

Return to
Box 265,
Crescent City
Florida

A BIT OF FLORIDA IN THE BY-GONE DAYS.

THE MENTAL MEANDERINGS OF A FLORIDA PIONEER.

By Bessie A. Williams.

Florida! What thrills that name sent up and down one's spine away back in the days of 1876--especially if that spine was only eleven years old. What mysteries it suggested of tropic beauty, of alligators, big spiders, snakes; of dreamy days spent in a hammock eating oranges and gazing upon flowers--endless fields of flowers and waving palms, while mocking birds and cardinals, and countless other warblers filled the air with song. Down there life must be one long series of lovely, joyous picnic days.

My father was a minister in Brooklyn, and in the course of some church correspondence with a Florida minister, he asked about the work in that state. Father was eager to get into a missionary field, mother yearned for a warm climate, big brother was tired of his work in the Christian Union office, younger brother suffered from bronchitis and needed to get away from the city. Big sisters and I were ready for anything that was different. So when father read Mr. Thackara's letter urging him to come, the Florida fever spread through the family like measles.

At that time Harriet Beecher Stowe, who owned a winter home in Manderin, was writing fascinating articles about Florida, which were published in one of the large magazines. These I devoured, along with anything else that was written about the magic state, and believed everything I read. I knew more about Florida at the age of eleven "goin' on twelve" than I do now after spending the major part of sixty-two years in the state.

Mother and father decided that father should go to Florida early in the summer to "spy out the land." So father obtained a permit from the life insurance company to go to the state in June, but the permit stipulated that he must leave that state by the 30th of June or risk losing his insurance. That was what the life insurance companies thought of the Florida climate in those days.

So he came down here with Ocala as his objective point. In Jacksonville he was introduced to a real estate man who represented the recently formed company of Griffing, Gardner and Case, owners and promoters of Crescent City, a brand new "city", seventy-five miles south of Jacksonville. Let no one think the present day boom-time methods are new. They were all in use in 1876, with some extra pressure and imagination tacked on.

The result of the introduction was that Ocala was forgotten, father came to Crescent City, met numerous people, held a service in the hall of the Capwell House, a small boarding house where the entire community ate and all who could, slept. A nice little congregation was present for that first service, held on Trinity Sunday, 1876-- the year of the great Centennial in Philadelphia. In that tiny congregation were represented Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Alabama, Virginia, Georgia, England and Florida, the latter chiefly "Cracker" people, the cattle people of Florida.

Crescent City, just that strip of land that lay between the large Lake Crescent and small Lake Stella (one time Lake Lena) was a cotton field for many years before Griffing, Gardner and Case bought, platted and promoted it. Lake Crescent was known in the old records as Dunn's Lake and the nine-mile creek connecting it with the St. John's river, was Dunn's Creek. One, Lord Dunn of England, discovered the lake and creek late in the seventeen hundreds. But to the imaginative, poetic minds of the trio described below, the lake formed a perfect crescent, hence the change of name to Lake Crescent; and the wonder town of the near future naturally became Crescent City. Of this trio, Griffing was the

contact man, the glib, plausible talker, the man of wonderful imagination. Gardner was the hard cash man who looked after the accounts and wangled the money out of the victims. Case was the poet and gentleman of the group. He wrote a charming little collection of verses describing the attractions of Crescent City, and compiled a little pamphlet replete with pen pictures of the ideal city, whose embryo lay between those two enchanting lakes. There was one Major Dyke, the engineer, much used by the company in platting the town-- very dapper and military. Small wonder that such a quartette wove a glamorous spell over the tender-foot parson, unused to the wiles of real estate salesmen. Within a few days, after brief consultation with some Jacksonville business men, father had selected a lot for a home, for a church, and arranged for the future purchase of a five-acre grove lot, just north of the "city." Then he sailed for New York, and was received at home with wild enthusiasm.

The die was cast! We were really going to that land of mystery and dreams -- Florida!

Followed a series of farewell visits to relatives and friends; a visit to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, where I saw the bald eagle "Abe" that followed the soldiers through many battles in the Civil war; the Butter Woman; the great Corliss engine and beside it a tiny replica that rested on a man's hand and ran perfectly -- these and many other things. In the after years when one was prisoned in the woods these made interesting memories.

Early in November began the serious work of packing, when our long drawing room was turned into a boxing and crating shop. It was delightfully exciting. Mother decided to take all of our possessions notwithstanding the advice of Mr. Griffing of the Crescent City company, to take nothing but heirlooms and buy light, summery furniture in Jacksonville. Mr. Griffing came to New York and called upon my parents, especially upon mother. He wished to clinch the bargain started by father, and assured mother that very soon Crescent City would have running water and gas in all the homes. Lake Stella, being forty feet higher than Lake Crescent, would supply the power to force water into the houses and to run a gas plant. This was, of course, before the days of electric lighting. Needless to tell that "very soon" never came -- not until this century, any way, after we had staged a battle in town that made World War seem like a nursery scrap, but which resulted in giving us a fine water and electric plant.

Just before the packing began, the congregation of St. Matthew's church gathered at our home for a farewell party, presenting father with a purse the contents of which were to be used for the purchase of a horse, which animal was to be named Matthew; and the ladies of the parish handed mother a case containing seven beautiful silver and gold saltcellars, one for each member of the family, so that every time we sat down to a meal we would be reminded of dear old St. Matthew's and its host of good friends.

Then came the hour when the house was locked and the key handed over to the new owner. It was a bit choky ~~at~~ that moment. We spent about a week visiting friends and relatives, and then arrived the day when, with my mother, I bade good-bye to a beloved aunt and we rode down Broadway in one of those old Fifth Avenue stages. Many, many times in the years that followed, when I was jogging along over a deep, sandy road in the midst of the rustling pines did I live over that farewell ride, sitting on the last seat of the stage, gazing but upon that busy, rushing, delightful, horrible, altogether fascinating old Broadway as it seemed to reel out from under the stage like a long shimmering ribbon, and finally disappeared when the stage turned into Fulton street.

The next day we all went aboard the Mallory steamer, Carondelet, with many friends to wish us Godspeed, and we sailed blithely away into the little known. The last bit of New York we saw was the spire of Old Trinity, lost now in a forest of skyscrapers.

Our steamer plied between New York and Fernandina. No ocean steamer could get into Jacksonville at that time because of the impassable bar ~~at~~ at the mouth of the St. John's river. We experienced an average amount of seasickness. I recall that a great coil of rope appealed to me as a pleasant reclining place because it was near the rail in case one needed to do a little hasty unenting at the rail. One of the pas-

sengers, a Mr. Smith, impressed himself upon my memory because he loved pepper and made a great circumstance of patting the pepper box. One time he patted too vigorously, the cover came off and down went all the pepper into his soup. I was rather glad. I disliked pepper very much. Later we learned that Mr. Smith was headed for Lake Como, a little place only five miles from Crescent City. He was a very pleasant man -- except for his pepper habits. On Sunday the Captain requested father to hold a service in the saloon. Father was inclined to seasickness, and I waited expectantly for the moment when he would toss the Bible and prayer book to the floor and race for the rail. But it did not come. At night after dinner, the negro waiters gathered outside the saloon door and sang some of their old spirituals in their own inimitable way, with that undertone of wailing for something lost and mourned for that only the old-time negroes give to their songs.

We left New York Thursday afternoon and reached Fernandina Monday afternoon, having stopped for a brief call at Port Royal, S.C., a quaint little oak-tree town. Sailing into the Fernandina harbor we saw cabbage palms and lone pine trees standing like great solemn sentinels, guarding the coast. As we stepped ashore to the sun-flooded, grassy path, a wave of happiness swept over me, and I cried out, "Oh, daddy, it makes me feel so happy!" and father turned to mother, saying, "I guess it's all right, mother. The child says it makes her happy."

The Rev. Mr. Thackara and his charming wife took us to their hospitable home to remain until we could board a train or boat to Jacksonville. Big brother had come down in October to get our future home started. He had come by Mallory steamer, also. It was the only direct way to reach Florida from New York, there being no railroad from any point North that came as far south as Florida. He had written of his experience on the little bob-tailed train that ran between Fernandina and Jacksonville; of how, if a pig or a cow stood on the track the train was stopped while the conductor ran ahead to shoo the beast off. Sometimes the train ran so slowly that the passengers (a few men) got off and walked ahead for awhile, waiting for the train to catch up with them when they tired of walking. So father and mother decided we had better take the steamer "Carrie," which might leave Fernandina any time that night, the leaving time depending upon when she arrived from Jacksonville, when she got unloaded and re-loaded, and whether there were enough passengers and packages of freight to make it profitable for an immediate return to the city. If not, she would probably wait until the next Mallory steamer came in!

I was put to bed at eight o'clock, and at about two A.M. mother wakened me, telling me to dress quickly for we were going aboard the "Carrie" which was leaving some time during the night. We all walked to the dock, our kindly host piloting along with a kerosene lantern. We were assigned to our rooms, which were dimly lighted by some kind of kerosene lamp, and I was soon asleep. Some time later, I was aroused by the most remarkable combination of chugs and scrapings and snorts and grunts I ever heard. For a moment I thought the whole world was on the rampage in a spasm of some sort, but my room-mate assured me it was only the boat machinery we heard, for we had left the dock. I looked out of the port hole, the moon had come up and apparently we were sailing along over an immense lawn. There was no water visible. The water on which we sailed was just an opening in the big marsh which at high tide was deep enough to float this very light draught river boat.

In the morning a nice old mammy knocked at the door and said: "Honey, y'all's wants ter git up an' have some nice breakfast, cause we's gwine be in de Sain' Jawn's ribber an' den we gits ter Jacksonville an' yo' sho' wants ter see all de sights." We had a nice breakfast, too, heaps of breakfast. And then we reached Jacksonville -- the sleepest, tiredest, most stragglin' little town one could imagine. There were magnificent oaks on some of the streets; hogs wallowing in many of even the business streets. A long line of shakey looking docks adorned the river front, to many of which were tied sailing vessels from many parts of the world. On the docks loafed scores of laughing, peanut-eating negroes, shouting every minute at the passengers to offer their services as baggage carriers or guides, almost always holding the baggage to their heads. We went to the Mattair House, a very comfortable, large boarding house.

Father and younger brother left the next morning for Crescent City, going on the steamer "Florence," a fine river boat that, in summer, ran on the Hudson river between New York and Poughkeepsie. It was prudent for us all to go to Crescent City on that day, because there might not be room-space for us all in that tiny town. But word came on the re-

turn trip of the boat that there were two rooms at the Capwell House that the six of us could occupy. So on Thursday we four went aboard the "Florence" at 6:30 A. M. just a little after dawn. It was a charming November day. We sat on the deck that none of the fascinating scenery should escape us. The Indian name for the St. John's river was Welaka (pronounced Welakkah'), meaning a chain of lakes, which was a most appropriate name. Sailing along for a few miles the river seemed to have come to an end, and apparently we were headed for a bump on shore, when suddenly the boat made a slow turn and behold! a new lake burst upon our vision. Shores lined with great cypress trees, magnolias, cabbage palms and hosts of other low-land trees, all draped with silvery Spanish moss, framed exquisitely these recurring lakes. And save for the swish of the boat through the water and the beat of the engine, we floated through what seemed an ~~xxx~~ endless, breathless silence.

no. Slower When we docked for a few moments at Mandarin, I felt quite cheated that ~~the~~ was not on the dock to greet us. Mandarin was a tiny settlement of just a few homes, and we glimpsed one house that they said was the Stowe home. After leaving Mandarin the boat made several stops at Orange Park, Green Cove Springs and some other tiny towns, and then we reached Palatka. At the foot of Lemon street the boat docked. Lemon street was Palatka's Broadway-- a grass-grown street with a driveway of deep sand, sour orange trees on either side, and little narrow, foot-worn paths for sidewalks. There were small shops, boarding houses and private residences intermingled along each side-- a quaint, sleepy looking street, typical of what one expected in Florida in those old days. Facing the river were two large hotels, the Larkin House just south of Lemon street and the Putnam House north of that street. These were fine hotels, crowded in the winter season, for Palatka was at that time a popular winter resort, from which point the famed Ocklawaha steamers ran to Silver Springs. In those days no tourist felt that he had ~~xxx~~ seen Florida who had not taken the Ocklawaha river trip. The steamers were very high and narrow, so built to enable them to get through that narrow, tortuous stream. The headlight at night was a great "pine knot" blazing in an iron basket.

Leaving Palatka we sailed about five miles and docked at the wee town of San Mateo, near which was the then famous Hart ^{Orange} grove. Leaving there we soon turned out of the St. John's and entered Dunn's creek, a beautiful stream as tortuous and picturesque as the Ocklawaha. To add to the tropical effect of the scenery, an occasional alligator rolled off a log into the water. Or an immense water turtle plunked off his log into the water. Again, what looked like a bumpy log proved to be otherwise when a moccasin snake lifted his ugly head, wagged his tongue at what he sensed as an enemy and wiggled off out of sight. Nine miles of twisting and turning ~~to~~ turning to every point of the compass through ^{what} seemed an endless forest, then one little turn and we were in Lake Crescent, ~~at~~ stretching eighteen miles beyond us, a lovely placid sheet of water that yet could lash itself into a fury of big waves and white caps in times of storm.

One hour from the time we entered Lake Crescent we were at the Crescent City dock -- the end of our journey -- the beginning of a new, strange life in a new, strange land.

Father and the two brothers met us at the boat and escorted us to the Capwell House. The sand was very deep and slippery, and we seemed to go back eight inches for every twelve that we went forward. Younger brother (just fifteen) having been in Crescent City two days felt very sophisticated, and as he walked beside younger sister, who was quite short and found plowing through the sand difficult, said to her in most disgusted tones "Do walk as if you were used to it!"

The arrival of a large family like ours in the little community caused a considerable excitement and the population was out to witness the procession. The Capwell House consisted of five bedrooms on the second floor, four bedrooms and a long, wide hall on the first floor, and a detached kitchen. All Florida kitchens were detached from the main house in those days. Mother, father and younger brother were given a room on the first floor, my two sisters and I a room on the second floor. That meant three in a bed. A close fit but luxurious for pioneers.

The down stairs hall was used as a dining room, Mr. Capwell, generally known as Uncle Thomas, and his kindly wife, known as Aunt Harriet, ran the house. Uncle Thomas was born in Connecticut, went to Virginia in his youth, where he met and married Aunt Harriet. In the middle seventies they wandered down to Florida, and in Jacksonville were discovered

by Mr. Griffing who induced them to come to the projected town of Crescent City, build a house and run it as a boarding house.. Uncle Thomas had spent none of his youthful years in school, and could neither read nor write, of which he was rather proud. Given sufficient time he could write his name. He had a great dread of having checks forged, so he never had a bank account. "This here forgin' of checks comes of eddication. 'Tain't necessary. Look at me. I got twenty thousand dollars, an' I ain't got no eddication an' I can't forge nobody's name." If he liked a person he told him so in vigorous style. "Damn you, Williams, I like you," he said to older brother.

Aunt Harriet could read; also their daughter could read, and that accomplishment was capped by some oil painting in which she had received no instruction, and produced some quite remarkably good results. Her special gift, however, was in training animals. Twenty cats she possessed at one time -- a miscellaneous lot of strictly alley cats. The whole group sat up on their hind legs, mewed at a sign from her, and were rewarded with a good feeding of meat. A common old monkey she had trained to pick up his tail and wipe his eyes when he wept real tears because she scolded him. A medium sized alligator she had as a pet and kept him in the yard. She even tamed a big, head-strong man, married him and kept him in harness until she died.

The Capwell House hall was used as a dining room. Uncle Thomas waited upon the table comfortably arrayed in shoes, trousers, shirt and suspenders. That these articles of apparel had seen long service did not in any way disconcert him. He wore a long beard and was blind in one eye so that he had to look sidewise like a chicken, but he had a nice smile, and when he placed a huge plate of hot cakes and a cup of coffee at my place, asking "Have some fried griddle cakes?" I was his friend forever.

