Childhood Recollections of Old St. Paul[1]

Marion Ramsey Furness

WHEN I FIRST BECAME definitely aware of the world of people and events, beyond the four walls of my own home, Minnesota was already a full-fledged state. Territorial days had faded into the past and the frontier had left St. Paul well behind. No longer an outpost of civilization, it was now a self-sufficing, well-organized town, calling itself a city, I dare say.

A decade had not yet passed since the organization of the territory, but in that short time St. Paul had grown rapidly and substantially. The houses, generally of frame, though not a few of brick or stone, were comfortable and convenient, as convenience was understood in those days. There was usually a well or a cistern in the yard and a pump in the kitchen and, in close proximity thereto, a woodshed, supplemented by a long, neatly laid woodpile, chief ornament of the back yard. It gave comfortable assurance that the fuel supply was equal to the demands of the many, many stoves which were to keep the house warm during the long, cold winter ahead. Nor should the storerooms be overlooked with their gargantuan and wholesale stock of supplies — barrels of flour, barrels of sugar, barrels and barrels of apples of many varieties — greenings, winesaps, russets, and bellflowers for both cooking and eating.

Prior to railroad days and before our present wonderful system of transportation had been organized, apples were the winter standby. There were seldom any oranges, and bananas I had never seen until I went to Washington in 1863. Grapefruit had not been

[1] These recollections of frontier St. Paul and wartime Washington were written in 1934. They are in the form of notes for a talk given before the New Century Club at the Women's City Club of St. Paul. The author, who was the only daughter of Minnesota's first territorial governor, Alexander Ramsey, was born in St. Paul in 1853. Her earliest memories of the community, dating from the late 1850's and early 1860's, and some of her later girlhood recollections, are here printed for the first time through the courtesy of her daughters, Miss Anna E. Ramsey Furness and Miss Laura Furness of St. Paul. They furnished also the charming ambrotype of their mother which illustrates the narrative. *Ed.*

evolved, and the idea of fresh fruit and vegetables all the year round would have been considered the wildest of dreams. Indeed, in material comforts it is probable that St. Paul was comparable to most towns of its size in any part of the United States. For we must remember that it was then in the larger cities only that gas, running water, and central heating had been introduced, and those to a very limited degree. I doubt if there was a house in the country, however large or handsome, that boasted more than one bathroom. So residence in St. Paul in the 1860's no longer involved hardship or even discomfort.

Interior decorating was a refinement of later years, the mere thought of which, I don't believe, had dawned on that happy-go-lucky time. Comfort was the first consideration; sofas and chairs were chosen with that in view; and those of the Victorian era, so vilified nowadays, were at least comfortable. If their upholstery of dark rep or black haircloth accorded well with the flaming roses of the parlor carpet, well and good, but the matter was not of vital importance. The few pictures hung high on the walls, and the ornaments all collected on the étagère or whatnot were really negligible in the general effect. And yet the whole atmosphere of the rooms was one of cozy, homelike cheer. It may have been an emanation of the wholehearted hospitality so characteristic of that generation, and especially of this part of the world. I always associated that atmosphere with the dear, ugly old stoves, and when I go back in memory to those winter afternoons when I lay on the sitting room floor, a favorite book in hand, watching the snow fall outside and listening to the crackle of the burning wood, I am still filled with a sense of content and satisfaction that is a joy just to recall.

On this very spot where we now are stood the First Presbyterian Church — a brick building with a steeple which housed the first bell, or at least one of the first, in the territory.[2] The House of Hope was an offshoot of that church. I do not know whether I was often taken

[2] The First Presbyterian Church was located on the corner of Third and St. Peter streets, where the Women's City Club of St. Paul was erected in 1931. Third Street is now Kellogg Boulevard. For some comments on the bell of the First Presbyterian Church, see Lois M. Fawcett, "Some Early Minnesota Bells," *ante*, 18:376–378.

there, but one occasion I well remember. In an accession of oratorical enthusiasm, the minister flung out his arms, knocking down one of the two lamps standing on either side of the high pulpit, which he mounted by a flight of stairs. The lamp was not lighted, so no damage was done, and the crash to me furnished a very agreeable diversion.

