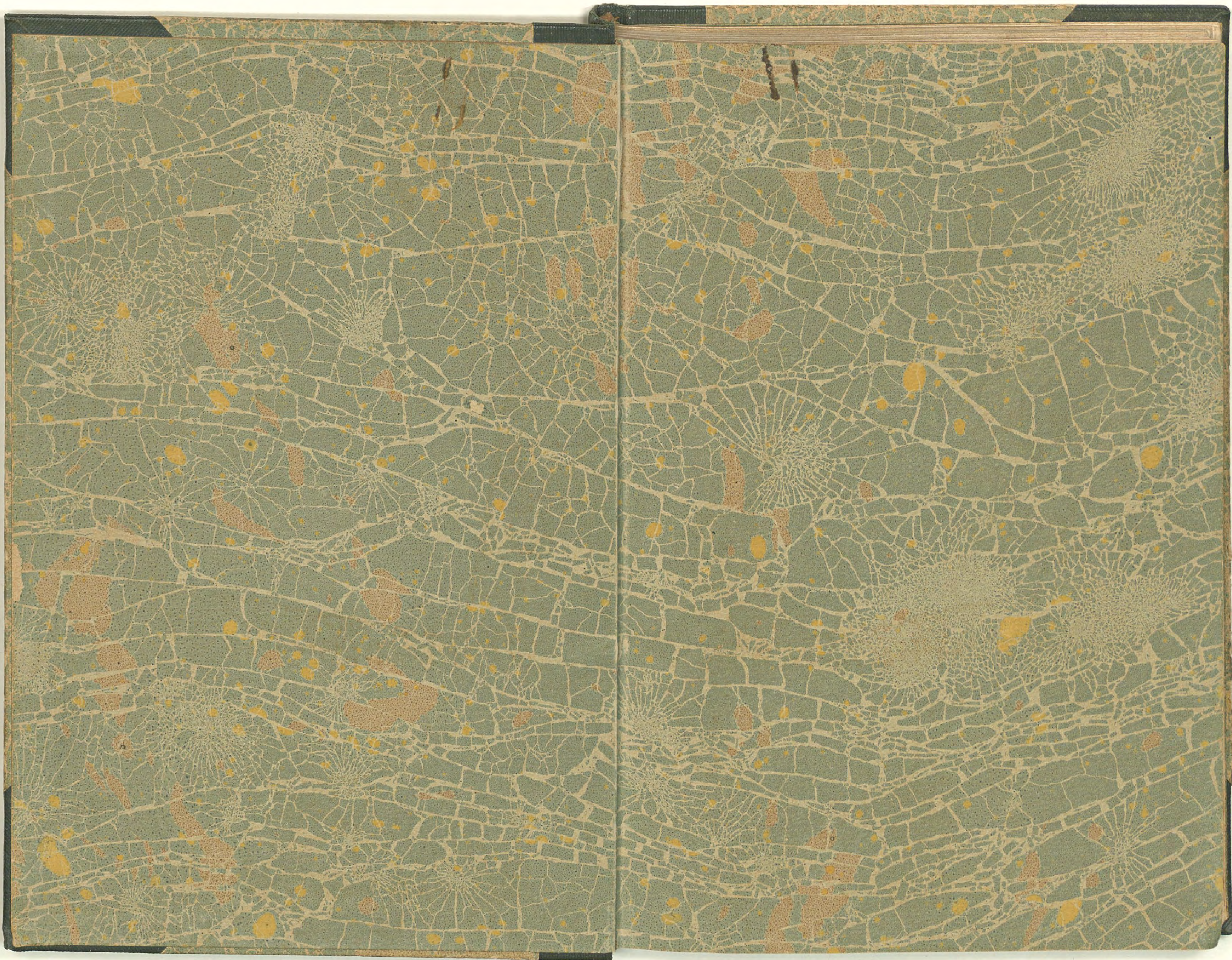

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AS WE WERE

A Personal Sketch of Family Life

By
Bruce Cotten

"Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR THE FAMILY ONLY.

BALTIMORE
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To my nieces and nephews and to their nieces and nephews that they may know something of how we were in those days before greed and avarice destroyed the happiness of the world.

AS WE WERE

A Personal Sketch of Family Life

I

THE FIRST of our family of whom we have authentic record was one John Cotten who signed himself "John Cotten, Gentleman of Bertie Precinct in the Province of Carolina Esquire."

A relative of ours once supposed that he signed himself thus because he was the only gentleman the family ever produced, but I question that and maintain that there has been several among us to whom this term could be properly applied, at least in its American sense.

John Cotten resided at South Quay on the Blackwater River in the Province of Virginia where his house was a well-known place both in Virginia and in the adjoining province of North Carolina. It was here at "John Cotten's house on Blackwater" that the duffles and supplies furnished to the North Carolina Troops for the Tuscarora war of 1712 were delivered to the North Carolina authorities. Here too Lady Hyde, wife of the late lamented Governor of North Carolina, stopped over and rested on her return way back to England after the death of Gov. Hyde and

it was here also that Tom Blount, King of a remnant Tuscarora clan came and pledged his neutrality in the war then starting.

It was at John Cotten's at South Quay that the gallant and brilliant young Alexander Spotswood, Royal Governor of Virginia, came on several occasions to confer with the North Carolina authoritites as to the conduct of this war and in 1712 while on a visit of this nature an heir was born to the House of Cotten. This child was promptly named Alexander Spotswood Cotten; and the name has continued in one branch of the family to the present generation.

John Cotten married Martha Godwin, a daughter of William Godwin of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, hence the name Godwin Cotten which appears quite frequently among his descendants. In 1719 John Cotten purchased from his friend, Frederick Jones, a plantation on Potecasi Creek in what is now Hertford County, North Carolina, and removed there with his family to reside. He was influenced, it appears, to make this move by the fact that several grown sons had proceeded him to this vicinity and by the influence of his friend, Frederick Jones, who was Chief Justice of the Colony of North Carolina at that time.

John Cotten was himself quite an elderly man at the time he made this change, notwithstanding which he was made a Justice of the Peace, Collector of Quint rents, and a member of the General Court of the Province. He was one of the "Prime men" of old Bertie and died in 1728, leaving a large family, a lengthy will and a goodly estate.

At the time of John Cotten's death, George II was King of England and Lord Bertie was Palatine of Carolina. The

population of the Province was estimated at 10,000 christian souls, all white skins being erroneously recorded as christians.

Samuel Cotten, second son of John Cotten above, came to North Carolina several years before his father and located on land in what is now Bertie County. He was a resident of both Bertie and Northampton Counties during his long lifetime and resided for some years at Roxabel in Bertie County. This place was first called Cottens Cross Roads, then for very many years Brittons Cross Roads, until the late Mr. Stephen Norfleet, Sr., gave it the attractive name of Roxabel from an English novel he was reading at the time.

Little is known of Samuel Cotten, except that he was hardy, vigorous, domineering and rich. He was not at all conventional in his relations with women and some other things, I suspect, and having lived to a great age more feared than loved, he finally decided that it was time for him to give up the ghost, so he picked up a goose quill and wrote his last will and testament in which he said that he was "of sound mind and disposing memory" and bequeathed, besides much land and many slaves, any number of feather beds, pewter dishes and "Delph that stands in my Bo-Fat". And so by this having disinherited his eldest son and bestowed very little on his other legitimates, he crawled up into one of his great feather beds and shortly passed over the divide. He was our fifth great grandfather and I am inclined to think less of him than any of our grandfathers that I have become acquainted with through research—mostly, perhaps, because I do not like open indecencies or feather beds either.

Samuel Cotten, second son of the above Samuel, located himself in Edgecombe County where he bought a plantation from William Bell in 1786. He became a large planter and was a man of gentility and highly respected. In 1795, at the death of his wife, he divided his estate among his several sons and one daughter and shortly thereafter followed her into the beyond.

Roderick Cotten, a younger son of the above Samuel, married Mary Topping Braswell of Edgecombe County and died in 1814 when only twenty-six years of age. He was, I believe, a very admirable young man and wrote a very beautiful hand as papers in my possession attest.

John Llewellyn Cotten, eldest son of the above Roderick Cotten, was our grandfather. He was born in Edgecombe County in 1810 and married about 1837 Nancy Bell Penine Tart Johnson, daughter of Aaron Johnson, a well-to-do planter of Edgecombe County and his first wife a Miss Inghram of South Carolina.

There has been a great deal passed down about Jack Cotten, as our grandfather was called, very much about his gallantries and dissipations, his spirited manners, his attractions, his sporting and fighting inclinations. As none of his children remembered him and as all people who did, have long since passed away, it is impossible to verify any of the extravagances that tradition has fostered to his memory. There is no reason to doubt, however, but that our grandfather was dissipated, exceedingly so, and squandered his entire fortune before his death, that he was also gallant and attractive—is also equally true.

However, it is hard to believe some of the stories that have been circulated about him; such as he having on one occasion, at Muster, challenged every member of an adjoining company to single combat and actually knocking them all out, one by one, between drinks.

He was a sensitive, proud man, and is said to have been in the habit of requiring, by force if necessary, all persons of inferior position to retire from the Tavern or Tipling house wherein he had selected to take a drink. This very undemocratic habit caused him to frequently appear as defendant before Old Squire Cherry and other magistrates, here and there, as well as before the County Court occasionally for breaches of the peace.

From a photograph of a portrait, he appears in handsome broadcloth with black stock and rolled collar, an exceedingly handsome man. He was in spite of some defects of temperament, a considerable favorite with many people and on the most intimate terms with the families of his cousin, Colonel Robert Cotten of the Scotland Neck, and with Randolph and Spencer Dew Cotten of Tarboro. He died in his thirty-eighth year leaving no estate and a family of two sons and several daughters.

Robert Randolph Cotten, our father, was the eldest son of John L. Cotten and was born in 1839 on his father's plantation near Whitakers, then called Whitakers Turnout. He was christened Robert Randolph after his father's cousins, Robert Norfleet Cotten, a son of Colonel Robert Cotten of The Scotland Neck, and Randolph Cotten of Tarboro. Colonel Robert Cotten, with his family, emigrated to Tennessee and has numerous descendants in the south and west. Randolph Cotten lived an old bachelor in Tarboro and for fifty years was, with his brother, the leading merchant of Edgecombe County, doing business as R. & S. D. Cotten, on the site where the Town Hall now stands.

At the time of our grandfather's death, I discover from the records that his farm of 450 acres, upon which he resided, was already over-mortgaged to Randolph and Spencer Dew Cotten, but that these rather distant relatives permitted our grandmother to continue to live there unmolested and provide as well as she could for her family. This was indeed a gracious generosity but characteristic of the Cotten family, for I am glad to say that the Cottens appear to have always been a close family; very decent to each other in times of stress; indeed the records of Edgecombe and Northampton Counties disclose some amazing liberalities of brother to brother and cousin to cousin in time of financial trouble.

Along with the farm our grandmother appears to have owned a few negroes and to have hired others in order to cultivate the land. I have heard my father say that among the very first things he could remember in life was a trip he made with his mother to Enfield on "hiring day", where his mother hired a negro man for thirty-two dollars for the year. The custom of hiring out slaves was an extensive one and "hiring days" were announced and advertised in advance, so that large crowds assembled from far and near; those with superfluous slaves for hire and those in need of help, as well as very many who came for recreation and social intercourse, and some just to get drunk and have a fight; so "hiring day" was always something of a local event and a holiday for all the community around.

