

Family Anecdotes and Childhood Reminiscences  
of Alice Laidlaw Williams

---

---

NOTES ON LAIDLAWS, ONDERDONKS, CARTERS, TRASKS,  
BELLS ETC. (Begun March 1938)

For the benefit of the grandchildren.

Henry Bell Laidlaw, my father, was born on 12th Street near the old Jewish graveyard. The yard is still preserved and cuts off a curiously shaped piece of land near 6th Avenue. He was the son of Robert Laidlaw and his second wife, Hulda Bell.

Robert Laidlaw was born in Kelso Scotland away back in the eighteenth century, was a well educated man who edited the "New York Observer" for a while and wrote books on the Calvinist Presbyterian religion. He came from Scots people of good repute. Some of these books on religion are in the Seminary Library at the Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. Ann Rutherford was his mother & her family & many Laidlaws are buried in Kelso, some of them in Kelso Abbey.

One Laidlaw, William, was a secretary of Walter Scott's who wrote in longhand Scott's dictation. Scott would go off into a dreamland & forget to dictate for long periods until William could stand it no longer and would say "Well, Sir Walter?" And Scott would answer " Ah Willie, wait, The hand goes faster than the head." This tale was told to a member of the family by an old Scotch lady years after.

The Laidlaws were Border Scots & there is in the possession of some member of the family a book in which there is a tale about the Laidlaws. The Laidlaw clan were fierce fighters on the border. The tale is of some of

their raids. The book is called "The Club Book of Tales", an old volume in dull brown. I don't know where it is now.

There used to be a habit in the family of always naming the eldest son William. But my father did not believe in it, or carry on the tradition. His step-brother was named William & I imagine he did not like William very much!

I don't know when Robert Laidlaw came to this country. He had a son named William by his first wife (of whom I know nothing) who left one son, another William & two daughters, Louisa and another girl whose name I forget (Henrietta?). This William was the man who visited Russell Sage one day in Sage's office & while talking to Sage was severely injured by a bomb thrown at Sage by some crazed man. Sage jumped behind William & used him as a shield. William was terribly hurt. So hurt that he never fully recovered and was useless as a breadwinner, living in a wheelchair helplessly for years. Sage never aided him or gave one sou to his support. William's sisters had to nurse & earn money for all three ever after until he died. My brother, James Lees Laidlaw pensioned the two women and cared for them until they died. William Laidaw brought suit against Sage and won his case, But Sage appealed & took it (the case) to a higher court. Each time William would win his case. The famous lawyer Joseph Choate won one

of these trials. Finally poor William had no more money to fight & no more strength. Sage never helped or expressed any emotion toward poor William who had saved his life.

Well, my father was born, as I said, on what is now 12th Street, New York City. It was then very much like a country village. The house had, of course, no lighting arrangements but lamps or <sup>l</sup>cadles, no running water. The maids would have to go east toward Fifth Avenue, only then it was called "Marietta Lane", named from a stream or brook, the Marietta, and fill their pitchers at a fountain built for the convenience of the families about there, every evening and have a gossip with the other neighboring maids. There is an old mahogany sofa in my possession that belonged to my grandmother, Hulda Bell Laidlaw, that was in that 12th Street house and my father, Henry Bell Laidlaw,, told me that many times in his childhood he would fall asleep on that sofa and suddenly roll off onto the floor; it was so hard, narrow and slippery.

Robert Laidlaw died when Henry Bell Laidlaw was only 14 years old leaving very little to his wife and her two sons, Henry & Charles. My father, Henry, had to go to work very early to help support the family. He entered a banking house Lees and Waller at the age of 14 years. After years of faithful devotion he became a partner, then after Mr. Lees death he became head of the bank & founded Laidlaw & Co. which is still going on --- though there is only one Laidlaw at the head now [1938] Elliot Carter Rutherford Laidlaw.

Henry Bell Laidlaw, to go back to him, married Elizabeth Carter Onderdonk in , I think, 1861 or 2 (this can be verified by records). She was a very pretty, gentle girl, the daughter of John Remsen Onderdonk and Sarah Trask. They lived in a country place, simple but comfortable outside of Jersey City in Bergen County, New Jersey. My father when he wanted to invest some money thought real estate a sound & safe investment. So in going over different propositions looked into land "near New York City". He drove his buggy around the environs of New York & in going along a lane, now 72nd Street, found the land so unimproved, so deep in mud and so wild and rough that he thought New York would never grow north as far as that. So he invested his money in New Jersey real estate. And it never paid. All swallowed up in assessments and taxes. However in 1876 the whole family of Laidlaws moved from Bergen County into New York.