Third Street was then, and for many years thereafter, the town's main thoroughfare, and a brisk and lively one it was. The buildings on both sides, which many of us may remember as shabby and dilapidated, were then in their pristine freshness. There were good shops of all kinds. But what I recall most vividly as things of beauty were the gorgeous crimson, purple, and sapphire-blue jars in the drugstore windows, brightening the whole vicinity. St. Paul had a great reputation for fine turnouts, and the high-stepping horses with the stylish barouches in summer, and in winter the truly regal sleighs decked out with robes — the very finest this fur-bearing country could produce — and tinkling sleigh bells, all combined to make as gay a picture as one could wish to see. And, for a little girl all dressed up in her best, a walk or a drive on Third Street was a thrilling adventure. The streets were not paved, which, after I had been in the East, was a great mortification to me. I remember thinking that if only Third Street were paved with cobblestones like the streets in Philadelphia, St. Paul's status as a city would be assured. There were wooden sidewalks, and they were much appreciated, I am sure, by the early settlers as a great step forward, but a loose board on a rainy day could play sad havoc with the white stockings and white petticoats then in vogue.

Unquestionably the greatest drawback to a residence in St. Paul in those days must have been its inaccessibility, for with the setting in of winter and the freezing of the river, travel became difficult and most uncomfortable. Even the mails were infrequent and very irregular.

The first journey I remember was when I was five years old. We left St. Paul about the end of February, and, on the regular stage, drove down the river on the ice to Prairie du Chien, which was for the time being the western terminus of the railroad from Chi-

cago.[3] The stage was filled to the limit with passengers and heavy buffalo robes. I was packed in so tightly that I could scarcely move hand or foot, and the experience remains in my memory like a nightmare, only equaled by a subsequent phase of the journey.

Beyond Chicago we encountered the sleeping car — one of the first, I have since been told, to be introduced. It was an experiment, and was then on trial. There were three tiers of berths in a section, the upper one so narrow that it was hardly more than a shelf. I was put to bed with my mother in the lowest one, which was so close to the middle berth that there was not space enough for me to sit up or scarcely to raise my head. Again I had that desperate feeling of being caught in a trap. The conductor, most solicitous for our approval of the new invention, kept tucking my mother in and inquiring all through the night if we were comfortable. As no one in those days would have dreamed of removing a single article of clothing in so public a place, and as the hoop skirt was one of the most important items, and a very difficult one to dispose of either gracefully or modestly, you may realize that my mother was anything but comfortable.

All that I recall of the visit itself are the afore-mentioned cobblestones of Philadelphia and the running water in my aunt's home. It was almost impossible to keep me out of the bathroom, and I kept pulling chains and turning faucets, making myself such a nuisance, I suppose, that there could have been little regret at my departure. The most glorious moment of that trip, and the one I most clearly remember, was the return home. I had seen the great world, and now I knew that St. Paul was the best place in it. Thus you can understand how the community here was thrown upon its own resources for mental stimulus and diversion, and apparently its members were quite equal to the task.

In those leisurely days it was the custom to spend a whole afternoon with a friend, taking one's sewing or fancy work, and often being joined later by one's husband and staying for supper. Sometimes there might be several such casual guests. Like all children, I dearly loved company of any age, but what I most enjoyed was

[3] The Milwaukee and Mississippi River Railroad, which later was absorbed by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, was extended to Prairie du Chien in 1857.

listening to their chat and gossip. Sometimes I was rather crushed by hearing, *sotto voce,* "Little pitchers have big ears," and then my mother's brisk voice, "Marion, don't you think it would be nice now to go out and play in the yard for a while?" But I caught suggestions of many interesting things on those afternoons. There were discussions about fancy dress parties—those who were going and their costumes, including representations of Roman or Alsatian peasants, gypsy maidens, or, what most stirred my imagination, the black gauzy robes of the Queen of the Night, spangled with crescent moon and stars of silver, and the Queen of Morning in white and gold. But this was all hearsay, for I never saw a fancy dress party. And then my first glimpse of romance! My curiosity had been piqued by seeing, on several Sunday mornings at the House of Hope chapel, a strange young man sitting in the pew with Miss Ellen, daughter of General Randolph B. Marcy, then stationed in St. Paul, and a great favorite of mine. In answer to my questions I was told his name and perhaps the reason of his visits. He was Lieutenant George B. McClellan, an engineer who was building railroads in Illinois. Within a year or two he became General McClellan, in command of the Army of the Potomac and generally known as "Little Mac." I did not approve of his aspirations on account of his very red neck. Exposure to the sun in the pursuit of his profession, I suppose, had burned it to a crimson; my objections, however, availed nothing, for within a few months he and Miss Marcy were married.[4]

