

## Sara and Anna

She was very adept at rhymes -- often wrote complete letters in verse. Into their primitive school some teachers were brought a little geography book in rhyme. My mother remembered many of those verses till she was an old lady and often remarked that if more text books were issued in similar manner, pupils would learn more easily and retain what they learned longer!

One day a year was set aside for making candles. It was called Candle Day. Sara and Anna loved to help. My Aunt Anna writes of this day in a little book of reminiscences as follows: "One hundred and forty-four candles were made, the family's supply for the year. The kitchen floor was covered with saw dust. Blocks were placed at each end of the room and long poles laid across them. There were twelve small rods about the size of a finger. On each rod twelve pieces of doubled candle-wick, the length of the desired candles, were arranged. On the kitchen stove were two huge kettles of boiling tallow from which the boiler could be replenished. The kitchen door was open so as to keep the room as cold as possible. Mother, with warm wraps about her shoulders, sat beside the long rods and dipped one by one the small rods with the twelve strips into the boiling hot tallow. Thus 144 candles were made. After the first dipping she would rub each strip with her finger, giving form and shape to the candle. It took the greater part of a day for the work to be completed by it gave us all light for evenings for a year."

During the busy days, while they worked my grandmother would tell the little girls stories of her childhood, and of "Harmony Retreat," a ladies' seminary near Auburn, New York, where she was brought up by her Aunt Almira Bennett, who conducted it. These stories of far away places fired the imagination of the little girls living in the wilderness, and one day not long after candles had been made and safely stored away, Sara said to Anna:

"Let's run away. Maybe we could go to a ladies' seminary. Mother said she'd never send a young child away from home as she was sent, so there's no use asking her. We'll have to run away."

Anna, a little reluctantly, agreed to the idea. Plans were made. They would be gypsies! Bright colors were needed for the garb of gypsies, so the children gathered berries, weeds, and walnut husks, and little by little dyed what they thought was necessary. Their mother was too busy with endless household tasks, the garden, visiting the sick, helping with the work of the academy and the church to pay too much attention the activities of her daughters.

Sara felt, for some reason, that a foreign language would be useful, so out of a little French grammar they learned a few phrases. One was "Bonjour, Monsieur," pronounced "Bonjer monsir" and on "Comment vous portez-vous" -- pronounced "come meant vouss portess vouss."

Dolls were prepared -- they couldn't leave those behind -- and Sara's painting outfit was included. And oh yes, a Bible. Daughters of a clergyman, a very rigid and devout man of God, wouldn't dream of setting off for foreign parts without a copy of Holy Scriptures.

The day they planned to start, everything was in readiness, even to a lunch for the first stage of the journey. The nearest towns to the settlement were 15 to 20 miles away. It was a three day's journey to go to and return from one -- so you may realize what our young innocents were attempting.