His wife, my mother, was also born in New York City on Abington Square. It really isn't a square but a funny little triangle<sup>a</sup> now in a part of Greenwich Village (so called). By the time they moved into High Cottage near High Bridge, New York, there were five children, Louise, James Lees, Edith Elizabeth, Alice (myself) and Jessie Onderdonk.

Now I shall go back a little to my beloved grandmother, Mrs. John Remsen Onderdonk or Sarah

Elizabeth Trask Onderdonk. She wasn't a handsome person as Grandmother Laidlaw was, but she had great dignity, poise and a beautiful manner. As a girl she was full of life and very witty. She read and spoke French and Italian, was a tremendous reader and my father once said in my hearing that he had never know<sup>n</sup> anyone with a more perfect self-control and self-government [she was his mother-in-law]. Her parents were Col. Israel Elliot Trask and Elizabeth Carter Trask. Colonel Trask of New England, a lawyer and an aide on General Claybourne's staff, went with General Claybourne to receive and arrange the formalities at New Orleans when we bought Louisiana from the French. He was riding on horseback, of course, and for some reason, perhaps he had letters of introduction, he rode into the plantation of Mr. Jesse and Mrs. Sarah Carter (I have the silhouettes of Jesse and Sarah Carter in old gilt frames).

"There", he is supposed to have said, "I saw the most beautiful girl in the world." Elizabeth Carter afterward his wife. Grandmother Onderdonk used to tell me many stories about the Carter plantation, which Col. Trask afterward bought from Mr. Jesse Carter. After he, Col. Trask married Elizabeth Carter, they settled into the plantation for the winters, then would go by coach to Natchez, Mississippi, put the coach, servants (slaves in those days), trunks, bags & baskets on a flat boat which would be dragged or sailed somehow, rowed or poled up the river to some point in Ohio; from there they would

go by carriage & horseback all the way to Springfield Mass. [actually Brimfield] where they would spend the summer months, then back they would trek to the Mississippi River & via river & boat to Natchez for the winter. In the course of one of these journeys Sarah Elizabeth was born on a flatboat on the Mississippi River [actually on the Ohio River near Indian Creek 18 miles above Cincinnati] We used to tease her about that fact, born on a flatboat on a river! But as a matter of fact it was more as if a royal princess was born on a barge of the Pharaohs on the Nile. They seemed to have been quite wealthy and important people. He did many interesting and kindly things for people. He was an original founder and trustee of Amherst College and practically financed & started Monson Academy in Massachusetts. His portrait painted by Gilbert Stuart is in the (cousins) Tappan family in Boston. A fine picture of distinction - I have a small engraving of it - and his oldest child, William Carter, was painted by Rembrandt Peale (though it was unfinished because the boy died of scarlet fever during the sittings) and I have the pleasure and satisfaction of owning the picture though it is unfinished and unsigned. Also the two tall silver candlesticks, the silver cake basket and bowl, the punch ladle and some (6) heavy silver serving forks were of that family. I'm not sure but the three shorter silver candlesticks were Trask silver also. Jessie Roessler, my sister, has a beautiful tea service of the old Colonel's.

Grandmother Onderdonk used to tell me many stories of her childhood on the plantation. Some of them I remember. An old negro slave, the butler, used to get "queer" whenever the moon was full and rush from room to room throwing wide open all the long French windows and standing bathed in the moonlight for moments at a time.

The [i.e. my] <sup>great</sup>grandmother, Mrs. Jesse Carter used to take very good care of her slaves. She doctored them when they were ill and visited their cabins, or "quarters" to see that they were in good condition. My grandmother said that the slaves, the women, were very fond of bright ribbons and they would buy pieces whenever they could with the bits of money given to them, I suppose in "tips". Once a young colored girl insisted on giving grandmother a brilliant purple ribbon she had bought with a tip because "It is too beautiful for me to use, Miss Sally" --- rather pathetic and touching. When Grandmother Onderdonk became a young lady and when they stopped in New York for visits, her father, Col. Trask, would take her and her sister (my great-aunt Eliza) for a walk around the Battery every morning before breakfast. It was the fashionable thing to do. About 1834 I suppose. And she and her sister wore the first Leghorn hats in the U.S.A. brought from Italy by an older brother who had made the Grand Tour, in fact had gone around the world, as it was known then. I suppose around the Horn, poor thing, though he traveled as luxuriously as those days permitted. The portrait I own is of the eldest child. Many of the children died, the two surviving children were girls, Eliza Trask who became

Mrs. Tappan and Sarah Elâzabeth (Onderdonk).