Tableaux then were much in the air throughout the country, and St. Paul of course followed in the procession. Generally, I think these entertainments were given for the benefit of a church or some charity, and I seem to remember that as a rule they were at Ingersoll's Hall on Bridge Square. Once I had the thrill of taking part. In Penn's treaty with the Indians, Ellen Banning and I posed as Indian children. We wore very pretty and authentic Indian costumes, but unfortunately they were too small for our portly little figures, and we were much chagrined at being admonished on no account to turn so that our backs should be visible to the audience.

[4] McClellan and Ellen Mary Marcy were married in 1860.

Dr. Charles W. W. Borup, one of St. Paul's prominent men, was the center and inspiration of the musical group — a group certainly unique in so new a town. Naturally, at my age, my musical taste was not discriminating, but subsequent knowledge and experience have fully confirmed the contemporary opinion. Mrs. Ignatius Donnelly, wife of Minnesota's lieutenant governor, and Dr. Borup's niece, Mrs. Isaac Van Etten, both with very lovely flexible voices trained by the best vocal teachers the East then afforded, and Mrs. Henry M. Knox, the most charming of ballad singers, were the bright particular stars. Dr. Borup's fine, large house was the scene of many delightful musicals, but it was not until the scene was shifted to my own home that I made my first contact with music. It made a very deep impression on me, and that beautiful aria "Casta Diva" still lives in my memory as I heard it sung that night.[5] I dare say, the setting of the scene may have been no less interesting and impressive to me than the music.

The era of my childhood was that of the crinoline, with its bouffant skirts and flounces, its furbelows and many feminine accessories, and flowing sleeves with undersleeves of lace. Elaborate coiffures with broad braids looped over the ears, or headdresses of flowers and ribbons were the vogue, but especially effective and sumptuous were the rich materials of the dresses — satins, brocades, and moirées in most vivid hues — a rich and colorful background. From my seat of vantage in the corner of the parlor sofa, I remember watching and listening, divided between delight at this new experience and dread of eternally disgracing myself by falling asleep and having to be carried off to bed — which, I think, was what happened.

Within the next year or two I was again an onlooker, but at parties of quite a different character. As governor of the state for the several years he was in office from 1860 to 1863, my father gave each winter a series of receptions or parties for the entertainment of the Minnesota legislators and their wives. I gather that this was quite a motley group — all of them men of intelligence and high purpose, some of education and breeding, but others without any

[5] The aria is from Bellini's "Norma."

social experience whatever, whose unconventionality gave rise to some amusing situations. Many of these men had driven on sleds across the snowy prairie in the depth of winter from the furthermost parts of the state to attend the legislative sessions. Our house was not large and every available inch of space had to be utilized. Beds were removed from sleeping rooms in order to provide card rooms and what, I suppose, would now be called a bar for the guests. The latter proved so attractive on one of the evenings, it was currently reported, that a week or more passed before all the hats, gloves, and overshoes inadvertently left behind had been retrieved. But such little lapses were regarded very tolerantly in those days.

Gas had just been introduced, and it naturally was expected to greatly enhance the brilliance of social occasions. But it proved a coy and temperamental aid, for, in cold weather and when high pressure was needed for the many burners, it often flared, flickered, and then went out, leaving the house in total darkness. After one such experience my mother fortified herself with dozens of tin sconces for holding candles, which were hung on all the walls throughout the house.

I can see and almost hear the table groaning in the dining room under the weight of a substantial and bountiful supper. There were high glass bowls of chicken and lobster salad, great dishes of scalloped oysters—cove oysters, they were called, just heated through, I believe, before being canned for transportation—Maryland or beaten biscuits, and, what was then highly esteemed, smoked buffalo tongue.

