

In 1898 I was twenty-seven years old, Gertie twenty-three and Blanche three. Money--we didn't have any--and working conditions were none too pleasant. How I was able to maintain my courage and initiative during this period, I don't know. Maybe I was just too foolish to realize what an uphill, impossible fight I was waging. We had been housekeeping two years and found it very hard to raise the ten dollars a month we paid for house rent. It may have been about this time that Gertie helped out a bit by being the entire orchestra at the Bowersock for the big pay of two-fifty a night. We never made a wry mouth, we never said we were hard up, we never complained nor asked for help, and we enjoyed the few friends that we had. I give Gertie great credit for making good friends--friends of good people--not because she honeyed about them, but because they could recognize real worth in her. Our social standing has largely come about thru recognition of her worth. What we owed, not great in amount, was a heavy burden, and it was only by sheer grit and hanging on that we made this go.

In 1888 came the big panic in Kansas, when perhaps millions were lost in Kansas farm loans, and where most everyone, who could, left the country. We had held out for ten years in Western Kansas and at this time Mamma moved to Salina in order to give her children a better opportunity for an education. At the time of my seventeenth birthday I was probably working for Farquharson as a grocer's clerk, a few doors south of the old National Hotel in Salina. That summer I learned to set type and the following fall earned some money while attending the Kansas Wesleyan university, in setting type for the little paper published by Rev. A. N. See, field man for the school. Prior to this time I had attended school just about thirty-two months, but Mamma had taught me at home, so I was able to keep pace with the others and led the entire school in scholarship. I left school after the first of the year to become a reporter, but entered again in the fall, meanwhile doing some newspaper work on the side. How happy we were in our little family--Mamma only fifty-two years old, grandfather, we five children, and how self-sufficient we were. Not in an offensive manner, but we enjoyed our home life. Perhaps I should not include Julia as an immediate member of the family for she was living down town, and it was a year before our beloved Vera was born, but we were together a great deal.

We are nearing the end of our ten year groups now. 1878 was a sad year for Mamma. Papa had died October 29, 1877, and Mamma's heart was torn by the loss of her husband, who had been so near and dear to her. Eleven years of married life, with no unkind words and now he was gone. Well, we landing in Hodgeman county in the spring of '78. That was the year of the big Indian scare, of the falling down of our sod house and the building of the stone house. It was a revolutionary change in our lives for we came from a small city, to the open, pioneer country, with no roads but trails, and with hardship on every side. How well I remember the evening prayers and the singing of sacred songs, how little Mamma would gather her tired brood around her at night under the light of a kerosene light taught us arithmetic and other basic branches of learning. We had our horses and the "Old White Cow", who never was white, but spotted. We also had Star and Buck