The Onderdonks are associated with very early New Amsterdam. Adrain Van der Donck was living in Leyden & had a position of importance in the College of Law at the Leyden University. The King of the Netherlands, William of Orange, was annoyed that the revenues from shipping were not as great as he thought they should be so he sent Adrain Van der Donck to America to look into the condition. There was a great deal of piracy and smuggling just then and the King wanted it to be stopped. Adrain discovered that there were all sorts of things going on and one of the pirates he captured was a certain ..... well, I can't remember his name, but he was a Hollander and a man of importance in New Amsterdam whose descendent today is Aunt Harriet Burton Laidlaw. It is a strange drawing of fates together that Adrain's descendent should marry a descendent of the man whom Adrain was first sent to America to apprehend.

Adrain was very successful and the king gave him huge grant of land, comprising all the upper part of Manhattan Island and miles of land beyond Spytendivel Creek which is now named Yonkers after the younger son of Adrain, the Dutch "Yonker". Adrain made the first map of New York harbor (now in the museum of the New York City Hall). In the map he points out that the silt across the narrows made what should be a fine harbor always dependent on tides for crossing the bar, And he told the king that if the silt could be removed New Amsterdam should have the finest harbor in the world. Then a hundred years later

Andrew Onderdonk (my uncle, Grandmother Onderdonk's son) an engineer dredged & cleared the harbor his ancestor had mapped for the king of Holland and made it a great or even greatest port in the world. There is a portrait of Adrain Van der Donck in the Clarke collection in Philadelphia, I think in the city hall, but it may be in the museum. I have a photograph, framed, of the portrait marked "Adrain Van der Donck" on the back. The name became Onderdonk some time later than 1680. I don't know when. There were two Bishop Onderdonks, one of New York Benjamin O. and one of Pennsylvania Henry O. Bishop Benjamin had a difficult time as Bishop of New York. The Potters were enemies and succeeded in ousting him and then Alays [?] Potter was made Bishop. Bishop Benjamin was buried in Trinity Church, Broadway at the head of Wall Street where you can see his reclining statue in one of the chapels of the church. He was, according to the family, very handsome and charming, a bachelor, and had a very strenuous time keeping off the fair ladies who besieged him. That may be just family vanity.

Grandmother Onderdonk, Sarah Elizabeth Trask before her marriage, had ten children, six of whom I knew. Uncle Andrew was the one who was an engineer, built the end of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (for which my father Henry Bell Laidlaw was one of the capitalists with old D.O.Mills), the water supply for Chicago; and was the Onderdonk who cleared New York Harbor from the silt which Adrain Van der Donck had reported was filling up the narrows of THE Greatest Harbor in the World. Is it not an interesting

working out of family destiny?

The mahogany crib with the curved ends and the cane sides was made for Mrs. Israel Elliot Trask and given by her to Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Onderdonk, her daughter, for her first child. All of her children slept in that cot. Then Mrs. Onderdonk handed it down to my mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Cart<sup>r</sup><sub>η</sub> Laidlaw, all of whose children slept in it including myself. When my first son, Henry Meade Williams, was born he slept in it and so did Jesse Lynch and Laidlaw Onderdonk Wms. When my son Henry married and Karen was born I gave the cot, or crib, to Mona for her to sleep in. And little Christopher Williams slept in it. So that is the history of the old mahogany crib.

I spoke of some of the silver now in my possession that was once in the Colonel's family. There is a story connected with the silver that may be interesting because it is true. Grandmother Onderdonk told it to me directly. Once when Colonel Trask and his family were away from the plantation, the slaves in the neighboring estates "revolted" or had an uprising.. So Colonel Trask's old negro slave butler who was in charge of the household became frightened and took the table silver and other things to a brook on the plantation that divided the Trask's estate from some other plantation. He buried the silver in the brook so that no revolting slave could steal it. The uprising quickly died and the Colonel returned. Then they began to dig out the silver and they found only part of it. Much of the table service had disappeared. They hunted for days but it was gone. Sometime later Colonel Trask was at a large banquet

in New Orleans given by his neighboring plantation owner. There at his place and other places at the table was some of Colonel Trask's silver. The Colonel was astonished and told the tale of his butler's wise act in hiding the Trask's silver when the uprising took place. The host said firmly "This is my silver." So Col. Trask couldn't accuse his host at his dinner table so he let the matter drop. One piece of the same silver that was dug up and retrieved from the brook is in the safe deposit box in the Princeton Bank. That fell my share as being actually one of the spoons. Maybe some of the other things we have were buried too. But the spoon I know is one of the adventurous pieces of the Trask's.

