

Yet, all of us do feel very strongly that we owe much to our mothers. I endeavored to think back over my childhood this past week to recollect home and the influences that bore in upon me. Strangely enough the only specific Mothers' Day occasion I could recall was when I was 12 and my sister Jane was 15. It was the year the depression hit. Somehow I mustered up 25¢ and bought Mother a box of pansies, and this made Jane feel small and cheap because she didn't have anything purchased with money to present to Mother.

However, there are many things about Mother that we children have talked about since her passing. We mentioned that we never knew that Mother liked milk until all of us were grown and had left home. Then, not until then, could she allow herself that luxury...hitherto, all that we could afford went for the 5 children. I recall her self-sacrifice in order to buy me a second-hand suit for graduation from high school.

There was an allowance of 5¢ a week for treats. I still can visualize my brother and I, noses pressed against the candy counter glass, debating whether to buy a bottle of soda pop, or a bag full of stale candy. The pop tasted better, but the candy lasted much, much longer.

Mother only finished the 8th grade, so her formal training was definitely limited, but I recall that it was she who encouraged me to continue on in high school during those depression years when I was tempted to drop out to help meet the family budget.

I often wonder, as I look back, how Mother took the whirlwind of activity. Our kitchen was where neighborhood ping-pong tournaments were held. In our driveway, adjacent to the garage was where our basketball team practiced. In our backyard was the high jump, broad jump and pole vault pit for our track meets. To stop and think about it, I just now realize that we didn't have a park or a play-yard in our small town.

I never consciously remember Mother or Dad teaching us ethics, morals or religion. It was just a part of their life. Before each meal there was a prayer--and the meal was also concluded by a prayer. At dinner every day--but we never called it "dinner", it was "supper" to us--Dad read from the Bible. I don't recall being taught to pray. I do remember Mother kneeling at my side when I was making the transition from "Now I lay me down to sleep" to making up and saying my own prayers.

She didn't teach Sunday School, or hold any office in the church. She was given to hospitality, though. Every other Sunday night the preacher and his family came over after the evening service with anyone else who might be free. Every visitor passing through stayed at our house. I recall the morning I awakened and was told that Mother had suffered a slight stroke. Sleeping upstairs in the two bedrooms that night were Billy Graham, Lloyd Fesmire and Al Smith. We were doing special meetings in the vicinity during a spring vacation from Wheaton College.