1711 Graham Lane La Mott, Pa.

November 9th, 1955

Milo & Lewin,

My dear Boys,

Did you know that Chas. Chesmult was an early novelist. He wrote books long before either of you were born. One of his books was "The House behind the Cedars." It is a beautiful His daughter sent all his Library to Fisk University. There was a story called "The wife of my youth." He made it into a play and the girls and boys played it on the Gregoroy stage at home. Now Chas. Chesmult was born in Fayettesville, N.C., but lived in Cleveland, Ohio, and we were in Wilmington, N.C. The story was that of a little brown woman that had been married to her husband separated in some way for years. Chas. took the part of the husband who left the South and went to Boston. He rose from obscurity to a man of affairs. He was so handsome, tall, fair and very charming. He was engaged to be married to a fine young lady of Boston. Nellie Chesmult was the lady in Boston. Nell, you know, was a very pretty girl and today a handsome woman. A grand reception was given to announce the engagement. We were all having a grand time. That little wife of long ago tramped from town to town asking for work. She would cook or clean for any one until she got money enough to go to the next town. Then she would go to a back door and ask for work until she finally got to Boston, Mass. I was singing Tostis
Good Bye. I had just returned home from the singers for vacation
and could not take part in the play but just filled in to sing
and just as I was singing good bye for now, the door bell rang
and Chas. went out and in a few minutes he came back with a little
dark brown woman, his arm around her, said "Ladies and gentlemen,
this is the wife of my youth." He was as white as a sheet. She
had found a dress some where that fitted her like a horse saddle
on a little pig. Nellie his lady love fainted and just as I
sang the last good bye, the Curtain went down.

The scene of that play has remained with me all these years. I have taken part in plays since then, but none has stuck by me like that.

Many thanks for my birthday cards. I had such a surprise party. Many came and brought cards and handed them to me until I had a lap full. As I opened them, nearly all had dollar bills in them. There were thirty dollars. Two cakes with candles and ice cream and candy. It is really gratifying, when one has passed the noontide of life to feel that one's friends would think so much of them. As I read some of the cards, my eyes filled and I sent up a prayer and thanked God from whom all blessings flow. I sang for them and told jokes on myself and even danced for them. Don't you think your little mother is growing younger as the days go by? I try to keep cheerful although it is lonely now as the winter comes and I have to stay