

“OUR COTTAGE HOME”

By

Margery E McClean

Written 2nd half of 1880 to 1889

[Map of Area](#)

Preface

Dear reader these few chapters from our life history have been written with no idea of any eye seeing them except perhaps a loving father's mother's brothers or sisters and if anyone else hears them out to the end, I give them credit for an amount of patience which the writer does not possess.

Our lives are varied; some of our paths lead through shadows, and others through the sunny upland, but if we are travelling homeward to that Better land why should we care though Shadows dark our pathway at all.

Fear not, for Jesus knoweth all. And oh these shadows to the day. To that glad morn when all shadows flee away –

Chapter I

First days in Hayestown Cottage.

I want to introduce you first to our family and then I can better go on with our life-story. Well first there was my father, a man about thirty-five, (when my story begins) about middle height, fully brown beard, finely shaped head, and high fore-head, devoting great intellectual powers; dark brown eyes that had a merry twinkle in them, and sharp enough to take everything in at the same time, and with all a kind and gentlemanly hearing which made him loved and respected wherever he went.

Next comes my mother – always delicate even from a child, - rather tall, very graceful, with beautiful dark sad eyes, a sweet mouth, and low, broad forehead, it seemed no wonder that my father, then a young man holding a position in the Provincial Bank should have fallen in love with “pretty Della

Thomas”, and brought her to share his home in the quaint old town of Wesford (sic). At the time I am now writing about, four children had come to the happy parents, Charlie, the eldest and only boy, a fine manly little fellow of 11 years, I came next, one year and some months his junior, and then after a jump of nearly 5 years came little Evangeline, or Eva, as we here after call her. She was always considered a pretty child and like her mother. The same large brown eyes, and pink and white complexion marked her out as her “mother’s girl”; and then lastly came Baby, or little Elsie, aged 3 years, who proudly bore the title of “the flower of the flock”.

Such, dear reader, is the family that I wish you to follow with me through a few years of their lives.

It was a bright day in April, the soft balmy wind and air had coaxed some of the trees to put their robes of fresh green and the primroses and daisies nodded fearlessly in the morning sunshine and the streams that came rippling down from the mountain, had a glad ring in their song, as if they knew that the winter was over and now they were free one more bounding over miniature waterfalls, and winding in and out here sparkling in the sunlight, and there hidden beneath the wet grass and bushes that lined their banks.

“Now, you and Eva can go along and take your time, -and are you sure you know the way?” Such were the words my mother uttered as she stood on the door-step of “laurel Hill” Eva and I standing ready equipped for a walk. “Ye-quite sure” said I confidently as (I took little Eva’s hand and started off up the lawn toward the gate. “Take good care of Eva” shouted Mamma, and then turned into the house, while Eva and I turned out of the gate and trudged bravely up the road.

Laurel hill had been our home for five or six years. A fine old place surrounded with trees, and a long avenue leading to the door. The house itself was rather gloomy, with large rooms, and long dark passages leading to the back apartments. A house where it seemed quite possible, to my childish imagination, to be a dwelling place for ghosts, for as carefully as my mother had tried to keep the servants from filling our minds with such nonsense, still somehow or other, we had got hold of the idea, and some

nights as the wind howled through the trees outside, and swept in angry gusts around corners of the old house, I used to creep in under the bed clothes and go to sleep covered up so that I could not “see” anything. It was from this old place we were moving when my story opens- to another about two miles and one half further out in the country, and it was to this that Eva and I were setting out.

“I think I can see the house.” Said I as we turned the corner of an incline; “Where?” said Eva, “I don’t see it.” “You are too little” said I in a tone that became my superior height, “Just wait till we get to the tip of this hill and then we’ll get into that field which I think belongs to us.” So having safely climbed over the ditch the next cry was, “O Sissie, I have found a cowslip.” Eva ran to me with her treasure, to which, before we had reached the house, were added a good many more. But before I go any further I must give you a description of our new home. Nestling amongst trees, and half hidden from the road by shrubs and bushes, with an avenue leading to the hall-door over shadowed by tall beech-tree, we find ourselves in a pretty glass porch, and passing through that enter a long hall, with a stair-case leading to the upper apartments, and on either side was the drawing, and dining room, and opening off the latter was a cozy little room, which at once went under the title of “Papa’s Study.” Upstairs there were 5 or 6 bedrooms, our room, -Eva’s and mine – being in the tip of the house, commanding a beautiful view of the coast of Wexford, and the low-lying country between. Across a lobby was Charlie’s room, out of which one saw the mountains of Forth, and if you leaned far out of the window you caught a sight of the blue sea, and the rocky Saltee Islands. On the landing below was Mamma’s and Papa’s room, little Elsie as the Baby sharing it. A Passage-way from the hall led to the large low ceiling kitchen, and dairy.

Of course we were very tired that night, and glad to get to bed, and to be awakened next morning by the sunshine, flooding the room with its golden rays. Thus life began in our home, the old house, that was ever to picture up in our memory years. After, all that was happy, and all that went to make our child life long to be remembered.

Chapter II

Some of our friends.

Yes, we had a good many friends, normal otherwise, but the closest and the nearest were a family by the name of Horneck. Mrs. Horneck was a small bustling little woman very neat to a degree of primness. Not a speck of dust was to be found in that well-appointed house, where everything had its own place, and was to be always found there: of course the two little daughters followed closely in their mother's foot-steps, and were always noted as being so near perfection as any children could be. It got whispered also in the kitchen quarters, Mrs. Horneck's nurse telling our maid in a low voice that "sure the mistress made her wear white gloves when taking the Baby out, she was that perticular. (sic)" So it was little wonder that little Addie and May grew up to Abhor untidiness in any shape or form, and I am afraid the little McClean often shocked them by a total neglect to the said good quality.

