Rocking Horse to Cow Pony

Jessie de Prado Farrington

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WHILE I was yet convalescing from a serious operation, my beloved husband passed away suddenly in his arm chair. Among the many new friends, new and old, who tried in all ways to help me carry on was our rector, Rev. Dr. Hunt Balcom, and I guess for psychological reasons, he talked me into writing a resume of my life and even introduced a friend to do the stenographic part; all, I feel sure, just to try and take my mind off my grief and many worrying problems, and so help me over the first mile of my new lonely and difficult road. I think Dr. Balcom was struck with the great influence that the love of horses has had on the "woof and warp" of my life and would have me work it out in this way.

I was born at Crosshill, Glasgow. My mother died when I was so young, I do not remember her at all. The first memories are of my father (who also passed on while I was quite young). I have a brother Eben, who is six years older than I. From the cradle up, it seemed that I showed a pronounced love for horses. I had a huge dapple gray rocking horse, and one day my brother inadvertently pulled his tail out (he was never an unkind brother). This caused great weeping and wailing until the damage was repaired; but a little while later on, at play, he wanted to enact some historical scene he had been studying at school and it required the beheading of a queen. A friend of the family had presented me with a very magnificent over-sized doll, so it was designated to fill the part of the unfortunate queen. In one of the hallways was a large wooden bin for soiled linen, so when the time came for the execution, I cheerfully held the handsome doll over the edge of the bin while Eben chopped her head off,—quite a contrast to when he pulled the horse's tail out!

One of the first characters I remember caring for was a man who drove a wagon delivering cases of ginger ale, etc. I do not recall his name, but I know I used to get up on his seat with him and drive the horses as far as he would let me go. I
always wanted to be just like my brother, and, among many other more or less hopeless wishes, I yearned to have my hair cut short like a boy. One day when the nurse was out and we were left in peace, we went to the kitchen and got the cook to make us a large soup plate full of toffee. We retired with this upstairs and while it cooled on a nearby chair, my brother planted me on a newspaper on the floor and began to whack my hair off. He had got half way around when the nurse returned. When my father came home, I was presented to him, half shorn and half long-haired!

My brother was banished in disgrace, and I was bundled into a cab and taken to a hairdresser to have the vandalism completed. However, my rejoicing did not last long, because I was required to let it grow again and suffered more than ever. I think this episode must have made a greater impression on my brother than it did on me, because, when years afterwards I was starting for the (then to me) far west, he did his best to make me promise that I would not have my hair cut off when I got to New Mexico. Though I never gave the promise, I refrained for his sake. I have an idea that his five daughters are now more or less shorn. "Time Marches On!"

I am afraid I was what my cowboy friends would call an "ornery little cuss." One Sunday afternoon, my brother and I had the kitchen to ourselves and he was melting lead to run bullets for some gun he had. I happened to want him to do something for me, but he could not or would not; I had a swanky toy carriage whip and began to whip his bestockinged legs (he wore knickerbockers) till I had him prancing around the table unable to protect himself, the vessel with the hot lead in one hand and bullet-mold in the other. In the midst of this uproar, the maid came to the door, but instead of pouncing on me, she went and got my father, so that he might see for himself how hateful I could be—because he was inclined to think I could do no wrong—but he seized my precious whip, and broke it in several pieces (it was a nice long one with a beautiful curved lash), and put it into the fire. I rushed to salvage at least the lash, but before I could put my hand in the grate, he grabbed me and marched me off to the sitting room and planted me in a corner: this on top of the destruc-
tion of my precious whip, was about the greatest affront of my life. In time, he told me to come out and say I was sorry, but I guess I had become attached to my corner, for I refused to budge, till finally he capitulated and took me on his knee and as good as said he was sorry for what he had done. This is the only occasion I remember his trying to punish me.

In time, we left Crosshill and moved to the other side of town, now Kelvinside, but as the Heads of the Collegiate School—where my brother was a pupil—were close friends of my father, he wanted Eben to continue there, even though it meant a long daily journey in two street cars. At first, I was sent to a nearby “Lady’s School,” but as I persisted in refusing to arrive in gloves and also in throwing my succession of wee thimbles out of the window at every chance, the good ladies finally asked my father to take me out of their school. In their lady-like way, they expelled me, little as I was.

My brother's school was run in two sections, one for boys under Mr. Christie, and the other for girls under Mr. Cairns; so in despair, in spite of the long car journey, my father decided to send me with Eben, who daily turned me over to one of the governesses, before he went to his class. The last part of the drive, on the way to school was through a quiet section of the city, from Eglinton Toll to Crosshill, and here, we used to descend from the outside upper deck to the driver's platform and my brother would tip the driver a sixpence every now and then, and I was allowed to drive the horses the rest of the way. After my father's death, I was boarded with the governess already mentioned, and attended the school long after my brother had left.

