



THE RUINS OF FARTHER-AND-GAY CASTLE

[From a photograph in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.]

A VISIT TO FARTHER-AND-GAY CASTLE

INTRODUCTION

Among the traits that endeared the late William W. Folwell to the people of Minnesota was his lively imagination, coupled with a certain whimsical way of looking out upon the passing scene. That he could write serious history, could even grapple successfully with the tremendous task of producing a full-length history of an American commonwealth, with due regard to the responsibilities of a scientific scholar in the use of sources of information, his four-volume *History of Minnesota* demonstrates. Needless to say, his flair for the whimsical did not find much outlet in that formidable work, though the watchful reader will occasionally find, perhaps hidden away in a footnote, some sly turn of phrase that is characteristically Folwellian.

Now and then, however, Dr. Folwell took delight in presenting history in a guise other than the sober prose of his *magnum opus*. When he was asked to give an address at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Historical Society in 1925, for example, he chose instead to submit a letter purporting to have been written at St. Paul's Landing on a summer's day in 1849 by an eager young pioneer who had recently arrived on that frontier scene. Dr. Folwell requested that this letter be read at the meeting, with the explanation that he believed members of the society would find the document one of interest. There is some reason for believing that Dr. Folwell would have been pleased if the officials of the society had fallen victims to his pleasant little deception. The letter was in fact an imaginary one, written by Dr. Folwell himself, but written with a gusto and with a knowledge of the pioneer scene that might readily have caused the unquestioning acceptance of the document by many. The superintendent of the

society solved the secret of the letter's authorship after careful examination, but when he presented the letter at a luncheon session of the annual meeting apparently few or none suspected that it came from the pen of Dr. Folwell and not from that of some breezy traveler of 1849. Indeed, a newspaper reporter was so impressed by the letter that she found no difficulty in describing the nonexistent original as "yellowed with the years since 1849."¹

Late in 1925 Dr. Folwell returned to the congenial task of enlivening Minnesota history with the play of his vigorous imagination. The result was the series of imaginary letters that are published herewith. In a sense these letters are a venture by the author into the realm of historical fiction. One does not need to read far, however, before discovering that the author had studied the historical scene and setting with great care and that, for the most part, the alleged facts that he sets forth can be substantiated from historical records.

No extended introduction to the letters is necessary. In fact, a part of their fascination lies in the gradual unfolding of the story; and the reader must not neglect the footnotes that the author provided to give the entire enterprise that touch of gravity which he felt the sober perusal of an historical document demanded. These the editor has taken the liberty of supplementing where further explanation has been considered desirable. It may be noted that the letters were read not long ago by a grandson of Joseph R. Brown, Mr. George G. Allanson of Wheaton, and that they evoked this comment from him: "I marveled at Dr. Folwell's ability to picture so accurately scenes and characters that he had never seen, for his descriptions of my mother and aunts fitted them perfectly." It should be added that Mr. Allanson has very kindly aided the editor in solving some of the puzzling little editorial questions that the publication of the letters involved. *Ed.*

¹ The document was later published under the title "Minnesota in 1849: An Imaginary Letter," *ante*, 6: 34-40. *Ed.*

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, August 15, 1861

MY DEAR FATHER:—

The Browns have invited me again to visit them. The major sends word that he wants me to be at the housewarming of the new house they have just moved into, and he has arranged for my journey. Brother and sister say there is no more danger than there would be in going out to Fairfax Court House. I will write you all about what I see and hear.

Ever your affectionate daughter

CASSIE

SACRED HEART, MINNESOTA, August 19, 1861, Monday.

DEAR FOLKS AT HOME:

This is a rainy day so I can begin writing about all I see and hear, as I promised (I wish I hadn't) to do if I came out to the Browns. I told you about the lovely trip I had coming up from Galena in the *War Eagle*, a boat as fine in every way as any of those which run down the Potomac to Old Point or Newport. It was a different kind of craft which brought me from St. Paul up the Minnesota River to Henderson on last Friday. The *Antelope* is a short, dumpy, scow-like boat with a paddle wheel at the stern as long as the boat is wide. The standing joke is that "sternwheelers" will run in any heavy dew.²

The captain told me that Major Brown had laid out Henderson six years ago and started roads like spokes of a wheel to make the town a center of business. I passed the night comfortably in the hotel of the place, and was ready for an early start with Major Brown, who had come from his home on business the day before. He had a light two-horse wagon, with one seat in place and various bags and packages behind.