But, of course, what fascinated me was the dancing in the parlor. The mazurka, the schottisch, and the polka were the fashion. Square dances alternated with round, a cotillion, or the lanciers; and Bill Taylor, the fashionable colored barber, played the violin in the small orchestra, at the same time calling out the figures in stentorian tones—"Balance to your partner, à la main right, à la main left, ladies chain, grand right and left." Later, poor Bill was killed by the Indians.

And now just a word about still another party, because it exem-

plifies so perfectly one of the characteristic features of life here in frontier days — its neighborliness. During the summer and early autumn of 1860, Governor William H. Seward of New York, who had been Mr. Lincoln's chief rival for the presidential nomination, but was now campaigning in his interest through the Northwest, was to deliver a speech in St. Paul. A reception was to be given for him at our house, but owing to the uncertainties of travel it was impossible to know definitely the day of his coming. On a Sunday morning word was received that he would be with us the next day — Monday.[6] A young man with horse and buggy was dispatched to deliver invitations, and another was sent out to scour the country for chickens; and bright and early Monday morning our large, airy kitchen was the scene of activity such as would delight any child. Our neighbors — and I have often heard my mother say, there never were such neighbors — Mrs. W. A. Spencer, Mrs. William L. Banning, Mrs. Henry J. Horn, and others were all there making the cakes for which they were famous — gold cake, silver cake, and sponge cake such as we never see nowadays — and mixing chicken salad in a wooden washtub dedicated to that purpose. All was ready in time for the great man to be welcomed with calm and gracious dignity by these same busy cooks. There were no caterers here then, and no trained nurses either, indeed no nurses of any kind, and again the neighbors filled the breach, and with skill and real devotion.

It must have been during the following winter, at the state Capitol where I often went with my father in the afternoons, that my curiosity was aroused on seeing large packing boxes piled up to the ceiling in all the corridors. I was told they were filled with arms and ammunition in case of war. The big word pleased me, and war meant little or nothing, especially when I heard its probability pooh-poohed on all sides, and at the same time the prediction that, if it ever did come about, it would not last more than ninety days.

There were many delightful Southern people who, for reasons

[6] Seward and his party arrived on Sunday, September 16, 1860. The visitors were entertained at the Ramsey home on Monday evening. See Charles Francis Adams' diary, published under the title "Campaigning with Seward," *ante*, 8:158, 160.

of health, had made their homes in St. Paul, and very many who were in the habit of coming North each year to enjoy the then cool, invigorating summers of Minnesota. So there was no monopoly of opinion on one side or the other of the burning question that was rending the country. But, as far as expression went, the juveniles were unquestionably more violent and unrestrained than their elders. Epithets such as "Rebel," "Copperhead," "Black Republican," and "Mudsill" were flung about with the utmost freedom by the childen; and the certainty of being able at any minute to stir up a fight simply by marching up and down aggressively and singing "We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree" filled one with a sense of power that was indescribable. And this is what I remember of the early days of the Civil War — this and the marching soldiers, the fifes and the drums — but of actual events, such as the firing on Fort Sumpter, I have no recollection, and of the tragedy and sorrow it was to mean to the entire country, of course, I had no conception.

In the summer of 1861 I went with my parents up the Minnesota River to Redwood Falls to see the payment by the government to certain bands of Sioux Indians at the agency there. It is a miracle to me now how a boat large enough to carry passengers could have made the passage up that shallow river. We landed at the agency early in the morning and were met by a deputation of Indian chiefs, decked out in their most gorgeous ceremonial costumes. Standing Buffalo, a handsome young brave, magnificent in his war bonnet of feathers, I remember most distinctly.[7] His face was painted in stripes of red and green, perpendicular on one side and horizontal on the other. A cheap looking glass framed in wood hung like an ornament around his neck. There were hundreds of Indians there. I had never seen so many. They were given an ox or two, which were plunged in cauldrons of boiling water, the Indians dancing around them, snatching from the kettles pieces of meat which they devoured as they danced.

[7] Standing Buffalo was chief of the Sisseton Sioux, one of the bands whose members assembled at the Redwood or Lower Sioux Agency for the payment of June 26, 1861. United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Reports*, 1861, p. 69; William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 2:230 (St. Paul, 1924).

