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Two Long-Ago Years in Covington, Kentucky

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TWO LONG-AGO YEARS IN COVINGTON

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There is a halcyon period of childhood when everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds; so it was then, and so it appears forever after, even until death. And there are certain names prominent in one's past which flit through one's memory as a sort of picture. With the sound of that musical word Covington there is an intangible, momentary flash on the screen of a tree-arched street of homes, nearly all brick and some of them very comfortable, too, which is evidently West Fifth Street, the one most often traversed by me, on a mellow, early autumn day when sounds carry from afar, just before the first leaves begin to slip from the maples and come curvetting softly down to the old herringbone-patterned brick sidewalks, heaved into ridges by the creeping tree-roots under them.

It must be that I am walking through that golden haze with books under my arm, on my way to school. It is the latter 1880's, there are no automobiles, and the graveled streets seem very peaceful by comparison with fifty years later—just a clop-clop of hoofs now and then or the tinkle of horse-car bells a street or two away. Even Madison and Scott streets, the two busiest streets in the city, are crossed with safety by a ten-year-old boy and with no worry on the part of the parents at home.

Grover Cleveland was President, and Republicans were already seeing Democracy's blighting touch in the small depression of '85. The Knights of Labor were gaining in power, strikes were becoming ugly, and a type of radical called Anarchists were beginning to appear menacing in the larger cities (see Haymarket Riot in Chicago). Some wiseacres were saying, "The next war'll be between capital and labor." Ladies wore apparel unknown to the present age—bustles, basques, dolmans, fichus, even underwear, which is now almost wholly discarded; but the bustle development that I saw was never as large as that propagandized in the old fashion books. The first great roller-skating fad was waning, and preachers had ceased to denounce the rinks as cesspools of iniquity. Regular advertisers in the magazines were Sapolio, Pearline, Cuticura, Pears' Soap, Ayer's Sarsaparilla,

Lydia E. Pinkham, Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey, Mellin's Food, the various tea companies, Gillott's Steel Pens and Jones of Binghamton, he of the enormous weeping willow mustaches, who always paid the freight.

Sweet Violets, *White Wings* and *My Nelly's Blue Eyes* were among the most popular songs we whistled; how they got about with no radio or phonograph, no broadcasting save through the occasional tootling of a street organ to boost them, you probably can't imagine, but they did; and whatever their words may have been, they had a sweetness of melody which to me now seems superior even to the songs of my young manhood, when I was most susceptible to such things. Proctor Knott was Governor of Kentucky, Maud S. was queen of the trotting turf. A Covington lawyer with large cold gray eyes named Goebel was beginning to be heard of in politics. Over in London, Jack the Ripper was beginning his incredible holocaust in the Whitechapel slums; thrilled, we read in the papers that one of the victims, Mary Jeannette Kelly, was heard singing *Sweet Violets* —how close that seemed to bring her to us!—in her room about one in the morning; and after dawn there she was, all cut to pieces!

I was a regular subscriber to the *Youth's Companion*, reading J. T. Trowbridge's and Charles Egbert Craddock's stories therein, yearning over the yellow-backed annual premium list, wishing I knew how to sign up new subscribers and win the magnificent rewards offered. For 200 subscribers—or some such astronomical number—you could get a Columbia bicycle— the ancient high-wheel type, of course—which was always pictured in the ads as coming directly towards you, while the mustachioed rider gaily wound a horn something like a short bugle; I couldn't imagine why unless to notify the drivers of skittish horses of the approach of the monster. Or it might be to rally following comrades who had taken headers on the more or less graveled roads and risen shakily with cracked clavicles or parietals and too dizzy to know which way was which. But being no salesman, I never won a bicycle or any other grand prize. All my years of effort produced only one subscriber, and he was a personal friend who hated to refuse.

Oh, yes, Covington! I was coming to that. A decade or more later I was somewhat annoyed at reading in some stuffy guide book—the American Baedeker, I believe—that "Coving-

ton contains little to detain the traveler." Much that fellow knew about it! He must've never been there. To me, who had lived in various other places, but never in a city so large—for of course we counted Cincinnati as a part of Covington—it was a wonderland; it was drama, romance, mystery. Even the pall of smoke which overhung it from autumn to spring, the omnipresent smell of leaking gas around the big buildings and some of the homes, carried their thrill; they meant The City. And from the hill west of Covington on a clear summer Sunday, when many factories were shut down and the smoke was reduced to its minimum, the view of the three cities cupped by the hills, with their suburbs climbing the slopes behind them, the winding Ohio with its three bridges—the L. & N. from Newport, the Suspension Bridge from Covington and the Cincinnati Southern bridge far around to the left—I could not see how all this could have been surpassed by one of those famed views of Vienna and the Danube from the Wiener Berg.

From here you could see the incline cars, like little bugs, creeping up and down the slopes of Mount Adam and Price Hill; on Mount Adam just large platforms on which street cars, wagons and pedestrians rode together, one big, happy family, while on Price Hill they were enclosed passenger cars, one named "Highland Mary," the other "Lily of the Valley." And you could see the long flight of steps climbing the steep side of Mount Adam to the church which was a landmark on its summit, up which on a certain day in the year penitent Catholics went on their knees, with a prayer at every step. Could you see anything to beat that in Europe?

Covington was haphazardly planned or unplanned, with each succeeding realty addition following its own ideas, and cosy little streets, a block or two, sometimes only half a block in length—Covington Avenue, Willow Avenue, Trevor Street, Montgomery Street et al.—narrow, thickly set with homes, tiny grassplots, unkempt trees, but comfortable and neighborly looking—tucked in here and there between other streets for no apparent reason. None of the streets were wide, and it was, until you neared the outskirts, a city built largely of brick—partly the result of its early British heritage, partly the German influence which came later; sturdy brick homes, often with very small yards, or abutting directly on the sidewalk, with the yard in the rear. That and the chatter of German heard on many streets, the signs in

German type—"Deutsche Apotheke," "Federn," "Wein und Bier Halle," the tall clock towers on the Catholic and Lutheran churches—you could raise your eyes almost anywhere and learn the time—gave it for me, who even at ten and twelve had eagerly devoured much travel literature—Hezekiah Butterworth's *Zigzag Journeys* among the rest—something of the atmosphere of a city in the Fatherland.

The German immigration to America of the first half of the nineteenth century had, from New York and Boston, clung somewhat to the waterways in its westward trend. One avenue was that via the Erie Canal, Lake Erie and the Miami and Indiana Canals, giving Fort Wayne a large German population and spraying out into adjacent territory. A larger movement came down the Ohio River and left its greatest mass of drift at Cincinnati, though Louisville and other river towns received large contingents. And along with them, but mostly afterward, came many German Jews.