The road climbed diagonally up quite a steep hill—bluff they call it—and took a nearly due west direction over the prairie. I had supposed that prairie meant desert. It don't; prairie in this season is a vast, natural flower garden. Goldenrod and asters,

² The "*Equator*" is described as a boat "that will only require a heavy dew to enable her to run" in a newspaper advertisement of 1857, reproduced *ante*, 11: 134. *Ed.*

mile upon mile, with here and there a clump of trees in low places they call sloos [*sloughs*]. The major did not talk down to me but just chatted as if we were chums. At noon we "camped," as they call it, in the shade by a pretty lake. The horses had their heads in nosebags and we had a little snack out of a covered basket and a canteen. The canteen held nothing but water, for the major never drinks anything stronger. We were just about to decamp, when up came from the west a man in a single buggy. He was apparently not going to stop but when the major sprang up and waved to him he pulled up and got out, a man nearly if not quite six feet tall, broad-shouldered, athletic in figure and movement, with big but shapely hands. I did not make out his dress under the linen duster he wore. An easy straw hat covered his sunburnt face. The two had a short and earnest conversation and the stranger drove off. I could not help noticing his horse, muscular, clean-limbed, beautiful head and neck, a flashing eye, and black as coal.³ As we took the road I could hardly wait to ask who the tall and very distinguished gentleman might be and what was he doing out on that prairie. "Why," said the major, "that's Henry Whipple, the new Episcopal bishop. He came out here two years ago and is making things lively for his church people and other people too. He had not been three months in the territory before he came out here to see Indians. He found that the lower Sioux had had no missionary for seven years. He sent a young parson right off, raised some money, built a little church, and sent on a young woman to start a school. He's a good Democrat and if he had stayed in politics in New York state he would have risen high, I'm sure. He came this morning from the Redwood agency, where he has started a mission for the Sioux Indians thereabout. He said things were quiet there, but there was a bad state of mind among the Indians. They seemed to be mad about something."

After I had exclaimed several times on the smoothness of the

³ Evidently the famous Bashaw, who carried his master thousands of miles before the days of the railroad. *W. W. F.*

road right on the natural sod, the major said these roads are still a wonder to him after having traveled them for nearly twenty-five years. Dry hard in summer and frozen hard in winter, they made good wheeling except in short break-up periods. He thought a long time about applying steam to prairie navigation, and designed a steam wagon. He had one constructed in New York and sent out to Henderson last year. His engineer fired it up and ran it about the streets and up and down hill. It seemed all right and they started it for Fort Ridgely with a loaded wagon in tow. It mounted the bluff and took the road. It did not make the speed they expected, but jogged along comfortably till it reached a bad slue [*slough*] east of the fort, where something went wrong. The machine got off the road, half sank in the mire and half tipped over. "Why, by George," said the major, "here's the wreck now." He added that he had designed a wagon so much better that he did not care to salvage the wreck except to take the oscillating — what's oscillating? — engine out.⁴

It was still daylight when we drove into Fort Ridgely and directly to the house of the sutler, Major B[enjamin] H. Randall.⁵ Greetings were very cordial and Mrs. Randall made me feel at home at once. She had a nice little supper of cold corned beef and creamed potatoes for us, and for a treat served some wild crab-apple preserves. My, aren't they spicy! Mother's North Carolina persimmons are not to be compared with them. After supper the commandant of the post came to call.⁶

Later the two majors got to talking about territorial days in which both — I should think — must have played leading parts. A mention of service in the legislature made Major Randall flare

⁴ For a detailed account of Major Brown's steam wagon, see Dr. Folsell's *History of Minnesota*, 3: 351-357 (St. Paul, 1926). *Ed.*

⁵ Sutlers at Indian posts, as well as agents, had the courtesy title of "major." *W. W. F.*

⁶ From July 5 to August 20, 1861, Captain H. H. Western of the Second Minnesota Volunteer Infantry was commandant of Fort Ridgely. A complete list of the "post commanders" appears in a manuscript history of "Fort Ridgely, Minnesota," p. 10, in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. *Ed.*

up. "Yes," he said, "I was in that legislature of 1851 and helped put through a bill to establish a university at St. Anthony," a smart young city a few miles above St. Paul, which I am to see when I get back. The legislature elected a good board of trustees, who erected a good sized building on a lot some citizen gave for the purpose, and started a school. It was a good little school and was going on all right till 1854. In '55, the boom year, Gorman — Governor Gorman — prophesied that the state would have 350,000 people in three years. There was a new board in '56 and they caught the boom fever. A majority of a bare quorum voted to borrow \$50,000 and put the money into a college building on a new site, expecting the legislature to pay the bill. The panic of '57 came on and the legislature had to borrow money at twenty per cent to pay its own per diem. Four years have run past, and now Governor Ramsey is proposing to the legislature to turn the government land grant over to the creditors and wind the thing up.

I did not understand what caused Major Brown to free his mind about Fort Ridgely. In the first place — I give only the substance — the location was a stupid thing. The fort ought to have been placed at the mouth of the Yellow Medicine River forty miles up the Minnesota, where the wild Sioux live. In the next place, it was absurd to fit it out as an artillery post. There should have been a garrison or a squadron of field artillery, one of them mounted.⁷ "And then," the major went on, "they never built a stockade around the post. The fur company knew better. My trading post at Lake Traverse in the thirties had a high and stout stockade. A dozen good men with rifles could have stood a thousand Indians with their smooth iron, double-barrelled shot guns. The act of stupidity, however, was the failure to provide

⁷ Major Brown probably had in mind the experience of the artillerymen of Fort Ridgely in 1857 in the pursuit of the outlaw Inkpadduta, who had murdered seven white people and carried off four white women. Captain Bernard E. Bee of Company D, Tenth United States Infantry, — afterwards of the Confederate Army, — and his company chased the scoundrel on foot for a week and never came in sight of him. Dr. Thomas S. Williamson, the missionary, regarded this failure as the bottom cause of the Sioux Outbreak. *W. W. F.*

any inside water supply. For eight years the garrison has been supplied with water hauled up in barrels on wagons a half mile up hill." Major Brown mentioned Bishop Whipple's report about having found the Indians mad about something and said he felt some anxiety about it. Mr. Randall said he did not think it amounted to much; the Indians were always growling about something.