When breakfast was finished we sallied forth to visit the place where our future home was to be. The piers were down, the sills set, and one of the huge corner beams was just being raised as we arrived. The detached kitchen was finished. Our lot was on the corner of Edgewood Avenue and Summit Street -- Edgewood because the woods came up to it, and Summit because that street ran along on the highest part of the land between the two lakes -- a boasted eighty feet above sea level. We walked up through deep sand and sand spurs, a distance of about six blocks from the Capwell House. There were no streets, just trails through the dog fennel that grew man high. There were no houses in sight -- just pine woods at the sides and back of the lot. To the front (south) stretched what had been a cotton field, all over-grown with dog fennel and other weeds, with a very few oaks scattered here and there. It was not an inspiring outlook.

When we returned to the Capwell House, mother called us all to her room and asked which we preferred to do -- remain in our two rooms at the boarding house, or camp in the kitchen until the house was finished? The vote was unanimous for camping. So they went to the stores, bought a cook stove, two cots, three chairs, some cooking utensils, plates cups and saucers. There were two stores, carrying a regulation miscellaneous stock of everything from brogans and shovels and stoves to sugar, and eatables generally, calico and overalls and various odds and ends of drygoods. Everything in very limited quantity, of course, and we didn't ask about the quality.

The following Monday we moved in. The kitchen measured sixteen by twelve feet, so when the stove, two cots, three trunks, three chairs and ourselves got in there we had little space left for company. But we had company just the same -- not over-night guests nor for formal dinner parties, but numerous and frequent callers who were eager to see how we managed to stow ourselves away in such small quarters.

On the two cots, placed in one corner, reposed at night, mother, father, younger brother and myself. My sisters put three trunks together somehow, piled all the coats, shawls and whatnot on them to fill in the hollows and soften the ridges, and there they slept -- or said they slept. Older brother "roomed out" in some other person's kitchen. One end, or corner, of the room was the dressing room. When one was arraying himself the rest politely looked the other way, and then the dressed one went out of doors. Really the ceremony of robing and disrobing was brought to the "inriducible minimum." But on Saturdays there had to be arrangements for the traditional Saturday bath. The ceremonies began shortly after the mid-day meal. Mother, the two sisters and myself

performed during the afternoon. The masculine part of the family was banished, and invariably callers came during the hours of ablution. Father and the two brothers would entertain them outside, all sitting on a log or the beams of the house. After awhile, older brother would weary of the job of entertainer, knock on the door and ask "Are the rites of the afternoon concluded?" Then there would be a great hurrying and scurrying to reduce the room to order, and I would be delegated to open the portal -- a board doory--and the guests would smilingly enter. It was really great fun. After supper, mother, father and the sisters would go to the Capwell House for choir practise -- I guess it would be called that. Then I went to bed and the two brothers took their turn at the Saturday ablutions. When all the family was safely tucked in bed, father took his turn. At meal times, a wide plank rested at one end on the window bench the other end on a carpenter's "horse." As many as could sat on the edge of the cot with plates and cups on the board, while the rest "sat around" with plates in their hands.

It was impossible for the Capwell House to give the use of its dining room for a Thanksgiving service, so father held the service in the kitchen. A dozen or fifteen attended, amongst them two or three children. Boards supported by boxes were arranged for the grown-ups to sit on, while the children were placed on the cots. We sat cross-legged, rose on our knees when the others stood and "scroonched" down during prayers. It was a type of service that very much appealed to the youngsters. Father used the cook stove for lectern, prayer desk and pulpit. For a number of weeks a tiny Sunday school was held in the kitchen, while the services continued to be held in the Capwell House hall.

The matter of food was a bit perplexing to mother, for there was no fresh milk, very few eggs, and no fresh vegetables excepting potatoes of both kinds. Most of the meat had to come out of cans. Once in a while some one killed a beef and peddled it around, "toting" it in a cart, entirely uncovered so that flies and other insects had free access to it. It was any old critter that ranged the woods, and was it tough! A steak was any small, flat piece -- it might come from the neck, tail or any other part of the beast. Venison was brought in occasionally -- fairly tender and eatable if carefully cooked. The pork was mighty sweet and tasty if one could scrape any meat off the bones. Piney rooters went chiefly to skin bone and muscle -- I should add also, to brain. They were very intelligent, keen-witted beasts. There were fish to be gotten from the lakes -- mullet that tasted like mud, and mud fish that felt like cotton in one's mouth, and seemed to expand and fill the mouth at each chew. The bass and brim were good. Once in a while we had a green turtle, which was excellent and a great treat. The only canned milk in those days was the sweetened condensed milk. Not being familiar with condensed milk, mother creamed some potatoes with it one day, and how the family howled over that mess.

The residents all said it was impossible to raise vegetables in Florida, excepting sweet potatoes and field corn, which was very tough and used chiefly for cattle and horses. When very young it was used for "roas'n years" by the cracker people. All the Irish potatoes here came from the North. It can be readily understood that rice and grits became very important items on the bill of fare. Anxious to find something to vary the monotony of our menu, mother inquired about the cabbage of the cabbage palm, and how it was prepared for the table. The kindly cracker woman who was giving the information said, "Put it on soon and cook it a right smart." A clear enough recipe if one understood the vernacular.

During the first few weeks of our camping the weather was charming. Then one day the temperature began to lower, and lower some more until we were all ashiver and the cook stove became a heater. We went to bed with our clothes on and covered ourselves with wraps and anything else we could find, including newspapers -- anything that would help to keep us warm. By morning the temperature was below freezing, and so were we. As soon as possible I went out of doors and discovered ice in all the tubs and buckets the masons were using. Breaking the ice out, I took the pieces to the well, fitted them together as neatly as possible, making an ice walk from the well to the kitchen door. I was very pleased with my work, but I would hate to depict the expression on my brothers' faces, or repeat their remarks when they stepped out of the door and started to the well.

Our house had been planned without any chimnies, because father had been told repeatedly that the only fires required in Florida were for cooking. In fact, father and mother had talked seriously of building a log house because they thought it would be cooler than any other type of build --

ing, I assume on account of the cracks between logs that would admit the breezes -- plus some millions of insects of various kinds, sizes and evil intentions. After that night's experience, the plans were changed and arrangements made for building two large chimnies in the house.

The mails reached Crescent City once a week, coming by steamer from New York to Fernandina, thence by river boats. Shortly after our arrival, the "Florence" ceased coming to Crescent City, going instead to Sanford, the southernmost point in the eastern part of the state where tourists stopped. Our mail was brought from Palatka by a little boat that was advertised as "The new and elegant side-wheel steamship, Euphemia, plying tri-weekly between Crescent City and Palatka." The scoffers said that meant that she went down one week and tried to get back the next. It is true that she did not always return to Crescent City the same week that she left. The "Euphemia" had no guards on her deck, and had a tendency to careen if more passengers went on one side than on the other. So to avoid accident, a barrel filled with sand and manned by a stout negro, was kept on deck, and when more passengers stood on one side than the other, the barrel was rolled to the deserted side. So it was that we sailed grandly to and from Palatka with never an accident of sliding into the water, save when some passenger carried within him too much stimulant (commonly known here as "Red Eye"), and himself careened. Mails were one week and longer coming from New York to Crescent City. At that time ('76-'77), Crescent City was the distributing point for Daytona mails, forwarded from this post office by mule-back or two-wheeled cart. For some time, one reached ~~the~~ Daytona only by horseback or in a cart over rough, gandy trails, or by sail boat.

On mail nights the masculine portion of the family lighted lanterns and went to the dock to watch the boat come in, for the arrival of the boat was the special excitement of the week. One night, after we had been camping for about two weeks, older brother returned from the dock with the news that our furniture had arrived; that the warehouse was not large enough to hold it; that after getting in the piano and a few other large pieces, the remainder was to be left on the boat until the morning, when it would be put on the dock to remain until father could have it hauled off. The next morning, work on the house was suspended and the carpenters rushed to the building of a "lean-to" at the back of the kitchen. Much excitement filled the air and numerous people came up to offer advice and share in the excitement. By noon a line of two-wheeled carts loaded to capacity, began arriving, the stuff packed into the lean-to, and some time during the next day all but the piano and ~~and~~ a few other large crates were stowed away and the lean-to closed. The things had come by sailing vessel from New York to Jacksonville and thence by river boat.

In the rush to have the room sided up and covered, there had been no time to have the roof shingled, so it was just planked over, with some very hospitable cracks left between boards. They all said it never rained in Florida in the winter season anyway, so a regular roof was unnecessary. But one day the rain began to come down. Consternation filled the family bosom. Father and brothers gathered together some shingles, nails and hammers and began shingling the roof. It was dark and I was sent up to hold a lantern and sometimes an umbrella, for the rain was coming down steadily. We were up there until after ten o'clock, and all came down with feelings of great satisfaction over a deed well done, and went to sleep. Two days later, mother had the door opened and to her utter dismay found that the new roof had leaked. Alas and alack! Then ensued such a pulling out and hanging up and all kinds of attempts to dry things. Case after case of books had been soaked -- carpets, bedding -- it was all quite appalling, but one of the experiences in pioneering to be expected. The roof was filled with the best of intentions, but also with too many nail holes. It was the maiden effort of father and the brothers in shingling. I know I held the lantern all right.

Father had the carpenters lay the attic floor as quickly as possible, and then all the furniture was hoisted up and things spread out to dry. It took many a day to dry the carpets and bedding. And the books -- alas for them! To this day many of them bear the marks of the deluge that overtook them.

One night we were awakened from deep slumber by a rattling and rumbling and tum-tumming under the kitchen. All kitchens and houses were

built on piers so that they stood from twelve to twenty-four inches from the ground). Everybody sat up. The lantern was turned up. Was it an earthquake -- robbers -- what? The rattling and bumping went steadily on. Father and brother pulled on their shoes, grasped, one a cane the other a poker, went stealthily to the door, carefully opened it, tipped silently down the steps to the ground and made one grand onslaught upon the enemy, whatever it might be. Within, we held our breaths awaiting the result of the attack. I had seized a frying pan -- I do not know what the others had. Then we heard a shout, a squeal and a burst of laughter, looked out and there was a tiny "piney rooter" pig trotting off, squealing at every step. Father had stored some potatoes near a few boxes and boards under the kitchen and the small pig was simply selecting his potatoes and enjoying a midnight repast when he was interrupted by the crazy antics of a group of scared humans.

Perhaps we were more ready to be alarmed because in the next lot about a hundred feet distant, were camped two or three negroes who were working on the house. They were altogether quiet and harmless, often affording us much entertainment with their banjo strumming and the singing of their weird and wailing negro songs as they squatted around a pine knot fire under the garrulous pines. We were unused to and unacquainted with southern negroes.

That little piney-rooter, that I named Piney, who had so disturbed our slumbers, became a valued companion. He and a gopher that made its appearance soon after Piney came upon the scene. Gophers in Florida are just ordinary land turtles, ten or twelve inches long. The turtle I used as a pack horse, piling pieces of wood on his back, and he would pad off with the load to whatever point I headed him for. Piney would stand off, just looking. Then I would start off on a chase after him, Piney grunting and squealing and making his little hoofs fly, outrunning me every time. When I sat down, back he would come, standing off looking at me from under his long lashes, hoping for a hand-out, which he usually coaxed out of me. A tame fawn trotted about the place, a general pet, fearing no one. During that first year flocks of parrakeets played in the trees, filling the air with their raucous notes. After that first year they never appeared. Too many human beings intruded upon their domain.

After the floor was laid in the attic, sisters, brothers and I moved our sleeping quarters up there. A twenty-six foot ladder rested on a beam of the unfloored first story, and against another beam in the attic. We became as agile as monkeys running up and down that ladder, and almost regretted the staircases when they were finished.

Shortly before Christmas the floor was laid in nearly all of the first floor rooms. The first floor consisted of of a long hall, twelve feet wide that ran the length of the house. On one side were the drawing room and a bed room; on the other, a library and dining room, all opening into each other. Christmas Day, father held the Christmas service in the drawing room. Early in the morning the brothers and I went into the "hammock" skirting Lake Stella, and brought in armful of lovely holly and other greens with which to decorate the room, and the result was very pleasing and Christmasy. Those attending the service were very happy over having a Christmas service and sang joyously without any instrument to accompany them.

For the first time, dinner was to be served in the dining room and two guests had been invited to join us. The passage-way between the kitchen and dining room had not been built, so two wide planks were laid from door to door, over which the food must be carried. Just as everything was ready to convey to the festive board, a steady rain began. That made an umbrella necessary, so father held one over the trays of food as sisters carried them in. The table was set with a miscellaneous collection of tinware, silver, china, and crockery heavy enough to be fired out of a cannon. When the repast had reached the dessert stage, a heavy thunder and wind storm came up. There was no sash in the window openings, nor doors in the doorways, so all the men of the party rushed about putting doors and planks against the openings, which kept out some of the rain. That was the beginning of a solid week of rain -- in this country where they said it never rained in the winter months.

Being the only child in the immediate community, I was the recipient of numerous Christmas remembrances, but the variety in those remembrances was of necessity very limited, for our stores were not what would

be called emporiums, so the gifts were candy and nuts and raisins, raisins and nuts and candy; but they carried as gracious a message as if they had been jewels. That holiday week was unique in my personal experience. Arrayed in a "waterproof" and rubber boots, with my head stuck under the kitchen, I spent most of the day hours making love to a very pretty cat that had come from nowhere and had no faith in the kindness of human beings. I coaxed and cooed, fed and watered her, and at last she entrusted herself to my arms. The male human she looked upon as a demon of cruelty, and it was weeks before she succumbed to the blandishments of father and brothers, who were all fond of cats, and thenceforward she was the family pet, joining in the frolics of Piney, the turtle and myself.

New families were coming into town and building homes, and we counted eleven besides our own, representing nine states, mostly northern and western, England and Scotland. Small wonder that we dreamed dreams and saw visions of a metropolitan winter resort. Amongst these was a U.S. judge from Michigan, who, after building his house, became ardently interested in pig culture. The piney-rooters, razor back hogs, half wild creatures that ranged the woods, he acquired a large number of, feeling that he was going to develop a new business for the state in pork production. Some of these hogs he kept near his home, others in a large field north of town, his idea seeming to be that change of scene would be beneficial to them. Daily we saw him walking along followed by a lot of grunting pigs that he was baiting with corn which he scattered as he walked, steadily calling, "soo-ee, soo-ee." One group would be taken to the field in the morning, another brought back to the home lot at night. The judge's pet fear (in which he was not alone) was a skunk, and one night he was sure he was being followed by one from the post office. Being short and portly, running was a difficult exercise, but that night the judge made record speed. His wife hearing him panting up the steps rushed to see what tragedy was afoot. He tore into the house, unable to speak, slammed the door and locked it, gasping, "Smell it, smell it." Mrs. Judge thought he was going entirely crazy, but when he was finally able to say the word "Skunk!" she collapsed into a chair in spasms of laughter. She knew it was not the habit of skunks to chase, so she went out to see what manner of beast it was that had so terrified her spouse, and there on the steps sat a little puss mewling pitifully, asking for a home and food. Needless to mention that the judge was never allowed to forget his narrow escape from a skunk shower. The experiment in pork culture was not a success, for no amount of feeding would make those hogs anything but razor-backs.