Has the teasing of Cincinnati as a Little Germany subsided? I haven't heard much of it in a long time. It used to be a favorite subject for the jokesmiths of the theater. Remember "Vas you effer in Zinzinnati?" which a musical comedy cut-up propounded about thirty times in an evening, and won screams of laughter at every repetition? Few who ever knew the Three Cities will forget "the Rhine," the old Miami Canal, with the mules plodding its towpath down Plum Street and then east on Court; and beyond it the reputedly fascinatingly rowdy quarter studded with beer gardens and dance halls, whose very nickname, "Over the Rhine," had a subtle lure. Pork-packing and "Dutchmen," those were the favorite gibes at Cincinnati. Yet it had the Nation's grudging respect, too, as a musical and art center, as the May Musical Festival, the Art Museum in Eden Park, the McMicken Art School and other activities bore witness; and we did not let it be forgotten that its top-flight painter, Frank Duveneck, was born in Covington.

Covington and Newport received their full quotas of the German influx; mostly kindly folk, as I knew them, some stolid, even lumpish, some highly dogmatic, some jovial, as merry as grigs, but nearly all of them clean, thrifty, orderly, law-abiding citizens. The roster of names of my first roomful of schoolmates is a good ethnological study of Covington. This was at the old First District School on Scott Street between Fifth and Sixth,

and it drew its attendance largely from the northeast, the oldest portion of the city, overlooking the Ohio and Licking rivers. Here, on Shelby, Garrard, Sanford, Greenup and the cross streets, was the older, the Anglo-Saxon, quarter of town. Here were yard space and some large old brick houses and to me an intriguing air of *l'ancien regime.* West Fourth and Fifth streets, west of Madison, had some elegant homes of the well-to-do, a few of them in large yards. Twice I saw the inside of one of them, Mr. Singleton the coal dealer's—he and my parents were all members of the Madison Avenue Baptist Church, and he and Mrs. Singleton sometimes permitted church socials to be held there—and after ranging as far over the house as I dared, politely respecting closed doors, I was finally driven by journalistic curiosity to ask Mr. Singleton how many rooms there were in his dwelling, to which he gave the staggering answer, Nineteen. It was difficult to grasp.

Well, the First School District covered most of that area. That first winter of my school days in Covington, there were 38 to 39 pupils in my room, and I've apparently forgotten two or three; but this is the remembered roster—Appel, Barkley, Bishop, Brown, Clarkson, Coppin, Eaton, Echert, Edwards, Emley, Emmert, Evans, Fairchild, Fant, Fink, Fisher, Footheroap, Hardy, Harlow, Hazen, Hoskins, Kemper, Kerr (2), Lawwill, Long, McCarty, McDonald, Parlin, Peebles, Reed, Sanford, Spalding, Steventon, Vonderschmitt and Wisenall. Not a Jew among them, not an Italian or Slav or any other from southern or eastern Europe. It is true that we had a few, a very few, Jews in Covington even then, most of them operating small clothing stores. There were thousands of them in Cincinnati, many high up in business, finance and society. Third Street was lined for blocks with their wholesale clothing and cloth houses: Seasongood, Menderson & Co., Heidelbach, Friedlander & Co., Rindskopf, Stern, Lauer & Co.—such were some of the names on the building fronts. Others were distillers, bankers, retailers; Fleischmann made our yeast and Aaron S. Stern owned the Cincinnati Baseball Club. But Covington at that time still preserved its Nordic Kentuckianism. I think there were not more than two or three Italian families in town, all selling either fruit or confectionery.

At two other district schools than mine—the ones on Batchelor Street and on Scott between Fifteenth and Sixteenth—the

percentage of German names would have been a little higher, and in the Fourth District School, at Fifth and Philadelphia, it would have been much higher. We lived in that district, on Johnston Street, but as a descendant of seventeenth century Virginia pioneers, my father wanted me to be thrown more with scions of the older stock, and so procured special permission for me to attend the First District.

On a winter day, when a pale sun smiled faintly through the smoke, and soot peppered thickly down upon the already dirty snow, we moved into Covington and took up our home on West Ninth Street, almost directly opposite the home of one of the city's largest hardware merchants, J. H. Mersman. On the one side of us lived a Baptist family named Williams; on the other—well, our lares were not yet bestowed when I descried a red moon face under a light blonde thatch, peering, round-eyed, over the fence, and learned from its own lips that it belonged to August Eisele, a *junge* of about my own age. In no time at all, Owgoost and I were in a snowball fight, in which I claimed to have worsted him, though no doubt his communiqué on the affair would have differed from mine as materially as the present-day Germans' do from the Russians'.

West Ninth Street was a bit depressing to my elders, but a normal boy of ten can be happy almost anywhere, and, for me, the quarter had its alleviations. An Irishman living around in Washington Street had delirium tremens one day, right on the street, and what could be more entertaining than that? And down there at the end of the block on Washington, the Kentucky Central Railroad crossed, on its way down to its dead-end terminal at Washington and Seventh street. True, the K. C. wasn't a very exciting railroad; trains were not numerous, and there were no Pullmans with intriguing names. What you saw for the most part was just two lumbering old yard engines, 27 and 28, puttering about their chores as deliberately as a section hand—who used to be our favorite simile for soldiering on the job; we've had a new one created for us in recent years.

And Ninth Street had another argument in its favor. Down there on the corner of Washington was a little German bakery—one of many such in the three cities—where I discovered the cinnamon bun, the coiled variety, which I had never seen before. And, if you can believe it, only five cents a dozen! Why, I wondered, have we so long delayed our coming to this town?

Entering this bakery—as with many other bakeries, grocery stores and small shops—the opening door struck and jangled a bell hanging just above it on a coil spring; for the proprietor lived in the rear, just like in the old country. And then Mamma or a sturdy daughter or perhaps the floury baker himself, in his undershirt, would come forth, break off a dozen rolls from a panful, seize something like a huge pepper-box and sprinkle additional powdered sugar over them until they were whitely covered as by a snowdrift, slide them into a bag; and you carried them carefully home right side up, so that not a grain of the sugar would be jostled off.

Our doorbell on Ninth Street was like that of the bakery. It was new to me. I had never seen any save the gong type fastened right on the door, which you clanged by cranking or pulling downward on a handle. But in the majority of middle-class homes in Covington, you pulled a knob in the right-hand door casing, from which a wire ran up the wall inside, along the hall ceiling and so back to the kitchen, the hausfrau's headquarters, where it jangled a bell hanging on a piece of curved steel up near the ceiling.

We didn't stay long on Ninth Street. Father bickered with our landlord, Mr. Gausepohl, over some repairs and, leases on home property being practically unheard of then, we moved away in a month or so, to Johnston Street, just below Fifth. Here we rented our brick dwelling from Mr. H. Brinker, a bulky, elderly German, who lived a block down the street and worked in the big mattress factory of H. Closterman, over the river. I think he had toiled his way up to a foreman's job, and this house, like his own dwelling, had been or was being paid for out of some forty years' wages. Six days a week, Mr. Brinker, the bloated landlord, with his lunch in a tin bucket, still trudged down to the ferry—in winter it was scarce dawn—and was at his post when the whistle blew at 7 A. M.; for working hours then were from 7 to 12 and from 1 to 6. And fancy it! If the river was so frozen that the ferry couldn't run, he must either walk across on the ice, or, far more likely, take street cars around by the Suspension Bridge, more than doubling the distance, I believe.