Good Mrs. Randall took pity on me and led me up to a dainty little bedroom, where I slept the sleep of the just who digest, as the French say.

We did not need to take an early start on Saturday morning and stayed to see the guard mount. The traditional ceremony was gone through with as exactly with the one fifer and one snare drum as if the marine band were there to beat off. In the little group of spectators were two men with whom I exchanged greetings. One was John Jones, the regular ordnance sergeant, who had been left when the regular artillery troops were taken away.⁸ He talked as if he had a kind of ownership of those guns, six field pieces and two twenty-four pounders. He had taken much pleasure in drilling three or four volunteer gun detachments in the use of the guns.⁹ The other notable character was Peter Quinn, the interpreter for the post. He was beginning to tell me of one of his remarkable experiences with Indians when the major drove up and carried me away.

The fort I should say is no stronghold for defense. There is a large square parade ground; on the north side (appears east to me) is the principal building — the stone barracks for the soldiers two storeys high. On the east and west sides of the square are officers' quarters and quartermasters' storages. On the south facing the barracks are the comfortable quarters and office of the post commandant. Many small buildings are scattered on all sides of

⁸ For an account of Jones's services, see Folwell, *Minnesota*, 2:130 (St. Paul, 1924). *Ed.*

⁹ It is well known that but for the part taken by Sergeant Jones and his volunteer gunners, Fort Ridgely probably would have been captured by the Indians in August, 1862. *W. W. F.*

the fort proper — the sutler's house and store, the ammunition magazine, stables and log houses for soldiers' families.¹⁰

Our road from the fort lay along the Fort Abercrombie trail some distance from the river to get around the heads of several coulies, as they call ravines out here. Some twelve miles up a road leading to the Redwood ferry and the lower agency branched off to our left. Late in the afternoon we left the Abercrombie trail for the lower road and soon came in sight of the Brown house. The major did not drive to what looked to me as the front door of the large house, but turned into an ascending road partly dug into the bluff and stopped at the carriage entrance on the level of the second storey of the house. I had a warm welcome from Ellen and Amanda, who made me known to the rest of the family present. I was glad to have a good supper, some pleasant talk with the girls about our school days together, and a good night's sleep.

I found Sunday morning that the Browns did not intend that I should find life dull in their far-off prairie home. They had laid out a regular plan of sightseeing. Sunday we would go to church and today the major, who had some business there, would drive Ellen and me to the Yellow Medicine agency. The rain of today has put off that trip, but on Sunday, yesterday, a carriage load and two or three on horseback went to the Episcopal mission church at the lower agency.¹¹ The Browns are, as you know, all Episcopalians except Ellen. When a young girl she was at school at a convent in St. Paul. The good nuns were so kind and persuasive that they made a Catholic of her. The lower agency we found a very quiet place. There is a long place for a street along the sides of which the buildings are loosely strung — the big stone government warehouse, the council house, traders' stores, the little church, and dwellings. The Indians live in a half dozen separate villages on the Minnesota River or little creeks running

¹⁰ A plan of Fort Ridgely and a map showing its location are to be found in the manuscript history of the post. *Ed.*

¹¹ For an account of the founding of this mission, see Henry B. Whipple, *Lights and Shadows of a Long Episcopate*, 61 (New York, 1900). *Ed.*

into the river. A large number cultivate little farms, and live much like white people.

The little church was well filled with white and mixed-blood people. The only Indian I saw was Little Crow. I recognized him at once. Father, as you know, showed him to us three or four years ago when he came to Washington with other chiefs to make a treaty. He wore a good suit of citizens clothes with a very high linen collar and moccasins in place of shoes.

The service — our ordinary "Morning Prayer" — was very decently conducted by the young minister, the chants and hymns well sung to familiar tunes. The sermon was good enough, but I have to confess that my mind wandered a good deal. It's a fact that I was thinking of you all at home much of the time. After church the minister greeted the Browns and introduced his assistant teacher, Miss [Emily J.] West, who had led the singing. Other persons I saw or was made known to were Mr. [Louis ?] Robert and Mr. [William H.] Forbes, the leading traders, Mr. [James W.] Lynd, a clerk in one of the stores, and Mr. Philander Prescott and his Dakota wife.¹² Mr. Prescott I was told on the way home was a person of importance. He had come to Minnesota before the territory was organized as a trader's employee and had become a very competent and — as if that were a distinction — a very honest and reliable interpreter. On account of his intimate knowledge of the Dakota he was invited by Schoolcraft to contribute articles to his great quarto history of the Indian tribes.

There was a late dinner, a good rest, and a pick-up supper. Then came what I learned was the ordinary thing, the Sunday night sing. Amanda played the melodeon and the girls and I sang our parts and the major and the boys theirs. I can't write down all the old hymns we sang, but among them were "By Cool Siloam's Shady Rill," "My Faith Looks up to Thee," and "From Every Stormy Wind That Blows." We tried "Antioch" and "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come," but the boys went to pieces on the chorus.