Robert Randolph Cotten was born just one hundred and eleven years after the death of his first ancestor in North Carolina and was born no more than sixty miles away from where his first ancestor lay buried. The Province of North Carolina with its 10,000 christian souls had become a crown colony in 1728 and a Sovereign State after the

Revolutionary War. Dappy, diplomatic Martin Van Buren was President of the United States, and E. B. Dudley was Governor of North Carolina. The population of the state was 484,870 whites, 22,732 free persons of color and 248,807 slaves. I am glad that the census enumerator did not attempt this time to give us the number of christian souls that were with us at that time, for God knows they were few enough. The state was at its low ebb in progress, culture and enterprise, the population having increased less than 3% during the decade 1830—1840. Indeed, it can be stated that North Carolina did not progress nearly so well during the first fifty years of its independence as it did during the forty-eight years that it was a crown colony.

The period 1830—1840, just a hundred years ago, was a period of great depression, and poverty, such as we know nothing of today, was everywhere plentiful in the land. Our grandmother, while left poor by her profligate but beloved husband, was, considering the times, very comfortably circumstanced. She was a most courageous woman and lived to see her adored son achieve what to her seemed an enormous success and a restoration of the family fortune, in a way. I remember her myself when she would come to Cottendale on occasional visits and I remember, too, when she died, seeing my father sob with grief.

Father received what early education he had in the public schools of Edgecombe County, which is amazing when we consider what he was and how contemptible those schools are now made to appear in comparison with our Tutor Palace-Motor Bus system of today. I have heard him say that he attended what was called an "old field" school, which opened at sunrise and closed at sunset, with two hours recreation at mid-day and that nothing was

thought of sending a boy several miles distance away to fetch a coal of fire to light the teacher's pipe. Yet R. R. Cotten was very far from being an uneducated man. Indeed I never felt, in the least, that he was an uneducated man, he wrote an exceptionally good hand and letters in good form. He was quick and accurate with figures, understood commercial and banking rules perfectly, analyzed financial statements as quickly as anyone and acquired a considerable knowledge of the law and parlimentary practice. Frankly, I do not believe that the present elaborate and exaggerated system of education would have made him a finer man. After all, schools and colleges do not educate a person, it teaches them to read and write but no number of degrees educate a person unless they are born with the power to think.

Father was not an exhaustive reader, though he read many good books, some, several times. His favorite book was "Smiles Character" and a very excellent book it is, he read it several times and was always impressed with it. "Getting Along in the World" was another favorite and he recommended to me any number of books in my early manhood. He read as well, books that were highly scientific and designed himself a bookplate and accumulated a very decent little library of his own.

Father left his "old field school" when he was eighteen and secured a clerkship in the store of a Mr. Alston at Tarboro and remained there one year. At the expiration of this practical apprenticeship, he went to Baltimore, with Mr. Alston's assistance, and took a course in a Baltimore Business College, forming thus early in life an acquaintance and love for the city of Baltimore that continued through his entire lifetime. Immediately upon the completion of this course he took a position with a Baltimore

commercial house as a traveling salesman and spent one year as their representative in eastern North Carolina.

But such occupations as clerk and traveling salesman were never to his taste or liking, for Bob Cotten ever had the soul of a proprietor in his make-up and was compelled all the days of his life to be his own master and to dominate as well, all business actions that he was to be associated with. So when he was only twenty-three years of age he formed a copartnership with Mr. Walter Gwynn under the firm name of Cotten and Gwynn, cotton brokers and commission merchants, Baltimore, Maryland. Mr. Gwynn was a son of Gen. Walter Gwynn, a graduate of West Point, and for years an Army Officer of prominence, but who had resigned from the Army and was at this time Engineer in Charge of Internal Improvements of the State of North Carolina.

This firm of Cotten and Gwynn was associated with A. T. Bruce & Co., 44 Pine Street, New York. Indeed it was to be a branch house of that firm which for years had conducted an exceedingly large business in Virginia and the Carolinas. So father had thus very early in life by his own efforts succeeded in establishing a close contact with a strong and growing concern that promised extremely well for the future.

But the firm of Cotten and Gwynn was wrecked and dissolved almost at its conception by the outbreak of the Civil War; the bursting of those blood-soaked clouds that had for long hung over our country and was destined now to take so many precious lives and engulf the South in sorrow and economic ruin as great as any people have felt. So, Cotten and Gwynn was hastily dissolved and the partners took train at Camden Station for the south.

Arriving at his mother's home, father took counsel with himself, which, seeing that the country was going to war, meant that he must get himself into the army as speedily as possible.

Father had in his young manhood formed many friendships and acquaintances at Scotland Neck and vicinity, and Scotland Neck was indeed a most attractive village in those days and the center of an old and aristocratic planting community as prosperous as any section in the South. So now that young manhood everywhere was called to the colors, he accepted the invitation of his friends at Scotland Neck and became a member of the Scotland Neck Mounted Riflemen, Commanded by Captain A. B. Hill.

He enlisted on April 3rd, 1861, forty-seven days before the state seceded. This company became in course of time Company G Third N. C. Cavalry, which afterwards was designated the 41st Regiment N. C. Troops, Colonel A. M. Waddell, of Wilmington, commanding.

Though father enlisted with great promptness, for the war that was at hand and served faithfully until its close, he never felt the war was necessary. He regarded slavery as a moral wrong and a grievous evil, a thing to be rid of at any cost and felt that the South should have frankly acknowledged its evil and frightfulness and called upon the North to help in some rational solution of the problem.

He was present at a villiage called Palmyre in Halifax County just before the war, on a local occasion, when the people had assembled to deliberate upon the crisis of secession and heard the duty of secession propounded and the proposition advanced by General Clark that the South renew its allegiance to the British Crown. This proposition, however, was vigorously opposed by another group

who desired, rather, that North Carolina become subject to the Emperor Napoleon III. So the debate was long and fierce that day at Palmyre as to whether we should become Englishmen again or turn Emperial French; and while all this was going on, a black girl was being sold on a block nearby, all of which made a sad impression on father as he several times related to me during his lifetime. This day at Palmyre made an impression on Father that he never forgot and he never talked or even spoke of the War or slavery except upon rare occasions.

He could never justify the war from the Southern standpoint, notwithstanding, which he served almost exactly four years in the army, and served true and faithfully. His regiment did not serve with the main army in any of the major campaigns of the war, but was detailed mostly for scout work and picket duty in Eastern Carolina, around New Bern and Washington and the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad.

His company was in numerous brisk skirmishes, but as Cavalry, did not participate in any of the major battles of the war. For some time his regiment was assigned to Wade Hampton's Brigade on the left of Lee's Army during the seige of Richmond. I have had presented to me a letter that he wrote while on this detail, to his friend, Richard H. Powell, of Edgecombe County, who was a member of his company. This letter is the earliest letter I have in father's handwriting and it shows the same painstaking characteristics that remained with him through life.

"Camp 3nd, N. C. Cavalry
Between Stony Creek and Petersburg,
Sept. 10th, 1864.

Dear friend Richard:

I arrived at the regiment three days ago and found the Reg. on picket. They got back last night. I found everything comparatively quiet but we are expecting a big fight daily. The general impression is that the enemy will make a great effort to extend their lines around to the south side R. Road. Our right has just come off picket near Rhemes Station. The Yankees still hold a portion of the P. & W. R. R. north of the above mentioned station.

Several of our fellows, whose time is out, have not reported here yet. I am afraid that some of them will ketch it yet. Captain Smith is still under arrest; he says he is going to tender his resignation as soon as his Court Martial is over.

Your horse (Napolian) came in yesterday from Lynchburg, he looks some better than he did when you sent him there but nothing like as well as I expected to find him. I have taken him in charge and will ride him until you come

or send my horse. I will take good care of him.

You will please furnish Ben. money enough to buy forrage for my horse on the way and I will pay you when you get to camp. I have that note of Guss (?) with me, the interest will be about ($30.00) thirty dollars. Tell Ben to ask mother to send to me by him my overcoat or another blanket one, and you had better supply Ben with a bag to take some corn along for the horses. He can stop at mother's and get some. Forrage will be very hard to get on the road and I would advise you to bring a box of provisions. I don't think you will have any difficulty in getting it from Stony Creek to the Regiment for you will find some of the regiments or regimental wagons at Stony Creek. We have to get all our forrage from there. I had no difficulty in getting a good size box through.

Your friend
R. R. Cotten."

While on picket duty south of New Bern in 1863, father was stricken with typhoid fever and left almost alone in an isolated farm house in Jones County. Dr. Marsden Bellamy, a distinguished physician, of Wilmington, having heard of his plight, drove up there in his carriage and took him to his own house in Wilmington where he was nursed back to health. Such a service can never be repaid and father, during his entire life, never went to Wilmington without calling on the members of the Bellamy family, and before his death he expressed a desire that his children do likewise, which we shall do for his sake and for our own pleasure, only unfortunately none of us are in Wilmington except on rare occasions.

At the close of the war Company G was at Weldon and was disbanded and paroled under the terms agreed upon by Generals Sherman and Johnston. Father then made his way to his mother's home, a penniless but in no wise a broken man. Upon arriving he discovered that some of Sherman's scouts had taken two of his mother's mules away and along with them; which animals being very important in her then situation, the young paroled rebel retraced his steps and followed the Union Army into Petersburg where he identified the mules and actually succeeded in having the Quartermaster release them and he brought them safely back to his mother in Edgecombe County.

II

General Grant was much surprised at Appomatox to learn that horses in the Confederate Army were owned by the men who rode them. This arrangement was well suited to the condition of the Confederacy but novel in the armies of the world. Had this system not been in effect it seems likely that father would never have met mother and I can not say what would have happened to us children in that case—so tremendous is the effect of trifling things on human destiny that it may be that we owe our existence to a broken down horse.

Near the close of the war, father came home for the purpose of securing a remount, as required under the system, and while on this leave, his mother told him that there was a very attractive young girl teaching school over at the home of his Uncle John Johnson, and added that she would make him a good wife. Her name was Sallie Swepson Sims Southall.

The idea of seeing this girl who would make him a good wife evidently appealed to the young rifleman, for he mounted his horse and rode over to the plantation of his uncle to reconnoiter the situation for himself. The girl of the four "S's" was just seventeen years of age at that time and stood before him gowned in yards and yards of gray Confederate homespun, so that you could not really be sure of anything about her except her hair and eyes. What happened then as for some time afterwards has never been told, though we children often importuned them.

However I can picture the affair quite accurately. Father fell hard, there is no question of that, and lost no considerable time in declaring himself; he was ever a man of action, painted a fine future and was ardent, sincere and gallant with it all. Poor little mother, how she must have been impressed with his fine bearing and the splendid shape of his head as well as his courage and confidence. She was so young, almost alone in the world which seemed crumbling about her as the war continued, and here stood her knight, strong, confident and true.

This leave drew to a close and she consented to correspond—a concession almost equivalent to surrender in those days. Father went back to his regiment, and mother, having finished her engagement at Mr. Johnson's, accepted a position in the household of General Rufus Barringer, at Concord, where she instructed the little Barringers in the three "R's" and, incidentally, a nephew of the household, Gaston Means, who became in after years rather famous in a way not altogether complimentary to mother's influence.

They decided very shortly to get married as soon as father could "get on his feet". It is not plain how much "on his feet he must first get; however, they could decide that later. Father decided to become a merchant in Tarboro, having first considered Scotland Neck. He had no money, none at all, but shortly secured enough to go up to Baltimore and thence on to New York.

It was only a few months after the surrender of General Lee and, if I remember aright, he wore his Confederate uniform on this trip. He presented himself to his old friends, the Bruces, at 44 Pine Street, and this was the only time in all his long life that I ever heard of father

flinching or hesitating in anything that he had made up his mind to do. He told me that he walked by the place several times before entering.