I don't know when the Colonel died but those facts can be found in Aunt Harriet Laidlaw's papers about the family, or in Jessie O. Roesler's "Colonial Dames" papers. At this time there is living Adrain Onderdonk, a direct descendent of the original Van der Donck, who is headmaster of St. James School in Washington County, Maryland. I used to visit old St. James School when I was a young girl. Especially gay was commencement time and the "ball" given for the boys at the end of their school year. That was in the time of my great uncle Henry Eustace Onderdonk. The old hall in which there were four carved white pillars standing in the middle of the room and a wide bay window at the end was burned down 12 or 14 years ago (perhaps less) but Adrain tried to restore it exactly as it was. The old place with its beautiful spring gushing out of a big rock, its old moss-covered mill wheel & its brook flowing under tall elm

~~elm~~ trees seemed very romantic to me when I was 16 or 18 years old. There is now built at the school a memorial infirmary called the "Laidlaw Infirmary" given by the children of Henry Bell and Elizabeth Carter Laidlaw as a memorial to their parents. Adrain has some curious old portraits of a line of Onderdonks. He had them and I hope they ~~were~~ saved from the two disastrous fires that destroyed two distinct wings of St. James at different times.

Uncle Henry Onderdonk was a southerner at heart and worked for the southern cause. His nephew (almost as old as he) my mother's brother Remsen was a soldier in the northern army, Lieutenant John Remsen Onderdonk. I have a photograph of him in his uniform. He was shot in the foot in some battle and was imprisoned for a while by the South. But came out of it alive, though never really strong again.

Before I leave the Trasks altogether there was a sister of the beautiful <sup>Elizabeth</sup> Sarah Carter (who married Colonel Trask) another beauty (they were always "beauties" in those days) who was married to a notorious rake named de la ..... Her portrait is in the family of the Frederick Tappans of Boston, Mass. He was cruel, drank, gambled and treated his wife outrageously. He had two sons and to torment his wife taught the sons to drink at an early age. Both children died very young. This de la ..... would take his wife to a box in some N.Y. theater and then before the assembled crowd would bring notorious women into the box and force the timid Lydia to meet them. She never seemed to have enough courage to do anything about it but die, which ~~was a beautiful end, I agree. But perhaps they were called~~

she did at a quite youthful age. But the two sisters were called "the beautiful Miss Carters". Perhaps they were really lovely. Their pictures are quite sweet.

Grandmother Onderdonk, as I called her, Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Onderdonk, the daughter of Col. Trask, married when she was twenty years old ( I think I am correct) and told me that she was considered very old, verging on being an old maid. Some one of my various aunts and uncles told me also that she, Sarah was considered also very witty and intellectual (rather a dangerous gift in 1830-40 for a young woman). Her older sister was handsomer (Grandmother thought herself very plain) and married a Tappan of Boston. She had a very large family of children. I knew some of them in my younger days. Her daughters, Cousin Bessie and Cousin Mary used to visit my mother. They never married but lived gentle, quiet lives, were "ladies" in every sense of the word. Jessie Roesler, my sister, purchased the beautiful old Trask silver tea service from Cousin Mary, who needed the money and not the tea service, in her latter days. Some day I would like to see if there are any signs or records of where the Trasks lived in Springfield Mass [Actually they lived at nearby Brimfield]. They were an interesting family with pleasant ways, good manners and some more material advantages.

Col Trask had a very fine library (I have a queer old set of his books). He founded a school and a college. He helped young men through the university and supported good

causes. There are a few letters preserved from a youth named King who was educated and sent abroad by the Colonel. The letters are in a collection of old papers. In this box of papers are some amusing things, a list of slaves and the price of each one etc.

My mother was born, as I said, on Abbington Square. She was the eldest daughter but there were perhaps two older boys. Remsen was the only one older that lived to maturity. My grandfather, whom I never saw, died when my mother was only 15. I know Mother had to aid her mother in the care of the youngest brother, Elliot, who died in very early childhood. The family lived at "Wheatsheaf" a country home near Sherwood in New Jersey. I've heard my mother speak of it again and again, but only as a happy home. There were six children who grew to maturity and I think two who died. There were two girls and four boys. They must have had a difficult time educating them all, especially during the Civil War. My Uncle James Laurence Onderdonk took his degree at Columbia University as Dr. of Law. I have his college diploma somewhere. One of the first diplomas issued by King's College (afterward Columbia), was to an early Onderdonk or Van der Donck and it is now in one of the museums or libraries at Columbia.

I remember visiting my Grandmother O. in a little place in Plainfield, New Jersey, where she stayed for a few years when three of her sons were in British Columbia finishing the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. There was some of her old furniture being used at that time

(most of her lovely old things "Empire" furniture ~~were~~ burned up in a storage ~~warehouse~~ fire some years before) and among the leftovers was an oval mahogany framed mirror that I loved. ~~When~~ she left Plainfield she sent the mirror to me. It hung in my room at High Cottage and later in New York, and in it I first became conscious of my appearance, never having thought about it before. The mirror has disappeared. I don't know how or where.