While I was still too small to read myself, my father used to read to me every week day evening and introduced me to Scott, Fenimore, Cooper, and Dickens, but on Sundays he required my brother to read to me for at least two hours. One hour I could choose what I wanted, and for the other, my brother could choose what he wanted. As he showed a decided leaning for boats and the sea (he became a sailor) as I did for horses, he filled me up mainly on Capt. Marryat's books; while my hour had to be devoted to cowboy tales, though no one ever knew how I learned of such. I remember the night of the Tay
Bridge disaster: it was a terrible storm, and on a Sunday, I think—anyhow, my brother and I went downtown to see an uncle who was due to arrive from the South. We were to meet him at St. Enche's Hotel, I think it was. I was much impressed by the flying chimney pots, and umbrellas being blown inside out on the way down. When we arrived at the hotel, we went into what I thought was a very wee waiting room with crimson velvet or plush seats on three sides, but when it suddenly shot up, I was greatly frightened. It was my first experience in an elevator, and my brother had not thought to warn me. To this day, I have always disliked elevators.

While still at Crosshill School, for my summer holidays, I always asked to be sent to a farm on the Island of Bute: the farmer was a boyhood friend of my father's and his sister kept house for him, she was certainly a "corker," one of the two terrors of the Female Species that I have had real personal contact with in my checkered career. Well, he was a dear, and I was devoted to him and his strain of rather mongrel bob-tailed dogs, the most outstanding of which was named: "Sking the Goat." He was served his meal in state, by himself, in the best front parlor. I don't remember just where, or how, I had my meals, probably standing up by the kitchen table. I was supposed to have lots of milk and cream, etc., to build me up, but the housekeeper was terribly stingy, and unless I took a tin cup and went out to the byre (cowbarn) I never got much sweet milk and no cream. Here I learned to milk, which was a great help to me many years later in my New Mexico homestead days. I used to "strip" the cows, that is after the regular milkers had finished each cow, I'd pump away for what might be left. Of course, they would have filled my cup as they milked, if I had wanted it: no one was stingy but the housekeeper. I had all the milk I wanted, but there still remained the cream, for which I was a regular "greedy grub."

One day, by some chance, she sent me to the dairy for something. It was a large cool room with stone or slate shelves all around the walls, on which the milk stood in large shallow pans, until cream would rise and make a solid mat over the top. It looked good and tempting, and in my case, beyond resistance to the "greedy grub," so I put my head down in the
richest looking pan and began to suck the luscious thick mat in. I don't know how much I sucked in, but I do know that sometime after I had to retire, out of sight, behind the barn and be violently sick.

I stood ace-high with the plowman, though I've long since forgotten his name; he used to put me on the horses to ride to and from the fields. The farm hands, who were fed mostly on porridge, potatoes, scones, oatcakes, and buttermilk, were supposed to have tea once a week as a treat. The housekeeper provided this by saving the tea leaves from the "Master's table" and then they were boiled up for the help's tea.

My brother used to come down sometimes for rabbit shooting. I remember once when he had a new double-barreled shotgun that he was immensely proud of; I begged him to let me have a shot, and kept tagging along after him anywhere and everywhere. Well, he finally consented and I actually shot my first (and last) rabbit, but with the "kick" of the gun, I think I pulled both triggers at once, and seeing the poor rabbit topple over, just where he had been sitting, I dropped the precious gun in the wet bracken and grass and ran to the rabbit. When I realized I'd killed it, I sat down with it in my lap and wept and wept. Eben went off without me in high dudgeon, partly because of my tears and maybe mostly because I had dropped his new treasure in the damp grass. When I reached home, there was great excitement over my tears and bloodstained pinafore (yes, I was still in "pinnies") until they found it was only the poor bunny's blood and that I was unhurt.