In the days before telegraph poles and railroads penetrated the woods, Florida was very popular as a hiding place for those who had "done those things which ought not to be done" and feared to face the officers of the law. Also, it was hailed as an asylum for such persons as had become unpopular with their families--hailed joyously by the families, that is, because once in the state it was not so easy to get out. Crescent City had its quota of such persons in its very earliest days, notably, a really fine physician from Canada who, from habits of alcoholism and kindred disorders, won the disfavor of his family and was exiled to Florida. He was finely educated and very entertaining, but because of a tendency to over-drink his cash allowance, he was often in the embarrassing position of being requested to "move on." Finally he landed in Crescent City, where he "bearded round," guided by the gullibility of the householder to whom he appealed when making changes in his place of abode. At last he became a kind of nursery governess in effect, in a family of many small children, taking them out into the woods for nature studies and picnics. It happened that he fancied I resembled his own daughter who was a child about my age, and he tried to be very nice to me, which was unfortunate because I disliked him very much and could not force myself to respond to his friendliness. He disappeared at last, and we heard that he died in a near-by state. A good many years later, in a northern city, amongst a group of ladies, I saw what looked like a re-incarnation in female form of this same doctor. I knew it was the daughter whom I resembled when we were both children. Sometimes the world seems very small.

Along the shores of Lake Crescent north of the town were seven or eight homes and orange groves, most attractive of which was a place called Oakwood, owned by a former Massachusetts resident who had come to Tallahassee in the fifties, where he was a merchant for some years and during the Civil war, at the end of which time he had lost most of his money, and came to Palatka seeking orange land. By some accident of

* New Hampshire

property hunting, he bought a quarter section of land on Lake Crescent, built a commodious, cracker-style house, brought his wife and youngest child to the place, and until chided by his wife for building out in the woods instead of near the lake, did not know that the house was beautifully situated only about one hundred feet from the water, the forest was so dense. They had come by way of the St. John's river, landing at Welaka and driving to Oakwood through the woods. For some time Oakwood was the only post office for this region. It was said of one of the ladies whose home was not far from Oakwood, that when she left her former home to come to Florida, she walked through an avenue of servants (former slaves) who wept at her leaving, many begging to be taken with her; but the war had impoverished her family and they must be left behind. She came here to a home consisting of two or three log cabins, where she brought up a large family aided by one old mammy who refused to be left behind. When years had passed and the orange grove had matured, a comfortable home was built on a knoll that commanded a view of the lake to the east and north. With two attractive daughters and several sons the new home became a popular social centre, and the old log house period was forgotten -- almost.

There were a dozen or more families, some of them native, to the west and south of town within a radius of about ten miles. Altogether, there seemed to be a possibility for the formation of a pleasant social group, so when father suggested starting a social club, it was taken up with enthusiasm by all. The meetings started at our house before it was quite finished. There would be a programme consisting of essays, recitations, songs, piano playing -- each doing his or her little stunt and all having a very pleasant time. After the programme there was a general social hour, which meant chatting, playing games and such simple amusements. But the fact was that we all had a jolly good time and were not bored nearly to death because there was no show or entertainment going forward as we are now-a-days. The name of the club was the Crescent City Social club, which soon shortened itself to the "C.C. Social." And the "C.C. Social" lasted for years, finally becoming more of a dancing club than anything else.

Father was busy all this time getting together the nucleus of a parish -- a mission, that is, in Crescent City and in San Mateo. He held services at Lake Como, Welaka and at a little settlement that later became Pomona. All this necessitated the buying of a horse and carriage -- that is, he thought he was going to buy a carriage. But when he said the word carriage, the population held up its hands in horror. A carriage! A carriage with four light rimmed wheels! Impossible. These narrow rimmed wheels would cut right through the sand. This came from natives and the new settlers from northern and southern states. Such unanimity of opinion called a halt in his plans. The horse was purchased, and finally father compromised on a four-wheeled, light weight wagon with spring seats. This would not be so expensive an experiment. To the amazement of the populace the thing did not sink through to China. That wagon was gazed upon with the same astonishment and awe that the first horseless vehicles caused in later years. It was impossible, but there it was -- going! It was a matter of weeks only when a dozen or more buggies and carriages appeared on the roads. Up to that time, two-wheeled carts, with tires six to eight inches wide were the only vehicles considered possible for this Florida sand. If any person who may read these lines has never ridden in an old two-wheeler through a deep sandy road, with the horse going at a jog trot, I would urge his trying it. The like in exercise cannot be found by any other means, and thereafter earthquakes will hold no terrors.

Besides the two general stores in town, in one of which was the post office, there was a saw mill, which ran quite steadily, supplying lumber to many parts of the county. It was located at the foot of Edgewood avenue on Lake Crescent, just five blocks east of our home, and the hum of that mill forms the background of my memories through all the early years of our life here. The man who owned the mill was a big, angular man from Maine, with a numerous and constantly increasing family of unwashed but keen witted children.

Bine lumber sold in those days for from eight to twelve dollars a thousand feet -- genuine heart pine boards. Ten years ago a large lumber concern refused to take an order for a few thousand feet of twelve-

would
 inch boards because it take a year or two to fill the order for the heart pine such as was common in the early days. And the price would be one hundred and fifty dollars per thousand feet for rough boards. So have our pine forests been slaughtered, as much from tapping as from cutting..

One day the community was horrified by the spectacle of a man leading his daughter through town by a rope which^{was} attached to her tied hands. The daughter had run away from home to visit her married sister, and her absence interfered with the farm and house work. It was pa's custom to harness up daughter along with a cow to the plow, while another daughter guided plow, ^{as} ~~the~~ pa and a son sat on the porch smoking and observing the good work that was going on. In that family it was not considered good form for the men to work -- by the men at any rate. This same man built a new home and when it was finished he wrote a note to father asking him to come and dedicate the house. This man had a clipped ear and a brand in the palm of his hand. Old-timers will know what that meant. Also, he was "short-tempered," and handy with the gun; so father wrote a polite and diplomatic note in reply, regretting his inability to comply with the request because of the fact that in the church organization to which he belonged ministers were not allowed to dedicate any buildings save those which were used for religious purposes only. Later on this man died. At the funeral the wife and daughters wept and howled and beat the air, as was considered the proper thing to do by the country people at that time. Son, (we will call him Samson) was taking it all very quietly until a wild eyed female, who made a specialty of funeral gymnastics, seized him by the collar, shoved him to the brink of the grave and literally shook him until poor Samson gave vent to a wild bleat -- of fright, for that old vixen had him so near the edge of the grave he feared she was going to drop him into it. I know, because I was very near, watching the whole performance. This is a digression and a leap ahead, for the funeral did not take place until we had been here for several years.

During January a very distressing disorder appeared amongst nearly all of the new-comers, which the doctor called "Florida itch." It certainly itched, and we all looked as if we had been sprinkled with pepper-corns. What caused it was a mystery, but most thought it was the result of drink-surface water, for our wells were not deep. One old negro told us, "De Lo'd done sount-hit so's ter keep y'all Yankee folks f'om thinkin'n y'all is too good, cawse hit's sho' de itchin'est thing He ever done thunk up." We agreed with him as to its being the "itchin'est thing," but it disappeared within about three weeks and never returned.

When the twenty-second of February arrived, the house was finished and settled, and we celebrated with a special meeting of the "C.G. Social." We had barely reached this stage of ease and quiet when a plea came for all who had any spare rooms to take in tourists as boarders. From the Falatka hotels had come several excursion parties, and many of the excursionists wanted to remain in Crescent City, but the Capwell House was already overflowing, hence this request from the Company that each family take in as many persons as could be comfortably accommodated. So mother and father decided to comply with the request, and we had the thrill of "keeping boarders" for a few weeks. Mother had secured the services of an excellent cook and her husband as regular servants -- Aunt Phebe and Uncle Dick, two of the best old negroes that ever lived. The boarders entered into all the little doings of the place, helping out at the "C.G. Social" meetings and at the Sunday services, and one young man assisted in getting the portion of the yard that had been planned for a croquet ground into shape, which made possible the gathering here of the young folks of the vicinity for croquet and sociability. When the boarders left I wept copiously, and I think the rest of the family wanted to.

Here in the South, any time after noon is evening; after six o'clock is night, and many were the embarrassing times when friends casually spoke of coming to spend the evening, and the family interpreted it to mean the hours after six. Spending the evening in those days always meant remaining for supper. It took too long for a horse or mule to drag a cart through those old sandy roads for people to indulge in short "calls." In the good old days when you had no refrigerator because you had no ice, and every bit of food that was put on the table had to be freshly prepared and cooked on a wood-burning stove; and sometimes there were no eggs, never any nice canned vegetables and meats that one wanted to offer to guests, to have an unexpected group of visitors arrive called for a very robust command of facial and conversational powers on the part of the hostess, to show proper cordial welcome and pleasure, while in the back of her head she was taking a rapid survey of food possibilities and deficiencies. Mother was very thankful

for two grown-up daughters to whom she could leave the entertainment of the guests while she rustled around the kitchen pantry and started off the cooking activities. Notwithstanding the little embarrassments and culinary panics, those unanticipated, informal little visitations were very enjoyable and helped to bridge over that strangeness and distance engendered by different backgrounds, environments and ideas.

All through the spring and summer, and until the church was finished the services were held in our hall every Sunday morning. Chairs were set in rows, an aisle left on the side. A home-made lectern and prayer table formed the chancel; the piano stood corner-wise at the head of the aisle and the choir sat on the front row of seats. It made a really good little chapel. Each one in the family had a special task to perform in preparation for each service. Brothers brought all the straight backed chairs in the house to the hall, placing them in proper rows. Mother and sisters arranged flowers, younger sister accompanied the singing on the piano, mother and older sister sang in the choir. My particular task was to "water" the congregation before and after service. They were very thirsty. We were all pretty thirsty. One little girl asked me, as I poured water from a silver water pitcher "if it was a sure nough tea pot?" Amongst the congregation there were always some of the cracker people, men chiefly for the women were very shy about meeting strangers. The majority of them had never seen a plastered wall, and I saw two of them pat the wall and press it to see if it was hard. Many of them had never looked into even a small mirror and were not at all familiar with their own appearance. When they walked into the drawing room and came directly in front of the long pier glass, their faces were an interesting study. Surprise, pleasure, embarrassment, fascination all combined in their expressions. I saw one man almost bristle when he discovered himself in the mirror -- much as dogs and cats do when first introduced to themselves.

These cracker people were gentle spoken as one met them and their manners were good. Few of them ever failed to doff his hat when he met a lady or a parson. They were strictly cattle people; raised some field corn, sweet potatoes, horse bananas (a coarse banana belonging to the plantain family) and a very few other things. They had no milch cows, very few chickens, and all their live stock depended upon what they picked up in the woods, which made them lean, forlorn looking creatures with scarcely any meat on their bones. Most of them were sold to Cuba, where they were fattened for beef, Cuba being a fine grazing country. Such hogs as they possessed were used for home consumption. For years herds of cattle were driven by our home, with men on horseback guiding them and cracking their whips, giving at the same time their weird, blood-curdling yells. The name "cracker" is supposed to come from the cracking of their whips; or from the fact that they cracked their own corn, making their own grits and meal -- the women did it, that is. Their houses were built with a hall in the centre, open at both ends, a bedroom on each side, and a detached kitchen. Occasionally there were more bedrooms. The size of the family made no especial difference with the number of rooms. Furniture was scarce, most of the chairs having cow-hide bottoms. When two or three men were together they sat on their heels -- squatted -- as they talked, even in the stores where there were plenty of chairs. When they were driving in their carts, if a woman was along, she had a chair to sit on. Almost invariably there was a man or boy riding astride the horse -- that is, when there were more than two persons along. Amongst the crackers in this region was one Connecticut sea captain who had been all over the world. We never knew how he happened to land in the woods here, married to a daughter of one of the biggest cattle owners in this part of the state, living in regular cracker style. One old woman from Maine lived out in the woods, her daughter married to a cracker man.

A few times during the year some one of the cracker families would give a big dance. Always there was one, ^{man} maybe two men, who could saw on the fiddle. Square dances, with wonderful flourishings of the legs and swaying of bodies, were the custom. When a man desired a partner, he usually tapped the favored one on the shoulder and said: "I pick you for the next dance." If she had already won a partner, she said, "Thanks, I'm picked." When they went to a dance the whole family started off before dark and remained until "sun-up" the next morning. Babies and small children were parked on chairs, beds, the floor, or out in the carts. All the family dogs went too, and many a dog fight had to be broken up in the course of the night. The men chewed, smoked, drank "red-eye." The women dipped snuff, many of them adding chewing and pipe-smack

ing to their accomplishments. Always there were dogs around their premises, for protection and for hunting, cattle and hog driving. When they drove up to a gate, they always halloed before alighting, waiting for some one to appear to hold back the dogs. "Please ma'am min' the dawg," was what greeted one when a "team" (local for a horse or mule and cart) stopped at the gate. One day I went to visit a little girl who lived outside of town. We were walking through the orange grove. Suddenly she said "Excuse me, I'm going behind a tree. Don't you want to go behind a tree?". This was a new form of hospitality to me. I did not quite understand. Presently the meaning dawned upon me. After that I looked all about and realized that there was not an out-house anywhere. This was not a strictly cracker home.

The origin of the Florida and Georgia crackers has been a matter of interest because of the fact that, while far removed in possessions and culture from the Southern aristocracy, many of them claimed to have descended from the fallen aristocracy of foreign countries, coming from penal colonies where they were imprisoned for political reasons. This would explain the very good features, the intelligence and instinctive good manners shown by many of them -- not all of them. Their conception of the size of the earth was similar to that of a caged canary. One man said in my presence that he had been "plumb up to Geo'gy, an' if the world is as big ttother way as hit is thats way, hit sho' is a big place." One of the woman who had married a Texas man and accompanied him to New York City, told her friends here, upon her return, that "When we'uns got to New York all the folks was out on the dock to meet us."

Amongst our new residents was a very fine druggist, and we soon had an excellent drug store, better than any that Palatka boasted of. There was another resident who bore the title of doctor. It was well for the citizens that the druggist was also a physician, though because of ill health was not a regular practitioner. When the alleged doctor prescribed what would have made blue ink, as happened in one instance, the druggist, being familiar with the case, substituted the correct ingredients. One day a man shot himself accidentally and the bullet lodged in the fleshy part of the leg. This being a surgical case, the doctor needed assistance and commandeered the services of older brother. Armed with a piece of wire, a small chisel and a small carpenter's saw, they proceeded to relieve the patient of the bullet, or of his leg, as the case might require. Probing with the wire located the bullet and, with the aid of the chisel, it was pulled out. So the saw was not needed. The patient did not die.

For many years the druggist above referred to was the unpaid, skillful physician of the town, to whom we all ran when physical troubles assailed, and to whom we old citizens owe a debt of gratitude that can never be paid.

The first of May brought the first rumblings of malaria, when younger sister had a full sized chill and fever. First one, then another in the family chilled and fevered. It did not seem very serious until after the Fourth of July. Perhaps the picnic that was planned for that day, the first ever held in this region, buoyed us up. That picnic was held at what was then called the Lipscomb Place, just south of town on Lake Crescent, a lovely spot, grass-grown, with big oaks making a delightful shade. All the country-side attended, bringing baskets of lunch, which was spread out on long tables by a committee of ladies. Before the call for luncheon was given, there was a regular Fourth of July programme, with an oration, reading of the Declaration of Independence and singing of national hymns. When the luncheon call came, how the cracker people fell upon the "light bread" and pies! The house on the place was unoccupied, and in the large hall they danced -- they danced at noon-time, all the afternoon and into the night. The newcomers joined in, but they were not able to compete with the cracker folk, and nearly all of them wandered home by six o'clock. It was hot and dreadfully -- what younger brother called "perspiracious". But the picnic had been a great success. And the great climax of the day was at night, when a lot of fireworks were set off -- the first ever seen by many of the spectators.