Sometimes on a Sunday afternoon, Mr. Brinker would stroll up to our place, often accompanied by his big china pipe. If it was summer, he might be in shirt sleeves and carpet slippers. It passed for a social call, though I think he really came just to

feed his soul with a sight of his property, acquired through so many years of sweating and saving, and now paying him a small return. He seldom found much to say, and in a half hour or so he would remark, "Vell, I go now," and amble away. Once, to our astonishment, he appeared, carpet slippers, big pipe and all, in the middle of the week.

"Why, Mr. Brinker!" exclaimed my mother. "Who would have thought of seeing you on a week-day?"

He drew a thoughtful whiff of smoke and slowly evolved the explanation.

"Der factory iss shut down," he said. Another meditative interval, another nicotinic inspiration, and he added:

"Dey mend der b'iler."

No doubt that visit to his property was the high spot of a holiday otherwise occupied with sitting at home with suspenders hanging down, smoking and drinking an occasional glass of beer.

Ours was a pleasant middle-class neighborhood, but, like most neighborhoods in Covington, spotty—another old-world resemblance. You had only to go around into Fifth Street, and a short block east, at the corner of Craig, was one of the largest flour mills in the Three Cities—the Trumpet Mills, with a tall brick chimney. Why was it there? For no apparent reason. There was no railroad anywhere near, as a modern factory twenty years later would have thought indispensable, and all hauling was done by wagon. There were factories all over town like that. Even Mitchell, Tranter & Company's big iron works, down in the West End, was far from any railroad. Covington, having no rail connection with the North and East, the Cincinnati Transfer Company did a lucrative business in hauling goods across the river in big four-mule wagons, with massive drivers armed with blacksnake whips riding the nigh rear mule. They not only delivered goods in Covington, but carried quantities from the railroads in Cincinnati to the Kentucky Central depot in our city for distribution down the line to Winchester and beyond. I recall one driver, a stocky fellow with the thews of a Hercules, who, finding that his load had begun to shift, stopped in Pike Street to rearrange it, and how my mouth fell open when I saw him swing easily by the chines a barrel of flour—weight 196 pounds net, not counting the barrel—from the ground and set it on end in the rear of the wagon.

The owners of the Trumpet Mills were old Mr. David Kiefer and his two sons. Some of them lived somewhere in the vicinity, for Dave Kiefer, a grandson, sometimes played ball with us on the vacant lot at Sixth and Johnston. It would not have been too surprising if they had lived next door to the mill—though they didn't—for that was not uncommon. John Brenner and John Seiler lived immediately adjoining their breweries, just as eighteenth century brewers in Germany would have done. The Trumpet Mills cooper shop, where they made their own barrels, was just across Craig Street from the mill, and then, as you went along Fifth Street, came some comfortable homes, with lawns and flower beds. In the second house from the cooper shop lived John R. Coppin, one of Covington's largest dry goods merchants; or am I wrong? I know that my pretty little schoolmate, Lina Coppin, lived there, and I thought she was John R.'s daughter, though I cannot now recall my proof of this.

Other well-to-do folk were sprinkled amongst us like plums in a duff. A large old brick house in a broad yard with big trees on Fifth between Main and Johnston was the seat of an old family, Mrs. Kaiper, a widow and her two sons, who were quite democratic with the rest of us boys, though they went to a private school. But only half a block away, on the corner of Fifth and Johnston, was P. Michel's grocery store, which, like hundreds of corner groceries in the Three Cities, had a saloon in the rear, with an entrance from the side street, and just a pair of swinging half doors between the two rooms. In slack hours Pete or his clerk-bartender, Johnny, looked after both store and saloon. A pungent odor of stale beer and sometimes a sound of loud talk drifted through into the grocery, and was the cause of my mother's preferring to do most of our buying at a larger, better store at Fifth and Main.

We were beginning to buy novelties in the grocery stores then: baker's bread (unwrapped) delivered to the store in large baskets and pawed by several human hands, and fresh compressed yeast, which Mr. Fleischmann had begun making as a by-product of his distillery at Sedamsville, out in Cincinnati's West End. You didn't get it in a little pat wrapped in tinfoil then. A big slab of it lay in the grocer's ice-box, and when you entered and said, "Cent's worth o' 'east," he took out the cake and with a knife or sometimes a thread, cut off as much as he thought would give him a good profit at a cent (more than you

get now for three) and wrapped it in a scrap of paper. When that thread had been used a week or so, it might not have been very sanitary, but we didn't know so much about germs then, and consequently they were not so deadly. In fact, I think some of them had not yet been invented.

It was to places like Pete Michel's that children "rushed the growler," as it was called, carrying a tin bucket, stopping lawfully in the grocery and asking for a dime's worth or even a nickel's worth of beer—which bought more than it does now. They were under such strict orders not to linger on the way back lest the beer go flat that I have seen some of them go home running.

Johnston extended from the river up to Sixth, where it stopped. South of that there had been an old, old cemetery, now obliterated. When it disappeared, instead of extending Johnston farther southward, they cut a narrow street with a slight bend in it through that long block from east to west and christened it Bremen Street. It became a frowsy, scrubby little thoroughfare and was the home of the Graveyard Gang, a camorra of which we boys stood in awe. I could never find anyone who had actually encountered them, but the consensus of opinion in our circle was that if you fell into the hands of those Graveyard kids, you were gone! In company with my dog, I ranged all over Covington from end to end, coming home in the evening to draw sectional maps of it from memory, as well as pictures of the leading features of interest—which, curiously enough, consisted mostly of churches, breweries and distilleries. But Bremen was the one street which I never traversed. I looked fearfully into it from either end, but ventured no farther. Today I look upon the map and find, not Bremen but Pershing Street—hero worship going hand in hand with an attempt to blank out the past. They do the same thing in Paris; the Avenue Woodrow Wilson was renamed just the other day.

Once when I went to visit Walter and Foster Waddell, whom I had known on Fifth Street, but who had moved over to Mount Adam, we fared forth, as boys will, in search of we knew not what, and scuffled down the gulch below the big stone dam which formed the Eden Park Reservoir. This ravine did not appear to be inside the park, for it was unkempt and weedy. We were rambling happily along when suddenly a shower of stones flew

about our ears, and looking to our right we saw six or eight sinister-looking young countenances peering above the weeds.

"It's the Pendleton gang!" cried Walt. "Run!"

We scrambled wildly up the slope, battered from the rear by the pursuing horde until we were again in the smooth lawns and gravel drives of the park, whither they dared not follow us. How completely playgrounds, boys' clubs and the Boy Scouts have taken, in cities of such size, the place of those gangs of other days whose hand, for some unfathomable reason, was against all other youth! In New York and Chicago, those festering sores upon the body politic, they still exist, though in lessened numbers.