Ambleside

After a time, the powers that were decided that I ought to go to a boarding school; and, I was allowed to make the final choice out of three; one was in Liverpool, where my favorite aunt lived. She was only aunt by marriage, but had been a school friend of my mother's, and was always closer to me than my own aunts and uncles. She urged that I go to Liverpool, but I never liked towns, so I chose Ambleside. The name, and the setting, among the Westmoreland Hills, and by Lake Windermere, all appealed to me, and it seemed the lesser of the various evils, if I had to go to a boarding school at all.
Here, I guess they did their best to try and make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. They even tried to coach me in algebra, which was one of the worst of my troubles at that time, and in piano and violin. They could not acknowledge that my hands, those of a worker, not an artist, were too short and stubby for a violin; but required me to go around for hours at a time with corks between my fingers to extend them, and the ache thereof was most wearing. But with all my many failings, I was usually conscientious, even to enduring those corks the required time; but I guess I must have unburdened myself to the music master, for I have never forgotten, that during one of his explosions, he informed me that I had not even the "essence" of a lady in me! I was very unhappy at this school, and developed anemia there. The housekeeper, Miss L., was the sister of the head of the school, and we understood that she had a fixed allowance on which to run the house, and the less she could run it on, the more she could pocket. On Sunday, we always had a huge roast of beef (and buckets full of cabbage) and the remainder of the roast was made over in several ways, and with unusually generous helpings of vegetables, generally unpalatably served, carried us on towards the middle of the week, when we'd have huge legs of mutton that might possibly be stretched with other fillers to carry us over Saturday, and this went on all term with maybe a fish dinner now and then, but always loads of watery cabbage, and we were not allowed to leave our table until we had cleaned our plate. Cabbage became tabu to me for half a lifetime.

Immediately after noonday dinner, we each had to retire alone to a room for half an hour's meditation and bible reading. By using our rooms, and the governesses' rooms and in fact, all available rooms, we could be kept apart for this half hour. I usually felt so nauseated, I had to lie flat on my back on the floor.

What I liked best about this school was the coaching drive from Windermere to Ambleside the opening day of each term. Our other great treat of the term was the first morning in school, when we each had one egg for breakfast, and no more eggs till the same time next term. Another treat during the term was when we had ONE sardine each at breakfast, other-
wise, we “filled up” on bread, on which some butter seemed
to have been spread and then carefully scraped off; and cereal
with syrup, and, if Miss L. could ferret out that we had failed
in any of our studies the previous day, she forfeited our right
to syrup for that meal. She always presided at our meals. The
head had hers with a chosen governess in her small dining
room. After prayers at night, we had to file past a string of
governesses and kiss them good-night; one I just could not
endure, and, as I have always had an innate objection to pro­
miscuous kissing, I just froze up when I came to her, and even
had the “hebee jebees” when she pecked me on the cheek or
ear, so she finally reported me to the Head and I was sent to
the study. Here, we, the Head and I, threshed it out, and I told
her, maybe in other words, that kissing really meant some­
thing to me and I did not care to cheapen it by indiscriminate
use; so the edict went out that I was to be allowed to just shake
hands at the goodnight ceremony, and that was ordeal enough
when I came to the governess I could not like, and Miss L., the
chiseling housekeeper.

During my second last term here, I got so run down that
I could hardly keep up with the “crocodile,” our daily proces­
sion of school girls, going for a walk in strict formation, two
by two, with one or two governesses at the tail end. We had
so much rain, or rather frequent showers, up there, that we
were fined a penny if it was found that we had sneaked into
the crocodile without an umbrella. When my guardian real­
ized how far from well I had become, he put me in a doctor’s
hands, but if a pupil was withdrawn from the school without
a full term’s notice, the term was charged for, anyhow, so I
was sent back. But, the doctor wrote the Head, with the result
that for my last term there, I had my meals with her, but I
did not like being fed on fine chops, steaks and poultry while
my friends were still pegging away at the original and ever­
lasting roasts and rehashes.

Switzerland

After I left the Ambleside School, the powers that still
were, decided to send me to Switzerland. So, in due time, I
arrived at “Riant Rive”; again, I landed in lovely surround­
ings, there was a large garden going right down to the beau-
tiful Lake of Geneva. We were a short walk by the lake-side from Ouchy, where we got the “Funic” up the steep hillside to Lausanne.

On Thursday afternoons, those who liked could go up to town, in charge of a governess. The usual first place of call was our favourite “Confiz.” As what little French I did acquire has nearly all gone from me, I have just put down the old nicknames which have stayed “Put,” e.g., Funic, (hydraulic railway from lakeside up the mountain to Lausanne), and Confiz (tuck shop). Lausanne is in the French Canton of Vaud. At first, I rather scorned some of my school mates for spending so much of their often scant pocket money at the Confiz. I thought, “not for me, I’d rather keep it for wee Swiss carvings, paintings, etc.,” but once I got introduced to a special creation called “pomme de terre,” I was lost. It was built to resemble a potato, but more a cake than a pastry, and filled inside with a very generous portion of luscious mocha cream.

The doctor whom I had been under on account of my anemia in England wrote to Madame Mennerich of Riant-Rive about my condition, and she promptly put me in hands of her doctor, with the result that I was allowed to pretty much arrange my own curriculum, and skip even that if it became too arduous, and as all our classes were given in French, they were often “too arduous.” How I really got by as seemingly well as I did was owing to two special friends, Daisy Close, and Win Durrant. They were both good French scholars, and they would write me out an English translation of our various studies, and this would give me the meaning of each subject, and though I’d fall down in my French rendition of it, the teachers felt I at least knew the subject I was trying to talk about, and let it go at that, otherwise, if I got too badly cornered, all I had to say was “please, I had a headache,” (although I’ve nearly forgotten how to write that in French, I certainly had it off pat in those days!), and then I could go out to loaf in the garden.