Grandmother Laidlaw, a tall, very erect, slender woman was really a very handsome woman. Her very straight features and snowy white curls worn dangling over her ears, her lace caps and her lace fichu were very charming.

As a child I was rather afraid of Grandma Laidlaw. She never cared much for me and let me know it. Not that she was ever directly unkind, but she was cool and indifferent. Her favorite grandchild was my sister Edith, who was never afraid of Grandma and who would quite boldly play games of wit and repartee with the severe old lady. Grandmother Laidlaw lived with us all my conscious life until she died when I was 12 years old. She was walking on the piazza of old High Cottage one spring evening and walked off the end where there were about 5 or 6 steps leading to the ground, and I shall never forget the excitement, confusion and fright of that evening. Someone heard her cry for help and rushed out to find the poor lady with a fractured hip bone, which never knit and from which she never ceased to suffer. She had an abdominal tumor also that couldn't be operated on. When we left High Cottage she was driven to New York, 31 West 73rd Street, in

an ambulance (of course a horse-drawn vehicle) with a doctor & nurse and carried to her room from which she never moved again. She died in July that year.

She used to seem very cool toward my darling mother. Even as a young child I remember her criticizing the food in a very unkind way and my mother blushing deeply and keeping control of herself to as to answer quietly. Also the attitude of apparent cool indifference she used to my father, who was so kind and considerate towards his handsome mother. But I suppose she really loved her sons, Father and her younger child my uncle Charles E. Laidlaw. Only she had a high temper and a severe life that made her unhappy. I mean the early part of her life. My mother was so different, so gentle, sweet, tender and to me as a little child, angelic. I adored, really adored my mother.

Grandmother died in July or June of 1886 I think it was. Her family was an old New York family. Her cousin Samuel (?) Bell was a founder and director or trustee of the General Theological Seminary. It used to be on West 22nd & 21st Streets beyond 9th Avenue. Also she was closely related to the Samuel Seaburys, Bishop Seabury and the rest of that clan.

My first memory of my own doings are perhaps what I heard spoken of by someone else. Yet to me the scene is very vivid: I was three or four years old at the time and was playing under some evergreen trees whose branches came close to the earth singing "Spring, Spring, beautiful Spring". I used to sing a great deal as a child. When I grew older and was recalling

my first consciousness of our home I wondered how I could have walked under that special tree; it had so little height under it.. So I must have been a very little girl when I was playing and singing. We had moved from New Jersey, Bergen County, to High Cottage near High Bridge, New York. Mrs. Lees, the widow of the banking house of Lees and Waller afterward Laidlaw & Co., had a beautiful old stone house with extensive grounds, gardens, greenhouses, stables, fields & woods adjoining a place owned by some friends called Montgomery. My father found the Montgomery place just the type of house with big rooms and plenty of them, that he needed for his increasingly large family. The grounds were equally as large as Mrs. Lees', with pastures for cows, gardens for vegetables & fruit, woods with chestnut trees, lovely lawns & flowers & a small greenhouse. My father loved flowers and enjoyed having them around him. The greenhouse was small but there were always flowers. Potted plants bloomed for the house and I remember there was always smilax for decoration. The garden seemed huge. It was on an eastern slope a way below the house. And there were always vegetables, fruits (grape vines and pear trees) and many flowers. The house had 13 bedrooms (three servant's and 10 for the family) an attic where we often played on rainy days, a drawing room, halls & vestibule, a library, dining room, pantry & storeroom, kitchen, servants dining room, a laundry and big cellar, 20 rooms not counting halls, pantry and storage in attic. A big house, so bright with sun and full of children.

The grounds seemed to be full of exciting places for play. Elm trees, maples, evergreens, cherry, apples, Sycamore (where a swing hung for our pleasure) and larch trees were around the house. It stood on a high piece of land which sloped east and west, part of a ridge where there were several large country places and the whole community was known as "The Ridge".

How can I tell the charm it had for me? I have some taken later that may give you an idea of its shape and size and position. But its romance, mystery, charm can never be conveyed. On the kitchen side was situated, beyond the blue gravel drive that, branching from the main drive coming from the east, came to the kitchen, cellar & laundry entrances, was the garden, containing squares of vegetables surrounded by flowers and fruit bushes. At the northern side was the greenhouse with its back to the north, with a funny stove and pipes that must be kept hot all winter. In the spring, in the month of May the garden was full of the scent of pear blossoms, grape vines, cherries and a few apples. In June it was the roses; so sweet and gay. Columbine, bleeding-heart, lilies, morning glories, petunias and many other perennial plants. We children always had a piece of land given us for our gardens, where we experimented with radishes, carrots and lettuce, always so thrilling in our imagination and so meager in reality!