It was at this very spot at the same season of the next year that the first blood was shed by the Indians in the terrible Sioux Massacre of 1862. A thousand white people were said to have been killed, and many thousands were driven out of the state by the fear of the Indians.[8] In Minnesota this terrible calamity overshadowed even the Civil War for the time being. St. Paul was filled with refugees from the Indian country, people who had seen their houses burned and their nearest and dearest tortured and killed before their eyes. There were instances of little boys ten or eleven years old who had carried a baby sister or brother all the way to St. Paul, walking at night and hiding in the underbrush by day. The whole community had no other thought but to help these poor people. There was much negotiation to keep the Chippewa Indians from joining with the Sioux in their war against the whites. It was ultimately successful, and in its course I often saw at our house Hole-in-the-Day, the great Chippewa chief, and the friendly Sioux, Other Day, both of whom were active in their efforts for peace.[9]

In 1863 my father was elected to the United States Senate, and late in the year my mother and I joined him in Washington. It was like being in a huge camp. The streets were crowded with officers and soldiers, members of regiments marching through on their way to the front, and that front was so near that the booming of the guns might often be heard. This was not a desirable atmosphere in which to bring up a little girl. So within two months I was placed in a boarding school in Philadelphia. But before I left Washington I did one thing, and quite of my own volition, too, which has been a source of infinite satisfaction to me all my life. Without the knowledge of anyone in the family, I and a small friend a year or two older dressed ourselves in our best clothes and walked up Penn-

[8] A delay in the government payment was one of the causes of the Sioux Outbreak, which began on August 18, 1862, in and about the Lower Sioux Agency and in other settlements of the Minnesota Valley. Estimates of the number of whites killed during the massacre vary, but the figure was probably under five hundred. Folwell, *Minnesota,* 2:109, 229, 238, 392.

[9] The "Chippewa Disturbance" and the hostile activities of the tribe's head chief, Hole-in-the-Day, are described by Folwell in his *Minnesota,* 2:374–382. Although these Indians were the cause of considerable alarm in the vicinity of Fort Ripley, they failed to join the Sioux in a general outbreak. John Other Day saved the lives of many settlers in the vicinity of the Upper Sioux Agency. See Folwell, *Minnesota,* 2:116–118.

sylvania Avenue to the White House. It was a reception day when anyone, high or low, black or white, might call on the president. We followed the crowd and presently entered the room where Mr. Lincoln stood. The marshal of the district beside him introduced us, having first learned our names. Mr. Lincoln, with his tall figure, had to lean over as he shook hands with us and repeated our names, with just as much *empressement* as for any of the callers. I can still see the large hand encased in a white glove, all the fingers extended, and the rugged face as it bent over us. I never saw Mr. Lincoln again, though I watched the crowds as they passed along Chestnut Street in Philadelphia on their way to Independence Hall, where his body lay in state in April of 1865.

A few weeks later, I was one of the thousands who had gathered in Washington to witness the review of the troops at the close of the war, which, instead of ninety days, had lasted four long years. All of one day the Army of the Potomac passed in review before President Andrew Johnson and the generals who had commanded it. On the next day it was Sherman's Army of the Tennessee which marched in rags and tatters, just as it had come from the seat of war. Such rejoicing as there was, or would have been, but for the sadness of Lincoln's death, which still hung like a pall over the country. Almost everyone wore on the arm a mourning badge of crepe tied with the national colors, and for three months it was not laid aside.

Those school years in Philadelphia were very happy ones, but uneventful, as such years are apt to be. In looking back upon them now, two high spots stand out. One was seeing and hearing Charles Dickens read extracts from his own works. He looked exactly as his pictures represent him, watch chain and all. People said he couldn't read, but I certainly got a thrill out of hearing about Little Nell in his own words and in his own voice. The second was a reading of Shakespeare by Fanny Kemble Butler, once a great actress herself and a niece of Mrs. Siddons. There was no doubt but that she could read. Her beautiful, cultivated voice made a deep impression on me, but I fear what she read was far above my head, and I remember wondering what could be the meaning of that word she ejaculated in her deep voice at the end of every scene, "Exeunt."