When he did enter, Mr. John Bruce came forward and greeted him warmly and with marked kindness. "Well, Bob, the war is over, how are you all getting along down there?" Father explained the situation, not dwelling I imagine, on the darker side. Mr. Bruce inquired after many old friends and customers and the conversation continued at length without father being able to open the subject that he had come on purpose to do. Finally Mr. Bruce said abruptly: "Bob, you want to borrow some money. How much is it?" Father, relieved, then explained his situation and plans, and ended by saying that he needed about $40,000.00 to be used over a period of a year or two. Mr. Bruce said: "You can have it."

Thus it was, without further ado, that this young rebel still in uniform, arranged a credit of $40,000.00 without even so much as giving a note.

In this way was recommenced a business association and personal friendship, of great intimacy, that continued without the slightest interruption until the last of the Bruces died in 1908. With this credit father established a mercantile business in Tarboro, on the lot now occupied by the rear of the Hotel Farror, and in a few months had the audacity to consider himself "on his feet", figuratively speaking, and befit to betake unto himself a bride.

Sallie Swepson Sims Southall was a daughter of Thomas James Southall, of Amelia County, Virginia. This Southall family is descended from Dacy Southall, who settled in Henrico County, Virginia, in 1720, married Martha Vanderwall and died in 1762. The family has an extensive

and well established genealogy, but suffice to say here that Major Stephen Southall, third in descent from the above Dacy, married Martha Wood, a niece of that indolent fishman and phrase-maker, Patric Henry. There was by this marriage a daughter, Lucy Henry, who became the wife of Honorable Charles Cutts, United States Senator from New Hampshire, and two sons, Daniel and James Southall.

Daniel Southall early established himself in Murfreesboro, N. C., where he became a large and successful merchant. He was also a Methodist preacher and would exhort the crowd for hours at a time after the Methodist's custom of that day. He married Julia Riddick, of Gates County, a meek and blameless soul, notwithstanding which Mr. Southall was heard to say, after her death, that if he could he would take a knife and let out every drop of Riddick blood in his children's veins. He married secondly a sister of Governor Branch of North Carolina, and died in Washington City in 1833 leaving a large estate, a mixed reputation and, among others, a son, John W. Southall, of whom more presently.

James Southall, brother of the above Daniel, married Elizabeth Parker, of Gates County, N. C., and died in Amelia County, Virginia, in 1814. He left practically no estate and an only son, James Thomas Southall, who was raised and educated by his uncle, Mr. Daniel Southall, at Murfreesboro. James Southall was our grandfather and married Susanna Swepson Sims, a daughter of Dr. Richard Sims, 1st, of Brunswick County, Virginia, and wife, Rebecca Dromgoole.

Our grandfather Southall was rather a helpless man and unsuccessful in all he undertook. Though upright and much beloved, he quickly lost the small fortune that came to his wife, and as his family grew, our mother, being the

youngest child, was taken into the household of her father's cousin, John W. Southall, at Murfreesboro, and raised there as a member of his family, just as her father had been raised by Mr. Daniel Southall.

Mr. John W. Southall had something of his father's domineering temperament, tempered perhaps by that Riddick blood that his father could not extract. He was also a merchant and a Methodist of the gloomy type, but not so terrible in this respect as his father was. He gave our mother a most comfortable home and the best education obtainable at that time, graduating her through the Wesleyan Female College at Murfreesboro, as well as the Greensboro Female College at Greensboro, N. C.

Our Dromgoole, Sims, Walton and Swepson ancestors were all Irish and interesting people to be descended from. Edward Dromgoole was borne in Sligo, Ireland, in 1750, of an ancient Catholic family. He received an excellent education, became a follower of John Wesley, broke with his family and came to America to preach Methodism when only twenty-two years of age. After a year in Maryland, he was assigned to south side Virginia, where he married Rebecca Roe Walton, a very considerable heiress, as substance was reckoned in those days. Bishop Asbery said of him that he was "a good preacher though encumbered with a family". From his papers preserved, I learn that he rode horseback some 12,000 miles through North Carolina and Virginia preaching the gospel to fallen souls and carrying a Bible, Hymnal, and a canteen of brandy in his saddle bag.

He also wore a wig, rouged his lips, wrote poetry and took snuff, which proves that he was a gentleman as well as a preacher.

His youngest son, George C. Dromgoole, was a great orator, and for twenty years was a leader and whip in the lower House of Congress. Mr. John Quincy Adams, in his old age, loathed Dromgoole and feared him more than any man in Congress, as his diary reveals. Peter Dromgoole, around whose disappearance from Chapel Hill in 1833 so much romance and speculation has existed for a hundred years, was a grandson.

The Walton, Sims, Swepsons and others that we are descended from on our mother's side, were equally respectable and there is very much of interest about many of them that belongs more to a genealogical work than to this. Our mother had two uncles, both of whom were successful and became quite prominent in their respective fields. Edward Dromgoole Sims, who graduated at Chapel Hill in 1824, was professor of English and Oriental languages at Randolph-Macon College and afterwards, for long, at the University of Alabama. Alexander Dromgoole Sims graduated at Union College, N. Y., studied law, and having married in Darlington, S. C., located there. He is still referred to as one of the ablest men ever at the South Carolina bar. He wrote a novel called "Bevil Faulcon", and was murdered by his valet while a member of Congress in 1848.

From the little that has been said here, it can be seen that these two young people, who were to be married, now, had hereditary backgrounds, very different, one from the other. Father was a man of exact traditions, old English, tempered and reshaped by five generations of Southern Planters. He believed in the stability of things and disliked social changes. The word "freeholder", with all its rights and ancient privileges, seemed more applicable to

him than to any man I have ever known. He was a realist, well suited to meet facts and conditions. Loyal and courageous, he was direct, honest, highly capable, industrious and the purest man I have ever known. His courage and manliness was superb, especially in adversity, and he never, in his whole life, failed in any of the major duties of a man. He was decidedly aristocratic in his taste and manners, was careful of his friends and associates and insisted on social distinction. He was also, even in extreme old age, ever careful and tidy in his dress; was fond of music, a good swimmer and a superb horseman. He was nothing of a muse or dreamer and could never snatch rapture out of nature or the invisible things around. There has been little temperament and hardly any artistic talent in any of the Cottens.

Mother's background, on the other hand, was very different from all this. She was Irish, poetical, musical and dreamy. There was nothing of old world tradition in her. Irish Catholics turned American Methodists, indicates how completley her background had broken with the past. In a sense her heritage was decidedly revolutionary, impatient of traditions and many conventionalities. Along with all her stable qualities, these additional traits were ever discernible, though more pronounced at some periods than at others. There was too, with mother, an unaccountable, but pronounced temperamental brooding and apprehension of ill that might befall her or those she loved.

There is all manner of proofs of this, even if we older children did not know it. The very first poem I find preserved from her pen, flavors strongly of this and is addressed to her first child, born three months later. Mother developed early in life a conviction that her family were un-

fortunate and that it had to be so and not until her children were entirely grown do I think she became relieved of these troubled, though suppressed, thoughts.

Indeed there had been much misfortune and sorrow associated with her people, which naturally impressed her young and sensitive nature with fear and uncertainty of things to come. Both she and her father had been raised by relatives, her own sisters were not happily married, and an only brother was never spoken of in our household, though for what reason none of us children ever knew. He was known to be a brilliant man and a successful lawyer in an adjoining State. Yet his name was never mentioned by anyone. One afternoon when my brother, Preston, was living in Norfolk, a well dressed, handsome man came into his office and introduced himself as his uncle. He chatted most agreeably and charmingly, I am told, for half an hour, then walked out into the street, never to be seen again.

There were other sorrows and disappointments too, connected with mother's family, that I have never been able to solve, all of which combined to produce these gloomy broodings in mother's entire young life. In this, father was a powerful antidote and a pillow of strength to her, for he was an extreme optimist all the day of his life.

Mother, in every way, was a perfectly normal woman, but she had inherited, along with all this, the accumulated temperament, talent, and academic inclinations of her background. And so it came that these two backgrounds met in me and I am as conscious of them, at times, as if I were several separate personalities. They often clash sharply and frequently in important matters I can do nothing until the Cottens, Braswells, Johnsons, Sims, Dromgooles, Southalls, and others, have fought it out within me.

III

They were married on the 14th of March, 1866, at the residence of Mr. John W. Southall at Murfreesboro, N. C. The house is still standing and a very attractive place it is.

Mother must have been beautiful and even more interesting on the morning of her nuptials—just eighteen and about to marry a man whose only wealth was a debt. But it was not given to my generation to see one's own mother a bride, though common enough today. Only recently, two children were playing on the beach at Newport, when one said: "There is a great time at our house today—I am getting a new papa." "Who is he?" said the other. "Mr. VanLipp," said the first. "Uh, I don't think much of him, we had him once ourselves."

Father had bought a comfortable little house located on the Commons in Tarboro, and there he took his bride, after a trip to Baltimore and a stay at the Old Barnum Hotel. An attractive little poem dedicated to Mr. R. R. Cotten and bride, appeared in the Tarboro Southerner and they were welcomed by a number of friends.

Mother was exceedingly popular from the first. She played and sang exceptionally well, was winsome and attractive in conversation, so that their home at once became a rendezvous for those informal gatherings of young people so much in vogue at that time in the south. Tarboro is an old town, with its families' traditions and well established social set. Indeed, its atmosphere in this respect was unsurpassed by any town of similar size in the

State, and it was in other respects a pleasant place to live. Our Sister Agnes was born in this little house on the Commons.

Father in the meantime had established a branch business in Wilson and had purchased two plantations on credit, located along Tar River in the adjoining county of Pitt. One he purchased from a Mr. Evans and the other from the Foreman family. These places, almost adjoining, were mostly woodland at the time, but having placed some negro farmers there, the price of cotton was so good that father's share of the proceeds alone practically paid for the places the first year.

This so encouraged him that he permitted the really great ambition and desire of his life to exert itself—that is, to become a planter. This was the one highly respectable calling in the South, it had always been so, he had been raised on this idea and had imbibed it deeply into his soul. So he closed his business in Tarboro and placed his business at Wilson in the hands of a junior partner and moved himself, wife and child to the plantation. He invited mother to name these places and she christened one Cottendale and the other Southwood, not Southall as father suggested, for she had with her a strong feeling that Southall was an unfortunate name. Southwood had been known for a generation as Eggville and was a favorite spot for cock-fighting. Port Crayon's drawing of a cock-fight, made near Greenville in 1857, is thought to have been made there. These two plantations were destined to be father's greatest joy, his pride and care for life.

The location was as rural and rustic as could well be imagined; no conveniences, no neighbors, and a mail once a week. Nothing whatever seems to have been thought of the hardships of burying a young girl of twenty in this

solitude; indeed, mother has said herself that she thought nothing whatever of it, she had her child, her books, and her duty with her husband, though it was eighteen months before anyone called upon her.

Here, my eldest brother, Robert Randolph, was born, at Southwood. The places did splendidly and were much improved, cleared and built up. The business at Wilson, however, was not doing so well, so after two years father felt it encumbent upon him to move to Wilson and take charge of the business himself. This he did in 1869.

In Wilson, father did an exceedingly good business and did very well considering the dreadfully disturbed conditions that existed everywhere in our Southland at that time. He bought a two-story frame dwelling located on Nash Street, next to where the Briggs Hotel is now located, and here I was born and christened Bruce in honor of the New York house that had so befriended my father immediately after the war. This house, in which I was born, was built by Dr. Alexander Spotswood Cotten, a distant cousin of my father's, who, after graduating at the University of Pennsylvania, married Miss Sarah Vick of Nash County in 1854, and located in the town of Wilson for the practice of medicine. I think he was the first graduate physician to so locate in the town and after his death his widow married Dr. N. B. Herrin.