Those brick homes, whether abutting directly on the sidewalk or eight or ten feet back from it, never had any front porches; but from their front doors, which might be slightly recessed and from two to four feet above the street level, stone steps led down to the ground. To German housewives, these steps were a constant care. Somebody had discovered long ago that, from a hillside southwest of town, near the suburb of Lewisburg (which I can't find on a present-day map), you could dig a white substance, a sort of clay or rotten stone, which, when mixed with water, made a coating for stone steps rather less durable than old-fashioned whitewash; and so some one of the family must go out there at intervals and lug home pails or baskets full of the stuff. Then, when the steps were chastely whitened, what a bitter sight to the eyes of the housewife were the first black, careless footprints on them! None of the family dared be so guilty, of course; they all had to go around to the back door.

My mother announced at the very beginning that this was all nonsense; our steps would have to get along with plain soap-and-water, take it or leave it. We liked to sit on them summer evenings, anyhow, as many of the neighbors did, visiting back and forth. Every family had woven straw mats or cushions for the purpose—and who wanted that white stuff on their clothes?

The inside shutters, handsomely stained and varnished, were for me another elegance of The City. Each shutter folding two or three times, and in two halves, top and bottom, they gave distinction and privacy to our rooms. Folk in one-story houses left the windows open at night in summer, locked the shutters and slept peacefully—reassured when they awoke momentarily in the small hours and heard the passing patrolman drop the end

of his nightstick against the curbstone with a clear, musical clink which could be heard two blocks away, and which was some sort of signal to his brother officer on the next beat.

Few homes had central heating; just stoves or grates in each room, and dwelling house chimneys were crowned with clusters of terra cotta chimney-tops—"pots," the British call them—which were another novelty to me. In my previous places of residence, we hadn't thought them necessary, but the Three Cities believed that no chimney would draw without them.

Most houses had no bathroom, no sewer connection; just a hydrant and sink in the kitchen. From the sink a drain pipe led through the wall into an open brick gutter, which ran into the alley, or if there was no alley back of the property, that brick gutter led through the side yard and across the sidewalk in front into the street gutter. Where it crossed the sidewalk, it froze in winter and overflowed and froze again, and you slipped on it and broke a wrist or a leg. In summer, on certain narrow, crowded streets like Craig and Banklick, where the women seemed to do a great deal of washing and scrubbing with strong soap, the bluish-gray wash water ran out into the rough stone street-gutter, dried in its hollows under the hot sun and stank acridly.

Few people drank hydrant water, not because they were afraid of it, but because it was too warm. Nearly everybody had a well in the back yard. It might be and often was no more than twenty feet from the outdoor privy, but what of that? Apparently the earth or the ledges through which our water flowed were impervious to pollution. Cincinnati hydrant water was worse than ours. In the spring, when the river was higher than usual, when you drew a glassful of it, it was opaque and of a Roman ochre color. Set it on a table, and in a few minutes at least a half inch of thick yellow mud would settle in the bottom of the tumbler. And yet I was told that there were people over the river who drank the stuff.

Of course there were no milk bottles nor paper containers, but we got real service. The milkman measured out our usual daily purchase in his big can-top and came in, even around to the back door, where the pitcher was waiting, with the milk-ticket in it. If we wanted more than usual that day, he had to make another trip back to the wagon. Our milkman, H. Holtmann, whose dairy was out on the Lexington Pike, was a tall, lank fellow with huge feet toeing outward, and so strenuous was his schedule that

he always came in and out in a dog-trot. No doubt he arose hours before dawn; his arduous life was reflected in his deeply lined and weathered face. I should like to know that one day he found he had accumulated enough to rest from his labors.

Those farmers, mostly German, who composed our open markets, led strenuous lives, too. We had three market houses, functioning on alternate days in the week, each in a street greatly widened at that point for the purpose; Seventh Street, the central market, between Madison and Washington; Sixth Street in the West End, and one farther out, in Eleventh Street, I believe. While the butchers and the fishmongers sawed and cleavered in the market house, the wagons of the market gardeners were backed up all along the curb outside and were their salesrooms. Mixed with them were the wagons of professional hucksters who sold potatoes, bananas (only five cents a dozen for the smaller ones) and other fruits. The country men and women, too, at the wagons had risen long before dawn to cover those miles into the city by horse vehicle, to be ready for early shoppers.

Seventh Street was the one market which functioned on Saturday afternoon and night, and that was the big occasion. The wagons were lined up for two blocks and more. Gasoline and oil lights flickered, hucksters bawled, crowds thronged the sidewalks with basket on arm; sometimes winter cold bit sharply at the ears and noses of these poor folk who had to stand by their wagons for hours. And if it rained, what a mess! I have since thought pityingly of those men and women, late in the night, perhaps after a disappointing day, jogging slowly homeward behind a tired horse, out the Lexington and Banklick Pikes and into the byroads, finally to tumble into bed, half dead from weariness, and thanking God that next day was Sunday!

I wish I could reproduce the musical street cries of our hucksters—almost melodies, some of them were—and of our rag and old iron men. There were traveling meat markets: trim, one-horse covered wagons, handsomely painted, driven about from door to door each morning, usually along a regular circuit of customers, the driver-salesman announcing himself with a horn, each having his own particular little motif of a dozen notes or so. The meat, all cut into chops, steaks, roasts, etc., lay on the oil-cloth-covered floor of the wagon, informally protected in summer from the flies, which hopefully followed, by a length of pink mosquito netting thrown over it. Fred C. Niemeyer seemed to me

the most superior of these itinerant butchers; his wagon was most richly painted, the script lettering of his name on the side was elegant in the extreme, and the horn-flourish with which he heralded his coming was the most elaborate of any; it was well-nigh symphonic.

How quiet Sundays were in the city then, with only the pleasant, occasional voices of church bells interposing in the restful stillness! No mill whistles; workmen in their best clothes leaning against posts or sitting on the empty vinegar barrels and beer kegs under grocery porches—there wasn't much to do for minds barren of resource; no clatter of iron-tired wagons, big and little, on cobbled or graveled streets; no dashing brewery wagons, just big open racks stacked with kegs wet from the icehouse, served by magnificent horses and brawny, often bearded drivers, and with that rich, mellow, patrician bass clunk of hub on axle which no other vehicle save a circus wagon had. I wish I knew the secret of it. If we had had the Ph.D. fad in those days, some young candidate would have written a thesis on it and I would have known the answer.

To me, after the morning nuisance of getting cleaned up and dressed, and shining shoes and going to Sunday school and church, Sunday might not be so bad. On a summer Sunday afternoon we might go for a walk, perhaps up on the big hill west of town—we had our own family name for it, Forrest Hill, because of a legend we had heard that the actor Edwin Forrest once won it from Israel Ludlow in a poker game—and enjoy that ever-wonderful view of the river and the cities. To reach it, we traversed a narrow wooden foot-bridge, perhaps 400 feet in length, which was the only extension of Fifth Street from its end, a block west of Philadelphia, across the muddy bottom of little Willow Run, where weeds grew thickly higher than my head, and Father surmised there might be snakes eleven feet long. At the farther end one reached a little eyebrow of a suburb, with two long streets, Bullock Street and Western Row, skirting the lower slope of the hill. And then you climbed right up the open slope of the hill.

