gone some distance along the corridor he stopped in front of a door at which a sailor was on guard. The sailor saluted him and Lord Alexander opened the door and passed in and motioned for me to follow him. I discovered that we were standing in a huge room. The entire walls of this room were covered with maps and charts. "This is the room we were talking about," he said. I glanced around me in amazement. I had often wondered where the home fleet was stationed. One glance at the map of the British Isles and a look at the many flags there revealed its position. Flags were at various points in the Mediterranean, from Gibraltar to Alexandria, and even down in the waters off the coast of South America there were British war ships sailing as I could plainly see from the flag. Lord Alexander pointed to a cluster of flags almost in the center of the North Atlantic. "That" he said "is the exact point where the biggest convoy of ships we have ever had in the Atlantic is now located. That's the life line of Britain. I would appreciate it," said the First Lord, "that you will not make any mention anywhere of that convoy for the next three or four weeks." I cannot recall experiencing a greater thrill at any time in my life to that which I felt at that moment. Here I was at the start from which orders to the British fleet in every quarter of the globe where the white ensign would fly and where the strategy of naval warfare was plotted. Lord Alexander said, "This is the room in

which I spent several nights without sleep until we finally got the Bismarck." I conjured up pictures of grim-faced naval men poring over charts and maps of the North Atlantic, receiving a stream of radio messages and flashing back signals to units of the British Navy ordering them to converge on that area of the Atlantic where, amid mists and storms, the Bismarck had suddenly disappeared.

From naval stations in the British Isles to Home Fleet set forth, their boilers under forced draught -- from Gibraltar mighty battle cruisers and aircraft carriers ploughed through the seas; warships of every size and type forsook their convoys and sped to the chase, while keen-eyed pilots in flying boats scanned a thousand miles of ocean. "Bismarck sighted" flashed a message to the British Admiralty, which electrified the group in the Chart Room. It came from a United States built Catalina Flying Boat. The Bismarck's position which had just been received was radioed to all units of the Fleet and scores of sleek, grey ships began to close in on the enemy. It was not until more than twenty-four hours later that the laconic message "Bismarck sunk" was received at the Admiralty. The most famous hunt in all naval annals had been brought to a successful conclusion, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, with such of his assistants as could be spared from the Map Room, sought long-delayed sleep.

As I walked from the Admiralty Building on Whitehall I knew that there had been revealed to me secrets which I suppose not even a score of highly placed naval and military men unconnected with the Admiralty have been privileged to see.

Radio Messages

While on this journey to Britain I broadcast three times messages of spiritual encouragement and cheer to the British people over the BBC. What was of much greater interest to me, however, was a message I broadcast to the United States and which was relayed from New York to Los Angeles. It was a thrill of a lifetime for me to stand in front of a microphone and say "This is London."

When I applied earlier at the Dorchester Hotel for a bedroom, I was given the last one available. It was just under the roof and sometimes I would wake in the night to the sound of the heels of a fire-watcher grinding on the pebbles on the roof. The first time this happened I had a momentary spasm of fear because I realized as I had not previously that should there be an air raid if I could not get down to the basement in time that would be the finish for me. Each night when Big Ben would strike the hour of midnight I would be sitting at a wide open window having put out all the lights in my room and locked my bedroom door so that no one could come in suddenly from the bright hallway and shed light into the room. Also, I had made it a practice to sit on the window sill every night and hear Big Ben tolling out the midnight hour with twelve deep-throated strokes. I found it greatly reassuring to hear the strokes of Big Ben. In a special way it embodied the spirit of the British people: resolute, determined, ready to persevere until the dawn of victory should come. One night when I was seated in the dark I could hear the commans of a fire-watcher in the street or on some roof top shouting, "Put out that light -- there's a light shining there -- put out that light!" and the light would immediately be extinguished wherever it was coming from. While seated there in the dark I received the greatest fright I had gotten in all my time in London: there was a deafening crash that I at first thought must have burst my ear drums. My first thought was that a German plane must have avoided all the plane watchers and dropped a bomb very close to the hotel. In the morning, however, when I got down to the street I found that the explosion had come from a large naval gun inside the fences of Hyde Park, and only 100 yards from the hotel.

One more memory which will remain with me always is the sight high in the heavens of the speckled fire that appeared thousands of feet above London and then

slowly descended, growing brighter every moment it was coming to the earth. The morning paper said that a German raider had been shot down just on the eastern outskirts of London. Time and space prevent me from enlarging on my experiences in the British Isles and especially in London in May and June of 1941. After the close of the war I received a notice from the British Embassy in Washington that on a certain date I was to appear at the British Consulate in New York where there would be bestowed on me a citation and the British medal known as "the King George the Sixth medal for service rendered to the cause of freedom." A dual recognition was conveyed by this medal, not only of my visit to Britain but for the fact that several thousand British service men and women were entertained for Sunday dinner after they had attended a service in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. During this memorable visit to the British Isles I had been entrusted by the British authorities with many important secrets. I had met most of the members of the British war cabinet including a fleeting contact with Mr. Churchill. I had seen many secret preparations which had been made to paralyze Britain's resistance while Hitler's army would endeavor to make a landing on the British Isles.