Then there was Mr. Horneck – or Richard as his wife always called him – a strange make-up of humanity. Six feet in his stockings, gaunt and awkward looking with a scant beard, he looked a strange contrast to his prim little wife. If his appearance was strange looking, certainly; his bearing and manners were stranger. I don't think he ever could have believed in "silence is golden" for to hear himself hold forth on various topics, himself being the principal one, was to give him the utmost satisfaction. Whenever he came to pay us a visit he invariably asked us the same questions, first coaxing us to him by whistling as if calling a dog; and then inquiring if we had found any birds nests "etc. etc. However not withstanding all, he was very fond of his wife and children and they returned his affection and we were also very dear friends, in fact Addie and May were about all the child – friends we had and we spent a good deal of our time together they living in a house on the outskirts of the town.

Then there were the Windrosses. Dear old Mr. Windross, a Methodist of the old type, who was never more happy than, when sitting in his big arm-chair, with his snow white silvery beard, and still bright eyes, reading the old-old story of Jesus of Nazareth a saint, who long since has gone to dwell with Him he loved and served so well on earth. Then his wife, some years younger, very stout to almost a degree of helplessness, was his true help-meet. Then there were sons and daughters married, and sons and daughters unmarried and living with their parents. These said daughters appeared “old maids” to our youthful minds, but we liked them all very much nevertheless, and always enjoyed an evening spend at “The Hills.” Next came Miss Whitty, an old lady of between 60 and 70 years, who would turn up her eyes and clasp her hands in horror at the mention of an “old maid,” and declared that she would not be such for all the world. She was Matron of the County Infirmary: kind loving, who knew my mother when she was a little girl, and bestowed the same love on us, conlined with a great deal of ginger – bread, which, whether extra hot, or not, gave us a great deal of satisfaction in the demolishing thereof.

Then there were the O’Hayese, 3 old maids and one old bachelor, who lived in a nice house, two or three minutes’ walk from Laurel Hill. Mrs. Browne was also a very dear friend of ours who lived in a very pretty place some distance from us. Now I think you have made the acquaintance of most of our friends and so I will proceed with my story.

Chapter III

Our first meeting

My dear Father and Mother had been Christians from before their marriage and the Lord Himself had “gathered them out from the sects when Charlie and I were but babies; and so my father was never happier than when telling out the story of the Cross to others around. So when we came to live in Hayestown Collage the first thing he proposed was to have a gospel meeting every Sunday evening in our house. Accordingly Mr. and Mrs. Windross were invited out to tea and they all had a good deal prayer over the matter, and it was decided that they should have the first one of the following Sunday. Papa with Eva accompanying

him stated off to invite the people and when Sunday evening came around at 5. O. C. the little drawing room was quite filled with eager hearers; Mamma played the piano and Papa spoke on the story of blind Bartimaeus, and of course Mr. Windross spoke some, and prayed, and thus began the meetings that are still going on through now in the school house, 13 and 14 years after. Only when we meet before His throne in the Glory will we be able to know where the seed fell and brought forth fruit.

Chapter IV

How we spent some of our holidays

Papa's holidays were always hailed with delight by us children. We usually spend the two weeks at the seashore, and how we looked forward to these days, bathing in the rippling waves, hunting for shells, exploring rocky nooks etc., the time passed all too quickly.

It was arranged the year after we moved to Hayestown, that we and Mrs. Horneck should take a cottage between us. So the day arrived for going, and wet and stormy it turned out. Our young hearts sunk within us, as we watched the down-pour, however at about 4. O. C. in the afternoon Mamma said we might venture, so Charlie brought old "Neddy" up to the door, and Charlie and I, and our servant-girl got in and off we started for a drive of 10 or 12 miles to Carne. The rain dripped down through the trees as we passed under them going by Johnstown Castle, but we were young and a little wet did not make much difference to us; not so with poor old Neddy however, as the last few miles of our journey, he seemed less inclined to trot along, and as Charlie bravely got out and walked beside him and coaxed him on. At last we could hear the roar of the waves on the shore, and the smell of the salt sea waters, and soon we were in shelter of the pretty little cottage, and Mamma and Papa, Eva and Elsie arriving soon after we all got to bed, tired out after our rough experience.

Each day passed happily and all too quickly by and one morning we were at the breakfast table discussing where we should go when Papa said, "Let us go and see St. Margaret's'." "Just the place." Said Mama, and all the rest joined in and agreed that we could spend an afternoon very nicely at the old ruin of a mansion

that once had been the pride of a wealthy family by the name of Nunn, but now they nearly all lay asleep in the little graveyard adjoining the demise, and the once stately mansion lay almost in ruins, and its grounds were totally neglected. It was great fun exploring about the old graveyard, picking blackberries – etc. but a little adventure happened then, which seemed only to serve to make more merriment. Mrs. Horneck, my Father and Mother were in a field, when suddenly they heard the bellow of a bull, and looking around they saw a large animal following them: to make for a ditch was the work of a moment or two and Papa dragged Mamma breathless to a place of safety, but Mrs. Horneck, owing to her particularly short “understandings” was a little behind, but arriving at the ditch she tried to hurriedly scramble over, but alas! -the clay was sandy, and her head covered with a large rush hat, underneath which beamed a very red face, would just manage to appear over the top of the ditch, when everything would disappear, hat and face and all. Another, and yet another effort was met with the same result, till the poor little woman half exhausted was helped up by my father. This little adventure gave us many a good laugh long afterwards, the subject of it seeming to enjoy it as much as the lookers on did. Thus the days would pass along, some afternoons when the sea rippled in tiny wavelets at our feet, and the sky above was of a cloudless blue, we would seek a sheltered nook among the rocks, and my mother would amuse us by making paper boats and floating them out on the sparkling water. How anxiously we would watch the tiny crafts sweep on the top of a wavelet, out and out till we could see them no more; and how often would we sing together on such occasions “In the sweet by and bye we shall meet on that beautiful shore” and as the music of our song would rise and sweep over that blue-blue sea, we had little thought then of ever being separated. “To be grown up,” seemed such a far-away thing that we hardly ever thought of it except to build castles in the air about what we would do when that far-off period would arrive.