¹² The traders' stores at the lower agency in 1862 are located on a map in Folwell, *Minnesota*, 2: 110. *Ed.*

Now I'm tired out, and it may be you are. I have written all this gossip on the pretty writing desk with mother-of-pearl decorations which mother gave to Ellen.¹³

Ever your loving daughter

CASSIE

SACRED HEART, MINNESOTA, Tuesday, August 20, 1861
MY DEAR FATHER:

Our drive to the upper agency put over to today had to be again postponed, because word came to the major that chiefs from both agencies wanted to meet him in council this very day.

After breakfast I asked him to explain to me what was meant by upper and lower Indians and upper and lower agencies. He took more time to tell me than he could afford, and I will try to give the substance. When white men came to trade with the Sioux in the early years of the eighteenth century they found those Indians divided into two great groups. One, the smaller, was living in villages along the Mississippi River from the Falls of St. Anthony to Prairie du Chien, at the mouth of the Wisconsin River.¹⁴ The larger group lived far away on the upper parts of the Minnesota River and lived by slaughtering the countless buffalo on the great plains to the west. These were the upper Sioux.

¹³ We have here the best clue to the identity of the unknown writer of these letters. That writing desk is still in the possession of Mrs. Ellen Brown Allanson and it was given to her in Washington by Colonel Charles E. Mix, for many years chief clerk of the Indian bureau and at times acting commissioner of Indian affairs. When members of the Brown family were driven from their house at daylight on August 18, 1862, Miss Brown snatched up the little desk and held on to it during their six weeks' captivity in the Indian camp. We may pretty safely conjecture that "Cassie" was none other than Miss Catherine Mix of Washington, D. C. It is now known that a sister of this young lady had been married to the Honorable George L. Otis of St. Paul. Notice an allusion to this in the first letter. *W. W. F.*

Mrs. Allanson died at Wheaton on December 12, 1928. The desk is now owned by her daughter, Miss M. Ethel Allanson of Wheaton. *Ed.*

¹⁴ Miss Cassie was misinformed here. The most southerly of these villages was where Winona was afterward built and there were two or three villages on the Minnesota River, one at Shakopee. *W. W. F.*



CASSIE AND MONNIE MIX AND ELLEN BROWN
[From a copy, in the possession of Mr. George G. Allanson of Wheaton, of
a daguerreotype made at Washington, D. C., about 1860.]



MRS. JOSEPH R. BROWN
[From a tintype in the possession of Mr. Allanson.]

In 1851 the United States bought the Indian right to some twenty million acres in central and southern Minnesota for two cents an acre and granted the Sioux a reservation twenty miles wide with the Minnesota River running through the middle of it. After a delay of two years the lower Sioux were removed by the government up to the southern end of the reservation and an agency for them was established on the west bank of the river some twelve miles above Fort Ridgely, which had in the meantime been located. The upper Sioux had only to move some of their villages from outside the reservation on to it. An agency was established for them at the junction of the Yellow Medicine River with the Minnesota — also on the west side. The one agent for the two agencies lived in a commodious dwelling at Yellow Medicine. The Browns moved from it to their new home.

It was late in the forenoon when the lower chiefs, six or eight in number, made their appearance, all in white man's clothing. About the same number soon after came down from the upper villages in Indian dress. Major Brown had had some benches and boards put out in the shade of a clump of poplars in front and to the right of the house. Without any formal greetings they "went into council" as the saying is, and except for a time while they ate a luncheon of pork and beans and white bread the palaver went on till late in the afternoon. There was no oratory that I could see from the piazza, but much earnestness in the talk. Of course I could not have understood a word of it. After the council was over Sam told me all about it. The major understands Dakota fairly well, but to make sure of full understanding he had his son with him to interpret in hard places. The principal chiefs of the lower bands, Sam told me, were Wabasha, Wakute, and Big Eagle; Little Crow was not with them. From the upper bands came Standing Buffalo, Scarlet Plume, Red Iron, and Akeepa. The two delegations had a common complaint about which they wanted Major Brown's counsel. As I understood from Samuel J. B. it was this: the original reservation for the Sioux was twenty miles wide. For reasons you can guess at as well as I can all the Indian villages were on the west side of the river — the Minnesota River.

The Indians merely hunted on the east side or some of them went over to meet whisky sellers on the boundary line. Those "bad birds," as the Indians call them, are very careful not to break the law forbidding, under heavy penalties, the introduction of liquor into the Indian country. After five years' occupation of the whole reservation the discovery was made for them, rather than by them, that the Indians had more land by half than they needed — and that was true if Indians were to turn farmers. Major Brown, who was doing all he could to get them on to farms, favored the idea of reducing — a very common expression — reducing the reservation. In one of his reports to the Indian bureau he advocated that policy. He said the land the Indians would give up was well worth five dollars an acre, but that it would not be worth while to expect any such value, because the land grabbers would combine and hold down the price at sales. He proposed that the Indians should be assured of a dollar an acre and that the proceeds should be funded to put the Indians beyond future want.