The house is still standing, though moved to a side street in the same block. I especially state this in case some of our ladies should, some day, become tablet minded.

My brother Lyman Atkinson Cotten, and my sister, Sallie Dromgoole Cotten, were also born in Wilson, as well as two children who died very young. Wilson was then, and is today, a pleasant place, has grown very much, and both father and mother always looked back with pleasure

upon their ten years' residence on Nash Street, and valued through life the many friends they had there.

Father had established a branch business at the village of Falkland in Pitt County near his farm, and in 1878 decided to remove to Falkland, the business at Wilson not doing so well and he still hearing the call of the plantation. I was five years of age at the time we made this move and remember well, how mother looked, but father made no impression upon me at that age, and existed not at all so far as my memory goes.

We remained one year at Falkland, during which time my brother, Preston Sims, was born, and I started to school with my elder brother and sister, under a governess. We then moved to Cottendale, which was destined to be our home for the remaining forty-eight years of father's life.

The village of Falkland is very near Cottendale and for many years was our postoffice. I have seen it stated, that it was named for Lord Falkland, but this I am sure is an error. I find that a man named George Falkner, of that neighborhood, secured license to conduct an Ordinary shortly after the Revolutionary War, and from an old diary I find it referred to as Falkner House. The place was undoubtedy known as Falkner House until 1837, when it became a postoffice. As a postoffice the spelling was changed to Falkland.

The house we lived in while there, is still standing. It was built by James Lang Cobb, who having married Fanny May Williams, secured a good estate adjoining. Their daughter married the Rev. Nedham Bryan Cobb and was the mother of the late Professor and highly regarded—Collier Cobb of the University of North Carolina.

I recollect very distinctly our move to Cottendale. In preparation of our coming, two rooms had been added on as wings to the little cottage that constituted the dwelling there, and a dining room and kitchen built on in the rear. One end of the back porch was cut off and built into a bathroom, which was, I believe, the first room ever, so exclusively built for bath purposes in Pitt County.

The house even as improved was merely a frame cottage of plain construction, containing six rooms, a dining room and kitchen. There was a two-room house to one side called the laundry, which was also used for storage and other purposes. Further on in the rear stood the Gin House, barns, sheds and stables, the whole set in a splendid grove of oak trees, as can be seen to this day. The negro quarters sat in a row some distance back, the entire picture being rural and typically southern.

Plantation life in the decades prior to our Civil War, attained a fine dignity, and produced a social and cultural class that dominated the South. Almost founding an Empire, it was broken by the war, yet its spirit marched on, growing ever weaker and weaker under the changes wrought by the Revolution. It has long since disappeared now. "Masse is in the cold, cold ground" and "Uncle Ned has gone where the good darkies go", and nothing can be preserved of their extraordinary life and companionship.

The winning of the west, with its wagon trains, buffalo herds, and Indian fights, will remain with us very truly preserved, but the old plantation is among things lost upon the face of the earth; for it was a soul, a thing quite without incident, a thing that can no more be preserved in literature than the odor of the Jasmine, so for that I will attempt nothing.

Yet it was in the dying embers of the old plantation that I had my being and was reared to manhood days. The odor of the Jasmine still lingers on my sense and speaks of many things that are dead and gone, and were of no importance to commence with, except for the soul that was in them. But of these I will speak, only of some customs and things that yet survived during my boyhood, and surrounded our home life at Cottendale, even though they must appear commonplace and wholly unimportant.

At the time we established our home at Cottendale, the Civil War was some fifteen years behind us and the State had passed through the agonies of reconstruction. There was not a railroad or telegraph line in the county. We had a mail twice a week and the roads were wholly unimproved and at times all but impassable. We had practically no neighbors, so were entirely dependent upon ourselves for such social and intellectual recreation as we could devise.

It is strange to look back upon it all now and reflect how simple life was, yet how happy and contented we were in those surroundings. I can not explain it, but it is nevertheless true—we were always a close family, extremely happy and fond of each other, and even proud of our humble little home at Cottendale.

The plantations were in charge of overseers, one at Cottendale and one at Southwood, and the entire cultivation was done in those days with hired negro labor. Fifteen dollars per month was the wage of a man, and twelve dollars, that of a woman. In addition, they received five pounds of meat and a peck of meal each Monday at noon, as a weekly ration. It was a favorite pastime of mine to be present at these ration times and enjoy the jokes and

banter that took place as the overseer passed out the rations.

Cottendale was largely a forest when we first moved there and much land was cleared during my boyhood. The timber was mostly immense pine trees, scarred by turpentine boxes, though the tar, pitch and turpentine industry had long since passed from this locality. These beautiful and immense trees were, everywhere, cut down and their bodies burned merely for the riddance. In order for them to burn effectively, they had to be piled in heaps before firing. This very heavy labor was accomplished by making it something of a neighborhood affair and the occasion was known as a "logrolling".

Whenever a sufficient number of these trees were ready to be "heaped", neighbors of the more masculine sort were invited to a logrolling. There was no pay for this work, it being, in a way, a mixed social affair, for men only. Free whiskey was furnished along with barbacue in plenty, so the occasion was always boisterous. Men would be pitted against each other in physical strength and not infrequently some man's reputation would be completely ruined by being "pulled down" as they called it, at a logrolling".

The corn shucking was another ancient social institution which, like the logrolling, had for long played an important part in the life of the rural south. This was designed to assist in ridding the corn from the shuck, a very considerable task on the farm, so it was also made, something of a social occasion.

The corn having been gathered and placed in a long row in the barnyard, invitations would be sent out to the adjoining plantations to whites and blacks alike to a corn

shucking, on a selected evening. Usually, the hands of each plantation would arrive, marching in a body headed by their "whooper". It was an interesting sight to see them arrive, each singing in a body, and marching three times around the corn pile, before stopping to be greeted by their host group.

The host group would then pass around a jug of whiskey, singing themselves this time, some melody of welcome, but usually carrying a refrain, reflecting upon the poverty or laziness of the visiting group.

All having arrived and been well "drammed", the parties placed themselves behind the corn pile on their knees, still retaining their plantation formation. The whoopers would then mount the corn pile opposite their respective groups, and the shucking commenced, along with the singing and fun that was sure to be in plenty. Whoopers were selected for their wit and quickness in corning to turn little rhymes and phrases that would reflect upon some other group or whooper—a sort of teasing and blackguarding, back and forth, as the shucking proceeded. He who shucked a red ear of corn received an extra drink, and the wit and quickness of the whoopers was often remarkable and highly amusing.

Sometimes the jesting between rival whoopers would grow rather fierce, and display too much feeling, so that the overseer would place another on the corn pile, or stop shucking altogether for the purpose of taking a drink all around. I remember myself having my feelings considerably aroused because a visiting whooper had gotten decidedly the best of our whooper, Uncle Joe Cates. A good whooper added considerable prestige to the reputation of a plantation, and during the days of slavery sold for a

much better price, on that account. Under the combination of fun, rivalry, and free whiskey, it was amazing how much corn would be shucked before midnight.

In antibellum days the slaves were aroused in the morning by the blowing of a trumpet, but, by the time of which I am speaking, every plantation was equipped with a bell. The plantation bell was the time piece by which all labor was regulated, the sun being the master clock.

Much of the old-time equipment used on the plantation in antibellum days, was still in use in my young days, the most picturesque, of which, was the home-made cotton press. This was a familiar object in almost every farmyard, and stood sometimes, fully forty feet in the air. It was usually capped with a shed-like roof, to protect it from the weather, which roof, turned as the screw was driven up or down by horsepower. The cotton screw was constructed from a trunk of a tree about 20″ in diameter, and screwmakers were highly valued in a community; I dare say that there is not a countryman in the State who can make one today.

Wells were, everywhere, equipped with a swinging pole attached to a huge lever, held in the air by an upright beam—see-saw fashion—weighted at the other end with waste iron. I have seen this device for drawing water elsewhere, only in China and in Russia. In my early boyhood days oxen were very plentifully found in use as draft animals in our community as well as home-made wooden axels for carts. Also, I have seen cabins with solid wooden sliding shutters in place of the frame glass used today, and all of the older log houses had stick chimnies covered with clay. But none of these things were to be found at Cottendale; father was far too progressive for such antiquated

equipment. Our negroes lived in very good frame cottages, set in a row some distance from the house, and each was provided with ample ground for a vegetable garden, and potato patch, which generally remained uncultivated then, as now.

Up until I was a grown man, the fields were, everywhere, in North Carolina, as indeed, throughout the south, enclosed by a worm rail fence, that completely surrounded the cultivated portions. These fences were about eight rails high and there must have been hundreds of thousands of miles of them in North Carolina alone. The whole of this stupendous waste of timber and labor was for the purpose of keeping out a few hogs and an occasional stray cow. From the earliest period of our history, the woodland everywhere, regardless of ownership, was considered a public range and cultivators were required by law to fence against cattle, instead of stock owners being required to keep their stock on their own property.

Finally the strain and expense of maintaining such a vast system of fences became so great that landowners began to organize for the purpose of having the requirement removed by Legislative enactment. The non-landowning class along with the small farmers resisted vigorously what they considered an invasion of their ancient rights, and the result was a long and bitter political fight that went on for years. Even as late as 1912, my father decided not again to stand for the Legislature on account of the feeling that had developed against him for having secured an extension of the no-fence law during the last session.

The negroes at Cottendale, and indeed, throughout Eastern North Carolina, were and still are, a well behaved and, generally speaking, well working lot of people. Most

of them are from two to six generations American born, and were originally Angolas and Carramantes. I think there were very few, if any, African born negroes in North Carolina at the time of which I am writing, though further south a considerable number still survived. I have seen a few myself in South Carolina, and there are perhaps some yet remaining, when we consider that the smuggling in of negroes from Africa continued briskly, in spite of the law and watchfulness, and that the last cargo was abandoned on the coast of Florida shortly after General Lee surrendered.

Beyond petty thieving, now and then, there was little crime among our negroes, nor did we ever have any trouble at all with them. The old slave, like the old plantation, can never be painted or preserved to posterity. They were entirely different from any set of human beings that ever existed, and very many of them, superior men in character and habits of life.

The affairs of two plantations along with the mercantile business that father always conducted in connection with his farms, kept him a busy man at all seasons. A variety of problems were constantly arising requiring tact, ability, and pains. He was a man of enormous industry, and his success was very remarkable, when we consider that he established a plantation home, after the war, whereon he maintained and educated a large family, maintaining at the same time a high social position and personal standing. This during a time when plantation life, was everywhere, disintegrating and falling into utter decay.

At home father would be up at seven o'clock and ring a bell for prayers. We children were required to be

prompt and absolutely regular in our attendance at morning prayer. No excuse was accepted, and only mother, if she wished, would be excused. But mother was very regular in her attendance upon morning prayer, though she was often up at night with a complaining child, with earache or toothache, or some of the multitudinous ailments that seize upon children. I can see the family now as we used to sit before breakfast—father with prayerbook in hand, and Lucy, the cook, and Dennis, the colored boy, seated in the corner of the room. The morning prayers were a positive institution in our household for years and years, until indeed the last child grew up and had flown from the little nest that had nurtured us to maturity.

In all respects, father was the best Christian I have ever known. Religion to him was a cheerful thing, a thing to carry with you and live up to on all occasions. He had none of that hysteria or terrible gloom that possessed, in those days, some of our denominationals. Revivals and evangelistic camp meetings, with the noise and uproar that frequently accompanied these exercises, made no appeal to him whatsoever; though he was very tolerant and I never heard him speak lightly or disrespectfully of any religious set. Only I do recall that a strolling preacher came to Cottendale on one occcasion and was taken in for the night. The next morning I asked father if he had discussed the Bible with the preacher on the evening before, and he said—no, that he had, rather, tried to discover something, that he preacher knew something about.