There were all sorts of places to play. Below the lawn and drive were the woods. Such a fascinating wood. Before

you reached the woods were some apple trees, then Chestnut trees and birches. The chestnuts in the autumn were full of nuts. To split the green or brown burrs and find the nuts within was a very exciting thing.

When I was a very small child we used to walk through the woods down to the river, the Harlem, where there was a bathing house, belonging to High Cottage and where in hot summer weather we could go for a swim. But we didn't and couldn't do that very long because after a few years the river grew too contaminated and wasn't safe.

On the lawn around which the driveway swung in a circle were trees and some <sup>great</sup> rocks. Over one group of rocks grew a walnut tree - a butternut tree- those nuts too were delicious. The rocks were so interesting because they were in strange shapes, and we would divide the space into sections for our "houses" and could imagine boats sailing over wide seas, or houses to live in, forts to defend and all sorts of thrilling ideas.

On a wide lawn to the north was a big sycamore tree; ~~from a high~~ branch was suspended a swing. There we would swing and imagine we were flying. One never forgotten spring morning I awoke very early and dressed myself and stole down to the swing. The birds were singing, the sun gleaming, the wind gently blowing from the west and I sat in the swing feeling that I could fly away, too, into a great wide country of lovely fairyland. Away off from a distance came the whistle of some railroad engine, so far and so full of mysterious suggestion of faraway countries that I was filled

with a strange, restless longing to be off and explore the world. And I a little girl of 9 or 10 years!

On the far side were more lawns and on the farthest was a croquet ground afterwards turned into a tennis court. If you passed that and followed some pine trees, or spruce I think they were, toward the west was hidden under a mass of vines a summerhouse. A little garden with grass paths was back of the summerhouse, lilac bushes so sweet and cool in the spring with sprays of lavender blossoms (always remembered with glistening drops of dew on them) and syringa, bridal wreath in June, and peonies. There was also beyond the summerhouse a grass covered bank, that in spring was full of wild violets. I can smell their <sup>wild,</sup> sweet fragrance now. Not a bit like the cultivated violet, a very distinctive and special, delicate odor of their own. When the grass was young, tender and full of moisture with violets growing through the blades we would love to roll down that bank and the odor of crushed grass is all part of the spring, the violets, the birds singing and the early morning adventures. I remember too how cross our old nurse Katy used to get with our grass stained dresses. She seemed never to understand the joy of the fresh grass or of picking violets or dandelions, or of rolling down a gentle slope with the blue sky above and all the other lovely spring things around.

Below the kitchen garden on the east side of the house where the kitchen and laundry were, were the horse barns and stable. We used to depend on horses to go

everywhere in the country in those days. No automobiles, a railroad quite far off, and a father who had to go to his bank every day. The stables were big, rambling old things with haylofts and 4 or 5 stalls, bins for oats, two or three rooms for the coachman and his family if he had one, and a pervading odor of harness and horses, that is seldom found in these motor days. We seemed to have always four horses on hand. The ones I remember best were two bay carriage horses, a sorrel riding mare named Lady Bird, and an old work horse called Nellie. The bays, Rob and Roy, were changed more often for various reasons. But ~~Nellie~~ ~~was~~ ~~with~~, us until she died and Lady Bird seemed everlasting, because she was brought to New York when we moved there in 1886 or was it 1885?

Nellie used to sometimes be harnessed to the station wagon and take my father to his train in the morning. But later she was used only as a work horse harnessed to the lawn mower and plow. As she became too old to do even that much she was put out in the pastures or down in the woods. One time we noticed a strange black & white collie dog with Nellie and noticed that every time we went to pat Nellie's nose or passed near her this strange dog would bark at us furiously and would not let us approach Nellie at all. At first we were surprised and a little frightened, but later we were very amused and pleased by the friendship between the lonely old horse and the poor stay dog. As I remember those two strangely assorted creatures spent the summer there in the

orchard above the woods and I suppose when Nellie was taken to the stables for the winter, the dog left. The dog must have gone agypsying off on the long road looking for another good companion.