In the summer of 1858 Major Brown took delegations from the Sioux tribes to Washington and there a treaty was negotiated by which they agreed to give up all their lands on the left bank of the Minnesota and accept such a price as the Senate of the United States should fix upon. The Senate ratified the treaties the next winter, and in 1860 decided that thirty cents an acre would be a right price. The Senate could not vote any money and the matter went on till this last spring, when Congress voted less than \$270,000 for nearly 900,000 acres of land. The Indians got mad just like white folks when this news came. But that was nothing to the storm of rage which is blowing now. When the treaties were made it was agreed that any just debts due to traders should be paid out of the money for the land. As the Indians were expecting a million dollars, they willingly gave their consent. Now word comes from Washington that traders' claims have been allowed to such an amount that the lower Sioux have not a dollar coming to them and the upper Sioux only some beggarly sum. They're just frantic about it. Nothing else was talked about in the outdoor council except that some fault was found with the

Great Father's sending the Sioux an agent who knew nothing about Indians and would never learn.¹⁵

One of the younger chiefs started in to say that they would have to fight to get justice. Major Brown gave the Indian sign meaning to stop, or leave off, or shut up, and said, "Good friends, I know you have been deeply wronged and I know, and so do you all know, that it is useless for you to threaten any violence. The Great Father means right, but he has advisers and officers who misinform him and act contrary to his orders. Be patient with him and he will do you justice. I will do all in my power to have the truth made known to him. I am out of office but I believe I have some influence left."¹⁶

I was not watching the council from the verandah all the time. A few women had come along with the lower chiefs and were asked to come up onto the lower verandah. Two good-looking young squaws were in native dress — a calico jacket and a scanty tube of a skirt of blue cloth. This skirt was cut long, so that it could be pulled up to the armpits and turned down over a waist belt. Thus the skirt could be long or short, as the wearer pleased. I could not help wishing that Mrs. Grundy would let me wear such a comfortable garment instead of these abominable hoop skirts. They all wore deerskin moccasins. I noticed that one of the women had brought with her a really pretty boy of three or four, nearer white than red in complexion. She had dressed him for the occasion in a blue hunting shirt, red leggings, and very dainty beaded moccasins. He had a little wooden gun which none of us could get him to let us handle. By noon he was tired enough to go to sleep on a blanket laid on the floor. As nearly as I could understand his name was — will call it Asa with a Y before it.¹⁷

¹⁵ The agent was Thomas J. Galbraith, who was Brown's successor at Yellow Medicine. Folwell, *Minnesota*, 2: 221. Ed.

¹⁶ It is a matter of history that the spoliation of the Sioux of half their reservation was one of the radical causes of the outbreak of 1862. W. W. F.

¹⁷ It is a safe guess that this child was none other than Ohiyesa, the boy with that Indian name who grew up to be a distinguished physician and author, Dr. Charles Alexander Eastman. The boy's father, John Eastman — Many Lightnings — was then living at the lower agency; the mother, a

Postscript — Just as supper was over this evening the mail came from the upper agency and brought the St. Paul *Pioneer* of August ———. It contained the revised list of the killed and wounded Union soldiers in the battle of Bull Run. The major ran down the list naming here and there someone known. At the mention of one Emily rose and went out, and we did not see anything more of her. The major said, "Now I will tell you that I wrote to Governor Ramsey telling him that I would be glad to accept any commission — the lowest in one of the new regiments. I told him of my seven years' service in the regular army and my knowledge of garrison life and the customs of the service. The governor may not care to appoint one who when editing the *Pioneer* gave him so many hard political knocks, but I want him to know that I stand by the Union cause and am willing to make sacrifices for it." "Oh, you daddy," broke out Amanda, "we know you. If the governor gave you a lieutenant's commission you'd be a captain pretty soon, and if the war should last a colonel and you wouldn't mind being a general."¹⁸

SACRED HEART, MINNESOTA, August 21, 1861

DEAR FATHER:

As soon as breakfast was over a wagon load of men and boys started out on a hunt, which had been much talked about. We girls followed in the light wagon and overtook the hunters two miles back on the prairie strung along a big field of stubble with their dogs. Of course, I know little about hunting, but of this kind I had no idea. The hunters sent their dogs, which had been trained, a few rods ahead of them out into the field. These would presently start the prairie chickens up from the stubble. The poor birds made a short low flight for a short distance straight ahead. The hunters took them on the wing with their shot guns and almost always brought them down. There was little romance granddaughter of Cloudman of Lake Harriet and of an army officer, had died soon after the boy's birth. *W. W. F.*

¹⁸At fifty-six Major Brown was too old for service in the field, but there can be no doubt that in some staff position he would have been of great service in the Union cause and distinguished himself. *W. W. F.*

in that kind of killing for me and I was glad when the rest were ready to go home.