Then at other times when the Storms blew up from the west and we stood on the shore of the “Forlorn” (rightly named) and watched the sweep of the breakers as they dashed in fury around Carnsore Point, and a cloud of spray would rise high into the air, and we’d listen to the thunder of their roar, watch them rush out again to be caught and hurled and thrown with greater fury on the dripping rocks. How tightly we would hold on to Papa’s hand, as the spray foam

blew on our faces, and it would be nearly with a sigh of relief that we would turn into the more sheltered lane again.

Then of course there were Papa's Bank holidays, on which days we always arranged to pass a pleasant day, either on the mountain close by, or at the seashore but on almost all of these occasions Mrs. Horneck, Addy and May would accompany us and thus our holidays passed by for a year or two happily and Oh! So swiftly –

Chapter V

Going to school.

"I think it is a great deal better to send the children to school" said Mamma one evening, as she and Papa were taking a walk down the road. "So do I," said he, "and the sooner they begin the better."

"Well, I will go in and see Lizzie Rowe tomorrow, and you can talk to Mr. Caldwell about Charlie." And so it came to the first day of school-life. Hitherto we had been taught by a young lady who came to visit us every afternoon, but since we lived in Hayestown our studies were superintended by our mother.

I remember well that morning we started off with Papa, in old Neddy's car, Charlie, Eva and I. We felt we were really going out into the world beginning life at last. The first part of the day passed quickly by and we got half an hour for lunch. Eva and I wandered off alone, and under a big tree we sat and took our lunch. I felt quite grown up and motherly and I gave little Eva her lunch, and many a time since I have thought of that day under that spreading beech-tree, and can see again the trustful brown eyes raised to mine as she sat contentedly at my feet eating her bread and butter. Then there was such a lot to tell Papa and Mamma when we got home and of course Charlie had his story to give also so that I'm afraid their heads were addled though Mamma seemed very pleased to have us home again, and let us rattle on until we proposed to learn our lessons for the next day.

Chapter VI

Ballyconick and its Master.

It was Sunday evening, a calm, peaceful evening, when the sun sank down behind the mountain in a sky of glorious gold and crimson, and the black-birds and thrushes lazily twittered forth some of their sweetest notes and thrills; not a leaf stirred in the trees of the lawn outside, and through the open window came the soft notes of a piano, and then the words of a hymn float out on the balmy wind. A rich man's voice joined in with a sweet full treble and my father and mother sang: "There is a fountain filled with blood," on and on they sang till they came to the words, "Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing thy power to save; when this poor lisping stammering tongue Lies silent in the grave," and as we listen, we see the head of a strong man bowed on his hands and his strong form shake with emotion. But he raised his head as the words tender, and triumphant swept forth and seem to pierce through the golden bars of the western sky, "For me a blood – bought free reward – A golden harp for me." "Tis strung and tuned for endless years, and formed by power Divine, To sound in God the Father's ears, No other name than Thine." The last sweet lingering notes died away and for a while there was silence, and he says; "it was my poor aunt's favorite hymn." Poor fellow, she had been the only Mother he had ever known as when still a baby he had been left an orphan, and had lived at Ballyconick with his childless Uncle till that uncle died and left him, then a man over 40 years, heir to his large farm of 300 acres.

A man with a kind jovial face with sandy side whiskers, and of middle height, such was John Sparrow when we first knew him.

"You are coming down tomorrow ma'am?" said Mr. Sparrow to my Mother, - whom he generally addressed thus – that same evening as he was taking leave. "I suppose so, Mr. Sparrow, if the day is fine" said Mamma, and off he drove with a satisfied air.

The next morning was Whit Monday and a Bank holiday, so great excitement prevailed as we all got ready to go to Ballyconick. Starting about 9.O.C. and after a drive of a couple of hours, we entered a gate and drove up to a

large white washed house at the door of which stood Mr. Sparrow beaming with delight and welcoming each in his own hearty way. Then there was Miss Clarke, his housekeeper to speak to, and after that we all went to the old fashioned garden with its old fashioned flowers, wall-flower, sweet – Williams and roses, and Mr. Sparrow led us proudly to the end, where going along a short path through a little wood, he pointed out a beautiful view of the country with its cozy farm houses hidden amongst leafy trees, and framing all was the dark blue sea. He kept us there quite a while, pointing out each place of interest and telling a little history about this person and that for had not he lived there from boyhood, and each place was as familiar to him, and was not he known and loved the whole country over? If any poor old woman was in want, wasn't it Mr. Sparrow who came with a warm blanket and a pound of tea and a kindly word to cheer up the poor old dames' heart, and would go away leaving sunshine behind him, and carrying the blessings of the poor with him. And wasn't it "the master" who sent round his horses and plough to till the poor man's field for him, when perhaps he was needing them himself in the rush of seeding time? Yes, Johnny Sparrow was loved and blessed by the poor and loved and respected by the better-off.

Then he would bring us into dinner and greatly insulted would the head of the table be if ample Justice was not done to his fine pair of fowl or his joint of roast beef; there we have passed many a pleasant and never to-be-forgotten day, rambling round the old farm-house and yard, which was always full of interest to us, from the house full of well-fed cattle down to the litter of little pigs, that, notwithstanding all prejudice, were admired by all hands.

But a gospel meeting at Ballyconick was the greatest pleasure to its master. He would invite all his neighbors for miles around, and of course as was the custom in that part of the country, a good tea was provided, after which all would adjourn to the large drawing-room and there my father would tell the "old-old story" to his eager hearers.