The next day there came to the house, asking for "Parson Williams" the head of the cattle men in all this region, the chief of the clan, so to say. He said to my father, "Parson, that sho' was a fine thing you read yesterday. Would you, please sir, read hit to me again? I ain't never heard hit befo'." It was the Declaration of Independence. Father was eager to let him have a copy to take home, but the old man said: "You know,

Parson, I ain't never larned to read, so hit wouldn't do me no good to take hit home." So father read it to him and he sat in rapt attention, listening. Then he rose solemnly, saying, "That sho' is a fine piece, and I thank you kindly." Beneath all his ignorance, what a fine brain the old man possessed to be able to appreciate that wonderful document.

And yet, he was the leader in one of the most dastardly killings this region ever knew, when the climax of a feud was reached some time before we came here, and resulted in the killing -- actually murdering -- of several men opposed to him, and one or two of his own clan. Many years later, I was told by the wife of the lawyer who defended this same old man, that her husband was approached regarding the matter in a very cautious manner, and the next morning an old feed bag was found on their back porch, which ~~they found~~ contained one thousand dollars in gold, the coins smelling of earth. The bearer of the treasure had simply knocked at the back of the lawyer's residence and told the servant it was for the "old man", meaning the lawyer. It was the retaining fee.

After the Fourth of July, malaria began putting in its biggest efforts, and there ^{was} several of us shaking with chills all the time. In those grand old days, mosquitoes were considered an awful nuisance, of course, but no one suspected them of murderous intent. In fact, we raised all our own mosquitoes, as did all the community, for the old rain barrel was right here. Dr. Charles Finlay had not then discovered that mosquitoes carry infection. Our house was partially screened, and we slept under mosquito nets. There was a general idea that malaria arose from the ground, and was especially harmful after the sun went down. Night air was something to be avoided, though no one explained what could be breathed at night excepting night air.

Older sister, younger brother and I were very ill at times, and oh, the quinine -- liquid quinine -- we had to take! The bitterest of all bitter things, the most pervasive, persistent bitter the Creator ever devised. It was almost worse than the malarial chills and fever. And to the illness was added the more or less distressing fact of unattractive food that we were obliged to eat or eat nothing. There was no fresh fruit, excepting a few tasteless peaches; no fresh vegetables; very few eggs and no fresh milk, excepting that for one week older brother rode to a place something over a mile distant where he was able to get a pint of very thin milk. That pint was the day's product from one cow, whose owner considered a pretty good milch cow. The brothers had tried to have some chickens, but they all had cholera, or some other chicken disease, and went to heaven before we had a chance to eat them. Our cook, Aunt Phebe, planned a great treat for us one day. She had uncle Dick get a gopher or two, and after performing various mysteries with the things, presented us with some turtle soup. The flavor was all right and it was nourishing, but the hoofs that floated about the plates! She had put all of the critter into the soup, excepting the shell, and it was a little disconcerting to one's internal machinery.

About all of the people in the community were ill much of the time and a few were without the wherewith to get the necessities of life. I know mother and father were trying to help several families. The general atmosphere of the town was not what would be called hilarious. A polite and cheerful greeting to a citizen was, "Missed your chill to-day, I see." Father and mother were not as ill as the rest of us until late in the season, and the services were continued until August. By that time there was no congregation. Everyone was ill -- more correctly -- sick.

By the middle of August father became very ill, delirious, and begging for ice water, for he was burning up with fever. Any ice that was gotten came from Maine, by sailing vessel to Palatka, and our weekly boat brought us what had been one hundred pounds, in a barrel -- usually. Sometimes there was none to bring. A large box filled with sawdust held the ice. Butter and other meltables were set on the ice by burrowing into the sawdust. Oh, how good that ice water felt as it trickled down our fevered throats! When there was no ice, butter was served with a spoon, even if it had been hung down the well.

By the end of August, mother began having chills. One day a boy came hurriedly to the door to ask if mother could go with him to a home on Lake Stella, nearly a mile distant, where he had found a lady in convulsions, she being alone with a little six-year old girl. The boy tried to have mother ride the horse, but she had never ridden, so she walked to the house and walked back late in the afternoon. It was a very hot day, and the day before she had suffered from a chill, so when she returned and had father who was still delirious, she staggered to her room and to

bed. For one agonizing week she lay there, half unconscious. None but older brother was strong enough to go down stairs. We all took turns, night and day, between her room and father's, watching and trying to ease them. Even our faithful aunt Phebe took her turn at nursing when she could leave her kitchen work.

On Sunday morning, September 9th, older sister came to my bedside to awaken me and to tell me that mother was dying. My beloved mother, the light and life of the home, how could life go on without her? And she was leaving us!

And father, poor father, who went to sleep in a delirium with mother sitting beside him, awoke to find her unconscious and dying. That night at nine o'clock she left us. Oh, it was so lonely, and we in a strange land. Poor, poor father!

There was no way of procuring a regular casket, so a pine box was made, and the sisters laid mother in it. Interment had to be quick in those days, so the funeral took place the next afternoon. As there was no burying ground, father decided to have the grave made in what was to be the church lot, just where the chancel would be. All the people in the community and outside were so kind. Two young men rowed to Palatka, twenty-five miles away, hoping to find and bring back the minister who was stationed there, but he was out of the state.

So, as there was no one who felt equal to doing it, father read the funeral service. He was too weak to walk to the grave, as were sisters and I, so the two brothers and the little group of friends carried her over, and with a few words at the grave, laid her away in that sun-scorched, lonely church lot.

The next day father tried to sit at the dining table with the family. Suddenly, he fell from his chair, unconscious. The brothers carried him to his room, laying him on the bed, and it seemed as if he too was going to leave us. For a week he hovered between life and death. Perhaps none of us realized, none but older brother, how terrible it was for father. The light of his life had gone, and only the thought of his children made it possible for him to resist the temptation to just stop breathing and follow mother. Finally he rallied and was able to be about once more.

As cooler weather came in October, we all began to throw off the malaria and to feel more vigorous. Services were resumed and gradually father took up the work again, visiting all the missions and starting others.

Older brother had decided to apply for the position as teacher of the tiny district school. So he wrote to the county superintendent asking when he could be given an examination needed to secure the proper certificate. The superintendent replied that as the requirements for this school called for one who could read the Bible without spelling out the words, write a legible hand and figure as far as "vulgar fractions," he considered that brother's letter was a sufficient guarantee of his ability to handle the school, so he enclosed the certificate and the position was his.

The school house was a little log cabin, about sixteen by ten feet, without windows or chimney. The seats were hardly more than boards with a board in front to serve as desk. There was a table and chair for the teacher. The openings which took the place of windows, had door-like shutters to use in case of rain. If the weather was too cold for comfort in the cabin, a fire was built on the sand outside, and pupils and teacher sat around it. There was a lamp and a lantern to be used whenever it was too dark to see print, the teacher supplying the kerosene. The pupils were nearly all cracker children, big and little, some of them very bright. From the alphabet to the fifth reader from numerals to decimals my brother taught -- and he had been offered a professorship in his college but refused it because he did not want to be a pedagogue. So, in new surroundings, do our ideas change. The school term was for three months, ending at Christmas. The school house was about two miles from our home, out in the woods. When it was nearing school-closing hour, father would harness up the horse and wagon, we all got aboard and drove out to bring brother home. Father wanted us all near him in those days.

During the summer a very nice house had been built about two

Blocks from our house. The owner had bought the entire block, had it all set to grass, shrubs and orange trees. There was a commodious barn, with a second story apartment to accommodate servants. A fine horse and carriage soon appeared and presently the family arrived. We felt very much "in town" with two homes within two blocks of us. After a brief interval came a fine sail boat that could carry twenty-five passengers. Many a delightful afternoon we spent on that boat--"The Lady of the Lake." On those afternoons there was no one left in the town but the storekeepers and mill people, and the few negroes ^{w^ho} ^{w^{er}e} ^here.

Lake Crescent was the sporting place of this region. There was considerable fishing and there were many row boats and sail boats. Often there were rowing and sailing races, when the population all went down to the dock to watch and cheer the winner. The lake teemed with wild ducks--"blue peters"-- not too good eating though many liked them. Alligator s were hunted for sport and business, their hides and teeth being in much demand. The rest of them was used for fertilizer. They were very plentiful in the lake and more so in the creeks. Frequently we saw their heads when we were out rowing, but they were more afraid of us than we of them. Haw creek, at the southeastern end of the lake was a wonder spot of beauty, with its great cypress trees meeting overhead to form an exquisite bower. On the shores vines rioted over tree trunks making gay festoons, and cabbage palms leaned out over the water as if keeping watch over the creek. It was still, so still that one could hear a leaf drop into the water. To see an Indian peering from behind a palm tree, required but little imagination. In the late afternoon with the sky ablaze with sunset colors of every hue and those colors dripping down into the shining foliage and through the silvery moss, the still water perfectly reflecting the gorgeous loveliness, gave one an unearthly, exstastic feeling of floating through rainbows and jeweled clouds.

In writing of this beautiful creek, I have used the past tense. It is still beautiful and thrilling, especially to those seeing it for the first time. But the ruthless axe has mercilessly slaughtered countless numbers of those magnificent trees.

Near the mouth of the creek, there was, for a number of years, the wreck of a Confederate boat which had been chased by a Federal gunboat during the Civil war, scuttled and left there. Right on the edge of town there were graves of two Federal soldiers and two Confederates. Many and many a tale of their ghosts was told. Ghosts were fairly popular with property owners--better than dogs for scaring off marauders, they said. There was one ghost haunting the hammock lands about here that carried its head under its arm. I never saw it myself. But I did see, at each end of a grave on the banks of a small lake, a large ball of fire. My gallant escort assured me that if it were not for the presence of a lady he would go right over to the grave and investigate. I urged him to go, but he remained right in the safe seat beside the lady. It was just the phosphorescence from decaying matter, quite explainable and normal, but seen in the stillness of the night in the woods, on a grave, with an owl to-hooing in a near-by tree, it was a bit hair-raising.

On the east bank of Lake Crescent, about five miles from the town, an English family had come to live several years before Crescent City was started, attracted by the glowing accounts of fortunes to be made in orange culture. They had come from London, a mother, three sons and a little daughter. In the woods they built a log house, a chicken house and a horse and cow shed. The sons toiled to clear a few acres of land for an orange grove, and to raise a little corn and some potatoes. Food stuffs and other necessities had to be brought from Palatka by row boat-- a distance of nearly twenty-five miles. They were educated, cultured people, one of the sons being an accomplished musician. Mystery surrounded their coming into the backwoods, so far from a post office or source of supplies. It was known that their worldly possessions were very small, and that there was one son living in a northern state. Beyond that nothing was ever learned. Hearing of the little post office at Oakwood the sons rowed across the lake to learn if they too could ~~could~~ use that as their mailing and receiving office. In this way the Oakwood family became acquainted with this English family, but they made no further friends.

After a few years had passed the mother became very ill, but they were unable to have a physician for her. Gradually her strength failed and late one night she smiled at her family, a sad little smile, and just stopped breathing. Before this, one of the sons had gone North, so there were just ~~there were just~~ the two sons and the little girl, the latter then about thirteen years old. In the woods, miles away from any other human

habitation, the two sons could do nothing but wrap their mother in a blanket, place her in the row boat, row to Palatka, from which place they started the body on its long journey to England. (X) Silently the little girl watched those pathetic preparations for the carrying away of her mother; silently she saw the little boat slipping away, leaving her alone in the wilderness, for the boat was too small to carry her also. Besides, there were some chickens and a horse to be cared for. Away into the night she sat there at the little landing place listening, listening for the last sound of the oars dipping into the water. Brave little girl to stay there so alone, with none but the horse and chickens and woods creatures for companions, staying without a whimper or protest. She was not afraid; the woods creatures would not harm her, and the horse and chickens were friends. Presently she went into the empty house and slept until the sun rose. After attending to her simple duties, she went again to the landing place looking at the distant spot where she had seen the last glimmer of light from the lantern which her brothers carried.

It was not until dawn the next morning that the brothers returned, for it had been a long distance to row, and it took hours to attend to all the arrangements for their mother, and then to have a bit of rest before starting on the return trip. One can imagine the stark desolateness of that return.

Within a short time the brothers decided to send Cynthia to the brother up North who was married and could give her an excellent home. Before she left, she spent a week or longer visiting us, while a seamstress prepared a few simple dresses for her. She was a beautiful girl, with soft brown, frightened eyes that reminded one of a wild fawn's eyes. She was just about my age. We had had some similar experiences in sorrow, but there seemed to be an insurmountable wall between us. We were both shy; she was sad, but never wept, smiled but never laughed. After she went North we heard very little of her excepting that she married when quite young. The elder of the two brothers went to a northern city, and there became a part of a large piano manufacturing concern, marrying a wealthy young woman.

The other brother remained in Crescent City for some years, developing a very active business in well-boring, being the first one to give the town artesian wells. Later, he moved to a large northern city and became the city engineer, married happily and died not many years ago.

During the season of 1877-78, father was made a member of the county school board, and the board was induced to appropriate funds for the building of a school house in Crescent City, to take the place of the little old log cabin in the woods. This was built during the summer of 1878, and was ready for occupancy by October. The school term was increased to four months, and the patrons raised sufficient money by private subscription to extend it four more months, thus giving us an eight months' school year. One of the young men living outside of town applied for the district four months' term, and father used his influence to get him the appointment, notwithstanding the protests of a few who said the young man would be unable to maintain proper discipline. So the teacher was extra severe in order to convince patrons of his ability to keep order. I well remember one day when teacher ordered a boy to cut a switch from one of the trees. There was great excitement among us, for the thirteen-years-old daughter of the chief objector had refused to obey the teacher. We held our breaths when he told her to come to his desk, and she flippantly strutted up the aisle; but when she saw that business-like switch raised in teacher's hand, she gasped, whirled and fled out of that school and home faster than she ever went before. It caused a good sized row, but complaints ceased.

I had not wanted to go to school to that teacher. I thought I knew more than he did, but father said I must. In those days when father said you must, you did. Being in poor health, I was allowed to go for half a day only, and so was a class by myself. One day, my seat-mate asked teacher how to do a certain example in fractions. He took the book, clucked once or twice, then said, "Why that's perfectly simple; add up the denominators and you have the answer." "But" she said, "how can you add the denominators?" He clucked some more and said, "Well, I don't know, but it gives the answer - 50." The answer was printed at the end of the example. Then teacher turned to me and said: "It's just as your father said in Sunday school about proving there is a God. You can't go to work and prove it by a rule, but you know there's a God." Thus were we taught arithmetic. Many a time I listened to a grammar

recitation when one boy invariably said, "According to rule six: 'Adjectives belongs to nouns which they do describe'" It passed, and that is the only grammar rule I remember. Spelling was an oral exercise, and nearly the whole school was in the class--about thirty of us. We "turned down," that is, she who was at the head of the class one day went to the foot the next day and climbed up again. Whoever "turned down" the greatest number of times was the best speller, and held in great respect by the others. Once I was being examined in U.S. history. The questions were at the bottom of the page. Teacher asked something about the French and Indian war, which I answered. Then he turned over a number of pages -- enough to have covered the Revolution, the War of 1812 and many other important periods-- and asked, "What next occurred?" I looked at him and said "Many things." He did not approve and I received low marks on that examinations. At recess we used to play "Hail over." Half the school went on one side of the building, half on the other, then the side that was "It" tossed the ball over, shouting the loudest we could "Hail over." The other side stood with hands up and mouths open, and dashed to catch the ball. Not a very thrilling game but better than sitting on the steps or on a log all the time. Some of the children were clay eaters, which showed by their distended tummies and ghastly complexions. Clay (clay soil) is a little tart and seemed to satisfy some craving in their systems, caused by a diet of grits and grease and soggy biscuits.

When the first four months of school were over, older brother took charge, and the teacher of the first four months came right into school with the rest of us. A large number of grown boys and girls came in, and brother taught anything they wanted, or were equal, to studying. Most of these grown pupils had not been able to attend any school but the little old log cabin affair, and they were eager to get more education than had been possible for their parents. Brother was hoping to build up a high-grade school here and so was greatly pleased to have these older and more ambitious boys and girls come in.