Well, the war was over, hoop skirts had gone out, and bustles were coming in. People who wore hats — and those were only the young — wore them tipped down over the nose. Narrow velvet ribbons tied around the neck and long ends hanging called, I think, "Come follow me."

In June of 1869 came the great adventure of my first trip to Europe. We sailed from New York on one of the large steamers of the Hamburg-American line, the "Cimbria," but it was much smaller than any we would consider today. It was comfortable, of course, but without so much that we now think essential and take as a matter of course; for example, there were no deck chairs or steamer rugs, unless the passenger himself provided them, and this the majority did not do. There were no flowers or fruit or books to surprise one in one's cabin, no letters or telegrams from friends left behind to wish one God speed or *bon voyage.*

We went, of course, to Paris, where, among the many, many sights which filled me with wonder and delight was the Palace of the Tuilleries, occupying the ground of the present beautiful gardens of that name. There Napoleon III and Eugenie held their brilliant court. Within two years it was destroyed by the Paris Commune after the Franco-Prussian War.

The charm and picturesqueness of Germany was then unspoiled, and one place was not like every other place, as it has since become. Berlin was in no way like New York. The sight of the many German officers filling the streets, with their brilliant uniforms and very bad manners, was most amusing, and the feast of music spread before me was enough to thrill anyone. The splendid orchestras were an absolutely new experience to me, for there then were none in the United States. But in all the wonderful music of that year in Dresden, it seems strange now to recall that the only one of Wagner's operas to be given was "Lohengrin." The "Ring" operas, to be sure, were not yet completed, and "Die Meistersinger" had just received its first performance, but Wagner at that time had not been fully accepted even in Germany.

I have told you something of the discomforts of winter travel in the great Northwest, but there were also features of traveling in

summer calculated to try men's souls, and surely the soul of a schoolgirl impatient to get home for vacation. The prospect of a trip from Prairie du Chien or La Crosse on one of the palatial steamboats that ran between St. Louis and St. Paul, with the beautiful scenery of the upper Mississippi to feast one's eyes upon, was looked forward to as a treat. But to awake the first morning on board and to realize that the boat had stopped and was stuck on a sand bar filled one with dismay. After hours wasted in trying to get it off, the passengers were transferred to a smaller boat, which met most likely with similar bad luck, necessitating another transfer to an even smaller and dingier boat. One arrived ignominiously, and with one or possibly two precious days of vacation lost.

But that was not our experience when, in the late summer of 1870, we returned from Europe, having hurried somewhat on account of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. On that occasion we landed in St. Paul for the first time on a train of the St. Paul and Chicago Railroad. We also found in St. Paul a fine new hotel, quite up-to-date in every respect — the Metropolitan, which stood on the present site of the Minnesota Club.[10] Its chief asset, to my mind, was the spacious hall with the large adjoining parlor, making it an ideal place for semipublic dances, such as the cotillions, or the Germans' and the bachelors' balls. Private parties then, here as elsewhere, were always given in one's own home. The earlier round dances had been replaced by the waltz and the galop. What a marvelous place was that hall for the galop, with the initial dash from one end to the other and then the whirl back at top speed! It was a trifle hoydenish, we then feared. But could anything be more exhilarating! Just to recall it makes one feel young again!

And there was no scarcity of partners in those days. There were many army officers stationed here, and the beginning of the era of railroad building had brought no end of young men, and of the finest type, from the East. Parties at Fort Snelling were among our favorite diversions, and the drive there was no small part of the pleasure. It took us out the Fort Road, as West Seventh Street was

[10] The Metropolitan Hotel, on the corner of Third and Washington streets, was opened on June 27, 1870.

then known, down a steep and stony hill to the river, across on the ferry, and up an equally steep and stony hill on the other side. Our conveyance was a buggy drawn by a pair of horses and driven by an agreeable young man. Chaperones were not *de rigueur* here, as they were in the East. However, many of the conventions of that very conventional day were as strictly observed here as anywhere else. For instance, there were no men or women in society then. They were gentlemen and ladies. Every married lady addressed her husband in company as "Mr. So-and-so." Young ladies were "Miss Brown," or, to those on a more familiar footing, "Miss Mary."