We were an Episcopal family, and father established the remarkable record of not having missed but one church convention for a period of over fifty years. He also gave very freely to our impoverished little parish which was located in Greenville.

We were the only Episcopal family in that entire section and, as the nearest church where they had services only occasionally was at Greenville, it was not possible for us to attend services. However, the Reverend Mr. I. N. Hughes, of blessed memory, would occasionaly come and hold a service with us; also, the annual visits of the Bishops were occasions always to be looked forward to. Bishop Atkinson and Bishop Lyman were both remarkable men. Bishop Lyman, the more learned perhaps, but Bishop Atkinson more loved, because he had nurtured our church through the vicissitudes of the Civil War. They always came occasionally and spent the night with us, and my brother, Lyman Atkinson Cotten, was named in honor of these two beloved churchmen. Mr. Hughes was also greatly beloved at Cottendale, and I remember, that it was he, who brought the news to Cottendale, of the assassination of General Bryan Grimes. I recall, so distinctly, though it has been fifty-three years ago, father's disturbed countenance.

It is difficult now to understand the terror and fear, with which many people approached religion and the worship of God in those days. Practically everything was a sin on Sunday, and I recall distinctly the bitter opposition and controversy that raged when the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad first proposed to run trains on Sunday. Long before, a man in the county had been expelled from his church for having sent his son to college, and a woman was dropped for wearing a gold ring to church.

Mother had been raised a strict Methodist but upon marrying she had immediately become a communicant of the Episcopal Church, and in this I know she was relieved, for the Methodist outlook on life was never congenial or

appealing to her. She could never attach any sin to dancing or even to playing the piano on Sunday, as many did. She was ever broad in her religious views, and never believed that the saving of her soul was such a terrifically difficult thing, as to involve such harmless pastimes, and require such doleful conduct, as was frequently demanded in those days. I have heard her say that the narrow path needed some considerable trimming and widening here and there.

Yet, our community was not a religious community by far, there were many blameless men and women as well as some pious humbugs here and there, whose religion ever seemed to hang over them as a terrifying pall. The doctrine of hell fire and eternal damnation constitued religion and how themselves to dodge the avenging angle, constituted the sole objection of religion.

Father and I would sometimes attend some of the quarterly meetings or other religious gatherings within driving distance of Cottendale, and as I became a young man I attended more frequently alone.

These gatherings were rather curious and interesting to look back upon. They were in truth more social in their nature, than religious, for our country people were starved in those days for social amusements and polite intercourse. So these meetings gave opportunity for people to assemble from a great distance and discuss many more things than religion. Young men came to look the girls over and the girls came for sweet religion's sake, but were careful to be arrayed in their best bonnets, and many a young heart has been uneasy in advance, wondering if John or William would be out on the second Sunday.

Numbers of men would never go near the meeting house but would stand in groups, whittling sticks and talking crops or neighborhood gossip; and there was an accursed custom at most of these places, that was the bane of the swain, an invention of the very devil himself as I myself have thought. That is, the women and girls were required to go in one door and set on that side of the house, while the men went in another door and sat on the opposite side; women on the right and men on the left.

Whatever the origin of this custom, it was bad for religion, and I am inclined to attribute much of our neighborhood lack of religion to this cruel custom, for these young people could not see each other often, and many a silent oath has gone up from the male side while a prayer was being offered to be followed by another sermon, and so on without end.

Sometimes these meetings would go on for several days and nights and would take on something of the form of an endurance test among the preachers, some of whom have been known to preach as long as four hours before being overcome. But the swain usually managed, in spite of all difficulties, to reach his girl in the end, and many thousands of matches have been made at these religious gatherings.

I have spoken of whittling sticks. This was a habit of many men in my young days. The whittler would, always, when he joined a group, produce or secure nearby a small stick and whittle it into shavings while talking.

Some would squat on their haunches and remain in that uncomfortable position for an increditable length of time whittling on a stick. I am unable to account for the whit-

tler or the squatter, or to trace any historic reason for either. I believe that both habits have passed entirely by now, for I have not seen a squatter or a whittler for many years.

Shouting at religious meetings and at baptizings was very common among the negroes, and to some extent, among the lower whites. I have seen negroes crazed for hours in this condition. I have recently gathered some interesting data concerning this "dancing" as it was first called, but hardly consider it relevant for introduction here, for it had not the slightest bearing upon our home life at Cottendale.

On account of our isolated situation, it was necessary for us to have a Governess, as she was called, to teach us children our educational rudiments. These young ladies were not Governesses in the real sense of the word, having nothing whatsoever to do with us children out of the classroom. We seldom had the same Governess more than one term—not on account of the dfficulties of the work I hope, but because our Governesses were usually so attractive that they could not resist matrimony. They were fully a part of the family while with us and several have remained lifelong family friends.

While I was still a very small boy, Miss Sarah Blount come to our house for the purpose of doing some sewing for mother. She was a middle-aged spinster of good family. Instead of staying a week or two as she intended, she lived on with us for some years and performed a service in our household, the value of which can hardly be appraised. She saved mother enormously from all those multitudinous labors that have to do with housekeeping and

the raising of a large family of children who have to be clothed, instructed, managed, washed and occasionally spanked.

In such a household, discipline and courtesy are essential to the peace and comfort of all. We were raised on the principles of discipline and courtesy to all; and I had heard the words so frequently, that years afterwards when I came across an Army Regulation reading, "Courtesy is indispensable to discipline", I immediately thought to myself that mother surely must have had something to do with that.

None exceeded Miss Sarah in this, or in unselfishness; she was that type of spinster, not uncommon in those days, who did all the work done by trained nurses of today. She has been dead now for many years and may God rest her big heart.

IV

There are certain things and conditions surrounding life in the South, especially in the rural sections, that it is not considered good form to refer to or even admit publicly. These have to do, mostly, with racial matters—the inherited sorrow of the South.

I will not discuss them here, only to say that the southern whites are framed with the ugliest condition that ever surrounded an Anglo-Saxon people and, say what anyone will, they have met it nobly and in the only way possible. The problem is solving itself, only I have to admit that the South has abandoned every political principal that it maintained with such spirit and ardor since our national independence, and stands today for every single thing that the Confederate soldier died to prevent.

These conditions, that surround every southern household, were felt and reflected upon at Cottendale, but like other southern people, we did not discuss them. There was nothing to do but to vote the Democratic ticket and trust in God.

There was nothing of great historic interest in our community. It had never been a rich or an aristocratic section, though one or two families had for some generations, stood out above others. These were for the most part gone at the time of our coming, though tradition still lingered as to their riches and mode of living.

First among these were the Williams family, who had settled here in 1727, and secured large grants of land. They produced some worthy men and women who had their position in the old plantation society of the day. In 1795, Mr. William Foreman, of Norfolk County, Virginia, came down, and having married a Miss Williams, secured by this or otherwise a large part of the Williams' holdings. He built the house known as Greenwreath, adjoining Cottendale, and it was from his grandson, that father purchased Cottendale. Across the river the old plantation of Bensboro, seat of the Atkinson family for several generations, was in decay, and shortly after our arrival, passed from the family entirely.

Adjoining Cottendale on the west was several thousand acres of land that had been acquired by a Mr. Spencer Harris during his lifetime, along with a large number of negroes. Mr. Harris, in his old age, rode down to a spring on his place one summer day and dismounting from his horse, drank well of the water, cool and sparkling. He then sat down under a spreading tree and forthwith died. Lightning shortly afterwards struck the tree and the spring dried up completely, so I have heard many times from the old Harris negroes.

Mr. John Spencer Harris, a son of this Mr. Harris, and a most estimable man, had inherited a part of this property. He had a family of children corresponding in age to our own family, and these were almost our sole companions and playmates during that period just before we were large enough to be sent off to school. We were neighbors and schoolmates, and while time has been harsh on some of us and death has taken others, I retain for them all, a lasting feeling of effectionate esteem.

When we moved to Cottendale, father had at the same time removed his mercantile business to Centre Bluff, a landing on Tar River, one and a half miles from the house. This place is supposed to have taken its name from the fact that it is located between two bluffs on the river, known in the early days, as the Upper and Lower Bluffs. The Upper Bluff became known as Pillsboro, and the Lower Bluff has long now been called Bluebanks.

During my father's lifetime, this place became of much local importance, and the shipping point, of all the back country, including the town of Farmville. Its history during this period is closely associated with father and is associated with my own early manhood, in a way that can never be erased from my memory. Here I earned my first dollar, and here, too, I loved my first girl; here, also, my older brother, Robert, was drowned while bathing in Tar River, on his fifteenth birthday.

Father erected a store here, with warehouses directly on the banks of the river, which business, was conducted by two clerks, who resided on the premises and had for years, as cook, old Aunt Pennine Atkinson, a faithful old soul and a former slave. These clerks were for some years, Charley Vines and Jeff Fountain, two men of character and high standing, then, as afterwards. Jeff Fountain was my cousin. Finding himself unhappily situated at his own home, on account of his father's unfortunate disposition, he left his father's house and came to Cottendale when seventeen years of age, asking aid and advice.

Father took him into his own family, sent him to school and finally to a business college. He developed into an exceptionally fine man; was a man of character and parts, was successful in affairs, and died a few years ago in Ra-

leigh, much lamented and highly regarded. To me, he was much like an older brother. He had a strikingly unique personality, was generous and kind, and I recall his memory with great affection and high esteem, now that he is gone.

Father did a considerable business here, besides the supplying of his own farms. Several other small stores also existed here from time to time, as well, of course, as the inevitable barroom.

On account of this barroom, which was ever the bane of my father's life, I fear that few people remember Centre Bluff with that same degree of charm and affection as I do. My fair Centre Bluff was, I fear, rather regarded as a dirty little hole, a sort of hell's half acre of the community, and I can not with honesty defend its reputation in this respect or maintain that it was precisely a cultural or moral center. Our community was, as I have inferred, rather uncivilized on the whole, and in addition, there was a particular group of whites and blacks whose drunkenness and lawlessness usually centered around this grog shop at the Bluff.

These men were, for the most part, merely noisy fellows, and objectional when drunk, but a few of them were desperate characters and had to be watched. The chief of these was George Gay, a man of desperate character and deliberate courage. He was, in truth, a dangerous man. My father never entered a barroom, under any circumstances, never drank, and was all the days of his life most genteel and courteous. He had, of course, not the slightest social contact with any of these people, yet he necessarily was brought into slight contact with them from time to time in a business way.

How he managed this situation, and even dominated it at times without ever permitting the slightest familiarity or lowering himself from his position, has always been an achievement of wonder to me. He never permitted anyone to come into his presence drunk, or to use profane language in his hearing, and I have frequently seen an entire group of drunken rowdies stand perfectly mute and respectful, merely at his approach. He was able to do this mostly, I think, through a real respect that these men must have had for him, and then, too, father was no fanatic by any means in regard to drink, and had, as well, a real physical courage that no man doubted or dared to test. Besides there was yet remaining, in those days, a very decided respect for class, a frank and open admission of social superiority, which has entirely gone today from our rural south, gone perhaps because class itself has gone.

Notwithstanding, this group of toughs sometimes gave me some concern, and frequently, mother would be apprehensive if father was late getting home at night. I recall one Saturday night, after I was large enough to become of some help in the store, we were late leaving for home and father told me that he had been cautioned that some of this crowd intended waylaying him on the road. He did not propose to be interferred with by these people, so he took an axe helm from the store and asked me to drive, which I did, he seated beside me with his axe helm between his knees. He never carried a revolver anywhere at any time.