At a little after 9.O.C. all would disperse, and we would drive home along the mountain-road in the moonlight, and often we would sing all the way, and as "Rock of Ages, Cleft for me," would rise up over the heather - covered hills and here – echoed down again mingled with the rippling of the streams that flowed

noisily over their stony beds, heaven would seem nearer than ever before, and it would be very truthfully we'd sing: "Nearer home, a day's march nearer home."

Chapter VII

"Cullenstown"

"I'll call around this evening to tea" said Mr. Sparrow, to my mother one day as he jumped into his Croyden (sic) and drove off.

"All right, we'll be very glad" said she, as she turned to pick some withered leaves off her plants on the porch, for my mother was always fond of flowers.

That evening true to his promise came Mr. Sparrow about 6.O.C. and said in his usual jovial way, "Well you all come down to Ballyconick on Monday early and I will drive you down to Cullenstown; we have to be there by 10.O.C. to catch the tide."

"But - Tw'ell be putting you to so much trouble" said my mother. "No trouble whatever ma'am," said he, "so I will expect you."

Monday was a Bank holiday, so we had all been cordially invited down to Cullenstown, - a seaside place on the south coast, - by a family who attended the Ballyconick meetings by the name of Jeffares. We were to be taken out in their boat to have dinner on two little islands a couple of miles from the shore hence the kind offer of Mr. Sparrow to drive us there. Monday morning dawned bright and beautiful, as we were up betimes, and started off brimming over with happiness. Getting to Cullenstown about 10.O.C. we received a hearty welcome, and started down to the shore where we got into the boat and were soon sailing over the bounding sea. What a happy day that was, as after having dinner on the larger island we got into the boat again, we sailed up and down catching mackerel for a couple of hours, and then as the sky became flushed with the sunset tints, we drove home again along the old country roads, while the scent of dewy wild flowers rose from the meadows along the way. After that Cullenstown became our favorite resort and instead of spending our vacation at Carne, we went to Cullenstown. All the old ruins of castles and abbeys were visited, and amongst those ivy-covered remains of what once had been so great and grand, we spent

many a happy afternoon, rambling 'round their ancient walls, and climbing up the winding stone stairs, and trying to imagine what kind of people lived there in the dark by-gone ages.

Chapter VIII

“A change”

After having lived thus in our home for nearly six years, my mother became ailing and it was decided that we should leave the old house and move into the town, so as to be near the doctor. It was with a sad heart that we left the old home, where we had played for years, and our favorite nooks, that as children we had highly cherished were duly visited and to all we paid a sorrowful farewell. Of course old “Neddy” our donkey, had to be sold, and as I heard him trot up the street that night after having deposited his last load at our new house, despite my fifteen years I cried myself to sleep. For had not Neddy been our friend in and out of town with my father every day, and being our play fellow at other times. Neddy had won a place in our heart that no other donkey could displace.

Our life in the town was a strange contrast to our country life, and at first the novelty made it rather enjoyable to us children. Living next door to us were a lady and gentleman by the name of Johnson, a young couple lately married. Mrs. Johnson had a sister on a visit with her and as she and I were the same age, we soon became sworn friends, and Jones came with us much to the jealousy of Addy and May Horneck, who I am afraid were rather thrust one side on her account. Thus time passed on until it came to February, when an event occurred of which I will tell you in the next chapter.

Chapter IX

A wonderful event (25 February 1886*)

“A girl Margery, a girl!” echoed Mr. Horneck, as if he hardly could bring himself to believe that such a calamity had overtaken his friends. “Yes” said I triumphantly, “a little baby sister.”

With a dejected look he turned off with the words: “I must go and tell Mrs. Horneck,” and thus our darling little sister was welcomed by this strange piece of humanity. He thought to have so many girls in one family was the greatest misfortune that could befall unhappy parents, and evidently quite forgot that his whole family was comprised of two daughters.

Notwithstanding all this our Baby throue and woed as all proper Babies do, and was loved and petted by everybody, and the helpless little laughing darling seemed to draw us all nearer together, a special love seeming to spring up between Charlie and little Mabel Edith as she was duly called.

The following May (1887*) we decided to move back into Hayestown Cottage and glad we were to go with our new treasure to the fresh air and familiar haunts, that our absence had given new interest to.

Life that summer and winter passed rapidly and pleasantly, little Mable thriving, and growing sweeter and prettier every day, and being loved and petted by all hands.

The next May my father and mother decided to send me to a boarding school in England to complete my education. How well I remember that last Sunday evening as I walked up and down Mamma’s room hushing Baby to sleep, trying to keep the tears back as I realized it would be the last time for months that I would again feel those baby hands and kiss those rosy lips. It was the first separation, dear reader, the first time and of us had left the warm mother – nest to face the world, and therefore it seemed terrible and lonely to say good-bye for the first time to all that made life dear.

So one bright in May (1888*) my father, mother and Charlie drove me into the old town where I got on board a steamer which brought me to Bristol, where I was met and put on the train for Bridport (on south coast of England*). But as I

am not writing a history of myself, I need not mention any particulars about my school-life, except that I was very happy there on the whole.

The first Monday in the following August broke clear and beautiful, as I walked up and down the Waterford way, waiting for my father and mother who were to come up on the boat from Ballyhack bringing me home from there.

At last I saw them coming along and in another minute I was in their arms, oh, the bliss of feeling a mother's kiss again, and a father's strong loving arm thrown around you!

That evening as we were driving along the old road, nearing Ballyconick, we saw coming to meet us Charlie, Mr. Sparrow, Alfred Jones, and Mammie Whitney. There they all were, the friends, I had left – and how glad I was to see them again, and to be welcomed home again by each one in turn. Alfred Jones was Maud Jones brother and was learning farming at Ballyconick, a nice young fellow and a special friend of Charlie's. Nannie Whitney was a cousin of Mr. Sparrow's, a lady who tried to make out she was young, but who really had reached the mature age of 38 years.