It's about time I should tell you about this big house of the Browns. I wrote the other day about the company entrance being on a level with the second storey of the house. You enter there a very wide hall with large rooms on each side. The third storey is divided in the same way. I share a sitting room with Ellen with our bedrooms back of it. There is a lighted attic overhead, not furnished, but a billiard table and Major Brown's desk are up there. The first floor is taken up with the dining room and kitchen and storerooms. The outside walls are built of a reddish granite quarried out of the bluff near by, and they are so thick that the window seats are wide enough to sit in. There are wide piazzas — or are they balconies? — on all three storeys running the whole length of the house. Men are digging out a big place on the front lawn for a fountain. The water is to come from a pond in the bluff and the same pipe will have a branch to supply the house. All the rooms — there must be twenty of them — are well furnished, but the parlor is gorgeous with its sofa and chairs upholstered in black mohair, heavy damask curtains hanging from brass cornices, and heavy bronze chandeliers with crystal pendants. All the fine furniture was bought in New York. There are two pianos, one in the parlor, the other in Mrs. Brown's sitting room. The major had thought of giving a name to his estate, but no suitable one had occurred to him. Meanwhile Carter Drew, the Scotch surveyor who laid out Henderson, suggests "Farther-and-Gay Castle." The pun was appreciated in the household and has been spread by guests and acquaintances.¹⁹

I have written so far as if "you all" know all the members of the Brown family. The major and Ellen and Amanda we know of course personally, as they have been our guests. Others you know only by name, through them. One daughter, the oldest, Lydia, has been married to a Mr. Charles Blair; one son Angus, the oldest, has also married. I expect to see them tomorrow. Amanda's twin

¹⁹ The pun on Fotheringay Castle, where Mary Queen of Scots passed her last days, is obvious. *W. W. F.*

sister Emily is here and is a very fine girl, but has not seen so much of the world as her sister. Her complexion is fair, Amanda's as you know is dark. I have already mentioned Samuel J. He is only sixteen, but is no longer a boy. He has been for two years at the boys' Episcopal school at Faribault and has thought seriously of being a minister. He is tall, straight, and muscular; has color enough to pass for an Indian; and has the steadiness of gaze and the gravity Cooper attributes to his Indians. Joseph junior, "Joe," about twelve, has the smile and laugh of his father and is everlastingly teasing the girls. Little Sibley, about four, is a lovable child and the pet of the whole household.²⁰

The mechanics and laborers who built this big house have all gone but two or three.²¹ They had sleeping quarters in a barn built beforehand. Charles Fadden, the gardener and coachman, and Landmann, a German helper, sleep in the barn. The overseer has a little house up the road. I see little of the two maids, but a good deal of an old Indian woman who served the family so well for years that they do not like to get rid of her. She saunters about with a broom and dustpan, chanting softly to herself now and then a little song which Ellen translated for me:

My little red birdboy
Chippewa carry him 'way
Never come back to me.

It appears that the Chippewa had killed her husband and taken her child captive.

They call the woman "Curley," but her Dakota name is Chandesota. Isn't that musical? Major Brown told me one of her early performances; she was helping to bake the buckwheat cakes, dropped the knife in the batter and wiped it off on her moccasin.

Postscript: I did not write you about Mrs. Brown this morning

²⁰ A list of the Brown children, with the place and date of birth, is in a family Bible belonging to Miss Allanson. A copy made by Dr. Folwell is in the Folwell Papers. *Ed.*

²¹ An excellent account of the building of the house is included in a letter written by Mr. Allanson and published in the *Traverse County Star* of Wheaton for April 12, 1923. *Ed.*

and it is just as well I didn't, for I have had a long talk with her and will try to give you the substance. When I showed some curiosity about her nationality, she said she was a much mixed-blood—I should say she was. Her father was Narcisse Frenier, a French-Canadian. Her mother was Winona Crawford, daughter of a colonel in the British army—a bird of passage—and a half-breed Sioux and Scotch woman. Frenier deserted his wife and returned to Canada. Mrs. Brown has no recollection of seeing him. The abandoned widow married Akipa, a full-blood upper Sioux, and he was very good to his stepchild. He gave her a Dakota name. It was Wakinyasheea—that means “down of a bird.” Her relationship with her step-father brought her much into Indian companionship so that she not only understood the Dakota but spoke it fluently. By a little maneuvering I brought Mrs. B. around to her acquaintance with Mr. B. “Oh, that's my romance,” she said. “I don't mind telling you.” When she was a girl of twenty her folks were camped near the big trading post of the American Fur Company on Lake Traverse. Mr. Brown had charge of it. Mr. Sibley came up there to inspect it, and while he was there one morning a group of traders, including Mr. Joseph Renville, decided to find out who was the best shot with the rifle at long range. Renville, when his turn came, leveled his gun and fired. At the moment a girl ran across the line of fire. The bullet hit and passed through the fleshy part of her hip. She felt the sting, she said, and fell down, but she did not faint. She was picked up and carried into the post, and Renville went off on the best pony available to bring Dr. Williamson from Lac qui Parle, where he had lately begun his mission. He was a physician before he became a missionary.²² The half-breed housekeeper took good care of the patient. The girl was healthy and the wound was a simple one and was soon healed. To please her Indian parents the doctor used or pretended to use a medicinal root called white

²² This incident is related by Henry H. Sibley in his “Unfinished Autobiography,” *ante*, 8: 360. He puts the age of the girl at the time of the accident at sixteen. For a note on Mrs. Brown's parentage see Samuel J. Brown, “Biographic Sketch of Chief Gabriel Renville,” in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 10: 614. *Ed.*

medicine. Mr. Brown naturally made inquiry about the girl's progress, saw and spoke with her, and found something in her to interest him, although he was much her senior in years. To cut the story short, Dr. Williamson was sent for a second time to wed a pair of lovers.