I recall, too, that father was chairman of a county court that had considerable jurisdiction. This same George Gay, came before the court for having beaten a harmless old negro almost to death, with a pair of brass knuckles. Fath-

er sent him to jail for some months. George sent him word that he intended to kill him as soon as he was released. Father, so far as I know, never paid the slightest attention to it, but Jeff Fountain and Charley Vines felt concerned and fully prepared themselves against the day when George would be released. Sure enough on the day of his release he came to the store and wanted to see father. He was sent back to the office, Jeff following with a cocked revolver in his coat pocket, followed by Mr. Vines, likewise armed. George walked up to father's desk and asked him to loan him five dollars, which father promptly declined to do—not rising from his desk. George then turned on his heels and promptly walked from the premises. If he had made the slightest hostile move he would have been instantly killed.

Yet, Centre Bluff was not always sordid or barbarious. Many well behaved people came there, and picnic parties, or fish fries as they were called, frequent in season. It was at times a beautiful spot, surrounded by woods and a swamp forest through which our river flows. Flowing water to me has always been the most companionable of all the inanimate things of nature. I have dreamed much on the banks of Tar River and many of these dreams have come true, so I love it and tenderly regard it, in spite of its obscurity and its ugly habit of overflowing its bank. Fish were very much more abundant then, than now. White shad were very plentiful in season, and the lazy sturgeon came on his annual pilgrimage to fresh water and was frequently caught in front of our store.

But what appealed to me most about the river was the steamboating. In ye olden times, flat boats pushed by poles did the traffic on the river and carried most of the

produce of Pitt and Edgecombe Counties, down to tidewater. Many planters had their own flats and some of them were quite large and fitted with genteel cabins. Steamboats were first introduced on the river about 1830, the Petersburg and the North Carolina being among the first. The first permanent boat assigned to the river was the Amaidas, in 1849. The Post Bay and the Governor Morehead were both plying on Tar River, carrying freight and passengers, before the Civil War, and remained in the river until captured and destroyed by a Yankee raiding party at Tarboro, in 1863.

After the Civil War the Cotton Plant was a famous boat for many years. She was a stern wheeler, wheelbarrow type, and was built for traffic on the Roanoke. During the war she acted as a Confederate tender, at Hatteras and Ronoke Island, and also acted as a tender to the Albemarle, upon her famous descent upon Plymouth, and her later fight with the Federal double-enders in Albemarle Sound. After the war she was withdrawn from her hiding place, far up the Roanoke River and placed in commission on Tar River, where she ended her days in 1888, by being burned and abandoned above Old Sparta.

But by far, the most famous boat ever operated on Tar River, was the steamer Greenville, Captain Mayo. She was operated by the Tar River Transportation Company, a local concern, and made connections at Little Washington with the Clyde Line, for Norfolk.

She was the fastest and most attractively equipped boat ever placed on the river, and the only one that boasted a purser. It was on the Greenville that I made my first trips from home, when father used to take Lyman and me down with him on his occasional business trips, to Little

Washington. It was a glorious experience, these trips, of two days and a night, an experience never equaled in after life, even in our numerous voyages across the Atlantic and the Pacific, and it was on the Greenville, too, that father and I left for a week's stay at Ocracoke once, when I was about sixteen years of age.

There was a young girl aboard that trip, dressed in white dotted swiss with a blue sash. She was about my age and I fell so in love with that lovely little creature that I could neither sleep nor eat. An angel from heaven could not have smitten me more completely than this little slip of a girl, in her perfectly innocent way. I lived in a different ether, my whole physical and mental structure seemed changed, and I existed now only to worship this adored one.

I saw as much of her as it was possible for me to do for a period of one week, and was then taken back home almost in a state of collapse. I am convinced that some great chemical change, a breaking up of atoms or something of that sort, takes place in a fellow at a time like that.

The Tar River Transportation Company also built another boat called the Tarboro, which was wrecked and abandoned on a sand bar, which caused the Tar River Transportation Company to go into the hands of a receiver.

The Old Dominion Steamship Company also operated boats on the river for a period of about forty years. Their steamer, the R. L. Myers, was peculiarly well-fitted for river work. It was the R. L. Myers 2nd, that I knew the best. Her captain, W. A. Parvin, was a northern man who coming south just before the war, did a bit in the

Confederate Army, and ever afterwards ran a boat on Tar River. Many trips I have taken with him and his mate, George Dowdy, to Tarboro and Washington, and return. I knew every landing from Tarboro to Washington, and am still filled with the lore of Tar River, absorbed from Captain Parvin and George Dowdy, as well as from Hanks, the engineer, and old Uncle Arden, a negro engineer, who spent his entire life in voyages up and down Tar River.

The river was, in early colonial days, frequently referred to as *Taw* River, and some of our historians have stated that *Taw* was the Indian name of the river, and that its Indian meaning was the River of Health. There appears, however, no real foundation for this pretty supposition. It is much more likely that the early settlers on the upper river named the river *Taw*, in honor of their own *Taw* river back in Devenshire, England, from which vicinity many of them came. The name, naturally, very quickly became changed to Tar river, in honor of the principal commodity produced along its banks.

Steamboating on Tar River was for long a picturesque and important local business; it has now for years ceased to exist at all. The landings have grown up in forest and since few people living remember them as I do, I will take you down the river from Tarboro to Little Washington, a distance of forty-five miles, and point out to you some of the landings well-known in my young manhood.

Old Sparta, is eight miles below Tarboro, and is located on the south side of the river; this was the first place settled on the river and the tiny village sets some distance back from the landing. When it became a postoffice it became Old Sparta, because there was another Sparta in the State which had already become a postoffice, and the in-

habitants were entirely unwilling to abandon their ancient name. It was once the center of a thrifty planting community.

A few miles below Old Sparta there was Carr's Landing, a private landing for Bracebridge Hall, the seat of the Carr family. Two miles below Carr's Landing, on the north bank of the river, we come to Penny Hill. This is a very good landing and a very attractive spot. It was the site of an Indian town in colonial days, and is said to have received its English name from Penny Hill, a free woman of color, who resided there for many years doing cooking and selling tobacco and eatables to the flatters who plyed up and down the river. It was a tiny village for a hundred years, then disappeared entirely.

Next on the south side of the river was Dupree's Landing, a private landing, and about three miles below is Pillsboro, the landing for the village of Falkland. This place was first known as William's Landing, also as Tobacco Patch and the Upper Bluff. Before the Civil War, someone opened a store there and the place was found so unhealthy that some wag applied the name Pillsboro, which has stuck to the present day. Just below Pillsboro, and on the north side of the river, we come to Bensboro, where there was for years a store, ferry and postoffice. It is difficult to locate the spot now. A mile below Bensboro, is located Centre Bluff, which I have described, but neglected to state that is was first called Foreman's Landing.

Below Centre Bluff, on the north bank of the river, was Reaves' Landing, a private landing of the Reaves family. Reaves' Stretch, is a beautiful straight stretch of the river extending to Bluebanks — the highest and most picturesque bluff on the river. Its base seems to be of blue

marl, and nearby, extraordinary marine deposits may be unearthed. Little Bluebanks or Randles' Barn, is just below. General Walter Gwynn, commenced the construction of a fortification here during the Civil War, designed to arrest passage of Yankee gunboats, but the work was never completed.

Next, on the north side of the river, was Gorham's Landing, on the property of Colonel Gorham, a Revolutionary soldier. It was an important landing in the early days along the river.

I do not recall whether Gauff's Point or Landing was above or below New River, but they are very near together and there was a ferry here also, once upon a time; on a map of 1820 it is marked Brown's Ferry. New River or Old River, whichever you choose to call it, was originally a sharp bend or loop in the river. By cutting through a very short neck a mile of navigation could be saved. 'Tis said that fishermen cut a small ditch through this neck, in order to take their canoes through and that nature very quickly completed the job so that it has now for many years been the main channel of the river.

There was a landing nearer Greenville, called and frequently referred to as Slaughter House Point, but I have never known its signficance or how its name was derived.

Redbanks' Landing is three miles below Greenville. There was once a ferry here and one of the earliest churches built in the country. Below Redbanks was Barbers' Landing and Simpson's Landing, neither, of any importance in my day. Simpson's Landing, was the landing of Colonel Simpson, the most prominent citizen of the county, in the days before the Revolution. I discovered

a quaint bit of a diary kept by a New England sailor while his sloop lay at this landing in 1770. He states that on one occasion he was chased up a tree by a ferocious wild boar while passing through the woods to Colonel Salter's home. Later, he was taken very ill while at the house of a Mr. Allen; he was placed in an attic room and frightfully neglected, he says. While his life was despaired of, there was a wedding in the Allen household. There was a party in the house every night for a week, and the girls used his attic as a dressing room, all of which distressed him deeply and he was glad to escape that rude country with his life.

Just below Great Bend is Taft's Landing where there was a country store. I find it referred to as early as 1820. The river here widens and deepens so that navigation is easy from here to Little Washington, fifteen miles away.

Next we come to Boyd's Ferry on the south bank of the river, originally known as Salters'. Grimes' Landing, the private landing of the Grimes family, is just below Boyd's Ferry, then we come to Yankee Hall, which was entirely abandoned as a landing in my day. Some New England traders are said to have located there about 1800, and to have done a good business throughout that section for years.

It is a pleasant run down from Yankee Hall around Willow Point where the river widens very considerably and the town of Little Washington comes into full view. A number of old wrecks and hulks of ships are lying in the mud over on the south bank and the long rows of piles driven across the river to prevent the Yankees from ascending during the Civil War are mute reminders of those strenuous days. It is a pleasant trip through glorious foliage of great trees and masses of entangled vines,

moss and brush. Some hundreds of huge terrapins, sunning themselves on logs, have reluctantly tumbled overboard at our approach and we have seen no doubt a flock or two of wild turkeys, a number of musk rats and maybe a deer swimming the river.

Returning to Centre Bluff, it was a point of activity in those days when the country was dependent upon the river for transportation. The county maintained a free ferry here for years, and we shipped, I recall, some 13,000 bales of cotton from this point in one season, and the incoming freight—especially fertilizer—was very considerable. With the building of a railroad to Greenville, and afterwards to Farmville, shipping by way of the river ceased and Centre Bluff lost its importance as a shipping point. Finally, in 1900, father withdrew his business and my Centre Bluff today is one of the dead cities of the Tar.

V

We are now in the gay nineties and many changes are upon us at Cottendale. Several children are practically grown and all have cut their baby teeth. There is a severe depression, the farms are losing money and this at a time when money is most needed to keep us boys and girls at school. Father is sorely pressed but shows up greater as he always did in adversity. Mother is all pluck, uncomplaining and cheerful. But young hearts are gay. We were all singing Ta-Ra-Ra-Ra-Bum-DeA, reading Trilby and taking the girls out for buggy rides. The girls had dropped their hoops and bustles, were wearing sailor hats and shirtwaists with enormous sleeves and puffed their hair out with things called "rats". They still laced tightly around the waist, but that mysterious region, just above the ankle, was to remain in concealment for two decades yet.

My sister, Agnes, was married at Cottendale in January, 1891, to Julian B. Timberlake, Jr., of Raleigh, and the occasion was very naturally exciting and interesting to all, being the first of its kind to take place in our family.

Driven to desperation and despair by the low price of cotton, our neighborhood turned to an industry that had gone for a century from these parts. Most of our farmers had never seen tobacco in the growing state but they took to it rapidly and with enthusiasm as soon as it was demonstrated that Sir Walter Raleigh's weed could be raised and prepared for market in our parts. I assisted myself in the curing of the first barn ever cured at Cottendale, the first of thousands to follow, and we followed on that occasion,

written directions furnished by Mr. D. Y. Cooper, a warehouseman of Henderson.