It had been an incredible trip, and it was with a full heart that I came back to my loved ones and friends.

CHAPTER SEVEN

POSTSCRIPT: GOING ON

I mention from time to time that I won't be around much longer, but I don't dwell on it. No, it's just the course of events. The creator made the world and human beings and he gave us a certain amount of time (though we've done a remarkable job in lengthening human life). I've already had far more years than the average number of people and I'm not satisfied with what I've done. I'd like to do more.

I hardly ever think about my own death. It scarcely crosses my mind. Life has been so crowded and the months that I have left are going to pass so quickly, they'll be gone before I know it. I think when the end comes for me it'll come pretty suddenly. I don't think I'll have a long illness. Right now as I sit in this chair, I feel awfully well and I feel very strong but periodically a sort of change comes over me, and I have weary periods. I've had pretty good health and can't see that that's going to change as long as I live. I don't know how long that will be. If I don't pick up a disease of some kind, I might live for another three or four years. As long as I live, I hope my mind will be quite clear.

Whatever time it comes, it's okay with me. I've had a good life. Had a wonderful time. Had a lot of fun, a lot of serious work.

Immortality

The ordinary reflection -- trying to pin down immortality -- seems a wasteful occupation. We don't know. The New Testament, for example, was speaking to the people of the day in which it was written. What they valued most of all in the world was gold, so the author of the book of Revelation said that gold is in the next stage of existence; the streets of eternity are paved with it. From time to time my mind goes to the subject of immortality, and I think about Dr. Penfield of Montreal.

Dr. Penfield of Montreal

I have had at least a half a dozen conversations with Penfield, the great brain surgeon in Montreal, and I talked with him a matter of three weeks before his death. That was interesting. He of all men had a right to discuss and explore the whole idea of immortality because there's no man in the world today who knew more about the human brain than Penfield.

Penfield believed that the death of the brain didn't mean the death of the spirit. That aspirations and longings and great thoughts, all these things, he believed somehow are involved in the brain processes, but not limited to them. He said he believed that, in addition to the physical matter of the brain, there was associated with it a spiritual element and he was convinced that that spiritual element (the essence of the human life) was not irrevocably linked to the brain. It didn't die with the brain. He thought there was survival of the essence of the human personality.

Sometime, I start thinking back on my conversations with Penfield and with some others who are pretty great on the matter of the brain and the mind and the spirit of man. Some of the greatest men of science, too. Like that great doctor from Ontario (????????) who went to the United States and then over to Oxford, where he gave great leadership in medicine. I got my daughter Bonnie to drive me to the town in Ontario where this great doctor was born and she took me right to the place. (She had made inquiries on her own, perhaps stimulated by my question.) I climbed through a fence and I was standing on the very spot where

his home stood and where he was born. It gave me a strange feeling, thinking of that great medical scientist. He was a very strong man of faith, a general practitioner, interested in the whole scope of man (with probably more attention to the brain). He spent a lot of time going through the hospital wards.

Immortality is still in the realm of faith. There is no scientific proof of immortality. There are many scientific hints of it. It's a strange thing. Penfield talked to me about putting the probe into a man's brain and the man immediately relived way-back experiences. When Penfield put the probe in a different part, other experiences came back, complete with sounds and smells. They're all stored up in the brain. Well, then of course you can say, "Yes, but that's all physical. They're stored up in the physical. But if the physical were destroyed completely you could go to that man five minutes after he's dead and you put the probe in and there's no answer." But Penfield says that that doesn't mean that that vital spark or identity, intangible identity, has disappeared. Getting in touch with that uniqueness would require other means than putting a probe in. As of now we don't know how to tap that. Of course there's some spiritualists who give a lot of food for thought, yet much of it I just brush aside, it disappears. There's no such thing as a proof of immortality -- nothing you could take to a court of law -- but there are portents of it. As the poet says, "intimations of immortality." It's still a matter of faith.

There are in man capacities that are in no other creature. For instance, man's spiritual faculties lift him above all the rest of the animal creation. Man has surpassed mere animal existence. The mind of man reaching out into the ageless eternity. His comprehension growing, his consciousness growing, looking at the way the world and the universe is put together. We have no way whatever of picturing it, but I do have the feeling that there is something there that is beyond the reach of death for the human spirit.

I see the kinship in the animal kingdom, like a little family of puppies playing around. That's one level in the ascent of man. And then you get to higher levels until you come to man himself. Does that progressive rise end permanently with man at his present stage? What is the next step? Well, the next step of course would be completely spiritual experience. I used to have some misgivings on it but I find now it's quite satisfying. It's the logical next move for the forces of the universe to produce a man that is even greater, just as the chicken is greater than the egg and emerges out of the egg.