Or one might go for a street car ride, even to Cincinnati and up to the hilltops, or (unique experience) through the up-river suburbs to Columbia on the "dummy," a street car with a little steam engine in the front end. On Fountain Square, or rather in Government Square east of the fountain, you might see and hear the strange doings of the Salvation Army, a new form of

religion which had just come to town, and which to us orthodox folk was little short of impious but rather amusing. Some of their songs of those days were in a naive, uncouth doggerel which discredited them, and which, I think, has long been discarded. Punctuated with the squawk of a horn or two and the bloomp, bloomp, bloomp of a bass drum thumped in march time, fancy this, which I heard on a Sunday afternoon in Fountain Square in the long ago:

"Oh, I used to fight and swear with all my h, e, a, r, t;
I used to steal and drink and chew and s, m, o, k, e.
I once did lead a wicked life, but now you plainly see,
Oh, praise the Lord, oh, praise the Lord, I'm s, a, v, e, d!

"Oh, it's g, l, o, r, y!
It's g, l, o, r, y!
It's glory here, it's glory there, it's g, l, o, r, y!
It's g, l, o, r, y!
It's g, l, o, r, y!
It's glory here, it's glory there, it's g, l, o, r, y!"

I may not have remembered the lines with strict accuracy through all these years, but this version isn't far from being right.

If we stayed at home on Sunday afternoon, presently would come P. Stephano, the Scott Street confectioner, a public benefactor, trundling a push cart, just a freezer between wheels, blowing a tin campaign horn and bawling his ice cream. For a nickel you could buy enough for two people, according to adult ideas, and for a dime you could get a big bowlful, enough to make large dishes for three. Presently hokey-pokey appeared—ice cream frozen in little flat slabs and wrapped, but very crystally, because it wasn't stirred while freezing.

To me one of the pleasant moments of Sunday was that just after our noon meal—dinner, we called it—when we were resting from our strenuous forenoon, perhaps in the shade on the front steps. Then the bells of St. Joseph's Church at Twelfth and Greenup Streets summoned the parishioners to some service which other Catholic churches did not seem to have at that hour—at least, they sounded no call. St. Joseph's had only three bells, but they were sweet-toned, and their ringing for this service had its charm for me. In slow 4–4 time, eight notes to the measure, the low-toned bell—it dwells in my memory as E—boomed its deep note, which continued to reverberate while the

two upper bells, B and G-sharp, alternately rang seven times, then repeated.

Bells have always had a peculiar emotional effect upon me; I dare to admit it since discovering long ago that so brilliant a man as DeQuincey confessed to precisely the same eccentricity. As with him, certain bells or chimes, which are somehow in key with my soul, heard at a distance, take me into a dream world. I seem to drift back into the past, among scenes and friends of childhood, or among nebulous villages, old cathedrals, monasteries across the sea as they were in the happy days before the wars. There were other sounds which added their bit of sweetness to life in Covington; even the melodious chime whistle of Sol P. Kineon's coal elevator on the Cincinnati shore of the river, the deep voices of some of the steamboats, and, most especially, the Cincinnati firebells.

I do not know whether or not fire alarms are rung now as they were then—I know they aren't in New York—but in those days it was considered worth while to let the public know where the fire was. If the alarm was sent in from our nearest box, 21, at Fifth and Craig, the bells of the fire-halls would ring twice, pause a moment, then once (everybody runs out and looks for smoke); pause a few seconds and repeat the alarm . . . and then again. And even five blocks up from the river on Johnston Street, at quiet hours when the wind was right—say on a Sunday or after supper on a summer evening—we could hear the bells of four fire-halls in Cincinnati when they rang a box. Rung electrically, always in the same order, although they were not attuned to each other, they were not inharmonious, but, rather, had the effect of a tristful chime. Soft, faint, far away, the last and lowest note sometimes almost or quite inaudible, they might have been the bells of Debussy's sunken cathedral.

The Kleimeyers had a Cincinnati fire card, and they would always look when they heard an alarm and tell the neighbors where the box was—which wasn't at all important to most of us, though we thought it was. But one memorable Fourth of July night when we saw a great glow in the sky, we younger ones trooped down to the river bank and saw the leaping flames from the burning George Weber brewery, away up on Court Street.

Of course everybody had a Covington fire card and consulted it at every alarm. One box, 61, was located on "Pike St. bet. Riddle and Kipp, Rising Sun Tavern," and when I look at today's

map, I can find neither Riddle nor Kipp; thus do names honoring pioneer families disappear. The hose reels of those days, just two-wheeled affairs drawn by one horse, would look funny to modern youngsters. They had names—"Boss" at No. 1 hall, "Wide-Awake" at Sixth and Main, while the Twelfth Street reel, drawn by a splendid, fleet, wild-eyed black horse, was "Fire-Fly." No. 1 hall had an extension ladder truck, but as there wasn't a building in Covington more than four stories tall, it was seldom called upon to exert itself greatly.

Saturday evening about supper time another clanging of bells, which I think I would recognize if I heard it a century hence, came from the church on Sixth Street whose great bulk struck my eye at the moment of my entrance into the city. For decades its towers overtopped the city like a mountain and were its principal landmarks. MUTTER GOTTES KIRCHE was the name I read, carven in stone high on its facade, a significant hint as to the predominant nationality of its membership. "Mother of God Church"; we Protestants thought it a rather shocking way to speak of the Virgin Mary. But Mrs. Bach—comfortably known to the Anglo-Saxon neighbors as Mrs. Batch—clearly bested Neighbor Barrett in argument on the subject by reminding him that, according to even a Protestant's idea of the Trinity, Christ was God, just as much as the Father.

Oddly enough, the architecture of Mutter Gottes Kirche was a simplified Italian Renaissance: a big dome in the rear, over the crossing of the transepts, and two tall frontal towers, sharply domed at the top. But as I stood in narrow Sixth Street and gazed up at it, it seemed to me to rank with the great European cathedrals; and that majestic name, cryptically hidden in a foreign tongue, added to its mysterious grandeur. It never occurred to me to slip in through the always open portal and view the interior, else I might have been still more impressed. I did not suppose I would be permitted to go inside. Without thinking it out, I must have subconsciously fancied that I would be instantly recognized as a Protestant and shooed away.