I must make as short as I can Mrs. B's rather long but interesting story of their married life. For a few years they lived at the Lake Traverse trading post. In 1838 they moved to Gray Cloud Island in the Mississippi River, a little way below St. Paul, where the major opened a large farm. Ellen was born there. Then they moved to the Coteau des Prairies — I don't know where that is — Sam was born there. They then lived for a few years on the St. Croix River, where Mr. Brown laid out a town.²³ The twins, Amanda and Emily, were born there.

In 1853 and 1854 the family lived in St. Paul, while Mr. Brown edited the *St. Paul Pioneer*. The next year they moved to Henderson, the major's town site. There they lived for two years until 1857, when the appointment as Sioux Indian agent came. Mrs. Brown had much to say about her husband's work in civilizing the Sioux, how he had got hundreds of the men to have their hair cut, to live in houses, wear white man's clothes, and live in peace and quiet. "Now," she said, "that's all over and I hope and pray that we will never have to move again. That is what we both hope, and Mr. Brown has built this house to be our home for the rest of our lives. He chose to build here for two reasons. I never liked the city, and he has had all he wants of city life. The other reason is that because of my Indian blood and that of my children we became entitled to many shares of Sioux half-breed scrip, which gave us the right to take up several hundred acres of land. (I won't venture to tell what I don't know about Sioux half-breed scrip.) My husband has selected the land here in this finest

²³ The town was named "Dakotah" on the map. It is now well-known that the adventurous Brown had a dream of its becoming the capital of a new territory in which it would be central. He got it made a county seat and a judge of the United States district court came round by Prairie du Chien to hold court. He found the jail empty and no cases on the docket. The town became later an addition to the city of Stillwater. *W. W. F.*

part of the Minnesota Valley and we expect to have our sons and sons-in-law settle right around us and all be well off." I said something to her to the effect that Major Brown must be pretty well off now to spend so much money on this big house and the furniture for it. Her reply was that Mr. Brown made money easily and had made and lost what most men would call a fortune many times over. The house was too big and the furniture too costly, and it would take time for her to get used to it. Some days she felt like having a teepee put up somewhere near and going back to the simple ways of her Indian folks. But she went on to say that Mr. Brown don't gamble away his money as some of the old traders have done, and he has not a single costly habit. "There is nothing he won't do for the children and me," she explained. He has spent a good deal of money on his steam wagon and wants to spend more on a better one he has planned. He will not go back into politics, but is likely to give a good deal of time and effort to pushing along the civilization of the Sioux since he has made such a good beginning. Mrs. Brown's picture shows her as she is — middle-aged and middle-sized, black-eyed and black-haired — but it don't show the glint of her smile nor the frown which appears when things do not suit. She still commands in household affairs, but is content to let the girls, especially Ellen, entertain company and do the trading.

ST. PAUL, August 25, 1861

MY DEAR FOLKS:

I expected to write from Farther-and-Gay Castle about the greatest day of all, last Thursday. The morning after the Browns were going to take me to see the upper agency, when word came that the major had learned that he must start right off for Henderson and would need the team. I had wit enough to say to myself — I have had a most delightful visit here and they, especially Ellen and Amanda, would like to keep me longer, but I will quit while the play is good and go down with Major Brown and save all the trouble of an extra trip to get me back. So I said my goodbye and drove off with the major. The trip back to St. Paul added no new

adventures and here I am ready to rest for a week after all the excitement and fatigue of travel.

But I will try to tell what I can about the housewarming on Thursday last at Farther-and-Gay. All the forenoon all hands were as busy as bees getting ready for the big dinner. The time was set for half past one, but the guests began arriving soon after noon. An hour and more's delay gave me time to meet the few I already knew and to be introduced to others. The commandant came from the fort. The Reverend Mr. Samuel D. Hinman, Miss West, Mr. Prescott, and Mr. Lynd were there from the lower agency; also Mr. Robert and Mr. Forbes, the traders. From the upper agency arrived Agent [Thomas J.] Galbraith, quite distinguished in appearance, as was Mrs. G. Mr. Garvin, the principal trader, came with them, and Dr. Wakefield, the agency physician, and his wife. Dr. and Mrs. [Stephen R.] Riggs had been invited, but had gone East. Their two handsome daughters, Isabella and Martha, came along with two members of the Williamson family, Mr. Andrew Williamson and Miss Jane Williamson, Dr. Williamson's sister and associate in the mission. I was struck with her composed and dignified but still rather charming manner. I am sorry that we were interrupted when she had gone a little ways into a story of her school. Dr. Wakefield told me that she had been very successful and he "guessed" that her school keeping would civilize more Indians than the doctor's preaching. Through her children she had got many Indian families to eat from a table with knives and forks and from plates instead of sitting around a pot and dipping out their food with fingers and wooden spoons. From hearing the Williamson youngsters call her so, her children and the whole settlement had got to calling her "Aunt Jane." The Indians call her "Dowan Dootawin" which means "Red Song Woman." I did not get far in a conversation with a tall and good-looking young fellow, Charles Crawford, a half-brother of Mrs. Brown.²⁴ He seemed to understand my English but did not speak it easily. One of the most distinguished-looking per-

²⁴ Charles Crawford was the son of Winona Crawford and Akipa. Brown, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 10:615. *Ed.*

sons in the whole company was Mr. Gabriel Renville, who has a large farm up river. He is the son of the Joseph Renville I mentioned, is very influential with the Indians, and is respected by white people. He brought with him his daughter Evangeline, dark-complexioned, but a beauty for all that. Ellen introduced her as her cousin and told me on the sly that one of the missionaries had told her that "Evangeline had less religion and more sense than all the other Renville girls put together."