Father took the English grammar classes and later I had to take the first, second and third reader groups. Amongst these were some boys and two girls between sixteen and eighteen years of age. The pupils in the whole school ranged in age from six to twenty-seven. A "lean-to" room had been added to the back of the building, which we called the recitation room and of which we were very proud. Father and I received no pay for what we did. It never occurred to us even to think of receiving any cash compensation. Pioneering brings its compensations in the consciousness of helping to build up a community. In the pioneering times the matter of money seems not so prominent a need. If I remember aright, brother received the munificent salary of forty-five dollars per month. We refer to ourselves as pioneers, and we were to a moderate extent. But when one thinks back to the fiercely savage days of the first settlers of this country, one hesitates to claim the title of "pioneer."

Amongst our student body we boasted Napoleon Bonaparte and Josephine; Julius Caesar, Walter Scott and Andrew Jackson. One afternoon as I was leaving school I heard a voice saying: "Mr. Williams, can't Julius Caesar stop poring water molasses down my back?" !

Our water supply came from a pump outside, near the door of the school house. Within, was a bucket and tin dipper, and the boys were expected to keep the bucket full. Seats and desks were made of heavy pine lumber, built by a local carpenter. A good old box stove kept us warm in cold weather and gave the boys exercise in bringing in wood. The girls dusted the desks and seats and kept the ink wells filled. Teacher did most of the sweeping. Lights were supplied by bracket lamps and one hanging lamp, all of which we thought was very fine. Most of the girls and boys walked to and from school, walking anywhere from one to four miles each way. How would our pampered youth of to-day with their buses, gymnasiums and all kinds of amusement paraphernalia -- how would they endure and evolve if shunted into such conditions?

There was a town meeting--or district meeting--one night at the school house, held for the purpose of discussing some school affairs, in the course of which a man, whom we will call Jones, accused father of using his office as a member of the county school board for the benefit of his family --brother being the teacher. Father jumped up and said the statement of Jones was an absolute and base falsehood; whereupon Jones leaped forward and banged father on the head with his cane. Father was bald and the blow stunned him for a few minutes; then he rose and repeated what he had said before. By this time several men had seized hold of Jones and were about to put him out, when his uncle whimpered "Don't hurt

Jones." Jones was a big husky man, and everyone shouted with laughter at that plea. The incident caused much excitement, of course. Father was dizzy from the blow, but insisted that the business of the meeting be continued. The next day a string of callers came to express their indignation and to commend father for self control. Being a minister he could not give vent to his wrath by word or deed. Later on this man Jones apologized abjectly, and became a staunch friend, allowing no other minister to perform any clerical act in his family from marrying him, baptizing his infant, and to burying him.. Jones was a prolific fabricator, considered by the men of the community as a genius in prevarication, only they used a less polite term. His genius was proven, they said, by the fact that he believed many of his own lies.

The tentative plans made by father and brother for starting a combination high grade district school and boys' boarding school did not materialize for several reasons, one being that father's ministerial duties were taking him away from Crescent City more and more, and the orange business was attracting brother very strongly. He was succeeded in the school by a lady from Atlanta who very efficiently carried on for two years. This teacher was especially interesting to me because she had such vivid memories of the Civil War period. At the time of "Sherman's march to the sea," this lady was a child of twelve years of age, living with her mother and small brother at their Atlanta home, her father being in the Confederate army.

The family possessed a precious cow and some chickens that were rigorously guarded by the old black mammy, for there were odds and ends of the Union army straggling in ahead of the regular army. They were plundering any chicken coop or any cow they could lay hands on, and mammy had many a battle over the chickens. She chased them under the house, the stragglers trying at the same time to shoo them out. The cow had been taken into the dining room for safe keeping.

One day news came that Sherman's army was entering the city. The mother locked all the outside doors and took the children and mammy up stairs, cautioning them to keep quiet. Presently there was a loud knock at the front door. They all kept still. Then came a louder knock, and then a bang-crash! and in came the door, followed by men in uniform. Down the stairs slowly came the mother, asking an explanation of the intrusion. The leader, somewhat abashed, said, "I beg your pardon, Madame. There was no response to my knock and I thought the house was vacant. I am General Sherman and I think I shall have to use your house as my headquarters while I am in Atlanta. If you have any valuables about here, please point them out and I will have them removed to any place you desire. I cannot be responsible for what the stragglers will do." So it was arranged that certain things should be sent to their country home, to which General Sherman advised they all go. The small brother sensing a part of the conversation, marched up to Gen. Sherman, shook his little fist at him and said, "Don't you touch my sister's planner." This belligerent command from the small boy delighted the general, who assured him that no harm should come to the instrument. So it was that "Sister's planner" was taken to the country home under military escort, as was the family, also.

This teacher showed us a crochet needle that had been whittled out of a ham bone during the war, and told of the coffee made from parched sweet potatoes which they drank during those hard days. These and many other tales she told making of Civil War history a very vitally interesting study.

Following several years after this Atlanta teacher came a man teacher who was highly certificated and an excellent instructor. Being an inveterate chewer of tobacco, he found it necessary to have more cuspidors about than was convenient, for while very skillful in long-distance squirting of tobacco juice, there was always the danger of a bad aim, which might result in serious trouble from patrons. The dilemma was solved by his having the entire school room floor covered with sawdust, thus converting the whole floor into a tobacco juice receptacle. And the patrons evidently did not object, for he held the position for several years.

The local school board developed a rather novel and easy method of financing the school--easy for them, that is. The teacher's salary was raised, but in order to get that raise, she was expected to get up an entertainment that would bring in sufficient money to cover the extra pay promised. So it was, no entertainment, no raise. Needless to say that the entertainment was always put on.

In those "good old days" there was no barbar in this region.

and the boys, and many of the girls, looked as if a bowl had been placed on their heads and the hair cut around the bowl; and that is actually what was done. The men were obliged to go to Palatka if they wished a barber's services. It took an entire day to go and come, even when there was a daily boat; so quite often they clipped each other's hair until they discovered an Englishman, the coachman of one of the families who claimed tonsorial ability. He would come to our house, for instance and "barb" the entire masculine portion of the family on a Sunday morning before service. During the course of his clippings he never failed to solemnly remark that he had "sheared many an 'orse in the hold coun-try." Sometimes their hair-cuts resembled the sheared "'orse."

When planning the town, the company very wisely set apart a portion of the lots to be sold to negroes only. This strip of land lay along the shore of Lake Stella. Very soon negroes began buying lots and building their little houses, or cabins. One big old negro, named Nero White, who seemed to dominate the rest of them, bought several lots and named that part of the town "Whitesville," and Whitesville it is to this day. Later, some one sold lots to negroes on the north side of the lake, and that was, and is, called "Babylon." One negro boated the name of General Jackson, and an old mammy was Lady Washington. In later years sprang up Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt and Kuropath kin in our midst. And Paris also. Paris was the community's dependence for clearing Spanish moss from over-loaded trees, for he ran about on the limbs of trees with the ease of a squirrel. But one night Paris was driving an old Ford. Something happened-- apparently the Ford partook of the agility of its driver, and Paris was found dead, with the Ford sitting on top of him.

For a good many years, servants lived "in de yawd." Father had a little house built for Aunt Phebe and Uncle Dick at one side of the yard, and there they spent their time when not working, Uncle Dick "stud'n de Bible and de laws ob de chu'ch," Aunt Phebe mending their clothes. Uncle Dick worked out on our grove lot, his costume usually consisting of two crocus sacks and a pair of brogans. When he sat on a log munching his lunch, with his graying beard bobbing at each chew he looked more like a baboon than those I had seen in the zoo. Aunt Phebe was one of the finest of her race, splendidly built, tall, straight, really handsome and almost queenly in her bearing. A wonderful cook and the soul of honor. She could not tell time by the clock, but a glance at the sun told her when to put the food cooking, and she never failed to have a meal on time. Our washerwoman was a mixture of white, negro and Indian, and she could "put her eye" on anyone and hoodoo him. That is what she told me. She certainly ruled the negroes, partly because she was a "Mother in Israel in de chu'ch" in addition to having "de hoodoo eye." One day I heard her say to Aunt Phebe, "I ain't no nigger. I'se a dark complected white lady." Aunt Phebe replied: "I ain't a nigger, but I'se a negro." Like most of the old-time negroes, Aunt Phebe was quick to distinguish between a well-bred and an ill-bred person. If the latter, she would say "He ain' no buckra" --that is, he was not of the "quality." The word buckra must have been of African origin, and it has gone out of use entirely amongst the present day negroes. Cracker people the negroes looked upon with considerable contempt, because they were not "quality." They felt even more contempt for some northern people who tried to treat them as social equals, and they disliked and distrusted such folk. "Whut kin' er people is dem Boogleses ober dare, Miss Bessie?" Aunt Phebe asked me one day. "Dey done ask me to call on 'em. Ugh! dey sho' ain' no buckra an' I don' want no truck wid 'em."

And the negroes had much reason to distrust such "Yankees" as palavered and wheedled. They were exploited by the "Carper Baggers", and off-shoot of a great blunder, the "Freedman's Bureau." These "Carper Baggers" would to-day be called racketeers, and were responsible for so much of the awfulness of the reconstruction period. These graft-ers induced negroes to pay thirty dollars for "forty acres and a mule," professing to be government agents. The whole thing was a fraud and the thirty dollars was put into the pockets of the self-styled agents. Under such conditions, every Northerner who came here became a state democrat, regardless of what his affiliations might be in general politics. Uncle Dick had paid his hard earned thirty dollars to some ras-cal, and mournfully told that he "neber did see no fo'ty acres ner no mule, 'cep'in by de sweat ob de brow."

Florida was under carpet bag rule when we came here, and there were some poor, ignorant negroes in the legislature. A few years later when our town was incorporated, the laws of the state required that there

be one negro alderman, and all he could do was to say "Yas-sir" to any and every proposition. Gradually the carpet baggers were ousted ~~until~~ they and they became just an ugly memory.

When our second summer loomed on the horizon, we dreaded and feared it, lest we have a repetition of the previous season. But we were spared that, and older brother and younger sister were the only members of the family to have any continued illness. An occasional chill and fever was not noticed, excepting when one was swallowing that diabolic quinine.

Church affairs were moving along, and sufficient funds had been contributed and promised, including funds set apart by older brother and the rest of the family, to make the church building (called by the cracker people "church-house") an assured fact. The first gift for the building came from one of my little friends in Brooklyn. It was a gold dollar pasted in the corner of one of her letters to me, and she it was who named the building the Church of the Holy Comforter. In February 1878 the building was ready for use, and the first service was held with a large attendance. The carpenter-builder and his brother camped in the church lot, and when the hour for that first service was near, he suddenly announced to brother that he was "goin'" to the tent to put on some duds and come over to hear the old man spout." The "old man" was father, of course. By March the building was entirely paid for, so that the consecration service could be held. The bishop of the diocese, the rector of St. John's church in Jacksonville and the rector of St. Mark's church in Palatka were all present and participating in the service. It was an impressive occasion for Crescent City, and the church was more than crowded. No organ had as yet been purchased, but one, Mr. Loun's the druggist and also musician, possessed a melodion, and that was brought to the church that proper music could be given.

That melodion was brought up for every service for many months, brothers bringing it up in their two wheeled cart and returning it immediately after the service. There being but the one church in town, every one attended regardless of any other church affiliations. "Uncle Thomas" of the Capwell House looked with favor upon the one church, but when, several years later, a Presbyterian church was established, he was greatly displeased and disturbed. Meeting father on the street one day he said in mournful tones, "I tell you, Mr. Williams, with one meetin' house in the place we've had peace; now, with two there'll be 'Hell to pay." But there was not "Hell to pay." The two congregations were very friendly and assisted each other in various ways. The town was so tiny that it could not support more than one fair or church supper in one season, so the two churches alternated, helping each other to make these affairs a success.

All the social affairs went on placidly. They included parties, dances, the Social Club meetings, and numerous public debates, which latter we took quite seriously and enjoyed immensely. My sisters were favored with much attention from the gallant swains of the vicinity and nearby settlements. One young knight confided to younger sister, when they were out driving that he had a "honeyful feeling." Apparently she received this saccharine announcement in an "iceyful" manner, for this same young man drove into town on a honeymoon trip with a dour looking but devoted bride not too long after his honeyful feelings for sister.

Older sister announced her engagement to one of the local swains during the fall of '78, and I was both thrilled and horrified. Horrified because it meant her leaving the family, but thrilled with a kind of vicarious importance. It seemed really quite wonderful to have an engaged sister.

Sister planned to be married in February, '79; so immediately after Christmas, preparations for her very modest treussau began by her sending to a friend in Brooklyn instructions and requests for the purchase of the wherewith for the outfit. When two weeks required for a letter to go and an answer to return had passed and no word came from the friend, sister became panicky, and sent a hasty note to the friend enquiring about the letter and check. The friend wired that she had received nothing. The message had to be wired to Palatka, then mailed to Crescent City, so it was two days or longer, reaching sister. Another letter and check were frantically dispatched, and the family consolingly told sister that no treussau no wedding; but she declared that she would not postpone the wedding if she had to wear a "Mother Hubbard," because a postponement would mean bad luck. Finally the things all arrived, and both sisters

sewed early and late, for there was but one (alleged) dressmaker here, and she was occupied in making gowns for sister's prospective mother-in-law. Since our beloved mother's death we had all worn black as was the custom then, so both younger sister and I required new dresses, for we could not have a black wedding. It was a rushing time, but when the 19th of February came older sister's lovely silver gray gown was all ready, and when she donned her white chip hat, trimmed with silver gray satin ribbon and pink roses, I thought she was as fine looking as any prince need wish his bride to appear, and I was inclined to "high hat" the bridegroom -- only we did not "high hat" in those days, we just "put on airs."

The ceremony took place at four o'clock at the church. Brothers had toted up the melodion, and to the not too melodious notes of the somewhat bronchial instrument, we all marched up the aisle, and father read the solemn and beautiful marriage service, which meant the beginning of a long married life for sister, and the second break in our family.

All the population was present at the ceremony, and after the family wedding supper, it again gathered to congratulate and felicitate the bride and groom. The honeymoon trip was as far as St. Augustine. That was the "proper caper" in those days-- to go to St. Augustine for a honeymoon trip. They returned at the end of a week, their home being at Oakwood--mentioned in a previous paragraph.

Going to St. Augustine at that period was a more strenuous journey than going to New York at the present time. It was necessary to take the boat to Palatka which consumed the better part of one morning. Often a stop over at Palatka for one night was required, then a trip to West Tocoil on a river boat landed passengers near a small ferry boat that crossed the river to East Tocoil. This ferry boat was necessary because the dock at East Tocoil was so small a river boat could not tie up to it. After debarking from the ferry boat, a tiny train was discerned resting on its tracks, or shorting up and down in fussy preparation for the journey eastward. This train consisted of a little "dummy" engine, something that seemed a cross between a freight car and a toy wagon, and one diminutive passenger car. From the St. John's river to St. Augustine is a distance of about twenty-five miles, as the train went, chugging through the woods, consuming from one and a half to two hours in getting to St. Augustine, or longer if it was necessary to stop once or twice to refill the fuel box.

The St. Augustine station was outside the town, and passengers were driven into the town in rather shackly hacks. Entering that little city, one felt as if he had been wafted into Spain. Almost without exception the names on the shops were Spanish, and the residents looked and spoke Spanish. One can but regret that when Mr. Flagler erected his beautiful hotels and other buildings, he did not just restore the few ruins and build his modern Spanish town outside the old city gates.