Madame was a dear, and certainly did her best to build up my red corpuscles, and succeeded, bless her! I can’t just remember in what order the following things were taken, but
each morning while still in bed, I had a raw egg, and a cup of chocolate with whipped cream, and before leaving the bedroom, a glass of red Swiss wine, and then I was ready for the regular dining room breakfast! Madame had me placed at her table, on her left hand. She had all meals with the girls, and tried so to crowd my eating that I was finally reduced to providing myself with some paper, so that I might slip some of the food into my lap and get it into a pocket. All my life long I have wanted pockets and lots of them!

During holidays, there were always some girls who stayed on at Riant-Rive. As I liked it, and had no home, anyhow, I stayed there for two years, and did not want to leave even then. Madame used to take those of us who wished to go, on trips during the various holidays. I forget what was the first trip to come off after I was there, but, anyhow, Madame said she thought it would be too strenuous for me; we usually traveled by Voiture, a wagonette or maybe a double rig-like affair, drawn by two horses, or saddle horse or mule in those days. I am talking of nearly fifty years ago. Well, Madame said she felt I was not equal to this trip, I think it was to the St. Bernard Monastery, but finally said, if I could raise some roses in my cheeks by the time she was planning to go, maybe she would consent. The day before we were to start, I was to go to her study for final verdict. In those days, we girls did not powder or rouge, as is done nowadays, but Win got out her water-colors, and with the help of Daisy’s advice, got a nice faint bloom on my rather pallid cheeks, and in I marched to Madame, with the result I was allowed to go!

There was a percentage of German girls in the school who were described as “in the Menage.” These girls had reduced scholastic rates because they “set” and cleared off the tables, etc. When we went out for our daily walk, again “a la crocodile,” we English girls were paired off, so many days a week, with these German girls, and supposed to talk German for the duration of the walk, but as the German girls were usually much more keen at improving their English than we were to learn German, it generally ended in our speaking English to our heart’s content; so what with that, and my standing permit to leave a class-room for the garden whenever I felt like
it, it is not surprising that my French and German were rather sketchy, even at best.

We had a good tennis lawn, and I was very keen on that, but except on the half-holiday, if we were heard using any English words we were fined, and my long suite was “Oh! I say” every few strokes, so that cut into the money I wanted to spend on the “Pommes de terres.” They had a system of passing an imaginary “mark” at that school. If a governess heard one talking anything but French, she would say to the offender, “Prenez la Mare,” take the mark. The Germans did not often transgress, but if by mishap they did, they soon got rid of it, for anyone could pass it on to another offender, but at night, Madame would say, “Who has the mark?” and those who had had to turn them in (there were usually quite a number for there was no limit as to how many might be passed out by the governesses and sometimes most of them got piled on to one unfortunate victim) had them recorded against their name, and at the end of the week, the amount, a cent a mark, was deducted from the offender’s pocket money.

One of our trips was to Zernatt. We were strung out in a long row of carriages, Madame, and an English friend and the latter’s son (an undesirable of about twenty-five or thirty years of age, inclined to be spoony, and if snubbed, of a tale-telling, sneaky disposition, but Madame and his mother thought him a great acquisition), bringing up the rear. Madame laid down the law, that no matter how thirsty we got, we must not, at any price, drink any water at the villages we passed through. She said the water was conducive to goiters, but in one of the carriages about midway of the caravan, was a supply of native wine, Vin Bougeau (spelling doubtful), and we could drop back and get some of that; much of the way up was mountainous roads, etc., and the horses walked, so we got off and passed up and down as we felt like. Well, I guess I must have literally had too many drinks, for when we unloaded at Zermatt, I was very wavy on my feet, so Daisy and Win armed me off from under Madame’s usually eagle eye, and got me to bed with usual plea of one of my ever handy “male la tete” attacks.