We said good-bye to them at last, and Charlie jumped on the back seat of the Croyden (sic), and another hour's drive brought us home. What a lot here was to be told that first evening, and how happy we all were, at least I was!

Those holidays lasted for over six long weeks of happiness all together. Little we thought that those sunny autumn day would be the last days we would all spend together in our "Cottage home." Yes, "we knew not what awaited us, God kindly veiled our eyes." And oh I have often thanked Him for so doing! And at last it came to the day of my departure again, another three months away, I intending to come home for the Christmas holidays, but He ordered it otherwise. The night or two before I left, Charlie and I went up for a walk over the mountain. How well I can see that scene again, as we walked down the familiar road, and then struck out on the steep hill that led across the summit. As we got half way up we stopped and rested on a large rock and there with no sound to be heard save the sobbing weird voice of the night-wind as it swept across the heather and mingled with the merry songs of the mountain streams that trickled nosily over their stony beds; with the moon beams making a silver path across the sea that lay far down below, and nearer to us just at the foot of the steep ascent, nestling

amongst the trees was the old white-washed wind-mill there, with these familiar sights around, Charlie made the promise that I should live with him, when he went to America. He only knew then, that some time or other he would be there, no definite time had been settled, as he was then intending to enter the Bank with my father; but ultimately hoped to reach that distant land, there to make his "fortune." And so the compact was made under that moonlit September sky, and we came down again, singing all the way. "Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go." And as our young voices rose up in harmony together and the refrain sang out on the still night. "Follow, follow, and I would follow Jesus," anywhere everywhere, I would follow on" we, with our young hearts intended to follow Him, though we little knew where He would lead, but, blessed be His name "goodness, and mercy have followed us all the way," and even more trustfully we can now sing, "Anywhere He leads me I will follow on."

The morning of my departure arrived, and being up very early we started off, driving to Ballyhack, Papa, Mamma, Charlie and I, getting there we took the boat up to Waterford where my first holidays. Things went on pleasantly at "The College", till toward Christmas when my father wrote to say that my mother was very sick and that he was afraid I could not come home for the holidays. Such a disappointment as that was, I can never tell you, but I had to meet the inevitable, and so I watched all the girls packing up and going off, and I and a couple of others were left behind, with heavy hearts. Then soon after came the news that Charlie was going to leave for Canada in the end of Feb. and I would not see him again – that seemed to be the last drop in my cup of bitterness, and that night I cried myself to sleep, thinking, of course, that I was the most miserable girl in the universe, and had more to bear than most other people. The wheels of Time went on surely though slowly turning, and the end of February came, - how I wept over those letters that told me Charlie had gone, - gone from the old home where we had played together as children for years, and I had not even said "good-bye" to him! And when would he return? None of us knew, the only thing we were certain of at the time, was-our loss. He arrived safe and sound in Ontario, and every week we received his long welcome letters.

Things then went on much as usual until the following August, the first of which month I left school for ever, and came once more to live in "Hayestown Cottage".

Chapter X

Joy and Sorrow.

It was the day before Christmas, and great was our excitement as we looked forward to "tomorrow". Mamma went into town that morning (Xmas eve) and we were busy decorating the room with holly and ivy. Mr. Sparrow and Nannie Whitney were to spend Xmas evening with us taking dinner all together at 5.O.C. and as Mr. Sparrow rushed in next morning with his arms full of presents, he of course was welcomed very heartily at dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Tucker came in and joined us, and we passed a pleasant evening, one game of "blind-man's-buff" was played for wee Mabel's special benefit, and then Mr. Sparrow asked for a hymn, and choosing "Forever with the Lord, Amen So let it be", we all sang it through, after which we had prayer, and they all dispersed, Mr. Sparrow lingering last to say farewell in his own hearty way to each of us, and thus ended his last Christmas day on earth. The following week passed by, and soon after New Year's day went also, and it had come to the afternoon of the third of January 1889 which day Mamma propose that she and I and little Mabel should go to meet Papa which we gladly did, and met him not very far from Hayestown. The first glance at his face told us that something was wrong, and in answer to our looks he said: "poor Johnnie Sparrow is dying, " and with those words he drove on home, too overcome to say anything further. Hurriedly he and Mamma prepared to go to Ballyconick and it was with sad hearts Eva, Elsie, wee Mable and I watched them drive out of the lawn gate. Papa came home early the next morning with the sad, sad news that Mr. Sparrow had died that morning a little before 4.O.C. Little any of us knew as we were singing "Forever with the Lord" that Christmas night that so soon one loved one of our number should have gone to the forever with Him, in that better Land, where there shall be no more sickness nor sorrow, and where God Himself shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Thje whole countryside mourned for the departed Master of Ballyconick. Strong men went to see the remains, and came down weeping like children for a father, and hundreds came to pay their last respects to the deceased man they

had learned to love so well, during his life. The funeral was the largest ever witnessed in that churchyard of "Forest" hidden amongst the trees and that remains of John Sparrow rests, until that trump shall be heard when the dead in Christ shall rise to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

He's gone Home, and we are left to weep,
Not dead, but only fast asleep.
Oh! Would we call him from his rest,
From Heaven, from Home, from Jesus's breast?
No, sleep thou on till He shall come,
And take us all to share His home:
Where ever on the golden shore,
We all shall meet to part no more.

Chapter XI

"Still at Hayestown."