When sister presented me with a niece about fifteen months after that honeymoon trip, I was so filled with pride I was in danger of bursting like an over-blown soap bubble. I mention my "Niece", forso she seemed to me. The fact that she was sister's daughter was a matter of minor importance. Being the youngest in my family I was not well versed in the care of infants. But there were some general rules of health I knew I understood, one of them being that eating between meals was very harmful to one's digestive apparatus. While I was visiting sister when Niece was three days old, I was horrified to see the nurse hand Niece to her mother to feed. I repressed any desire to voice my disapproval until I returned home, and then I became vociferous, expressing my disapprobation of, and astonishment at, sister's carelessness of the welfare of the internal arrangements of my Niece. As I said to father, sister was not brought up that way herself. My father exploded into peal after peal of laughter. Finally when he was able to calm himself, he explained that infants required different treatment from older folk, and assured me that sister knew how to care for her baby, and I need worry no more. I hoped he knew what he was talking about, but I still had qualms as to sister's ability to cope with anything so important as my Niece's insides. In the course of time came other nieces and nephews who seemed to thrive even though I was not on hand to direct their care, and most of whom grew to womanhood and manhood to be a joy and comfort as sons and daughters, nieces and nephews.

As sister's wedding was the first to be held in the Episcopal church so was that of the daughter of the Presbyterian pastor, the first ~~in~~ held in the Presbyterian church. The whole community attended that wedding also, and after the ceremony, the bride and groom received the congratulations of the entire citizenry. The elders of the church felt privileged not only to congratulate but also to kiss the bride. Some of the brethren were not too kissable, being addicted to beards and tobacco chewing. One onlooker, commenting upon the osculatory tendencies of the elders, remarked, "If I were in the bride's place, I would present my fist instead of my lips."

Another wedding I recall was held at a small hotel, when two bucksome flower girls scattered large bunches of hydrangea on the floor in front of the bride. Over these she had to climb, and her voyage to the wedding bower was a perilous one, for these hard bunches of blossom bounced around and became entangled in her train. She finally arrived safely, and the return trip was made easier when a sympathetic observer reversed his cane and with two or three comprehensive swipes, rolled the troublesome blossoms off the line of parade.

In the very early eighties came a new family to town, who had bought a small house and lot "unsight, unseen." They came from Palatka on the little boat "Comet," arriving at nine o'clock at night. They had expected to stop at an hotel, but there was none here at that time, so they were directed to their prospective home and, plodding through the dark, unlighted, sandy road, arrived to find that there was no kind of lighting arrangement in the house. The father of the family went to the little near-by store and succeeded in getting two tallow candles. But where and how could they eat? They had not thought it necessary to eat before leaving Palatka. Finally, at the same little store that had supplied the candles, they were able to get one can of soft, greasy corned beef and some stale ginger snaps, which they ate by the light of the candles in that stuffy house, in a strange land. It was warm and the house had been closed for many weeks. A royal banquet indeed for those weary travellers from New England, unprepared for the crudities of this little backwoods place. As they were walking to their new home, they encountered cows and pigs ambling about leisurely, eyeing them with mild curiosity, but not bothering to get out of the way. Perhaps it was one of these ladies who, walking along in the darkness, stumbled against something and suddenly found herself astride one of these cows-- amiable creatures, but not ideal for riding.

This family consisted of father, mother and daughter -- a young lady. Very exciting and delightful it was to have a new young lady come to town, and the gallant lads about were prompt in suing for her favor. It took a little time, but early one morning, after a year or two from the time of their arrival, there was a quiet wedding at her home, and she sailed away with her bride groom. But they sailed back again, and for many years have been our close and valued neighbors, giving to Crescent City several new citizens -- their sons and daughters.

The news that came into town one morning of the shooting of one of the out-of-town citizens did not greatly excite us, because we were assured that it was done "according to the code." A man thought his neighbor was too attentive to his wife, challenged the man and himself was killed. I do not recall that there was even a mention of punishing the killer. We simply had a funeral and forgot about it all. It would have been different if the killed one had been a cow.

Early in 1882 father was called to take charge of the church in Palatka, and an assistant was sent to aid in the care of the missions, making this his headquarters. When this new young parson came, he was anxious to revive the Sunday school. On the Sunday following his announcement that the school was to be resurrected, the attendance listed as follows: one parson, four teachers, one librarian, one small boy and two dogs. So after that we did not try to have any Sunday school for several years, after there had been time to grow some children.

In the early part of 1883, we were incorporated as a town. Florida has no villages, only towns and cities, and we were obliged to have a mayor, aldermen and marshal. One of the first acts of the town council was to declare illegal the running at large of cattle, horses and hogs. A pound was built, and when an animal was caught running the

streets, it was impounded, the owner notified and charged one dollar only, if the animal was removed within a day or two. Townspeople did not object but quite frequently outside animals wandered in. One night the pound was burned down, and a large notice, nailed to a post in front of the mayor's home conveyed the information that "A word to the wise is sufficient." That frightened the rather timid mayor who presided over us; but the council ordered that another pound be built. The timid mayor resigned, and his successor had his barn burned down after he had "held court" and decided against some cattle offenders who were discovered trying to burn up the second pound. He had imposed a slight fine, so they decided to burn his barn instead of the pound. It was safe enough to molest a man in those days, but beware how you interfered with cattle or hogs. The battle over the roaming animals continued for some years, and then finally subsided, the cattle men apparently accepting new conditions.

There was one very excellent mayor who vigorously enforced the ordinances, and kept both whites and blacks in order. Any tramps who wandered into town were thoroughly searched, up-ended and shaken so as to discover what cash they possessed, then fined to that amount, and put to work for a few days cutting down weeds in the streets. This mayor was very thrifty and put all the fines in his own pocket. After a time, when admonitions from the council failed ~~failed~~ to change the depository of the fines, they threatened impeachment. He told them to go to the hot place, and he'd be this-that-and-many-other-things if he'd hand that money over to the town. What the blazes did they think he was mayor for, anyway? So they got another and more docile mayor.

This blazes mayor was an alleged doctor. Also he had a split ear which was one of the little tokens Texas used to bestow upon certain of her citizens. He had had various marital experiences, and after wife number three or four died here, her sister felt consoled because, she said, her sister had received every medical aid possible, for the doctor had given her "everything in the doctor book!"

~~sixtimes~~ ~~the~~ ~~town~~ ~~was~~ ~~abundantly~~ ~~supplied~~ ~~with~~ ~~liquor~~ ~~stores~~ ~~in~~ ~~that~~ ~~good~~

The town was abundantly supplied with liquor stores in that good old time, and drunken brawls were common, especially in Whitesville, the negro part of town. There were two summers when, on Saturday afternoons no women ventured to walk about the lower part of the town because of the drunken men, some of whom occasionally rode through the streets firing pistols right and left. Semi-occasionally a man rode his horse into a store. On one occasion when a negro had been murdered, the justice of the peace was told that he must "sit on the corpse" and hold a coroner's inquest. Younger brother was one of the jurors called, and he said when the justice came in with ^a big horse blanket in his hand, they asked, ~~they~~ ~~asked~~ what he had that for. He replied: "I ain't goin' to sit on no dirty corpse and muss up my pants!"

In the first part of the eighties, the Agricultural Department at Washington was beginning to take very especial notice of orange culture, and an entomologist was sent here to study the insect enemies of citrus trees, the scale insect having made itself very harmfully numerous by that time. This work of going about amongst citrus trees, examining leaves and bark with little lenses, and then experimenting with various sprays, etc., filled the natives and some others with great amusement and contempt. "Running all over the county to hunt a bug, and be paid for it!" That was a shade too ridiculous to them. But later these scoffers flocked to the entomologist for help. The life and profit of their groves were threatened by all sorts of enemies, and they were verging on despair. The war on citrus enemies has steadily continued ever since.

Stake and rider fences were the only fences used when we came here, with an occasional paling fence about a house, the palings being ~~had~~ split and pointed. When wire fencing was introduced, with barbed wire at the top, it gave the men much to discuss as to which was the best protection against cattle. That subject and fertilizers they talked of incessantly until the women protested and demanded some other subject when they were present.

When the community learned that a large hotel was to be erected, there was great rejoicing, and our feelings reached a state of prodigious inflation. A hundred room hotel, with two adjacent cottages, livery stables and all the conveniences possible in that day and time. Driving

and saddle horses, carriages of all kinds were brought to the stables; a fine laundry installed, laundresses, cooks and other servants brought from the North. When one saw those grand equipages, drawn by fine horses, passing by it was very thrilling; and yet they seemed out of harmony with the rough old sandy roads and generally crude conditions of the town. The hotel was well managed and considered one of the finest in the state. The Potter House opening was a grand affair, and a great event to us who had lived here some years. And the hotel "hops" were occasions of much pleasure to the local people and to many Palatka residents. Many of the guests bought property and remained here permanently.

Alas for the uncertainty of earthly joys and prides! One morning after the hotel had been running for two years, we looked for the Potter House, and it was not! Two or three chimnies still standing, a great heap of ashes, and the proprietor hanging on a barbed wire fence, weeping. That was all. It had quietly, dignifiedly, completely burned down during the night. Being the end of the season there were no guests, and the servants, whose quarters were on the third floor, had gotten out safely.

Father's sympathies for the young proprietor were at the effervescent point, and he brought the young man home for breakfast, between mouthfuls of which he shed tears when any one of us appeared. After breakfast we all went down to look at the ruins, and again the proprietor draped himself over a barbed wire fence. Perhaps the barbs stimulated the tear ducts. He had need of tears, for after the investigation by the insurance companies it was announced that the halls had been nicely kerosened before the match was applied. And so there was no insurance money -- only a heap of ashes! Later this same proprietor evolved a more profitable line of finance. He acquired a wife who possessed an amiable disposition and a plethoric purse, and he built and successfully managed two large hotels in California.

And we left desolate with one small hotel called the "Lakeside" an acre of ashes and our blighted hopes. "Pears lak de Lo'd ain' stud'n Cristun City", one old uncle mourned. "Seem lak He favor dish yere no-count man and don' care nutten 'bout de folks what's hyere. Parsum Williams, he say mus' keep on a prayin'. How kin we all keep a prayin' ober dat ol' heap o' ashes? I axes yer." This same old negro was much given to public praying, and he never failed to ask God to "have mussy on all dy chillun, in partic'lar de sisters." He was very fond of "de sisters," this old Pap Benjamin, excepting his wife. He was mean to her, and she reached the point of planning to put him out of the way. She said to me, one day, "Yer know, effen yo' po's bilin' water in a pusson's years, hit gwine kill 'im. So one night I creeps to de stove, gits my kittle o' bilin' water an' was jes' 'bout to po' hit in dat triflin' nigger's year, an' he open he eyes an' he say 'Whut yo' doin' dar, Kittie?' an' I say 'I was jes' a killin' some chinchas.'" Aunt Kittie was troubled with nightmare. One day she said, "I done foun' how ter keep dat ol' nightmare off. I jes' puts de Bible under my haid an' I know she ain' gwine walk plumb thoo hit."

Tampa
When the Jacksonville and Key West railroad was projected, it was hard for us to believe that such a thing as a railroad train could roll through these woods. One who has not experienced the sense of complete isolation and far-awayness that living in a forest country, long distances from railroads and telegraph poles engenders, can not realize how strange, how impossible, railroad tracks, winding along through the pine woods seemed. Yet there they were. They did not seem to "belong." Cattle, hogs, mules -- yes. But this endless thing of steel, this that seemed like an emanation from big cities -- how could it be here out in the boundless woods, where the pines were whispering? But it was there. Then an engine whistle split the silence, and a train clanged by on those rails. One was glad -- yes, but not all glad. It seemed almost an intrusion.

Considering that feeling by one who was not a native, it is not difficult to understand the deep resentment felt by the cracker people who had been here for generations, when they saw Mankees and out-staters generally coming into this region, interfering with the freedom of their cattle ranges and their sense of complete possession.

At the same time that the railroad was built, the little town of Huntington was started by a lady who was a large owner in the rolling stock of the railroad, and Huntington was made Crescent City's station, although it was nearly three miles distant. The railroad company was interested in the little town of Seville, twelve miles south of Crescent

City, hoping and planning to make it a winter resort. Therefore they were not inclined to make any real effort to run the road into Crescent City, and made absurd propositions for the route they must take if they did come in, one being that they cross the town diagonally to get to the dock on Lake Crescent. This would have ~~have~~ run the road through one corner of our home, and made similar cuts through other properties. It was not surprising that the town was content to let the railroad stay out of town.

At about this same time, a new little hotel was built in the "city," by a wild eyed lady from Cleveland, who claimed to have brought eighty thousand dollars in gold with her, this trifling sum being ^{young} son's fortune, according to the lady's story. Whether the gold was in trunks, bags or what we never learned; nor were any of the willing citizens ever able to get any of it. This hotel she called Grove Hall and it existed here for many years. This lady had a meek and timid husband whom she stored in the cupola when he displeased her, and fed him on such crumbs as fell from her table. Asked by a friend why he did not kill her, hubby replied, "Oh, you do not know my wife; she would not allow me to do such a thing." She was supreme at funerals, preferring the loud, vociferous kind, and was adept in producing them.

Our funerals -- funeral processions, that is -- in those days must have made the angels smile. This is written with no flippant intent. They were pathetic and just plain funny. There was not even the pretense of a hearse -- just a wagon, any old wagon, sometimes draped with black cloth, drawn by any old horse or flop-eared mule, often in plow harness. The driver might have on a "biled" shirt, or a clean hickery shirt; also he might have just unhitched the horse from the plow and hitched him up to the funeral wagon, the whole outfit coming "as is" without benefit of brush or soap. Trailing along behind would come a miscellaneous collection of wagons, buggies, phaetons, berouches, two-wheeled carts, and an occasional man on a horse or mule back. Fully a third of the vehicles were decrepit, with a wobbly wheel, a sagging top, flapping curtains, or some other broken down part. At the grave, the lowering of the coffin by means of groaning, straining ropes, one of which usually broke, was a gruesome performance. Always some busy body bumped around like a bumble bee, giving orders, shoving the parson to some other position, and making himself a general nuisance. Once, one of these ~~umbled~~ tumbled into the grave and had to be hauled out while the pall bearers strained at the ropes to keep from mashing the busybody under the coffin. Pall bearers in those days had more to do than wear white gloves and ~~an~~ solemn expression.

As there was no undertaker here, the owner of the saw mill kept a stock of coffins, which he stored in the front hall of his home. He slept occasionally in such of them as might suit his dimensions, because, he said, he wanted to find out which one was most comfortable.

Fourth of July, 1881, no public celebration had been planned, so the populace was invited to spend the afternoon at our house. We played games, chiefly croquet, and after a buffet supper, we were all happily engaged in games and music when younger brother came in from the post office (it was boat night) and dramatically announced, "President Garfield has been assassinated!" Everyone leaped to his feet to express horror -- this ^{was} regardless of political affiliations. The president of the United States ^{was} assassinated and politics did not count. President Garfield was shot on the second of July, but the news did not reach Crescent City until two and a half days afterward.

That was an exciting period, and I remember how, notwithstanding the gravity of conditions, one of the big New York dailies gave space to this trivial item: "Mrs. Garfield and Mrs. MacVeagh were seen walking on the south porch of the White House. Both ladies wore white and carried palm leaf fans!"

There were many political meetings held by both parties, but chiefly Democratic. We all always attended regardless of which party was orating. Sometimes they were all-day affairs, with a basket picnic held out of doors. Often a band was brought along and it was all very exciting and no end of fun. Much eloquence and bombastic oratory was cast upon the air, and the "beauty and gallantry" were urged to vote for the speaker and thus save the state and country from utter ruin. The "beauty" did not vote then, but they were supposed to influence the "gallantry." Many times I heard each party bury the other in sad but

firm tones; but when the next campaign rolled round, each had resurrected, and each was saving the country all over again.