That night I was fully myself again, and the other two (we
three shared one room) teased me into dancing the Highland fling; we were all more or less in a state of undress, and in the middle of my gyrations, a Frenchman opened the door, and instead of hastily retiring, he stood there apologizing at length, so we all dived for cover; someone upset the "ewer" of water, which had been left standing on the floor (in those days, there was no individual plumbing or bathrooms to each bedroom in this hotel, just hand basins with large jugs of water); well, one of these upset. Daisy had presence of mind to put the light out before she ducked for cover, I fled under a bed. When the wretch finally got through his fake apology, and we got the light on and door locked, we were horrified to find that Daisy or Win's underwear had been on floor and got soaked, and after mopping up most of the water with our towels, we hung everything out of the windows to dry. None of us had a change available, all our extra clothing on these trips was "pooled" into one large trunk, and went more or less by rail, to designated places to be on tap. Well, it was a beautiful moonlight night, such as the Alpine country can specialize in, and we three had not been long in bed when we heard great guffaws of laughter under our windows. We all got up to investigate, and there below was our apologizing horror, with someone else, loudly amused at our display of underwear trying to dry by moonlight. In those days such things were not taken lightly, so we whisked in the offending undies, to dry as best they might indoors. I think it was on this trip that I slipped on a polished floor just as we were sitting down to breakfast, as per usual I was to be on Madame's left, as I went, I clutched wildly at the table, caught only the cloth, and landed the cups of hot "cafe au lait," and what have you, in the laps of Madame and Mrs. Marshall; and myself under the table, with an avalanche of things on top of me. For my clumsiness, Madame, in her excusable irritation sentenced me to a half-day in my room!

On another trip, this time to Chamonix in France, we made several side trips, and for once we were all mounted on mules. I was able to choose what I thought was the spiciest of the lot, and I was right, for on the return journey, much to my delight, it ran away with me, never stopping till it clat-
tered through the wee town, and landed me at its stable door, from where I found my way on foot to the hotel, weary, but happy; though again in momentary disgrace, for Madame, though frightened and angry, was too thankful to find me at the hotel safe and sound to mete out any punishment.

I loved Switzerland, Madame included, but even so, I was always counting the years till I would be twenty-one and free to start for the far and woolly west, and Ranch life; although my great love is for horses, I never yearned for a horse ranch, always for the cow country, and when "I arrived," I never enjoyed helping to round-up a bunch of range horses, as I did cattle.

Somewhere in this narrative, I've referred to myself as being of the conscientious order, and to some extent maybe was justified in so doing, but I recall one flagrant instance of a serious lapse. During my stay at Riant-Rive, I had a siege of boils, seven at a dose, three being under one arm and four under the other. Madame had a smaller adjoining house for those indisposed, but it was not a regular sick ward as hardly anyone was ever seriously ill. Well, I was planted over there and much of the day had the house to myself, and lay comfortably reading in bed by a window, my arms resting on two pillows. I had various medicines prescribed by the school doctor, but over and above that, as Madame had decided ideas of her own, she had a huge pitcher of camomile tea posted by my bedside, with instructions that I take a cup of it regularly every so often. Well, I found it about the vilest concoction I'd ever met, so, Scotch conscience regardless, I methodically threw a cupful of it out of the window at the prescribed time for taking it!

When Madame had visitors for afternoon tea, she always had some of us girls in to help entertain her guests, or to break us in along those lines, and, for sometime after my recovery from the boil siege, she publicly held me up as a fine example of the efficacy of camomile tea!!

Have I mentioned about Lausanne as a university town? There were no end of Student Societies, the most outstanding one of which, and my favorite, was the "Sofingia." The societies were distinguished by different caps, the latter by a
white yachting shaped one, with a band of beautiful heavy ribbon, narrow thread-like edge of gold, then red, white, red and gold edge. These students used to make a point of serenading their favorite schools and I guess we got our share, and always a great thrill. As our garden went down to the lake, they usually came by boat, landed and came up under our windows, and with guitars and voices, began to serenade us, but the thrill they gave Madame was that of an old war horse when he hears the bugle. She had a very diminutive gardener who had a room over an adjoining out-house and she used to wildly try to rouse him to go and run the serenaders off, but as he was small, not keen on the job, and one to many, it did not do much good. Madame's harangue was only drowned in a louder serenade, so finally she hit on a new desperate scheme. She got an old blunderbuss and had the gardener load it with all kinds of rubbish and fire it point blank at the students from an upper window. After that drastic measure, they did cool off for a time, many being visible on the streets thereafter decorated with patches of "court plaster" (Victorian type of adhesive tape) here and there.