Father and others brought down a number of tobacco farmers from Granville and other tobacco counties, our own local towns began to transform themselves into markets and the business has grown to enormous proportions.

The introduction of tobacco culture brought about many changes in habits and character of living, some of which were far from desirable. It was long hailed as the Savior of the agriculturals in our parts, but now, after forty years of intensive production, we have destroyed all the forest that remained in the county and are as poor as we were to start with. There has hardly been a decent house erected on a farm in Eastern North Carolina since the Civil War and I do not believe that there is a dozen white men residing on their own land unencumbered, within a radius of twenty-five miles of Cottendale.

While these matters were having their beginnings, our neighbor of eight miles away, Elias Carr, was elected Governor of the State. He was a lifelong friend of father's, and his seat, Bracebridge Hall, was one of the few places for many miles where we maintained anything like a close intimacy. The Chicago World's Fair had been planned and was about to take place. Governor Carr appointed Mrs. Kidder, of Wilmington, and Mrs. Price, of Salisbury, Lady Managers from North Carolina, for this Tri-Centennial celebration of the discovery of America. Mother was appointed an alternate for Mrs. Kidder, who, it appears, could not give proper time to the matter, so she impressed mother into action to take her place.

This gave mother an opportunity that she had never had before; that is, to become acquainted in the State on an

extensive scale as well as to meet women from all parts of the Union. She traveled North Carolina very thoroughly in the interest of the North Carolina exhibit, held scores of meetings from New Bern to Ashville, and became very favorably known throughout the State for her intelligence, and for the energy with which she promoted this undertaking.

During the fair she was at Chicago most of the time where she made many acquaintances and developed friendships with women from many sections of the country. Her success in these matters was most pronounced and her activities in women's movements actually started with this event and continued with ever-increasing influence until her death.

I have given rather fully some idea of both father's and mother's fine characters and performances in life. But mother needs some additional analysis here in order to show what manner of person she developed into from the background that I have given; mother's intellectual qualities and inclinations were far more complex than father's. She was, as I have stated, a perfectly normal woman with every feminine instinct fully developed. She wanted children and, having them, the full duty of motherhood followed and was most faithfully and beautifully performed.

She possessed none of certain female traits that men so frequently scoff at, but in reality, admire in women, such as feigned helplessness, susceptibility to flattery, small vanities, excessive weaknesses for dress and society. She was below the normal woman in all these things, never played her sex or used woman's weapons, but used direct methods always at home and abroad. She was not at all in-

terested in small gossip, and had no vanity as to her feminine influence over man.

But where she differed mostly from other women, was in her mind and soul. Mother's mind and soul were more nearly united than in most people. She was not so profound, as some women I have known, but her mind was far more beautiful and versatile.

She had, to commence with, an exceedingly good education, and she continued to use and develop that education, all the days of her life. She did not specialize in any particular field of study until middle life, but merely followed her taste and inclinations for her own pleasure, and personal entertainment. For years after her marriage, she showed a strong preference for the poets and wrote a goodly number of poems herself, under the pen name of Philo, which were published in the Wilmington, Wilson, and Tarboro papers. The first volume of her scrapbook, which was commenced in 1866, is entirely devoted to poetry and the poets. She also read all the classic novels, considered so necessary at that period, such as Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray. She read, as well, every other sort of book that she could get her hands on.

She lived in severe mental isolation for the greater part of her life, which subjected her to rather excessive self introspection, which was easily discernible to those who studied her closely. She read and thought and dreamed, and read and thought and dreamed again, with no opportunity of self expression until she became ripe and overflowing with zeal and the fullness of it all. And while mother's reading and studies touched upon practically the whole cultural field, there was one amazing defect in her mental preparedness, at least such always seemed to me. She knew no history in proportion to her information on

other subjects. She regarded history as a record of wars and cruelty and of no value in the understanding of the present or future. She was amazingly uninterested in the past of mankind and never seemed to realize that it was entirely impossible to understand the present without knowing the causes of it, that lay in the past. I have had many discussions with her about this but she was ever so enchanted with the future of mankind that she would never admit that the past had any important bearing on it; yet, she was a person of really extensive reading.

Mother also had one defect of character, almost a deformity it seemed to me when I was a little boy. She did not care for dogs. I had a little dog called Rance—though his real name was General Ransom. I loved this little dog so much that I used to take my meals with him whenever I could. But every dog has its flea, and plantation dogs are apt to exceed that permissible number, so dogs were never allowed in the house at Cottendale. For a person who was situated as she was and whose mind was so exceptionally inquisitive, mother was peculiarly uninterested in animal life—except bird life.

She was earnest and fascinating in conversation and seemed to look all over you when enthusiastic about something she was talking about. As a letter writer, she was without an equal, I believe. She could write literally dozens of letters a day, all entertaining and upon widely varying subjects, and in a handwriting exceptionally clear and splendid.

At the close of the World's Fair, mother was quite well known among the women of the State and was on terms of near intimacy with the active women in other parts who were interested in numerous things that collectively became known as "The Woman's Movement".

This movement manifested itself in North Carolina more particularly in the formation of women's clubs in all parts of the state for educational, civic, social and political betterment. In this movement, mother threw her self with energy and enthusiasm and came to be known as the Club Mother of North Carolina.

I left home in 1897 and have never resided in the State since, though my ties and heart-strings were so anchored that I have ever felt that Cottendale was my real home. I retain every letter that mother ever wrote me over a period of twenty-five years, and they are now being bound as family papers, only the period 1908 to 1910 are missing; lost, I presume, at the time of my rather hasty evacuation of Fort McHenry in 1910 for the purpose of being married in England, These letters give a most vivid picture of our family-life and movements for a period of a quarter of a century.

After 1910 I saw very much more of father and mother than I had during the decade preceding, was very frequently at Cottendale, and I think I know as well as anyone mother's feelings and ideas in regard to this woman's movement; though, of her actual physical work in this field, I knew very little.

Mother, as I have said, spent even most of her life in severe mental isolation; she was interested, of course, in father's affairs but could take no real part in them. She was also interested in neighborhood conditions and many other things at hand, but none of these furnished that particular quality of intellectual companionship that she so desired. This sort of companionship did not exist in our section or in the adjoining towns, except occasionally, and the fact that she resided on a plantation made no particle of difference to her in this respect.

I do not wish to infer that mother was ever unhappy under these conditions—lonely, no doubt at times— but never so lonely as many city women I have known, who have no resources within themselves. Isolation of a selected sort, is indeed, necessary for original thinking and the development of resources, and this was precisely what developed mother as she was.

There is no question but that early in life mother began to think of woman's sphere in life and commune with herself about it all. She found much in the average woman's life that she felt could be improved, made over, or entirely changed, to the betterment of both men and women. She regretted what she regarded as the inferior role, that civilization had at this point assigned to women, and positively resented the implication of mental inferiority. She felt that the greatest need in the world was an educated, vigorous, unhampered womanhood—a woman elevated and lifted out of her hampered stagnated state into a vastly more useful field. She never thought of hampering men in any particular, there was nothing resembling a sex war in her creed, though she was quite prepared to undertake a considerable skirmish with the male, whenever necessary, to carry her point.

So, by the time the so-called woman's movement reached North Carolina, mother was far advanced in her ideals, had studied the question for years and was well equipped to do pioneer service in this field. The movement in North Carolina was never radical in nature, our southern women being, by their situation and background, necessarily conservative, and, even for long, they hesitated to accept the club movement which has been the principal manifestation of the woman's movement in the South. North Car-

olina is an ideal State for the useful woman's club. Having no large cities, it has a hundred attractive towns where these clubs have accomplished very great awakening, besides furnishing, as well, healthy activity and needed recreation for hundreds of women. The men at first were inclined to be shy and suspicious of the thing, but as soon as they found that the clubs would not, after all, interfere with their comforts at home, they came in quite generously, which helped matters enormously.

Mother was absorbed in the organization and well-being of these clubs for twenty-five years. She gave freely of herself and time to this work and was amply rewarded, not only by her success, but especially by the regard and high feeling of affection and esteem in which the club women of the State held for her. They established a State wide Loan Fund designed to assist poor girls in securing an education which is called The Sallie Southall Cotten Loan Fund and at two of the State's Institutions for the education of its women: the North Carolina Women's College at Greensboro and at The Teachers Training School at Greenville each have a handsome building named in her honor.

The club movement in North Carolina naturally took on some political significance. The pressure from without was too great for it to escape this, but the political activities of these North Carolina clubs was on the whole very slight. In the matter of votes for women, mother was, in the early days of the movement, against it. She strongly expressed her feelings this way in a diary she kept while in Chicago during the World's Fair. She told me, as well, upon several occasions, that she was opposed to it, because she feared it might lead to some "embarrassment of our men". "North Carolina", she said, "has made the pluckiest fight against distressing odds of any State in the South and I don't think that we women ought to do anything that might embarrass our men politically."

Yet—as the movement grew apace, she became to favor it, at least she could never oppose it, though she was never a militant on this subject. She was glad when the matter was settled and glad, I am sure, that it was settled in the affirmative, and hoped that after all it would introduce something into politics af a cleansing and softening nature. In after years she expressed to me, almost bitterly, her disappointment in this matter of votes for women. The women in America had disappointed her in this matter and had done as she had first feared—at least in places—embarrassed and handicapped good government.

But the vote was not the only disappointment that mother experienced in this woman's movement. As she grew older and riper in experience, she discovered many things about women that she little dreamed could exist in such abundance. Not about her North Carolina women, she knew them and they had never dissappointed her, but about certain phases and leadership of the movement that did not touch North Carolina, except as it affected the whole nation.

She began to realize by degrees that dishonesty, corruption, immorality, bribery and destructive radicalism, existed without regard to sex. She discovered, too, that these sorts of women too frequently were able to disguise their real objectives and work themselves into positions of influence, or would organize clubs or societies with commendable sounding names behind which they worked for very different objects.

Mother was profoundly affected by the World War. She was among the first of my acquaintance to realize its scope and real significance. She saw a changed world ahead but not at all the world that was being so widely proclaimed at the time. The popular phrases of the day, that seemed to mould so much loose opinion, such as "war to stop wars" and "making the world safe for democracy", made no impression whatever on her. She early assigned Woodrow Wilson to the incompetents. She had no faith in prohibition or in the League of Nations, and saw ahead a world of far more bitterness and strife than had heretofore been known. To her, many things that women had for years now been striving for, were at the end of the war utterly useless, even insipid. Old problems had disappeared and others vastly more serious and dreadful in their aspect, were about to be ushered in. How would women behave in these matters? And would they assist helpfully? These were questions that were very constantly on mother's mind during the last years of her life and she was very uncertain about much of it. The fierceness and ruthfulness of the future struggle made her shudder for women. "They are far less prepared to resist communism than they were twenty-five years ago", she once told me, "and I can not even picture what it is going to be like."

Yet I am sure she never really despaired about the future of women. She had watched this so-called woman's movement with the keenest interest and approval. It would lead, she believed, to a better womanhood, a better manhood and to a better world.

The only time that I ever discovered her faith seriously wavering, was during those years immediately after the war, when the young people revolted against all conventionalities and many essential decencies. Mixed drinking, free discussion of sex, self determination and unseemly behavior, being the order of the day. This new freedom quickly gripped the young married set as well as millions of middle-aged married couples, who began petting and necking as promiscuously as their sons and daughters. It was a licentious and libertine period without parallel, and a condition deliberately incited and insisted upon by women.