No small portion of the population of Covington crossed the Ohio each morning—"went over the river"—to work in Cincinnati. One never said, "I'm going to Cincinnati, shopping, today"; it was "I'm going over the river." There was a melancholy lilt, a suggestion of death and eternity about it. The Suspension Bridge was our main avenue to Cincinnati. The only other was

the old sidewheel ferryboat *Kenton*, which huffed back and forth between the foot of Main Street, Covington, and Central Avenue, Cincinnati. But the bridge became a habit with us; it was a bit cheaper; it took you nearer to Fountain Square and you didn't have to wait for it. Three pennies in cash would admit you to it, but we always had a bridge ticket, with squares for punching around the edge, like an old-fashioned meal ticket; you got twenty passages for thirty cents. Told to figure it out on my slate, I found after much calculation that we paid a cent and a half per trip.

Or for a nickel you could ride across by street car. There were two car lines from Fountain Square to Covington; one ran out Madison, as far as Sixteenth, I think, and back; the other turned west on Fourth Street to Main, went out Main to Pike, thence in on Pike and so back to the bridge. A third line, a loop, ran up and down town on Greenup and Scott streets. All mule cars, of course, in those days, with tinkling bells.

As I cross the Ohio by rail at Cincinnati in recent years, I notice that it is much smaller than it used to be; effect of clearing away the forests around headwaters, I presume. But somebody must have used an electric torch on the Suspension Bridge and cut a piece out of it, too, for it is shorter than it once was, and fits the river just as it did fifty years ago.

My parents had moved to Cincinnati once before, just as the Bridge was completed in 1867, and they bought a very large and fine photograph of it, which hung somewhere in our house in a black and gold frame through most of my life. But a few years ago a warehouse where some of our goods were stored, lost a crate containing that, my mother's diploma from the Locust Hill Female Academy in Woodford County, and other things, and, despite all my anguish and threats, could never find it. To paraphrase Thackeray, may the curses of the nine thousand and ninety-nine Imaums light upon that storage man, and may pale gray jackasses sit and bray upon his great-uncle's grave! One reason why I cherished the photograph—it was taken from the Covington shore, just above the bridge—was the presence in the scene of steamboats which were casualties in two of the greatest of Ohio River disasters. Just below the bridge—proving that the chief landing place was there in the '60's instead of above it, as in my time—lay the two great three-deckers, *United States* and *America*, which, on a dark December night in 1869, collided

and burned just above Warsaw, Kentucky, with a loss of almost a hundred lives. My father, who was an express messenger on the river in those days, told me of how, by a trick of fate—an exchange of trips with another messenger—he narrowly missed being on one of the boats that night. Just above the bridge pier in the photograph one saw the rear half of the Cincinnati-Maysville packet *Magnolia*, which, a few months after the picture was made, blew up her boilers nine miles above Cincinnati, sending thirty-five people into eternity and maiming many others.

Amos Shinkle—A. Shinkle, he always signed himself—a Covingtonian, was president of the Bridge Company in those years, but we always spoke of him as the sole proprietor. Maybe he was. We were told of a very cold spell one winter when the river froze so solidly that people walked across from shore to shore, toll-free; and, as the story went, A. Shinkle sent a force of men out to saw a gash in the ice six or eight feet wide and a mile or more in length above and below the bridge. "Yes, sir, I was right here and saw that cut in the ice," a neighbor told us; "and that's how he's made his money."

There was a U. Shinkle, whether a brother I do not know, in the coal business. His name registered most vividly in my mind as seen on the sides of the two-wheeled dump carts, holding perhaps a ton, in which coal was delivered to homes and other small users. (There were big wagons, too.) I never saw either of the men, but to my infant mind A. Shinkle was the Suspension Bridge and U. Shinkle was a big-wheeled cart, with a Negro driving two mules tandem, and either loaded with coal or clattering along at a trot, empty.

How much joy the steamboats added to the life of a youngster ever fascinated by any form of transportation! From the little harbor towboat *Kate Waters No. 2*, fussing about like a switch engine, even wriggling up the narrow Licking no telling how far, up through the husky towboats, *Joe B. Williams*, *Smoky City*, *D. T. Lane*, *Champion No. 10*, *Iron Duke*, *D. W. Woodward* and many more which brought the coal fleets down from Pittsburgh and the Kanawha and fought their way back again with great tows of empties, up through the swarms of local passenger and freight boats which then thronged the river to the great New Orleans packets, they were all live things to me. It was in those years that the *Joe B. Williams* steered down to New Orleans that record-breaking tow of 31 barges, carrying 600,000 bushels of

coal or 1,800 railroad carloads of that day. The seamanship required to maneuver some two and a half acres of clumsy barges through 2,000 miles of tortuous river is beyond the conception of the landsman's mind. The feat of the *Williams* was not excelled until many years later.

Numerous passenger and freight lines ran each way from Cincinnati, but none passed it; it was too important. Their newspaper notices, "For Madison and way landings, Strs. JAMES W. GAFF and CITY OF VEVAY"; some of the melodious names, *Katie Stockdale* and *Golden City;* the formal language, "Str. TACOMA, AGNEW, Master, will leave this day at Noon"—all this was intriguing. The boats of the great Southern Transportation Company, which ran to New Orleans, carrying a golden "O" between their chimneys, were mostly the biggest and finest of the sidewheelers—*Guiding Star*, *New Mary Houston*, *Charles Morgan*, *Thomas Sherlock* (one of the most beautiful, later wrecked against a pier of the new Chesapeake & Ohio bridge)—and the *Golden Crown* and *U. P. Schenck*, biggest of stern wheelers. The Negro deck-hands had a chant beginning,

"De *Golden Rule* an' de *Golden Crown*,
De *Golden City* an' de *Paris C. Brown* . . .

The *Golden Rule* and *Paris C. Brown*, stern-wheelers, were then, as I recall it, on a Memphis line. Everybody knew when the *Brown* was coming, for she had what was called a siren or mocking bird whistle, a hideous thing which yowled up and down through two or three octaves, and the pilot usually blew it for about five minutes as he neared the landing. And there were the *Fleetwood* and *City of Madison*, big "Mail Line" packets to Louisville, and the *Bostona*, *Bonanza*, *Telegraph*, *Big Sandy* and *St. Lawrence*, all side-wheelers which ran up river as far as Pomeroy. Why such big boats were needed for local trade I couldn't see.

The steamboat chimneys had a hinged joint in them, well down towards the deck, and it was exciting to stand on the Suspension Bridge at flood time and see them leaned backward on an approaching boat, so that it might pass under the bridge, while the captain stood on the hurricane deck, looking up anxiously to see if even that was enough. Once the captain of the *Buckeye State* miscalculated and the bridge crushed the pilot house, though the pilot escaped with his life.

I thought some of the bigger packets magnificent, but my parents looked down their noses at them. "Nothing but two-

deckers nowadays," they sniffed. "Twenty years ago the *United States* and *America* and *Grand Republic*, all the really top-notch boats, were three-deckers." They mooned over the wonderful cuisine on those old boats until I could hardly endure it. They had a couple of the printed menus—fifteen or twenty kinds of meat, as many relishes (I remember that one of them was "Cold Slaugh"), all the vegetables known to Nature, custards, puddings, pies, ices, jellies, fruits, nuts, wines—it was enough to drive a hungry man crazy.