Spring came again to gladden the earth with its fresh beauty, with its wealth of primroses and violets, - the singing of birds and the awakening of all Nature -, and Spring grew into Summer, and still things went on pretty quietly in "our Cottage home". It came to September and my father had his three weeks holidays and again we found ourselves safely ensconced in a little Cottage by the sea at Calinstown. As usual we had a pleasant time, my father seizing the opportunity of having as many gospel meetings as possible amongst the coast-guards and country-folk, and we also did quite a little visiting amongst them. I remember going with my father and mother and little Mabel to see one poor old lady who lived in a house that once must have been beautiful - one of those large old country houses that are to be seen so often in Ireland - but which now had fallen into decay and grass grew up plentifully on the carriage-drive that led to the door, and it was with difficulty we forced the rusty gate open, and approached the old house that was now sadly needing repair. Upon ringing the bell, it was answered by loud barking inside, and then a slow lottering (sic) step was heard, a fumbling

and a turning of the key in the lock, and an old woman bent with age, with snow-white hair, and totally blind inquired "who is there". Having been answered satisfactorily she invited us in and entering a long hall we passed into a large room which was scantily furnished and dirty in the extreme. Perhaps I had better pause here and give you a brief outline of her past history before I proceed and further.

Once she was a young and beautiful girl, light hearted for her fearless horsemanship and manner of driving careless and even reckless of danger. She married a rich man, and had one son, and time passed on till he grew to be a young man, when one day they were all spending a day at Cullenstown and the father and son going to bathe both were swept out to sea on the strong-current and were drowned before the wife and mother's eyes. There she was bereft of all that made life dear in one brief hour; and a broken hearted woman went back to the old house to spend her remaining years in the home that one had welcomed a beautiful bride that once had re echoed with baby laughter and childish prattle but which now was a silent as the tomb itself, it was little wonder that the once bright hair grew bleached and white, and that those beautiful eyes grew dim with weeping! Hiring a man to manage the farm, he turned out to be totally void of principal, and soon the once flourishing land, dwindled down to almost being worthless, and the old house became dilapidated and forsaken looking, and to make matters worse, the poor old lady, as I before said, became perfectly blind. It was thus we found her sitting alone in the large old room, with two or three dogs and cats to keep her company, who looked suspiciously at us as we entered, and seemed to wonder why their peace had been disturbed in thus unusual manner. It was certainly a picture of forlornness and loneliness to make one's heart ache. A few gentle inquiries from my mother broke the ice, and then my father asked her if she would like us to sing her a hymn to which she answered "yes" and through the forsaken old house their voices sweet and clear rose in perfect harmony, and we sang "One there is above all others, Oh how He loves", and then after that we sang, "Oh think of the Home over there", and slowly down the withered, wrinkled cheek came the tears as my father read "Let not our heart be troubled." He then had a little talk with her and we rose to go. She accompanied us to the door, and as the tears coursed one another over the poor old cheeks, my mother always loving and gentle put her arms round the poor old creature and kissed those lips that for so long had been stranger to a woman's

kiss, and then my mother took little three year old Mabel and lifted her up till the sweet rosy lips touched those that had once been as beautiful, and nearly shaking with sohs the old lady laid her withered hands on little Mabel sunny golden curls, and blessed her, praying that she might never know sorrow such as she had known; and as I liked at our Baby who now stood with her large brown-eyes raised in wonder, and as the bright sunshine fell athwart the golden hair, and lit up the little face, which seemed in its innocent beauty to her angelic, my heart went out and echoed that same prayer for our darling. Thus we left her standing on the steps with her sightless eyes turning towards us and Oh I do hope to meet her again in the beauteous "Palace of the King" where they shall see the King in His beauty, and where all tears shall be wiped away.

Our three weeks slipped very rapidly away, and again we were in Hayestown Cottage, settled down for another winter, the last that I was to spend in the old home!

Chapter XII

Our mountain meetings.

It was Sunday, and we had just stood up from our little morning meeting, and Bro Thompson and Sister Charlton had taken their departure, and Papa was saying, "I would like to arrange a little gospel meeting on the mountain every Sunday evening, do you think we could manage it Dellie"? Addressing my mother, who was ever ready for anything in that shape "Why, yes I think it would be best to do a little visiting first amongst the people, and let your intentions be known."

"Well" said Papa. "Papa, Sissie, Eva and I could go up and see Mrs. Walker this afternoon and see what we can do".

So that afternoon as soon as dinner was over, Eva and I got ready and started off with Papa for Mrs. Walter's cottage which was situated just the other side of the mountain side, along the little paths across the heather, - now and then crossing a little stream on stepping stones, the autumn rains having swollen them

to an unusual size, we came at last to the tip of the mountain where we paused a moment to rest, and take in a view of the surrounding country, what a scene lay before us of mountain and valley, river and sea! As far as the eye could reach from Wexford harbour away round the coast to the Tower of Hook at the entrance to Waterford harbour we could see, and almost fancy we could hear the ceaseless waves of that ever changing, ever restless ocean. Then away behind us rose the Wicklow mountains, enshrouded in a blue haze that distance had lent them, and flowing and winding in and out here hidden entirely from our view, and there shining clear and bright in the October sun were the blue water of the beautiful Slaney, traveling on and on until they reached the sea and were lost in its blue depths.

And I cannot pass on without a word about the country that lay at our feet with its cozy farm houses, nestling amongst the leafy trees, with here and there the spire of a village church, and an old ivy covered ruin of some ancient Castle rising to point back to the dark by gone ages, adding a picturesque charm to the already beautiful landscape and then near us where we stood were the great rocks piled there by the Hand of Him who made the world, and then our hearts went up far above those rocky summits,

Far above you sunset skies
Far above these cold grey earth mist,
I would lift my longing eyes,
To the King of earth and Heaven,
Who hath made you as ye stand
Who hath made the isles and oceans
Who hath made the countless Sand
There I learned that wondrous lesson
Of His wisdom power and might,
And I thanked the great Creator
Who hath made the world so bright.

But we must pass on, and a walk of 5 minutes more brought us to the door of the little thatched Cottage which we entered, and going into the parlor with its clay floor and large open hearth, on which burned a bright peat fire, we got seated, and Papa had a nice talk with Mrs. Walker and her husband both of whom were children of the King and both eargarly (sic) seized at the idea of having a meeting in their house every Sunday that Papa could manage to get up.