Lady Bird was my father's saddle horse. She was very graceful, very gay and full of whims and fancies. She loved sugar and was always given lumps to eat whenever my father or my sister Louise rode. She would nose around my father's pockets and toss her head and look coy whenever he appeared. One day I remember she had been having herself curry-combed and brushed when she escaped the coachman and ran out into the stable-yard. Then began the long process of catching her. The gardeners came to help the coachman. They shut the gates and tried to entice Lady Bird with the oat-measure full of oats. But Lady Bird being very sleek and well fed liked her freedom better than mere oats which she would have anyway later on. They "corralled" her in an old, unused, but high-fenced pigsty. The sty was full of weeds, tall grass and burdock plants. Lady liked the grass and began to eat leisurely as the men crept softly up behind her to clap a halter over her head so as to lead her into captivity again. She went on grazing quietly but had her eye rolled around to see what was going on. The Coachman was just about to seize her mane thinking he had her cornered by the high board fence, when suddenly Lady dashed at the fence, lifted her long graceful legs and jumped clear over the fence onto the stable road and off she galloped into the fields beyond. It took the men a

long time to catch her that day. But as soon as she was a bit tired of racing around and the oats looked good to a healthy appetite she allowed the men to capture her and lead her back to her comfortable stall in the stable.

She was full of airs and graces, a great pet, spoiled but gentle. She never threw <sup>people</sup> nor bit them, was swift and sure-footed and had her opinion of poor riders. liking my father best, who had a light hand and never hurried her too much for her comfort. I was only allowed to ride her when the coachman was leading her to the house for Louise's ride or when he was leading her back from the front door. I suppose she was too gay for a mere child to handle.

There were several cows for there were also several children to be given milk to drink. But I never cared much for cows or milk and paid little attention to either. But the chickens used to entertain and interest us all. My brother Jim one year thought it would be a grand thing to earn some money and asked my father to allow him to run the chickens. So Father said "yes" and Jim started in. It was all very simple during the summer holidays, Jim could look for eggs and feed the chickens every day, with all the scraps left from the table that the servants saved for him and grain the coachman gave him; and then sell the eggs to Mother at the market price. But when school began and Jim had to leave home at 8 o'clock every morning the chicken business was in a precarious position. First I took care of them for a while. I remember how cold and dreary the chicken yard seemed and how few eggs there were. Until just before Christmas I found six or seven

sometime she had heard Max bound across the lawn toward the woods barking furiously and he had kept up the barking for some time. My father and mother were convinced that Max had seen the parwlers - perhaps approaching our house with evil intent and Max had frightened them away with his loud and persistent defence of our property. We children considered Max a real hero and petted him, fed and caressed him excitedly all day. Nero used to resent tramps who occasionally came to the kitchen begging. Nero would bark savagely and growl showing his teeth while we would hold onto his collar to keep him from attacking the man. But we hadn't many visitors of that sort. We were so far away from the main roads and the railroads.

Once in a time my mother would plan a shopping expedition to New York City. She would order the closed carriage, a "Brougham" type of equipage but not as smart looking, to be ready at a certain hour in the morning and might perhaps take one or two of us children with her. We would be brushed and dressed in our best coats & hats and would eagerly stand by the front steps waiting for Patrick to drive up with the bays and the old closed carriage, clean and sparkling with their grooming.

Of all the coachment we had Patrick is the one I remember best.... we liked him. He was kind, "sober" (some were not!), honest and good with the horses and used to allow us to "drive", that is how we all of us learned. Patrick taught us also how to ride. He would go out with us on one of the bays and try to teach us

to "post" and what to do with the reins etc.

Well, to return to our expedition. Mother would appear in her newest bonnet and "mantle" her lovely face flushed and her neat little gloves carefully pulled over her pretty little hands. Somehow we would get started, Katy having placed us in our proper seats, would wave goodbye ~~but~~ before we had driven as far as the stone gates we had changed our places and my darling mother was seated in the middle so that each child could have a window to look through upon the exciting new world passing by so quickly. At least that is the way I remember our drives. Perhaps Mother only occasionally gave us each a window to keep us contented and quiet. I have recollections of her seated at the right side in the carriage and can see her in memory leaning back in her straight dignified way. There used to be the exciting interval of luncheon at Purcell's, then on Broadway below 23rd Street. I would choose French crumpets, full of melted butter and richness. Then after the luncheon Patrick who had taken the horses and himself to have their dinners would meet us and we would shop and wander through Arnold Constable's and Lord & Taylor both on Broadway and 18th & 19th Streets or Best & Co. on 23rd Street, where the children, myself and sisters would have frocks, hats, coats and so on tried on. Our shoes we would buy at Cantrell's Shoe Shop on 23rd St. On the long drive home, tired and quiet I remember the noise of the cobblestones under the iron rims of the wheels (no rubber tires in those days) rolling over them. The one space of smooth peaceful gliding was over

to "post" and what to do with the reins etc.