A startling occurrence shocked the town one morning when a boy was almost carried off by an old alligator. The boy was paddling around near the dock, when he was seized by this big 'gator, his leg up to the thigh being in the beast's mouth. The boy grasped one of the spiles and shrieked for help, the 'gator steadily pulling and jerking all the time. A negro heard the cries and rushed to the boy, literally pulling him from the alligator's jaws. Others heard the outcry and ran to the dock, very soon succeeding in killing the creature. He was an immense specimen, very old and evidently having a struggle to feed himself, so this nice tender boy was very appealing. That is the only incident of the kind ever known here.

There were occasional cases of snake-bite, but comparatively few deaths resulted. Loading a person with whiskey (redeye or any other kind) was considered the one saving remedy at that time. Later permanganate of potash packed into the wound after it had been bled, took the place of whiskey and was entirely effective.. Florida snakes were never as numerous as the public imagined. Having roamed about the pine and hammock lands, waded in the lakes and ridden through the woods for many years, I am able to state that I never met but one venomous snake, and he was on the run. Early in my life here I overcame any horror of reptiles-- perhaps from seeing a naturalist friend handle them. This lack of fear may have dulled my powers of observation, but with that one exception, only a very few harmless little grass snakes ever crossed my path. Some rattle snakes and moccasins were killed about here, but I know of but one death and that victim was a dog. Rattlers very honestly let you know of their presence, but when they strike the enemy, they, like humans, strike to kill.

There used to be an interesting lizard existing here -- legless, about three feet long and beautifully colored. We had one of these as a pet in the family for six or more months. Because of her Egyptian markings we named her Cleopatra. She learned to know the members of the family and we could all handle her without any sign on her part of fear, but the moment a stranger came near, she flopped about until she was put on the floor where she could wiggle off to some hiding place. Once a week only could we get her to eat, and her food was either chicken, fish or beaten egg. The latter was given her from a teaspoon, and after two or three forcible openings of her mouth, the moment the spoon was presented to her, she opened her mouth and we poured the egg into it... A pail of water she would slide into evidently enjoying a weekly bath. In shape she was just like a snake, but she had eyelids and visible ears, and her body was one third the entire length, the rest being tail. To the hand she felt like ivory, and there was a soft line on each side of the body which showed her breathing. The lizards are said to be the most intelligent of all reptiles. Certainly Cleopatra was intelligent, and we all mourned when she died.

There are, or were, large snakes belonging to the boa constrictor family, but I never saw but one in this region and that one was about eight feet long -- quite harmless and prettily marked.. Down in the Lake Worth region, which was an unbroken wilderness in the eighties, the naturalist friend and his partner came upon a large specimen -- large, that is, for Florida -- coiled in a large, hollow stump. They were more than anxious to get the creature, and began pulling him out. They pulled and pulled some more, and presently the snake began uncoiling. Suddenly he seemed to leap from the stump and began wrapping himself so tightly around the naturalist that the latter lost his breath and fell to the ground. That squeezed the snake so he had to relax his hold, and the man got free.. It would give the present-day habites of Palm Beach a super-thrill to have a boa constrictor wiggle up the driveway!

In 1878 a fifty-acre tract of land lying along Lake Crescent, adjacent to the town, was bought by a young man from Michigan, fenced, a portion planted to citrous trees, another section planned for a great flower garden and lawns. Shortly after this purchase, the young man was drowned in one of the Michigan lakes, and the property was taken over by members of his family, who carried out his plans, and eventually the estate became the show place of Florida. Acres of beautiful flowering plants, many from Mexico and the West Indies; lily pools; long stretches of lawn, and winding paths through the dense hammock land, made it a place of such beauty even in its waning years after the original owners had died, that it was considered worthy to show a president's wife and party, traveling through the state in a private yacht. Over the lily

pools a waterfall dripped, and above the waterfall, away up in a tree that overhung the pools, was a summerhouse half hidden among the branches, and from which one had a charming view of grounds and house. A partly concealed, winding stairway led from back of the waterfall to the summer house. Now the glory of it all is past and gone. The boom finished it when it was cut up into town lots.

Society in Crescent City was very simple, and yet very exclusive in spots. In all such affairs as dances, social club meetings, picnics and similar things there was no separating into cliques, the only requirement being such good manners as each individual was capable of, considering his up-bringing and environment. It was in the very small affairs, such as dinners and teas at one's home, that a sharp line was drawn, very quietly, almost unconsciously. There were a surprising number of very cultured persons in our midst considering the size and remoteness of the place. Notable was one household to which at different times came three presidents of large colleges. The head of this household was a physician who had established and managed the largest sanitarium in the country at that time, located in one of the mid-western states.

Notwithstanding the simplicity of our social affairs there was a considerable formality practised -- or so it would be considered now. Formal evening clothes were felt to be incongruous, but at dancing parties the gentlemen wore gloves, or apologized and used a handkerchief on the hand of the encircling arm. Frock coats and the regulation "lavendar" trousers were much seen at church services, semi-occasionally a silk hat. Ladies always wore gloves when going out, and made formal calls, leaving cards invariably.

people

As the years went on the cracker came into our social life less and less. Unlettered and uncouth as they were, they exhibited a surprising degree of courtesy. One marked instance of their innate courtesy occurred when a very large party--a "German"-- was given, and many cracker people were sent the formal invitations with the usual "R.S.V.P." in the corner of the card. In acknowledging the invitation several of the cracker women had written, "Your R.S.V.P. is received. I thank you but I cant come." In contrast to this act of courtesy were a few instances of invited guests failing to in any way acknowledge the invitation, and then calmly walking into the assembly without troubling to notice the host and hostess, and continuing to ignore them throughout the evening. These were persons who had enjoyed many advantages; but somehow the germ of courtesy had utterly failed to develop.

On the night of August 31st, 1886, we were all chatting comfortably and watching my parrot, Perico, comb with his bill, our old cat, Nancy, from the top of her head to the tip of her tail, when Perico suddenly gave an appalling squawk, and began fluttering on his perch in evident fright. Then we became conscious of a weird, rumbling sound. Brother started to the door to investigate the sound, but he could not walk straight. Doors began swinging, pictures swaying on the walls, the parrot incessantly crying "caluck-a-luck, caluck-a-luck." Then came a distinct creaking of beams which brought full realization that we were having an earthquake. It lasted a number of minutes. Though not a pleasant form of entertainment, I do not recall that we were frightened, because we seemed to feel that nothing serious in the line of earthquakes could happen in this part of the country.

The next morning we were appalled to learn that Charleston had been frightfully shaken with most horrible resultant disasters. After that when we felt more tremors we were duly scared. For a number of nights we kept slippers and a lighted lantern at the head of the stairs so that we could make a quick flight if necessary. Always the parrot gave a warning cry when a tremor came. One who was in Charleston when its population was living in terror, told of the prayer an old negro called aloud in his fright: "Oh God, come down and he'p us, God. Don' sen' yo' Son, come yo'se'f, God. Dis ain' no time for boys!"

All of eastern Florida was slightly shaken, but nowhere in the state was there any serious damage.

Yellow fever ravaged Fernandina some time in the first half of the eighties, but it did not spread outside the city to any extent, and the state generally was not disturbed by anything further. Ordinary quarantine regulations. But in 1888, Jacksonville suffered a terrible scourge of the disease, and the whole state was thrown out of its usual calm.

By that time Jacksonville had become the gateway to all Florida, nearly all freight coming through that city, as well as about all passengers. Every town and settlement had its quarantine regulations, and no one could leave or enter without a certified statement from some official that the bearer had not been in an infected district. In Jacksonville conditions were terrible, for people were in a frenzy of fright, many of them rushing out of the city leaving their homes open and unguarded; pets left uncared for, and business paralyzed. Hundreds ^{and} they died so fast that it was difficult to have them properly buried. Numbers died as much from terror as from the disease.

In our little town, the daily boat from Palatka was "viewed with alarm" and required to leave the dock as soon as freight was unloaded, and anchor out in the lake. Just what protection there was in that no one was ever able to fathom, especially as our health officer spent the night on the boat! Needing to go to Palatka, where father remained during the epidemic, I obtained from our mayor a certificate which assured all and sundry that "the barer had bin in no yeller district, and please let her pass." Late in the season there ~~was~~ supposed to have been a few cases of the fever in the Palatka district.

When October came, the fever gradually disappeared, and there has never been another epidemic of the "yellow scourge" in the state, the causes and carriers of the disease having been discovered.

The railroad bridges that used to be allowed in the state were a crime against the public and the train workers. They were the flimsiest type of wooden bridge, built on wooden spiles that rotted rapidly. Within a few years they were unsafe, and the trains literally crawled over them to prevent too great vibration. Why the populace and state officials allowed such a condition to exist is still very puzzling. One night a passenger train that had just left Palatka crashed into the river. The engineer was killed and many others seriously injured. Then a proper bridge was built there, but some time later I was on a train nearing Sanford (this was in '92) when the movement of the train as it was crossing the bridge over the St. John's river was so slow as to be hardly perceptible, because the bridge was so flimsy. Not long afterward, a train went into the river there. Now our bridges throughout the state are as fine as in any other part of the country.

The roadbeds went through a similar course of development, and it is only within a comparatively short time that they have been properly ballasted. It seemed to be necessary that many accidents and losses of life and property take place to convince the railroad people that railroad beds and bridges required the same strength and durability in Florida as in other states.

A slightly unusual mode of travel was adopted by a minister who came here to take charge of the church and missions. He came from Missouri, accompanied by his little son, a Jersey cow, a large group of chickens, and the family furniture. It had been a long, slow journey in a freight car, so when they reached the Crescent City station they presented a decidedly weary and rumped appearance -- excepting the cow. With much dignity she ambled slowly, placidly off the car, glancing indifferently about, and then she said a long "Moo-oo," expressing, if ever creature did express anything, great disgust and contempt for what she saw. Unprotestingly she followed the vehicle which conveyed the minister, boy and chickens, and my father, who had gone to meet them, to our home for a brief stay. Quite unperturbed, she accepted the rather brief quarters we were able to offer her, and gave us generously of her most excellent milk as long as she remained our guest. The rest of the minister's family soon arrived, and shortly after found a pleasant home, where the young folks grew to maturity, and were married here.

What might have been a romance but became a tragedy, happened to one of our leading citizens, resulting from a combination of careless courtesy and a designing parent. A pleasant young girl and her mama spent the winter here, making the acquaintance of all the towns people; but the citizen referred to above gained the especial favor of Mama. In the spring business required his presence in a northern city, whereupon Mama sent her daughter to the same city to visit friends. Soon Mama wrote Citizen asking if he would inform her when he was leaving for the West. In case their dates of departure coincided, would he object to having Daughter on the same train with him, as Mama feared to have so young a girl travel alone?

town whom she could interest, for the purpose of organizing for further improvements, her plan being for a temporary organization. But the majority decided upon a permanent organization patterned after the Green Cove Springs Village Improvement Association. Thus it was that the Crescent City Village Improvement Association began, and developed into an important part of the town's life and progress. Immediately we began working on the streets, having all big weeds grubbed out. When that was finished, the making of shell roads and sidewalks began. The old Potter House & hos were used as a foundation this being surfaced with shell taken from the Indian and natural shell mounds found in spots along the shore of the large lake, all of this being crushed in a heavy horse drawn roller owned by the town. The town council allowed us the use of the marshal for three days in the week, and we had contributions of labor, horses and carts, and some cash. Suppers, theatrical performances and entertainments of various kinds added to the excitement.

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And still there were pessimists who declared that Fla. would never "come back." Since that time there have been four "freezes," but none so severe as that of '94-'95, and Fla. has come back.

One wonders what those pessimists would say now, for as I write on this February day in 1938, I am sitting beside open windows, and from windows I see beautiful citrus trees, laden with their golden fruit. The air is heavy with the fragrance of orange blossoms, and the birds are flitting and twittering in the trees. It is one of those glistening days when all the troubles and hardships of life are veiled, and just to exist seems like a lovely dream come true. In fact, like my child idea of what all of life would be in Florida.

As I call to mind those days, nearly sixty-two years ago, when we came as pioneers to a sparsely settled and inaccessible country, it seems inconceivable that we ever lived through years of hardship and isolation. For now, gazing from the windows of the same house my father built under such difficulties, I see hundreds of cars from every state in the Union passing daily, on a well paved road. Perhaps some left N.Y. only two days ago, and they will reach Miami by night. Progress and the passing years have made of our little town a lovely flourishing and accessible haven for winter tourists.

Across the street, I see the little church my father built. He, my mother, brothers and sisters rest in the little cemetery adjoining the church lot. The years pass on. The new generations enjoy the fruits of the pioneer labors, and tourists the healthful and beautiful qualities of our climate and town---while we of the pioneer generation enjoy the memories of those happy, if strenuous, years.

He courteously replied that it would be a pleasure to him to be of any use possible, and gave the date of his intended departure. Citizen showed the ordinary courtesies to the young lady on the train, escorted her off the car at their destination, where she was met by Mama. That as he supposed was the end of it. Shortly, however, he received a request to call at the mother's home. Upon his arrival he was asked in mysterious manner to come to Mama's sanctum, and there Mama divulged in sepulchral tones, that his traveling all that distance with her unchaperoned daughter was ruining the daughter's good name. The only atonement possible was for him to marry daughter. This was a thunderbolt out of the blue. Consternation, amazement, wrath surged through him. It was numbing, revolting. But he was a gentleman and lacking the intuitive sense to realize that it all was a well planned holdup. Within a few weeks the engagement was announced, the wedding date set for the following June. Citizen returned to his home here a wearied, worried man. When the Christmas season should arrive, he was scheduled to spend it with his fiancée. Realizing from his drab appearance and apparent muzzy-minded condition that he was extremely unhappy, his family urged - insisted - that he break the engagement, and he promised to do so. It was the second day after Christmas that the family picked up a newspaper and there read the notice of Citizen's marriage to Daughter at six A.M. Christmas Day at a certain named church. Later the hastily corralled best man told that the bridegroom was so discomposed that he started up the aisle wearing his heavy rubber storm coat, which the best man hastily dragged off his charge.

Presently the newly-weds arrived in Crescent City, the arrival made to appear as joyous as possible by the mourning family. The world wagged along, and this couple wagged along with it, always chaperoned and dominated by Mama. When Mama felt that a situation was developing that might be beyond her single-handed powers to handle, she invited her sister for a visit -- her sister, outwardly saintly with thoughts and feelings soaring above and beyond this world, but inwardly a cauldry of deviltry. Mama found her very helpful. After some years Citizen's health began to fail; then he was confined to his bed. No one of his family was allowed to see him alone, for there were property interests Mama and Daughter did not care to have discussed and possibly changed from their dictations. Then one morning the community was shocked to hear that he had died in the night, that a casket had been rushed to the house, the body laid therein and immediately carried to the railroad station and shipped North. All this without benefit of doctor, relative or friend. The community was wrathfully aroused, suggested murder, and vituperated at length; but nothing could be done. It was too late, and Citizen was gone -- a closed chapter.

For some time father and the brothers owned orange grove property, and brothers did some truck gardening. Strawberry raising promised a golden return the first year they tried it. One dollar per box was the profit. It seemed that the family fortune was about to be made. It had been so simple and easy to raise and ship those two or three hundred quarts. So the next year they started in blithely for a large crop of fruit; but legions of insect enemies appeared taking such tremendous toll of the crop that strawberry raising was relegated to the incidentals of gardening. This was in the eighties, before the successful war on insect enemies had been fought. The fight is still on, and promises to go on forever, but it keeps the enemy at bay.

In the Haw Creek region, about fifteen miles southeast of town, is a wonderful strip of prairie land -- black clay soil, as rich as the bottom lands of the middle West. Here it was that brothers and a partner developed a fine truck garden and citrus grove. To pull a plow through that heavy land required three mules. A most unusual thing in sandy Florida. This prairie grew fine grass and for uncounted years had been used by the cattle men for a summer grazing place. When a large tract was put under fence, they were wrathfully displeased. The tract under fence had been bought from the government by Williams and Hubbard. The cattle men had never owned a foot of it, but that made no slightest difference in their resentment. Outwardly friendly, they watched eagerly for some happening that might be used as an excuse for an act of revenge, or retaliation, for what they considered an infringement of their rights.