As I have said, my school was the old First District on Scott Street, which had the honor of being pictured in Collins' *Kentucky*, 1874 edition, volume II, page 430; plain as an old shoe, but efficient. Tiny play-yards, rigidly separated, for the boys and girls, all paved with brick save for the place where the wagons drove in to deliver coal, which was paved with cobblestones, and when you fell on them while running, there seemed little doubt for a few moments that both kneecaps were broken.

We were still using the McGuffey readers and Ray's arithmetics. The importance of mathematics was indicated by the fact that we had two classes and two texts in arithmetic—"mental," which you did in your head, and "practical," which was worked out on slate or paper. The word "practical" indicated that the other was just a sort of parlor pastime. Practically all of us were still using slates for calculation, which were then beginning to be edged with red felt, bound on with what looked to be shoe-string. This was supposed to ameliorate the terrific clatter which occurred when a slate fell off a desk, but I couldn't see that it helped much. The girls had dainty little sponges and bottles of water for erasing, and tiny rags to dry the slates afterwards—fripperies which we boys looked upon with scorn. We knew that the practical and efficient way was to spit on the slate, erase with the heel of the hand and dry with the coat sleeve.

There were two rooms to each grade. I entered in what we then called the Fourth Reader grade, Miss Alma Baker's room, whose southern exposure looked right across the block to the tall chimneys and ventilators of John Brenner's Covington Brewery, from whence, in autumn and spring, the sweetish-barmy odor of the malt drifted into our open windows. Miss Baker, young, tall and colorful, had a temper that could be peppery, but was intrinsically just and kindly. By turns sweet, humorous, sarcastic, patient, fiery and soothing, she was always interesting, and

whatever expert opinion of her might have been, I recall her as a good teacher. She did for me one of the greatest services of my life; she gave me a copy of Dickens' *Child's History of England*—I have it still, in good condition—and thereby introduced me not only to the complete story of English history—bits of which I had been gleaning from *Chatterbox* and other places in years past—but also to the beloved work of Dickens. We oldsters who were brought up on Dickens have a snobbish, pharisaical—call it what you will—pity for those who hadn't our experience. We think there is a void in their lives which they will never comprehend; they have missed something for which there is no substitute.

The girls mostly wore to school neat, starched white or dotted sleeveless overall aprons over their dresses. For the boys a favorite winter garment was the pleated and belted, close-buttoned coat; we appeared coatless in warmer weather. I felt touches of envy towards Harry Hazen at times because he had a pair of rubber boots which he wore on rainy days; also towards Alice Echert because her father owned a candy factory on lower Madison Street. I had never dreamed of such joy as being the child of a candy factory—though, strangely enough, I never saw Alice eating any candy. But my chum and seatmate through two grades, bright, whimsical, erratic, homely, gangling Robert Pretlow Peebles and I didn't really envy anybody much; we were happy enough as we were. We were under the old rigid school discipline so much condemned in later days, but we didn't know that it was bad. We violated it at times; whispered, passed notes, telegraphed across the room, clowned a bit when the teacher's back was turned, but these were just normal reactions. I cannot recall any serious disorder, any severe punishment or any feeling on my part of oppression.

In my second winter, I was under the teaching of stocky, middle-aged Miss Georgia Thurston, who was more equable and because of long service more routinish than Miss Baker, but pleasant and fair. She wrote in my autograph album—even small boys sometimes had them then—

> "Labor conquers all things and
> Diligence has its reward.—G. Thurston."

a sentiment which has gone somewhat out of fashion in recent years.

Miss Thurston had a special reward of her own for diligence. The highest four ranking pupils in the room each month—or perhaps it was the highest two girls and highest two boys—were invited to call at her home on Saturday afternoon just after the reports came out. Pretlow Peebles and I were the two honored males on one occasion—maybe it was the only one—and the girls were ambitious, strong-willed Effie Long (I'll wager she was a suffragette in later years) and perhaps—I'm not sure—her dearest friend, Carrie E. Lawwill, who labored valiantly to keep up with Effie. They were such bosom friends that the masterful Effie C. Long reversed her name to make her initials the same as her pal's; "C. E. Long, Covington, Ky.," with no pleasant sentiment attached, was the way she wrote it in my autograph album, the rugged masculine brevity belied somewhat by the long, feminine, pothook curleycues hanging below each capital letter.

Anyhow, we four, dressed to the nines and with—at least in my own case—many parental injunctions as to conduct, wended our way, proud of our distinction but with misgivings, to Miss Thurston's home on Greenup Street, and were received by her and her sister, equally stocky and middle-aged and also a teacher somewhere. Stiff and bored we boys sat—the girls somehow managed a better loquacity and simulation of interest—while our hostesses entertained us with light conversation (perhaps the same used on other generations of boys and girls), showed us pictures and picture-books, presently—the best part of the entertainment—served ice cream and cake, palpably home-made, and at length delicately intimated that it was time for us to go.

The good souls did their best, but I doubt that that hour was a great incentive, especially to boys, to excel in scholarship. We had scarcely reached the street corner when Pretlow and I, in the enormity of our relief from the strain, fell to scuffling violently, and in a moment were down on the sidewalk in our best clothes. Shocked at our ruffianism, the girls tripped primly away with a faint, snobbish titter, acknowledging no connection with us.

I moved to Covington just when the tobacco-tag collecting fad was reaching its height among boys. Plug or eating tobacco, as Irv Cobb used to call it, was still one of America's favorite vices then, and the manufacturers outdid themselves in the '80's in originating new brands and devising attractive tags of tin or paper for them. There was usually one tag for each ten-cent

cut, though in the case of at least two brands that I knew of, "Billy Barlow" and "Chain Shot," the name in large gold letters on a strip of glossy red paper ran all the way across a tobacco caddy, and was eight or ten inches long. Naturally, it took some doing to get one of these. Fathers who chewed tobacco were continually being pestered to buy strange brands, and complaining bitterly that they tasted like h——. Corners of the play-yard at recess were often like a merchants' exchange, and there was occasional trouble with Teacher as the result of exhibiting specimens in school hours. A *Tag and Stamp Journal* was being published at Louisville, and there was an increased demand for blank books, to be used as albums for the paper tags.

We scouted around the tobacco factories, which occasionally threw floor-sweepings, including a few dropped tags, out of a back or side door. One never found anything around Senour & Gedge's factory, down in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge, nor at O'Brien Brothers, in the middle of a block between Greenup and Scott streets. Perkins & Ernst, on Pike Street, occasionally yielded something. Lovell & Buffington, a big, dignified plant on lower Scott Street, had only three or four brands; "Senate" and "Congress" were two that I remember. But the real happy hunting ground was McNamara's, almost opposite L. & B. I think McNamara must have made plug for many concerns, for they had innumerable brands and were always as busy as bees. They threw sweepings into a vacant lot alongside the plant, and there were always tags there. Once I screwed up my nerve, went in and asked the first man I saw to give me some tags. He looked astonished, then stepped to some boxes near by and picked out a few. Nice fellows, those McNamaras! "But don't let this get to be a habit," he warned.