The making of social calls was regarded almost as a religious rite. Like house cleaning, in the spring and the fall the slate had to be wiped clean, and whole afternoons were devoted to making visits of the very shortest possible length with acquaintances, or, if by a lucky chance they were out, leaving cards. A corner turned down indicated a call in person; a card bent in the middle meant that it was intended for every lady in the house. After the invitations to a wedding had been sent out, the bride was never seen in public, even at church, until the marriage. And, of course, there was no entertaining beforehand.

Performances of Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks were then popular and very amusing. And there were evening companies at which all ages met on an equal footing and all seemed to enjoy themselves. Everyone who could was expected to contribute to the general entertainment — to sing or to play if one could, or to recite dramatic poems, for the elocutionist was then abroad in the land.

The summers in St. Paul alternated with equally diverting winters in Washington. Of course I often saw many of the great figures in political life, and some of them I knew, but a young lieutenant who could dance was at that time much more to my taste. I remember Carl Schurz with especial pleasure. He was then senator from Missouri — a delightful man with many interesting tastes. At his Washington house there took place many pleasantly informal musicals. His piano accompaniments of the German songs I used to sing filled me with pride.

One evening at an entertainment given for some charitable pur-

pose, dressed in peasant costume and sitting beside a spinning wheel, I sang "The Last Rose of Summer." Directly opposite sat General Grant looking about as interested and as animated as the sphinx might have looked. He was our first silent president. The only other occasion on which I came in contact with him was at an informal dinner at the White House following a reception given by Mrs. Grant, at which I had assisted Nellie Grant, or "Princess Nellie," as the press delighted in calling her. I sat at the left of the president and he, poor man, I dare say, was desperately bored. But he made a gallant effort at conversation, and before the dinner was over turned to me and said, "Is it true that you were the first white child born in Minnesota?"

And now, although I fear I have overstepped my time limit, I should like to tell you of a unique incident not typical of anything except perhaps the ineptitude and irresponsibility of special committees. It was, if I am not mistaken, in September of 1878, when Rutherford B. Hayes was president of the United States. It had been arranged that he and Mrs. Hayes were to be taken to see the famous wheat fields of North Dakota at the moment of their greatest glory, just before harvest. The time was coincident with the Minnesota State Fair, and it was a happy thought to invite them to stop over for a day in St. Paul to open the fair. A committee was appointed to arrange and attend to all the details of the reception and entertainment of the distinguished guests. This was the first time, I am quite sure, that a president had honored St. Paul by his presence during his term of office. My mother had known Mrs. Hayes, and she was anxious to throw open her house for a general reception for the president and his wife. But the committee vetoed that suggestion on the ground that only to a public place would the people of the city and the state feel free to go and greet their president. But my mother might, if she so desired, entertain them at breakfast on the morning of their arrival. The committee had arranged for a banquet to be followed by a general reception in the evening at the Metropolitan Hotel. So a breakfast was ready for President and Mrs. Hayes, the three or four members of their party, and governor and Mrs. John S. Pillsbury, who had been invited to meet them.

Filets mignons and prairie chicken were the *pièces de résistance.* Directly after breakfast, the president and his wife, my father, and I drove out to the fair, leaving my mother to rest and solitude, the domestics having all gone out to the fair to swell the crowd on St. Paul Day. At about five o'clock we returned, and Mrs. Hayes went to her room to rest.

When my father came in, my mother inquired when the committee would appear to escort President and Mrs. Hayes to the banquet. I fancy he replied with some trepidation, "Anna, there is not going to be a banquet, the crowds are so great the committee can't manage it. There will only be the reception later." Nothing in the house for dinner, the servants still at the fair! What was to be done? For remember there were no telephones, no automobiles, nor even a club where a complete dinner might have been ordered and supplied. But my mother, nothing daunted, searched the icebox and found what remained of the breakfast, and at that juncture the maids returned and a dinner was prepared. There were the sirloins from which the fillets had been removed and the legs of the prairie chickens, which my mother had the presence of mind to tell the president were considered the most delicate part of the bird. Mrs. Hayes assured us that she had enjoyed the meal much more than she would have enjoyed the banquet, which I am convinced was quite true. But, it was not the dinner one would have wished to set before the president and the first lady of the land.

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