So after a chapter had been read, and we all had sung an hymn and had prayer we took leave and began our descent down the mountain side again very happy and singing all the way, but very glad to get back again to our cozy home where the dear Mother had tea waiting to which we all sat down and related our experiences: to her sympathetic ear.

We eagerly waited for next Sunday, the day appointed for visiting the scattered Protestant families that lived on the mountains, and so the minute dinner was over off we started, Papa Eva and I for our long tramp over muddy roads and bye-paths, stopping here and there at a little Cottage, having a chapter a hymn and a word of prayer in each and telling of the intended gospel meeting at Mrs. Walkers for next Sunday, D.V., and so another Sunday ended, the following one dawned dear and bright. At about 3.O.C., "Jack" our donkey stood ready yoked at the door to bring Mamma, Elsie and little Mabel as far as the roads permitted them to drive, on their way to Mrs. Walkers cottage. Papa, Eva and I preferring to walk. After a long climb up the steep mountain road, Mamma got out, and "Mr. Jack" had to be let along the rugged path which led across the heath to the cottage, and thus we arrived, and entered the little room that I introduced my readers to before, which was not filled with a strange waiting congregation. There was old Mr. Stacey nearly bent in two with the "rheumatics" a spare little man, very deaf, with silvery hair, and bright eyes. Also his wife a large old woman, very neat, dressed in the usual Irish peasant style, with her snow-shite cap, and neatly folded shawl with rather short skirts showing the "broques" invariably worn by women of her class in that part of the country – and beside her was her grand-daughter, a bright looking girl of some 12 summers. Then there were great rough looking men hiding the warm heart that is generally to be found in the sons of Erin, who crept in looking shy and awkward, and curious to know how a cottage

meeting was going to be carried on in the little out-of-the-way mountain home. First there was a hymn given out, and as it was well known it was heartily sung by all – and then after an earnest Prayer, my father spoke “of Jesus and His love”, how He left His home with the Father in glory” to come to earth to die that they who believe should have life for all eternity. The words were drunk in eagerly by his hearers, and after another hymn and prayer they all quietly dispersed, and we bade farewell to Mrs. Walker and her husband and retraced our steps across the mountain, we turned in another direction , and came to another little cottage and having knocked at the door it was opened by the little girl you have before seen as Mrs. Stacey’s grand-daughter. As we entered the little kitchen the presence of some neighbors who sat around in hushed silence told at once that something unusual was wrong. A peep into the next room showed us at once the cause, for there lying on the bed unconscious was old John Stacey, with his poor old wife sitting beside him holding his hand. At her request my father prayed and sorrowfully we said farewell to the little group of mourners, and as we got outside the sun was sinking down behind the far-away mountains, and in the sky, now all flushed with the pink and golden hues of sunset shone one bright star, and inside the little cottage the weary old pilgrim’s earthly sun was setting never to rise again over the hills of Time, but instead for him was dawning that bright cloudless everlasting day in the Land where there shall be no more night. Very early next morning he quietly fell asleep in Jesus.

Chapter XIII

Leaving home!

Again I must ask you to jump with me over some months till we find ourselves once more in September the year 1890.

It was one of those bright autumn days when summer seems to be making one last struggle to regain pre-eminence. A day when the sky was a cloudless blue and the bees hummed about busily flitting from one flower to another, the birds in the trees overhead were thrilling forth some of their most exquisite songs.

Mamma was busy in the kitchen, and I in the dining-room was arranging the tea table with its snowy-cloth, and pretty tea set, and fresh flowers were shedding their fragrance through the room; at last having finished my task and having gone around it once more to see that everything was in the exact place, I went out through the glass porch and to the pretty little summer-house in the lawn where my father sat writing to Charlie with little Mable keeping him company. Having coaxed her in to "tidy" her, and sent her out again as pretty a little picture as you could wish to see with her bright golden curls framing the sweet little face, and dressed in a little pink frock with a white muslin pinafore and pink sash. I kissed the rosy innocent lips and sent her out again to Papa who was still in the summer house. Then having dressed myself I went down stairs to await the friends we expected to spend the evening with us, as the following week I was to sail for New York. Soon they all came, 8 or 9 altogether, and after tea was over the younger portion of our party decided to take a walk around by Johnstone Castle the beautiful residence of Lord Maurice Fitzgerald. So off we started, down by the pretty little church of Rathaspeck and around the road by the above diocese and which road was one of the most beautiful in the vicinity and overshadowed by large old oak and beech trees, through which we now and then caught a glimpse of the beautiful castle with its fountains playing before it, and bright with its flower-bed filled with scarlet geraniums. Having gone along for a while we decided to get into Deer-Park and take a "short cut" home by that way, as already the sun had set over the mountains and the sky was flushed with the rosy tints heralding the close of another day. So accordingly we all got in through the large gate and walked over a lovely stretch of green grass on which numerous deer were grazing, who on seeing us lifted their heads and with startled eyes gracefully trotted off to another place, then having come to a thick wood, on the fallen trunk of a huge tree we sat to rest. How that scene is photographed on my memory, one of the beautiful pictures that hangs up there, which may never be forgotten or removed. Through the dark fir trees the evening shades were falling, already casting a solemn gloom through the dark recesses from which now and again we heard the hoot of an owl or listened to a belated black bird's cry, while every minute we'd hear a rustle through the dead leaves and looking over would see the twinkling tail of a rabbit making for its hole, frightened at the sound of our voices. We sat there some time enjoying the hushed stillness, and looking up through the thick branches of the trees I caught a glimpse of the evening star, and

as I thought of the parting now so near, and the way all unknown and untrodden which lay before me, a strange peace filled my soul, as the words came rushing through my head.

“Into the future, that unknown land
Fearless I go, holding His hand”.