Even so I think there is something like a new plain of existance beyond death. It's not like looking out toward Mars and beyond Mars -- that's all physical -- but a dimension of spirituality that we will have in the hereafter. Yes, that is the next step in evolution, as it were. We'll move into that phase and we'll be at different levels of understanding, just as we are in the world today. When a chicken struggles to be born, it must break the hard shell of the egg before stepping out into a new phase of life. I believe there is, at the end of our earthly struggle, still another step upward, another stage of understanding. Everything teaches me that the universe is definitely progressive; you can trace it all the way along, from awfully crude beginnings. I can't believe that that process, so painfully gone through in milleniums of time, will suddenly stop with death, and that there is nothing more. I don't believe it for a moment. I don't know what form I'll take, I haven't any idea in the world, but I do feel that there's more ahead.

Bessie's Last Year

I thought a lot of this when I was putting flowers on Bessie's grave and knowing that, more and more and more, all that was visible of her in the world is disappearing gradually, going back to the earth from which it came in the first place. But I still have strong intimations of immortality -- that that

personality I knew and felt is not gone. At times when I'd be away from her, I could feel her near. And then we'd be in the same room together and we wouldn't exchange a word and yet it could be said that we had a very enjoyable evening. It was an intangible communication. And I think that intangible communication will survive death. Whatever that quality -- we don't know what it is -- it will outlive death. So there could be communication on that plain. Whether there will be any time yet when some great experimenter with the brain can make other contact, it's hard to tell.

Bessie was in the nursing home for a year and a half. She was anxious about it before she went in, but settled down very happily. The home wasn't completely finished, but she went up those stairs on her own. We went right away to see an aunt of hers and she was so pleased that I had come with Bessie. This aunt had had her hundredth birthday the day before. She smiled at us, "Isn't it a wonderful thing -- Yesterday I was 100 years old, and today I'm 200." That's the kind of thing I admire in the elderly.

When Bessie had her last stroke, I used to repeat over and over our wedding vows. I knew it would mean a great deal to her. I always used to finish with the minister saying, "Now you can kiss the bride." And then I'd give her a big smacking kiss. Once, shortly before she died, I recited the whole ceremony and finished it without kissing the bride. I don't know whether she was alert enough to notice, but I knew that the minute I brought it to her attention she'd know. So I said (acting the minister), "Did you kiss the bride?" "Why, no, I didn't." "Then kiss the bride, you dope! Kiss the bride!" And then I gave her this great big kiss -- and she grinned from ear to ear. Every visit from the time she had the stroke, I married her over again. I knew there was nothing in the world I could do that would mean more to her.

You know how the grin would come. Bessie had to put up with a lot from me, but we got closer and closer as life went on. She was happy in the nursing home. She had everything under the sun that a person could want: television, radio, and the telephone. And any time she wanted to, she'd call up someone in the family. When I was in New York, she seemed to be a long way off. But it was just like a trip up in the summertime.

Catherine told her college class about how Bessie "discovered her career" in her last year. Bessie had told Catherine not to phone in the afternoon, and she had asked, "Because you're resting?" And her mother answered, "No -- that's the time when I visit the old people." She would take her cane and go around each afternoon to the old people on the ward who most needed some attention. Sometimes it was conversation, or straightening a pillow. Sometimes it was holding an old lady's hand wordlessly for a half hour. It seemed that Bessie realized fully, for the first time, that she was loved for herself -- not just as Dr. Carruther's daughter and Dr. Bonnell's wife. Catherine was telling this to the class of young people when she suddenly noticed several students had tears streaming down their faces. These 20 year olds, hearing about mother's career -- "looking after the old people."

Changes With Age

So long as there is consciousness and particularly the capacity to respond, a little bit of speech itself, or if the elderly give indication that they know what you're saying, I don't feel any distress about the aged at all.

But I expect more from myself. I feel lazy and useless when I'm not performing. Catherine suggested that I perform in a different sense now -- that I relate to people in a way that I never did before. She thinks that, before Bessie's death, I didn't know my own children and grandchildren nearly as well as I do now. It's true that more time and attention on my part has gone into that. I think that's a marvelous picture, the photograph of me with a little boy Timothy

on my knee. I think that's priceless. As I see other people dropping away and things changing, then these little ones give me a feeling of things going on.

When Jed Emerson was taping tales of my life -- from my roots in Scotland to the ministry in New York -- we were waiting for the arrival of Lynne, David, and their baby, Timothy. Jed said,

> In a few minutes you're going to be seeing your first great-grandchild. And there'll be many more in the next few years. What are your words of advice to those that come after you?

I didn't have to search for an answer. It has been my life motto:

> What I would say is a good Scottish saying that is often misunderstood: "HAE A GUID CONCEIT O' YOURSEL'." It means that you should have a high opinion of yourself, that you are person of worth who has a contribution to make to the world. And it is your duty to give of your very best.