It was quite usual to have midnight supper parties in our rooms, but once when Madame was away for a few days some of us decided to go one better and have a dance. So half of us dressed as boys. Madame had a son and though younger than any of the girls, he was a big boy, and he and I were special pals, he lent me togs for the occasion. An hour or two after all lights were officially out, we all assembled in the dining room and cleared the floor and got a piano in. "Melone," the head governess, and a hopeless "blue stocking," never heard the uproar until everything was in full swing, and though the British were at the root of the trouble, I think all the girls joined in, French, German and Italians, so poor "Melone" was helpless with such open rebellion and finally left us with dire threats, but the poor dear was so scandalized and outraged at our temerity and her helplessness that I guess she decided discretion was the better part of valour and, so far as we know, she never even reported our insurrection, for everybody, including the maids, were more or less involved in the escapade—"least said, soonest mended."
Germany

Sometime after I left school, and just before I was twenty-one, I went over to Germany to spend sometime near my old school friend Winnie, who was governessing in Hamburg. The day after my arrival, I essayed forth to call on her; she was living on the other side of the Alster (a large lake dividing the city) to where my hotel was, so I had to take the ferry. I asked a deck hand, in what I thought was quite decent German, what street car I should take to get to my destination, but after several tries to get my query across, he smilingly said, and in excellent English, “If Fraulein would speak English, I could understand her.” Alas! if I had only tried to improve the shining hour in my crocodile walks with the German side partners in my Riant-Rive days, I would not have been thus humiliated.

Another boomerang from my lost, or neglected opportunities came in connection with a riding school master. After I had been in Hamburg some little time, my English trustee (I had two, one English and one Scotch) wrote to me that he thought it a mistake for me not to go on and see Berlin, while over there, so was enclosing extra cash for the trip. Now this Englishman had long been a thorn in the flesh to me as he strongly objected to women riding or having anything else to do with horses, accounting it inclined to “fastness,” as we used to put it in those days. Well, when I got this extra cash, I decided to throw my Scotch conscience over board pro tem, especially as I did not expect to be back in England till a few days before my twenty-first birthday, so instead of going on to Berlin, I used the cash to put my time in at a riding school. I had long ago added a riding habit to my wardrobe, even aided thereto by my pet aunt in Liverpool, and managed to wangle a few rides now and then when on visits to friends in the country, and no matter where I went my “portmanteau” went and the habit, too, so I was adequately prepared for any and all chances. Well, one day, during indoor instruction, in a large oval arena, I thought the master told me to go faster, and, as he kept on telling me, in a louder voice, I was more than glad to urge my horse on and on, when suddenly, to my huge surprise, he dashed across the arena (he, too, was
mounted), seized my horse by the bridle and threw it on its haunches, nearly dumping me over its tail onto the tan; he, the master, raved at me in fast and heated German, and I not understanding a word of the torrent being poured over me, at last turned loose myself in English, which fortunately he did not understand, but finally a visitor in the gallery came to the rescue as interpreter and the Herr Master and I calmed down. It appeared he was telling me to go slower, and keep closer to the wall and said something like “an die Wand,” to keep to the wall, and I translated it as for the French “en avant,” go ahead, so again I lost out for lack of having “made hay” while my educational sun was shining.

Colonial Training College

On coming of age, I was conscious of a dual personality, one half of me felt I ought to take training as a nurse, with a view to aligning myself later with the Salvation Army, and going to work in the London slums; the other half wanted to be off to the wild and wooly West and my yearned-for cow country. But, I was still not so very strong, though my sojourn in Switzerland had helped me a lot. My English trustee got two doctors to give me a thorough going over, and they were decidedly against the nursing training, so then I felt I could start out for the United States with a free conscience. Here, however, my friends ceased to help, as no one approved of my Wild West aspirations, so I had to dig around by myself for a starting point. I wrote to various places in London for information and finally decided I would try to get a position as companion or “mother’s helper” on some western ranch until I learned the ropes. Following this lead, I found that I would not get far unless I were useful along domestic lines, and, as I had never had a home of my own, I knew I’d have to get broken in before I started.

I finally contacted just the place I needed, Leighton Colonial Training College, in Shropshire, just for girls of my type. So I finally got started there aiming to put in a year at it, but after three months, I gave myself a bad internal strain that laid me up more or less for many months. The doctor here, when he learned that it was not absolutely essential for me to
earn my own living, but sensing what kind of a make-up I was, advised me to try and get on an English farm for a year until I got stronger. The matron at the college thought she knew of the very place for me and she proved right. So I made arrangements to go to Mr. and Mrs. Broughall (he was what was known as a Gentleman Farmer), who lived at Oldington, a beautiful old rambling red brick farm-house near Bridgnorth, fifteen or twenty miles from the training college.

Before going there, I paid a long visit to my old school friend, Daisy Close, whose father was a Vicar up in the Peak district of Derbyshire. It was very quiet and I loved being there, and as Daisy thought it too quiet for most of her other friends, I had become quite an institution there and turned up almost as regularly as she and her two brothers for the holidays. One boy was studying law and the other for the Church. They were both great fishermen and used to walk miles up the streams, and the usual plan was for Daisy and me to meet them at a given place for a late lunch; but while I was convalescing, I was not up to these hikes, so Mr. Close unearthed a donkey to carry me around. We named him "Doodles" and Daisy and I usually had a hard time getting him to the rendezvous, but on the home stretch the other three had a hard time of it to keep up with Doodles and me.