Shine on gentle star, the same Mighty Hand which holds three in thy place and marks out thy way through that wondrous firmament, guides me, tho’ “one of the least” – on to the shores of the heavenly land, where there is no more parting. For tis my Father’s Hand that holds the helm! And tis the same Hand that placed thee in thy appointed place so many thousands of years ago, that same pierced Hand, - that has promised to guide us all home until we shall see His glory in “The Palace of the King”.

Soon after we again reached home and after some music, and reading, a thing Papa never omitted to do when anyone was there, they all took their departure and soon all was still in “our cottage home” and sleep came as Nature’s sweet restorer to our weary bodies and minds.

It had come to Tuesday the following week, and if you had taken a peep into our home you would have found things in a rather confused state, as I was deep in the mysteries of packing my trunks as next day I was to leave with Papa and Mamma for Belfast en route for New York via Derry. It was a sorrowful task, and though all tried to put on an appearance of cheerfulness, still somehow many a bright unbidden tear seemed to drop into the trunk amongst the various things that went to fill it, and little Mabel would come up and put her little arms around my neck and kiss me in her own loving way, which would send a pang through my heart, while she would say. “Poor Ista, is going away tomorrow”, and would look with sympathetic baby wonder as I’d brush away those troublesome tears that would keep coming into my eyes, and then she would say “don’t Ky Ista, little Mollie loves “ou” But the hours flew on quickly, and that evening some friends would keep coming in to say good-by, and at last I took wee Mabelle up to but her to bed for the last time! Dear reader, unless you have had the same experience, you cannot have any idea of the soreness of my heart, as one by one I took off the little garments, and robed in her little white night-dress she knelt to pray at my knee. For two years, hardly any other hand but mine had done that task every

night, it was I who dressed and bathed, her, I who put her to sleep. I who taught her alphabet and I who made her little frocks and pinafores, as my mother, who was never strong was always busy of course, I loved her; but that is such a common-place way of putting it, and does not seem to half express all the tenderness and yearning and fondness that I had for my little golden haired sister, the little helpless innocent Baby that the loving Heavenly Father had sent down to draw us all nearer, closer together. And as she knelt there the tears fell quick and fast on the bowed curly head, but were hastily brushed away before she rose, and laughingly jumped into bed. Then as usual she wanted to be sung to sleep, and with a great effort I sang her favorite hymns, "Jesus loves me this I know", and "Shall be gathered at the river" etc. and soon the eyelids closed over the large brown eyes, and the long lashes lay on the fair pink cheek, while one little hand tightly held mine and little Mabel was asleep! I stayed on however, unable to tear myself away, but hearing Mamma making preparations for bed, I bent over and kissed the parted rosy lips, that smiled in their sleep, and gave my treasure over into the keeping of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps, "until we meet again", and oh I know that He loves her far more than I could ever! Next morning we were up early as we intended leaving on the 8.O.C. train to Dublin, and Eva was to come to the train with us and drive back the horse, as I before said, that my father and mother were to come as far as Derry and see me on to the steamer. After a pretense of eating breakfast, the horse was brought up, and just before we went out Papa called us all in to the little drawing room and kneeling there amid smothered sobs, he committed us each into the loving Keeping of Him who has promised to never leave us not forsake us, "until we met again ", and when would that be? Perhaps - who can tell? – it may be at Jesus feet when we all shall be caught up together to meet Him in the air.

We were all ready now, but little Mabel lay fast asleep still upstairs, and so up I rushed and hurriedly bending down I kissed her as she slept, but the brown eyes opened wide and with one cry the little arms were thrown around my neck; but I had to go and with one wrench I tore myself away leaving little Mabel sobbing as if her baby heart would break, seeming to realize at last that "Ista" was really going away for a "long long time".

I said good-bye to Elsie who stood at the hall-door and jumping into the car we drove down the lawn through the gate and down the familiar road which led to

Wexford. I looked back to catch one last lingering glimpse of “our cottage home”, as the sun had already risen and was bathing it in a flood of golden light, while the soft morning breeze stirred the leaves of the trees in the lawn, which had been already touched with the magic wand of Autumn, and their bright autumn tints flashed in the morning sunbeams. The mists were rolling from the rocky peaks of the mountain, lifting the veil that hung over the landscape, each pointy of which I knew and loved so well, a sudden bend in the road hid all from my view, and thus mid blinding tears I caught the last sight of that home of my childhood, those familiar scenes and haunts that I loved so well, those days of sunny childhood over which scarce a shadow had flown and that glad girlhood which seemed so near and yet so far off now, lay in the Past, that irrevocable Past that lay behind me bathed in the light of morning, and the Future loomed dark and unknown before my weeping eyes, and in my sorrow I nearly grew faithless. A retrospect of the Past taken from the Present standpoint always seems brighter than it really is, as Time with her gentle hand blots out all the harshness and leaver only the bright and beautiful to be remembered.

A life without one clout to hide,
The brightness of that azure sky;
Without one heart pang, or a grief;
And ne'er one bitter helpless cry.

But Thou dear Lord thou Knowest all,
Thou Knowest what I need the best;
I'll take with joy the pleasant things,
And Thy sweet will shall choose the rest.

Margery E. McClean

And this was really the expression of my heart at the time, and the Lord in His loving Kindness and tender mercy when He saw I had learned His appointed lesson, gently removed each obstacle. The same week that I got letters from home, with the permission to “do as we liked”, -that same week the Manager at the office told me that business had got so slack that they had not work of two stenographers, and so I

This document was transcribed from a hand written story titled, Our Cottage Home. In her own hand writing, my great-grandmother Rae (Margery E McClean) described her family life between the years 1880 and 1889 before she went to America. As to date, I have not found the ending of this account in Ireland. I have included dates when there is an asterisk. I also did not correct her spelling and identified the inclusion of the standard sic notation. Michael G Terpstra

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