Well, to return to our expedition. Mother would appear in her newest bonnet and "mantle" her lovely face flushed and her neat little gloves carefully pulled over her pretty little hands. Somehow we would get started, Katy having placed us in our proper seats, would wave goodbye but before we had driven as far as the stone gates we had changed our places and my darling mother was seated in the middle so that each child could have a window to look through upon the exciting new world passing by so quickly. At least that is the way I remember our drives. Perhaps Mother only occasionally gave us each a window to keep us contented and quiet. I have recollections of her seated at the right side in the carriage and can see her in memory leaning back in her straight dignified way. There used to be the exciting interval of luncheon at Purcell's, then on Broadway below 23rd Street. I would choose French crumpets, full of melted butter and richness. Then after the luncheon Patrick who had taken the horses and himself to have their dinners would meet us and we would shop and wander through Arnold Constable's and Lord & Taylor both on Broadway and 18th & 19th Streets or Best & Co. on 23rd Street, where the children, myself and sisters would have frocks, hats, coats and so on tried on. Our shoes we would buy at Cantrell's Shoe Shop on 23rd St. On the long drive home, tired and quiet I remember the noise of the cobblestones under the iron rims of the wheels (no rubber tires in those days) rolling over them. The one space of smooth peaceful gliding was over

the asphalt in front of the old Windsor Hotel on Fifth Avenue <sup>at</sup> and about 36th or 37th St. It was always eagerly waited for by us children. The cobbles and iron rims made so much noise that conversation became tiresome. When the Central Park was reached we would gaze with less shaking and jolting out of the window at the , to us, beauty and formal grandeur of our park and hope to see some swans swimming on one of the lakes. By the time we reached the end of the Park and entered upon Central Avenue I used to subside into a dreamy delicious state of mind and would begin hearing the strange music of wheels and horses feet, the rumble of passing carriages or carts all blended into a queer musical harmony in which I could hear tones that kept me listening and satisfied until we reached High Cottage. I've heard those undertones all my life. In carriages and on railroad trains there has always been the undertones of chords and harmonies that were in descending scale.

There were also lesser journeys, lesser in distance and importance to the "village" meaning Tremont where my mother shopped for small articles, needles, thread etc. and from which our supplies were sent, meat and groceries. It was a tiny place in those days, a drug store, markets and a few other small shops completed my knowledge of it. It was rather an untidy village with dusty roads in summer and mud in winter. There were long waits at the drug store while prescriptions were compounded, and sometimes a chocolate candy given me by the druggist. The drive there --- I can see the road, the turns in it, the woods, houses, blank spaces and hills, up and down, the railroad and the tracks over which we bumped

on our iron rimmed wheels, but to tell you of the subtle atmosphere surrounding each house, town, woods and hills is illusive, too impalpable, too subtle. But every one of these things had its personality in my childish mind, exciting or depressive.

On Sundays we were always expected to go to church with my parents. Everyone's "Sunday" has its own quality and its own atmosphere. I remember the weather conditions, the seasons and a feeling of a difference in habits and customs. The winter Sundays, driving off in the family carriage with a pair of gloves on my hands, my best dress and coat and the tight elastic band under my chin to keep my hat on. We were all submissive to Mother's orders. Once in a while, if the weather was very wet we would be left at home and have "church" in the hall at the rear of the house, where the curving stairway came down from the second story. I usually became the minister or "clergyman" and "preached". One day I understood we were not to go to church and was delighted, gathered my little sisters Jessie and Peggy together for church. I was giving my sermon (we must have begun church shortly after breakfast) when my mother discovered us and ordered us to get dressed immediately as we were to go off with the family for services at St. James Church. I was bitterly disappointed but there was no way out but to go out.

I remember lovely spring Sundays walking with a group of neighbors and the family along the old aqueduct along the Ridge, passing some pretty lanes full of buttercups

and daisies, the smell of fresh spring grass, the warm sun and blue sky, clouds, and the wonderful piercing quality of spring winds. The wistfulness of Spring's beauty used to fill me with a bewildering painful joy, almost unbearable, questioning and sad, thrillingly beautiful but with a longing that I couldn't understand or express.

Sometimes in the afternoon if the day was brisk and dry we would beg my father to "come out and play with us". I remember the excitement of hide-and-go-seek and Father racing for "home", as eager as we were to get there without being caught, I don't believe Mother approved of games on Sundays. But Father did and his word was the "law and the prophets".

As a whole summing up I don't think I liked Sundays. Church was very fatiguing, seats very hard and high. Kneeling had an advantage because I discovered the trick of pressing my eyes with my gloved fingers and seeing all sorts of flashing lights, colors, and stars. Very bad for the eyes I have been told.