I had planned to stay at the Colonial College one year, and I stayed three months. I aimed to stay at Oldington one year and stayed nine. A very happy nine years it was. Mrs. Broughall and I soon became deeply attached to each other. She was not at all strong and never went out unless her husband or one of the farm boys drove her. So I fitted in to a "T." I soon gave her a name of my own—"My Dear," and so she is to this day.

**Oldington**

At Oldington, I soon became as the daughter of the house, and here I learned much that was to prove of value to me in later years. The Broughalls did not want me to pay anything at all, but though I soon got to like Mr. Broughall, or the "Pater," as I later learned to call him, he and I used to have decided scraps. For, though I have always made many pla-
tonic friends on my way through life, I was always keener on women than on men. I felt I could not tell him just what I thought, if we disagreed over something, if I was eating his bread and butter. So, they finally consented to a minimum charge for my own and my horse's board, for I eventually started a saddler of my own, or the Pater did it for me. I really fitted in so well there, that they did not want me to go West at the end of a year, and they soon learned that my people felt the same. They even missed me greatly when I occasionally went away to visit friends.

My first mount of my own came as a great surprise to me, for having planned to stay there only a year, I'd not thought of trying to get a horse in England. This is how it happened. I went to visit another old school friend, Lou Curtis, who lived at Twickenham, and I always had a royal time there. Her father was a retired Navy Captain, and both his girls (who had been at school with me in Switzerland) were keen on boating. I, too, had been well coached along these lines by my brother, so those of you who know the Thames may guess I had a good time there. Over and above that, Lou planned my visits so we could take in the Richmond Horse Show and the annual Military Tournament in London, and I was peren­nially surprised to find that the Italians could ride just as well as the British officers. Well, this time, I guess the Pater and "My Dear" felt I was staying away too long, and he thought up a scheme to fetch me home; and it did, on the "double quick." I got a wire, "Have picked up a young saddler for you."

I found on my return a useful looking blue roan three years old filly, installed in a loose box of her own. He had picked her up at a ridiculously low figure at some country auction when he was out buying young steers to feed. She seemed gentle and tractable enough to handle, but it did not take me long to find out the "nigger in the woodpile." She was "baulky" and as obstinate as any double distilled long-eared Missouri mule could ever be. I named her "Hoop La" on ac­count of her penchant for spending much of her time on her hind legs. For no matter how I happened to want her to turn, she always decided she preferred the opposite direction and
would spend much time gyrating around on her hind legs at every crossroad we came to. Then again, she always wanted to turn and bolt when she met an oncoming vehicle. When she could not get away, she'd put on her usual exhibition, gyrating around on her sturdy hind legs till the carriage or wagon was well on its way past us. A neighboring horseman undertook to cure her of this weakness. One of his experiments was to take a thin glass bottle filled with water in his pocket, and when she put on her rearing stunt, he broke it over her head, but to no avail. After some weeks, he returned her, her sides all scarred with too much spurring, but still convinced that no matter what turn her rider chose, she preferred the other. So, finally poor spoiled "Hoop La" was disposed of "without a character" at another public auction.

For a time, I contented myself with riding "Dr. Gray," "My Dear's" little driving cob. She herself never handled the lines, so if I was not driving her around, I often rode him. During my nine years at Oldington, I had quite a string of successive mounts, "Starlight," "The Ugly Duckling," "Pet Plum," "John Peel," and best of all, "Spicy," a beautiful bay with black points. I passed most of them on for financial reasons, getting more for them than I gave. I often rode mounts belonging to other people, too. Neighboring farmers having young stock to sell found it advantageous to be able to say "ridden by a lady." In those days, I rode side saddle. One day, the Pater and I were riding along a bridle path at a walk across country and came to a gate, he said "Pop over, Mac," but being a canny Scot, I was not keen on such a stiff standing jump, so I said, "Your pop." He put Robin at it, but the horse failed to clear it, and they both came a cropper, the Pater unfortunately breaking a wrist.

Early every year, I used to get what "My Dear" called "Mac's Spring Fever," the longing to go West. Finally, my pet aunt got a promise from me to stay in England until I was thirty, thinking that if I did that I'd be safely married or, at least, over the desire to go off to parts unknown. Though I had several "chances" to "settle down," I was not tempted, even though one offered to sell out and go West, too!
On one of my frequent visits to my Liverpool aunt, I ran across a forlorn, emaciated, raggety, wee wire haired terrier, exhibited in a bird cage, of all things, in a pet shop window. I've always hated to see birds in cages, but a dog was more than I could endure, so I went in and asked to see the wee beggar. He was so weak and cramped that when taken from the cage, he just wavered around until my heart ached more than ever, and though he was too woolly for my type and they wanted far too much for him (he was not even eligible to register), I bought him and took him home to Oldington and named him “Rags.”