Once when Pretlow and I were seatmates, he became highly incensed at me about something, I've forgotten what. It was during lesson hours, but Miss Thurston was across the room.

"You're a sneak!" he whispered fiercely. "I'll never trade you another tag!"

It was an appalling threat, but, in the course of an hour or so, he decided that he had been wrong about me, and the economic sanctions were forgotten.

There were two other things which seem as exotic now as if I had known them in another world. One was the small cannon, owned mostly by boys in their teens and young men, which

appeared around the Fourth of July. With a barrel six or eight inches long, mounted on sturdy wheels, just like a Civil War field piece, it was loaded with gunpowder, held in by a tightly rammed wad of newspaper and fired through a touch-hole. It made a terrific noise and usually threw a back somersault from overloading. Once in a long while, one of the things burst, but this was rare within my knowledge. It is appalling now to think of teen-age boys going around with half a pocket full of powder and matches and playing with these fiendish little things, but the mangled hands were fewer than you would expect. Frequently, the victim died of tetanus, which we didn't know how to handle then as we did later. As soon as the Fourth was over, the cannon was put away and forgotten for another year. I wonder if any of them still exist in museums.

As for the other fad, it suddenly became known that every boy must have a whip; one of braided leather just like the four-horse wagon drivers used, save that ours were smaller. The whip as you bought it had a couple of thongs at one end by which it was lashed to the handle which you supplied. It swelled in the course of a few inches to double its size at the handle, then tapered gradually to the end, where was attached a cracker of twine. This must be renewed frequently, and there were many discussions as to which made the best cracker—jute, cotton or linen twine. The streets resounded with cracking of whips; many whips were confiscated in school and parents driven to the point of madness. It was all over in less than a year.

Now came progress, change to invade our peaceful West End. The Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, energized by Collis P. Huntington's millions, threw a line down the Ohio River from Ashland and planned a great bridge by which to enter Cincinnati. The route of the bridge approach lay through the block back of us. Families began moving out of the condemned homes, and then came auctioneers, selling the buildings to wreckers. My astonishment when I heard the first one, an old two-story brick dwelling, knocked down for $42, was boundless. Then followed the wrecking, an exciting process for small boys, though even then I began to feel the antiquarian's instinctive dislike of the destruction of what is old. Perhaps the obliteration of most of our playground at Sixth and Johnston by the track now laid along the gash through the blocks had something to do with it. Work trains came, bringing big derricks, which were set up here

and there, and which then unloaded cars of great, irregular blocks of stone and stacked them roughly in piles twenty feet high near where piers were to be; and we found by exploration that one could crawl through the interstices between the stones, threading the pyramids in various directions; a thrilling adventure, especially if one of the great stones moved slightly under one's weight.

The Kaipers moved over the river to Walnut Hills, and their old mansion became the temporary headquarters of a firm of bridge engineers with the strange name of Sooy Smith & Company. I learned that William Sooy Smith had been a brigadier-general on the Federal side in the Civil War and commanded at the Battle of Okolona, Mississippi, if that means anything to the casual reader.

One day one of the derricks down near Fourth Street fell and crushed a workman's head. We were apprised of it by the clanging of the bell of the police patrol wagon, the only vehicle Covington had for that sort of errand in those days. The wagon, by the way, was topless, fully open to the public gaze, so that you had an excellent view of the person or persons being escorted to jail. It took away dead bodies, too—as on this grim afternoon. When it came through an alley away from the scene, Dellmar Barrett and I ran and climbed some steps in front of a dwelling, so that we could look over it, and see the poor human relic in workman's overalls, jostled roughly on a pallet or rubber sheet or something on the floor of the wagon, with only a bloody pulp where the head had been. I had not quite realized what it would be like. . . . I could eat little supper that evening. . . .

Poor Dell himself was brought home in the patrol wagon two or three years later. Swimming in the Ohio at the foot of Johnston Street, in violation of parental injunctions, he was drawn under a coal barge and drowned.

I did not see the great bridge actually built. Father announced one day, to my consternation, that we were going to live in Indiana. I was accustomed to moving by that time, but I was rebellious at leaving the fascinating city, especially as I had formed a personal tie, the severance of which I thought might result in my death. Ella Morris was a dainty, pretty girl whom I met at Sunday school and church social affairs, at Sunday school picnics—where we would take a special train out to some

woods on the banks of the Licking and a thunderstorm would burst upon us as usual in the afternoon and we would come home bedraggled—and in her own home. I was aware of her beauty and poise, but not until one fateful day did she jar me into a realization of her undoubted superiority to other girls. After church on a summer Sunday she was suggesting to two of us that we come over to her house on the following day.

"Our back yard is the dandyest place to play I-spy you ever saw," she said. "There are so many places to hide, most 'specially you can get behind the water-closet and look out through the tall castor bean plants, and they can't see you."

I felt my vitals freeze, my breath stand still for a moment at her audacity in speaking coolly of an article never mentioned in mixed society. Then I was overwhelmed with admiration. Here was a woman who rose above conventions, who was fearless of criticism, who called a spade a spade and let who would cavil at it. She was magnificent, she was unique! I fell in love with her on the spot. I discovered other excellences; good taste, discrimination, for example. She would chew nothing but Adams's Tutti Frutti Gum, which cost more than other brands. Plausible tradesmen offered her substitutes, but she waved them aside. Here was strength of character! But what could I do? I was in an inferior station in life; i. e., I was several months younger than she and a grade lower in school, and I was seized with the humiliating conviction that she must look upon me as a mere child. And so I never told my love—in fact, I wouldn't had the courage to do it under the most favorable circumstances—but let concealment like a worm i' the bud gnaw on my damask cheek.

The wishes of a twelve-year-old count for little when adults make up their minds, and so I had to leave Covington and the great love of a lifetime behind. I looked my last upon the towers of Mutter Gottes Kirche, with their cloud of pigeons eddying about them. The Kleimeyers invited Mother and me—Father had gone on before—to spend our last night with them, our goods being packed. It was a sharp winter night, and I slept with Yonny in a stoveless room, between feather beds in the German fashion, for the first and last time in my life. And so ended my two years in Covington.

In Indiana we were only 73 miles from Cincinnati, and I paid three or four brief visits to that city, some of them only one day in extent, during as many years. I saw Pretlow a time or two, and two families of our old neighbors, but Ella Morris passed so completely out of my scheme of life that I didn't even look her up. Childhood and adolescence are strangely callous; they live only in the current moment. They may not have forgotten the past, but its emotions are erased from their souls. New friendships are formed, and the old are almost as if they had never been. This somewhat overstates my case, but it is so nearly true that I behaved as practically all other youngsters do. I became absorbed in new comrades, new interests, gradually ceased to write to anyone in Covington, and, with two exceptions, have not seen any of the old friends in fifty years.