Quarters for the negro workers had been built; also living quarters for my brothers, and a large two-story barn, the latter housing six or eight mules, trucks and implements of all kinds for the farming that was carried on. One day a hog burrowed in under the fence and one of

the negroes discovered and shot it, without waiting to consult the bosses. Here was the excuse. That night the big barn was set on fire. Fortunately one of the workers discovered the blaze in time, by calling out the others and my brothers, to save the mules and some of the larger implements. Footprints were traced to a cracker home, but no positive evidence could be found of the guilty party or parties. The fine large barn was replaced by a long, low building made chiefly of corrugated iron roofing -- very ugly looking, but safe.

Through it all the cracker men appeared to be perfectly friendly. Resulting from younger brother's proneness to advise remedies when anyone complained of aches and pains, this seeming friendliness developed into calls upon brother to go to their homes when there was illness, to hand out advice as to remedies. One night a man rushed in to beg brother to go to his house because his wife was "havin' a baby and was powerful weak an' sufferin'." Brother hesitated, but finally went and was able to give the poor woman something to ease her pain; but she died. Thereafter, brother was less generous with his advice and avoided obstetrical cases.

When Washington discovered that camphor was needed by the government for use in gunpowder, Williams and Hubbard received private information of the fact. Camphor trees had been grown in this region merely as ornamental trees; but immediately after this information was received, a large acreage of the prairie was set to camphor. Here indeed was a fortune awaiting them. No public announcement had as yet been made by Washinton, so this planting was well ahead of any other. Enthusiastically the trees were tended, distillations made from the bark to learn certainly if the right element was there, and they dreamed dreams of untold wealth. Later on, a large tract of land not far from town was set to camphor trees by the government. But the government tract was not as fine soil as the prairie land, so the prairie product was sure to get in while price and demand were big. How the ducats rolled in! -- in imagination. How to spend them all was the great question. Dreams, idle dreams! Before the ducats had time to even filter in, it was discovered that Japan, or some other eastern country, could supply unlimited quantities of the element needed for a less price than it cost to just grow the camphor trees in this country. Just another bubble burst -- so on to the next.

The Burton House (later the Turner House), a boarding house, was built in the middle eighties by a Mr. and Mrs. Burton from England. An elderly man and extremely religious, Mr. Burton kept close watch upon the acts of his fellow citizens, and noted in a large book such goings on as he felt the Angel Gabriel would wish to know about and keep a record of. Mr. Burton had lived in Africa, running a sawmill there, and incidentally preaching to the natives and attempting to convert them to his style of religion with, we were led to believe, a modicum of success; but the lumber business was very successful. It was, perhaps, this sortie into the missionary field that developed in him a feeling of responsibility to note the sins of his neighbors. Certain it is that he kept a sharp eye on all of what he considered our misdoings, and what he failed to see, Mrs. Burton discovered. It has been a matter of considerable curiosity as to what became of that book of records, for no one saw it after Mr. Burton went to his final reward. Perhaps he carried it along intending to present it to St. Peter, or whoever it is who looks after such things. Because of his concern over our iniquities, he was first dubbed "Father" Burton, which changed to Pa Burton as time went on, Mrs. Burton being Ma Burton. Mr. Burton had a style in trousers that was quite unique and caused a negro to say: "When yo' looks at Mr. Pa Burton yo' jes' cain' tell whichever way he gwine less'n yo' look at he feets." These trousers were voluminous, gathered fore and aft at the waist.

Mr. Burton was an active and valuable member of the Presbyterian church, heard frequently in earnest supplication to the Almighty for forgiveness of his erring bretheren and sisters. Came a time, however, when there was a battle with the elders on a question of veracity -- and Pa Burton was no longer a member of the Presbyterian church. They came over to the Episcopal church after that, where they continued to worship (alas, it had to be in silence) until one Sunday when a gifted violinist played obligatos and one beautiful solo. They never entered the church again. The Devil himself is in the fiddle, and bring it into the house of God! Such a monstrous insult to the Almighty was not to be countenanced by them. Yet when a trusting old negro woman, who had saved enough of her hard earned cash to buy a half interest in a bit of property in partnership with another negro, and entrusted the making out of the papers to Pa Burton, the latter was not too scrupulous to connive

with the negro man to cheat her out of her portion of the property by failing to have her name ~~to~~ appear in the deed. The Almighty must have felt honored by such an act.

One brave and gallant gentleman, who owned a charming home and orange grove just out of town, ventured to bring his beautiful bride here immediately after a long honeymoon trip in Europe. The bride was from the British Isles, and had never experienced a raw, crude country such as Florida was in those adolescent days of the not too gay eighties. They were to have been properly met at the Huntington station, but were not. When they alighted from the train, the bride saw her elegant luggage tossed out on the sandy, shakey platform. There was no vehicle in sight. In fact there was nothing in sight but sand, pine trees and an old negro. Asked about a carriage to convey them to Crescent City, the negro said: "Dey ain' no transpo'tation hyar bouts cep'n de mistis lady's, an' I know she ain' gwine hire hit out." Had she known of their predicament, the "mistis lady" would gladly have given them the use of her carriage. But it was not pleasant to ask favors, so the gentleman finally dug up a once-white nag and a vehicle that wobbled along, threatening to drop one of its wheels at every hump in the deep sandy road. The bride was seated beside the driver, the trunks and bags piled in the back, and amongst the baggage were stowed the bride groom and a disgruntled cook who had been picked up in Jacksonville. At long last they reached the hotel and were enthusiastically received by the garrulous and somewhat dowdy landlady, who assured them that she had reserved the bridal chamber just for them, and led them triumphantly to that grand apartment. Poor little bride! She must have longed for her British home. The room was quite shabby, stuffy, and filled with the combined aromas of roaches, rats and former occupants. The only thing that might have suggested the entitlement of "bridal chamber" was some very mature, slightly grayish lace curtains that had been draped over the mosquito net that hung over the bed. The mosquitoes were there; also, those other pilgrims of the night -- the bed bugs. Surely that bride groom had need to be brave.

When the business part of Palatka burned down one day in the eighties one of our near-by citizens became the hero of the occasion. He was generally known as Granville and was usually costumed in Nature's robe from the waist up; but in his case Nature's robe was a generous one for he was possessed of a heavy coat of hair. Happening to be in Palatka when the two large hotels and much of the business portion of the town went up in flames, Granville walked into blazing buildings that no other man could even go near because of the heat, and saved many valuable things, coming out unscathed although he seemed to walk through flames. The onlookers said he had no need to fear hell. Granville's wife was too dominating he thought, and he asked the advice of a friend as to what he could do. The friend jokingly said, "Give her a beating." But he took it seriously and proceeded to try it out, with the result that wife threw all the pots and kettles at him, then chased him into a near-by lake where he drowned. Not long after, wife was driving a horse and cart, the horse balked and backed into the lake, drowning the wife and itself. It is said that her ghost often appeared calling aloud for Granville, but Granville seemed not to come.

Late in the eighties, Ma Burton conceived the idea of placing a conspicuous sign at the railroad station, and building a board walk from the Burton House to the dock on Lake Stella from which the "Gondola" sailed to meet the trains. By this time Crescent City had its own station about two miles southwest of town, and this small boat went from Lake Stella through a tiny canal into another lake near which stood the station. There had never been anything in the way of a sign at the station save the very inconspicuous one placed there by the railroad. Mrs. Burton appealed to the citizens for money to pay for a good sign and the sidewalk. A very good walk was built and at the station appeared this sign:

2 Miles to

CRESCENT CITY

A B E A U T I F U L L O C A T I O N .

Beneath the sign was a mucky, marshy mess, where always there were hogs wallowing and grunting. Travelers on the trains were highly entertained with the "beautiful location" and the wallowing pigs, not seeing at all the "2 Miles to."

Mrs. Burton's efforts resulted so satisfactorily that she decided to call together, at the Burton House, all the ladies in the town whom she could interest, for the purpose of organizing for further improvements, her plan being for a temporary organization. But the majority decided upon a permanent organization patterned after the Green Cove Springs Village Improvement Association. Thus it was that the Crescent City Village Improvement Association began, and developed into an important part of the town's life and progress. Immediately we began working on the streets, having all big weeds grubbed out. When that was finished, the making of shell roads and sidewalks began. The old Potter House ashes were used as a foundation, this being surfaced with shell taken from the Indian and natural shell mounds found in spots along the shore of the large lake, all of this being crushed by a heavy horse-drawn roller owned by the town. The town council allowed us the use of the marshal for three days in the week, and we had contributions of labor, horses and carts, and some cash. Suppers, theatrical performances and entertainments of various kinds added to the exchequer.

Very soon we realized the need of a building in which to hold all meetings and entertainments, and promptly arranged for the purchase of a lot on the little business street. The former Library Association, active in the Potter House days, still owned its building which stood on loaned property. When we announced our intention of putting up a "Hall", the Library Assn. presented us with its building and seventy-five dollars left in its treasury. This was a great aid, and immediately we had the building hauled up to our lot, a distance of four or more blocks having to be covered. After adding two wings we were finely equipped for work. The building was named the "V.I.A. Hall," and it became the centre of all social and civic affairs, and so continued for very many years. The Association was formed in January 1890, incorporated in the spring, and the Hall was completed by the end of summer.

A little cemetery that had been started and left without provision for its care was adopted by the V.I.A. as one of its responsibilities. The fine trees in many of the streets had gone untrimmed for most of their lives, so that the branches hung dangerously low. These we trimmed and made safe and beautiful.

In those first years of the existence of the V.I.A. we dared not use the word club. Women's clubs were frowned upon by the trousered citizens as masculine -- that is, as aping masculine things. That we were doing the things that the male town council was supposed to do, did not seem to register as an attempt at masculinity. One out-of-town young man used to amuse himself by singing, when he passed the mayor's porch where certain of the male citizens were wont to loaf:

When the V.I.A. begins to work,
The men are free from care.
They sit and gab on the mayor's porch
While the V.I.A. gets there.

That was just a bit of fun. The men gave us loyal support, and we all enjoyed the work we did. It gave us a pleasant change from the humdrum of household cares and work.

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As I call to mind those days, nearly sixty-two years ago, when we came as pioneers to a sparsely settled and inaccessible country, it seems inconceivable that we ever lived through years of hardship and isolation, for now, gazing from the windows of the same house my father built under such difficulties, I see hundreds of cars from every state in the Union passing daily, on a well paved road. Perhaps some left N.Y. only two days ago, and they will reach Miami by night. Progress and the passing years have made of our little town a lovely, flourishing and accessible haven for winter tourists.

Across the street, I see the little church my father built. He, my mother, brothers and sisters rest in the little cemetery adjoining the church lot. The years pass on. The new generations enjoy the fruits of the pioneer labors, and tourists the healthful and beautiful qualities of our climate and town---while we of the pioneer generation enjoy the memories of those happy, if strenuous years.

One wonders what those pessimists would say now, for as I write on this February day in 1938, I am sitting beside open windows, and from windows I see beautiful citrus trees, laden with their golden fruit. The air is heavy with the fragrance of orange blossoms, and the birds are flitting and thrilling in the trees. It is one of those glistening days when all the troubles and hardships of life are veiled, and just to exist seems like a lovely dream come true. In fact, like my child idea of what all of life would be in Fla.

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building and seventy-five dollars left in its treasury. This was a great aid, and immediately we had the building hauled up to our lot, a distance of four or more blocks having to be covered. After adding two wings we were finely equipped for work. The building was named the "V.I.A. Hall," and it became the centre of all social and civic affairs, and so continued for very many years. The Association was formed in January 1890, incorporated in the spring, and the Hall was completed by the end of summer.

A little cemetery that had been started and left without provision for its care was adopted by the V. I. A. as one of its responsibilities. The fine trees in many of the streets had gone untrimmed for most of their lives, so that the branches hung dangerously low. These were trimmed and made safe and beautiful.

In those first years of the existence of the V. I. A. we dared not use the word club. Women's clubs were frowned upon by the trousered citizens as masculine--that is, as aping masculine things. That we were doing the things that the male town council was supposed to do, did not seem to register as an attempt at masculinity. One out-of-town young man used to amuse himself by singing, when he passed the mayor's porch where certain of the male citizens were wont to loaf:

When the V.I.A. begins to work,
The men are free from care.
They sit and gab on the mayor's porch
While the V.I. A. gets there.

That was just a bit of fun. The men gave us loyal support, and we all enjoyed the work we did. It gave us a pleasant change from the humdrum of household cares and work.

We had no fire company until well into this century, but we had many fires. A bucket brigade was the only means of defense. The usual procedure was to carry out from the burning building all that could be taken out, and then throw water on the nearby buildings. In one instance the barrel containing the kitchen dish water was the sole source of water supply, but it saved a conflagration. Wonderful indeed were the costumes seen at the night fires, of which there were many. For men, a night shirt and shoes was considered quite sufficient. If by chance a hat and trousers were added, the wearer was howled at as a "dude fireman." The women (for we all went to a fire), slippers, a night gown and a bed spread draped over the shoulders was altogether the proper array. One lady did not wait for the bed spread, but raced along the streets in slippers and what looked like a pillow slip, yelling "Fire! Fire!" That cry was our only means of sounding an alarm. Sometimes a gun was fired rapidly. Those night calls were terrifying indeed. One night seven or more buildings burned to the ground. I well remember that night when brother came in late, calling out "Wake up. wake up everybody. The town is burning up." And it took valient[sic] work on the part of the men to stop the fire before the eighth building caught, which was the small post office building.

The season of 1894-95 began delightfully, with moderately cool temperatures, orange trees loaded with fruit and everyone who owned a citrous[sic] grove feeling sure of a good income for the rest of his life. On December 30th the temperature went down. For four days the minimum ran 17°, 19° 22° 30°. The population almost stopped breathing. However, because there had been cool enough weather for several weeks to keep the trees fairly dormant, they were not so seriously hurt as was feared. After about two weeks had passed, the temperature became pleasantly warm, leaves dropped off the orange tress, and soon young growth came out and a complete recovery seemed certain. Five weeks after the cold in December and January, the young growth was fully six inches long. That was on February 6th. The morning of February 7th, the temperature had dropped to 16°. It was below 20° for two more mornings, and did not rise higher than 33° at any time during those three days. On the fourth morning it was still below the freezing point.

All citrous[sic] trees throughout the state were killed to the ground. It was a desolated country. Many people left their properties and homes, returning to the states from which they had come. Florida was paralysed. In this, as in all citrous sections, the very foundations of living seemed utterly gone. The people were stunned. Where an assured living seemed theirs, there was nothing--nothing but the land and dead tree stumps. The pessimist said Florida was ruined. Tourists--oh, yes, there would always be tourists regardless, of weather; but as a citrous country it was done for.

In January 1896, father, younger sister and I returned from the state of Washington, where we had sojourned for some time. We left a green country--the western part of the state where the fir trees and the grass were beautifully green. We arrived in Florida on a gray day, the trees were leafless and draped with gray moss;

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the St. Johns's river reflected the gray clouds. On either side of the train, gray looking weeds were rampant in a grayish sand. Only the busy pines were green. The country looked as if it had been swept by a great fire. The people were subdued in manner and seemed quite grave. They were making a brave fight to exist and rehabilitate their groves. They were learning to raise vegetables as they had never done before. And they were learning to keep a cow well fed so that she gave excellent milk. They were learning a great many things forced to it by dire necessity. Learning that, given proper and intelligent care, almost every kind of fruit and vegetable that grows could be produced in the state.

And still there were pessimists who declared that Florida would never "come back". Since that time there have been four "freezes," but none so severe as that of '94-'95, and Florida has come back.

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