He could not be induced to even look at a mouse, let alone a rat, so I passed him on to where he belonged, which included a drawing-room rug, and a ribbon on his collar, and he was happy ever after. My other outcast was “Tramp,” probably a cross between an airdale and a black retriever. One of my Liverpool cousins rescued him from a man who was abusing him beyond endurance, gave half a crown to get him and then wondered what on earth to do with him. Then, being struck with a brainstorm, shipped him down to me at Oldington. “Tramp” was a joyous person and quite regardless of any idea of control and social rules and regulations, in contradiction to “Rags,” his idea was to chase anything from a mouse up. So, when I used to go riding, with him and “Rags” tagging along, I soon got into trouble as “Tramp” thought chasing sheep extra good sport, so he had to be passed on. We gave him to a mail driver who made a nightly trip between Bridgenorth and Wellington (Shropshire) and in this roll, he was a great success, becoming devotedly attached to both man and team, and always on the job.

Then we got a supply of thoroughbreds. The Pater won a beautiful Collie pup at a raffle and gave it to “My Dear.” Then he got two wellbred fox terriers, “Tartar” for himself and “Darkie” for me. On top of all this, a Mr. Evans brought me a registered smooth-haired Welsh terrier puppie. He became the dog of my life, and I named him “Iky Evans.” Part of the time, all of these were to the fore simultaneously, so on my daily rides, I nearly had a pack of my own.
As I used to go with the Pater to all available Agricultural Shows, I got quite a smattering of general farm stock, implements, dairy work, etc. I even took over the Oldington butter-making and learned poultry dressing, all of which was very useful to me later when I became the wife of a Kansas farmer. I loved to work in the fields with a team and often did a lot of harrowing, and as it was quite an innovation at that time (and in that neighborhood) to see a woman in short skirt and leggings, handling a field team, I stirred up quite a bit of curiosity. One socialite, when calling on “My Dear” one day, could not contain herself, for she had seen me at work in the farm field, and heard of me in the hunting field, two widely separated social points, so in desperation she said to “My Dear,” point blank, “In what capacity is that young ‘person’?” To be called a “person” in those days was to be socially damned, indeed. “My Dear” replied, “As a daughter.” So that was that.

Among the many animals at Oldington, was an old warrior of a gander; he had all the “women folk” bluffed to a “fare you well,” whenever he saw one of us around his part of the yards, he’d go for us, and we would run for safety. He was particularly obnoxious to Mrs. Morris, the cowman’s wife who came once a week to wash, she often asked me to stand guard while she hung out the clothes, but if Mr. Gander hove in sight, and started for us, we’d both run for the gate. Some one told me that if I would take two or three bottles of port wine, and add six pennyworth of quinine to each bottle, I’d get grit enough to stand my ground; well, I did, for one day when I was in full cry, I suddenly screwed up my courage, stopped, whirled around and caught the warrior by his long stretched-out neck, just behind his head. My courage flowed back all over me, no room for fear left, and I pulled the unwilling pest round to the back door and called for all and sundry to come and see my conquest. When I loosed him, he nearly flew in his hurry to get back to his own parts, and ever after, he made himself scarce if I made for him, so I was always in demand on wash day.

While still at Oldington, I decided to take to riding cross-saddle, for having only one horse, I rode him daily and a side-
saddle every day, especially during the hunting season is apt to bring grief to the horse's back. Once in particular, I hurt "Spicy" ever so, and had to keep off him for some time, and when the hair grew again and came white, I had him photographed, so I'd never forget. Well, cross-saddle for a woman was a scandalous proceeding in those days, but I evolved a voluminous homemade skirt, and used the Pater's saddle, he would not be seen with me cross-saddle, and "My Dear" was greatly distressed and always urged that I keep to the fields and unfrequented bridle paths. About this time, I read a book by Mrs. Seaton Thompson, I think, and she recounted her trials in regard to a trip through the Rockies with her husband and the cross-saddle riding outfit she contrived, giving illustration and details of same. So I took the book to our local tailor and between us, quite a nobby outfit was evolved, regular breeches and all. That is what I wore through my homesteading days.

I forgot to say that early in my sojourn at Oldington I thought I would take up horticulture, so wrote to Swanley, which I think was the only college of its kind, at that time, for women in England. I asked if the girls were allowed to handle the teams. They said NO, they had a man for that, so I turned thumbs down on Swanley. I have regretted it ever since. If I'd only had sense enough to acquire that training, the horses could have come later.

(To be continued)