This extraordinary phenomena puzzled mother considerably and at times caused her to have great misgivings as to the stability of womanhood turned loose. But she always maintained that woman would right herself, though a generation might be sacrificed in the process. Had she lived only a few years longer, she would have seen ample manifestations of this—for the debutante of 1931 was almost as reactionary in her deportment as her sister of 1921 was radical. Woman had again rediscovered that old adage: "The woman pays."

Well do I remember the last long conversation I had with her covering such subjects. It was at Cottendale and she sat in a little low rocker that she was very fond of. She had just read an article on Feminism in Europe which had not encouraged her.

I think mother at that time had some decided misgivings about the future of mankind and civilization in general. She noted how politics had changed the world over, how it had become a great boiling caldron of passion and greed, that it had gotten from control of common sense, and that no restrain could be imposed by merely counting paper ballots. As for the women, they had wondered far afield and she shuddered sometimes for them. Not her North Carolina women—they were well balanced and sane, but for the thousands of other women who had

gone into this movement intensely believing that they could honestly help mankind; that women now had practically every right; yet something was missing. The men had changed, did not treat women at all as they used to, fine feelings and manners were passing; so, after all, maybe the average woman had swapped her birthright for a mess of porridge and would be better off back at the old fireside with her toes stuck in bedroom slippers, darning the children's stockings as of old.

Like most thinking women of her period, mother ardently hoped for light and the development of some social system in which women would be economically free of the male. And in this I am sure that upright manhood would cooperate if any system of promise developed, for the handicap of women in this respect has been oppressive through the ages. Mother, therefore, quite approved of the feeding of our young womanhood into industries of all sorts, a system that has reached such stupendous proportions. She hoped from this that some system of economic independence would be evolved. But this system has led to much disaster and the disruption of important human ties and obligations, one being the development of an amazing indifference on the part of the male as to the economic condition of his female, or her condition in every other respect as well; too often to a complete willingness to dump all responsibility in regard to her, either wife or daughter.

And so mother went on nobly and almost with an inspired zeal, grapling with these human problems that have been the despair of ages, while father, with equal nobility and faithfullness of purpose, went on with his problem which ever remained the same—getting on in the world as it is.

VI

The marriage of my youngest sister, at Cottendale, in 1908, and her departure for her new home in Massachusetts, marked the end, so to speak, of an era at Cottendale. For twenty years now there had been young people in the house who had brought their friends from a distance on visits or houseparties; so that our simple little home was for years almost crowded with cheerfulness and an atmosphere of youth and gayety.

On many occasions the house would be given over to the girls alone, for weeks at a time, while the boys would quarter in what was called "the office"—a one-room structure, built originally for a school house. Looking back upon this office, it seems now, that it must have been a magic space. It had an extraordinary power of accomodating itself to any number of young men and making them superbly comfortable and cozy besides. All were supremely happy on these occasions and the memory of Cottendale, I know, lingers sweetly in the memory of very many, besides the family, who like us, were young then and would come to us for friendship sake and the joy of companionship, and our simple unpretentious hospitality. The volumes of guest books covering this period are interesting remaining evidence of those happy days as well as of the wholesomeness of our entertainment and the character of our friends gathered from very far and near.

No one enjoyed a house, overflowing with visitors, more than father and mother. They were of the crowd always,

and in truth, father and mother retained their youthful spirit until the very end. They never became venerable, neither of them, no more venerable than I am urban and it was impossible to ever associate the word with them.

Yet Cottendale was very naturally changed after the marriage and departure of the last child. Many visitors still came and went, and young people as well to a less extent; then, too, children returned from time to time and grandchildren began to appear with them; so Cottendale remained fully intact and functioned to every family need for twenty years yet.

I think, in fact, with father and mother, that the last twenty years of their lives were the most satisfactory of all. They had raised their family and launched them in the world; they were proud of their children and anxiety over many things had passed. They were financially comfortable, so a great relaxation came over both of them, a relaxation that was beautiful to behold and more beautiful still, to look back upon now.

Mother was able to take even larger participation in her club work, was away from home a great deal and maintained an enormous correspondence. Father, not to be outdone in activity, for the first time in his life began to take some interest in politics and went to the Legislature several times. He also was fond of taking little journeys of a few days to any sort of place and on any pretence and began to take a great interest in the Confederate Veterans, an organization that he had no time at all for during his more active years. He was made a Colonel on the General's Staff and attended all reunions for a number of years before his death.

It was a perfect joy to see father enjoy life after he was eighty years of age, yet we frequently had some apprehension about him on some of those long trips he insisted upon taking alone. He became subject to serious heart attacks and his persistent activities became the subject of numerous family consultations. I recall that I was once especially detailed to dissuade him from going to a Confederate Reunion at Dallas, Texas, when he was eighty-five and far from well; but father had no idea of being influenced by a mere lad like myself and went on down to Texas where he had a glorious time and came back perfectly well.

Finally, in spite of the persistent warnings of the doctor, I advised that we let father do as he pleased in these matters, that if he died on a train somewhere on one of these trips that I would go to him and bring him home. This policy was adopted and I think prolonged father's life a number of years.

We used to tease father, or at least try to tease him, about his willingness to attend any convention anywhere on any conceivable subject whatsoever; but father enjoyed these trips, and gave full rein to his natural sociability and always had experiences that were interesting to him. His last Confederate Reunion was held at Memphis, Tennessee, when father was eighty-eight years of age. He attended but was not at all well; also someone picked his pocket of $175.00, as he confided to me, which humiliated him exceedingly and made him feel that he was no longer able to look out for himself. I asked him why he wanted to go on such a trip in mid-summer, and he said that he "just felt that he wanted to be a boy again for a day or two;" a feeling so natural and understandable that no comment was necessary.

On his numerous trips to see me in Baltimore, it became increasingly difficult to keep him over any length of time. All his numerous friends in Baltimore had passed beyond and even the streets that he once knew so well in years gone by had completely changed in appearance so at last he had no one to call upon and I was rarely able to keep him longer than a day.

During the last decade mother continued her club work and did, I believe, what she considered some of her best work. She would spend much more time on visits to her children than father did, and was never so restless on her visits from home as father was. She would complain that she could do nothing for me, that any little present she could bring me seemed superficial; however, she was constantly bringing or sending me some little present, usually some North Carolina book that she had found on some of her travels. Once she came up to Cylburn and brought me a little cardboard, all nicely bound, and said that she had written a little token to her children, that it perhaps would not impress us now as we were all so well and happy, but that it would some day. It was written in her own superb handwriting and here it is:

A MOTHER'S BLESSING

Some day when you stand with aching heart, where I lie cold and still,
For the first time deaf to your cry of pain, and your tears arouse no thrill;
When my helpless hands can no longer caress nor strive for your earthly bliss,
When my silent lips can no longer heal your wounds with a mother's kiss:

Oh! then be glad that you gave me love, while warm with life I could know it,
Be glad that by tender words and deeds, you never failed to show it,

Be glad that you crowned my age with joy; nor brought me grief, nor shame,
And comfort take that your worthy lives brought honor to my name.

God grant us many happy years ere I am called above;
And then I fain would soothe your hurt with a mother's deathless love,
Think then of all the joy you gave, let the pain at your heart soon cease,
For in life and in death, I bless you, let my blessing bring you peace.

Sallie Southall Cotten.

To my Children.

We all had been watching father and mother for some years with the keenest joy. If we had, as they ever insisted, been a source of joy and pleasure to them; they very amply repaid it and deserved it, for no parents had ever lavished more wholesome care, pains, or gave more freely of love or sacrifices than they. So it was a positive joy now to see them both enjoying life in their extreme old age, so generously, and for so many years, after what might have been considered a reasonable span.

Yet, our apprehension about them started fully ten years before their death. We knew, of course, that the icy hand of death must come and put an end to it all, but the break in the long family record of health and happiness commenced where none of us in the least expected.

In January, 1925, my brother, Lyman Cotten, Captain U. S. Navy, died after a few days illness of pneumonia at the Naval Hospital in Norfolk, where he had been rushed from aboard his ship. It was the first death in our family since my brother was drowned in Tar River in 1884. His death was a very great blow and sorrow. He was a very important member of the family, had graduated at U. S.

Naval Academy in 1898, and had attained a most enviable reputation and standing in the service—a standing indeed, that reflected great credit upon himself as well as upon the family at large. Three years later we were further bereaved and heartbroken by the death of our sister, Agnes, Mrs. Julian Timberlake, who, all her life, had been a most devoted daughter and sister to us all. She alone, among the girls of our family, was known as "Sister", and it was a roll that she lived up to all the days of her life. Her home at Raleigh, had always been as open to every member of the family as Cottendale itself, and all of us loved her devotedly and had spent many happy days with her and with Julian Timberlake, who was ever a member of the family.

Sister had come to Cottendale to attend the sixty-second anniversary of father's and mother's marriage. The occasion was on March 14, 1927. The event was a very happy one, father and mother being very strong and well. Numbers of people called during the day, some from a great distance and none seemed to enjoy it more, or be in better spirits, than Mrs. Timberlake. The following day she was stricken down with a dreaded disease that we all hoped had been arrested, and died at Cottendale where she had been reared and where she had been married thirty-six years before.

Both father and mother were naturally stunned by these tragedies, one so shortly after the other. Neither had ever thought of outliving their children and neither of them ever really recovered from the shock. Father was now 89 years of age, mother seven years his junior. They had been man and wife for sixty-two years and had seen a vast change in human affairs. Consider, if you please, what

had taken place in the world between Martin Van Buren and Calvin Coolidge.

Neither of them, I am sure, had the slightest fear of death. Both of them frequently spoke to me about their death in a manner so casual and unconcerned that I would be amazed. I am sure that there is something about old age that prepares people for death, a resignation and willingness to go.

Father had been frequently ill during the last years of his life, and mother as well, to a less alarming extent. During these years my sister, Sally, devoted herself without stint, to their care and comfort and to her love, devotion, capacity and unselfishness we are all indebted.

In August, 1928, I knew that father was not well and reports that I received were very unfavorable. He was at Cottendale and both mother and Sally were with him, as well as a nurse or two, who had been kept almost on constant watch at Cottendale for several years now. At midnight on August 13th, Dr. Zeno Brown called me on the telephone and told me that father had had a severe attack and was sinking rapidly. I caught the first morning train for Rocky Mount but the bridge having been carried away over the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg, my train had to detour over on the Southern tracks so that I did not reach Rocky Mount until 2 a. m. that night. "Gene," our faithful colored chauffeur met me at the station and as I saw him approaching from a distance I knew that father was dead.

Naturally we all watched mother very closely after father's death. She took his death bravely, nevertheless it was evident that much had come to an end as well with

her. She desired to remain at Cottendale for a while and some member of the family remained with her. By December she was in a much weakened condition but had promised to spend the winter with Sally and Russ Wiggen, at Winchester, Massachusetts, where very loving and careful preparation had been made to receive her. Sally supervised this transfer and actually took her from her bed at Cottendale and placed her in her room at Winchester without letting her foot touch the ground.

At Winchester, Mother was entirely at home, she had scores of friends there who made much of her and the young people as well, called her "Mother Cotten" as they did in North Carolina. She was always exceedingly happy with Russ and Sally, and they in turn were ever devoted and thoughtful of her comfort. She improved very considerably as the winter advanced, began going out some, and on one occasion she was invited to attend a mammoth convention of women in Boston, which she did, and was received with very distinguished attention, introduced as the Julia Ward Howe of the south and made a considerable address which was broadcast over a network of stations.

This was her last public appearance. In April the condition of her heart became alarming. My brother kept me informed by telephone, and at last, advised by attendance. Since childhood we had gone to her with our joys and sorrows, our plans, hopes and disappointments, and had always been received with sympathy and loving understanding. On the morning of May 2, 1929, please God, she passed from us forever.

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