The big dinner was at length ready. The main table, wide as well as long, was set in the dining room on the first floor. Mr. and Mrs. Brown sat at the head of the big table with the other guests along the sides. Mrs. Brown wore her red and black bayadere silk with a frilly lace collar and a cameo pin. Two smaller tables were on the verandah. Just as when we were little, the whole feast was spread on the tables, but there were napkins for all, which we didn't have. Mr. Hinman said his short Episcopal grace and the carving and passing began. There were boiled hams and roasts of mutton, — no venison of course at this time of year, — all kinds of vegetables you can think of, and cucumber pickles. But the things which were new to me and which I liked very much were these: young prairie chickens — the ones brought in from the hunt Wednesday, stuffed and sewed up in thin cloth jackets, — better than any chicken you ever ate, — wild rice, dark brown in color but tasting like the kind they raise down South, and with a plum jelly made from native wild plums.

Ellen had arranged for me to have a place with her at one of the verandah tables and put me next to Mr. Lynd, whom I met on Sunday at the lower agency. What a surprise! What should I find out in this wilderness but an educated, cultured gentleman who had seen the world. I tried to talk a little literature, but soon found that he had forgotten more than I ever knew. He asked me if I knew Shelley's "Skylark." I had to confess that I did not, but I didn't tell him that I wasn't sure whether Shelley was an English or an American poet. He drew a little piece of paper from a vest pocket and began to read it, something interesting. He said I might have the copy. What has become of it I don't know but I learned the first stanza.

Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place —
Oh, to abide in the desert with thee! ²⁵

A part of the dessert was a very delicious punkin [*sic!*] pie. As I was enjoying it my dear young Joe came along and said, "You don't know what you are eating — that's just squash and its better than punkin. I'll bet you don't know how to spell punkin." "Yes, I do," I said, "punk——." "No you don't. I'll show you how to spell punkin. P double 'unkin, P double I, P double unkin, punkin pie." It was late when the dinner and the speeches were over. Mr. Galbraith spoke and Mr. Hinman and Mr. Renville. Major Brown thanked the company for their assistance at the housewarming. He and Mrs. Brown had at length settled down for good and meant to be good neighbors. His was the only one I heard.

The sound of music brought most of the company up to the parlor. It was Amanda with her fine contralto voice, playing her own piano accompaniment. She gave us "Way Down upon the Swanee River," "Oh, Don't You Remember Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt," "Annie Laurie," and "The Gipsy's Warning." I played the accompaniment for a quartet of Emily and Augusta, Sam and Angus. They sang beautifully "There's Music in the Air," "Larboard Watch, Ahoy," "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton," and one or two more.

About sunset some guests began to leave, among them the Presbyterian girls from Hazlewood. Then Charles Fadden appeared with his violin and one of us went to the piano. There was plenty of room in the wide main hall for a cotillion and of course for others in the rooms opening off it. With Ellen calling off we did some of the old quadrilles in good style, but I was surprised that the dances went off about as well as they would on Judiciary Square. Then came the Virginia reel, in which the major and Mrs.

²⁵ Lynd's taste in poetry cannot be questioned, but he made a mistake in calling Shelley the author of this poem. James Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, wrote it. *W. W. F.*

Brown took their parts, and money musk, and Ole Dan Tucker. There were not enough young people left to do round dances. With Mr. Lynd for a partner, we showed off a little, while Augusta played two of her own compositions, "The Wahpeton Waltz" and the "Sisseton Schottische," into which she had woven melodies from Dakota love songs.²⁸

²⁸ A final sheet is evidently missing here, but we assume that the guests took leave and that after the joyous day a peaceful night fell on Farther-and-Gay Castle. The reader will be interested, though not pleased, to know that the Browns had but a brief enjoyment of their splendid house — only one year almost to a day. At daybreak of August 18, 1862, — the morning of the Sioux Outbreak, — the whole family had to flee for their lives, leaving everything behind. Major Brown was in New York looking after his improved steam automobile, as we would now call it. For six weeks his wife and children were in captivity in Little Crow's camp. Years passed before the family was reunited. Prescott and Lynd were killed at the lower agency in the first moment of the outbreak. Hinman and Miss West escaped to Fort Ridgely. Peter Quinn was shot at the battle of Redwood ferry. The wife and children of Agent Galbraith, the Williamson and Riggs families, and many others were saved by Christian Indians, John Other Day best-known of them. The overgrown ruins of Farther-and-Gay Castle still stand. *W. W. F.*



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