

CHUMS

Agnes and I were chums, often referred to as "bosom friends" and as inseparable as two little girls of the same age and in the same social group can be, who are in constant competition. I think we were each, in our hearts, jealous of the other. I had the better grades in school, but Agnes had more and prettier clothes. Agnes' mother could take a piece of velvet or silk and ship up some really original creations. I looked on them with much envy which I carefully hid under pretended airy indifference.

Agnes lived at the top of the hill on West Main Street. I often stayed at her house for dinner or supper. Agnes' mother was a good cook and tried to make tempting meals for her husband. Mr. K. was a glum silent man with a look of ill humor on his face.

Thinking back, I feel that he probably was frustrated and worried. Any man would be who had only the meager salary of a dry-goods clerk to support an ambitious wife and expensive daughter and a young son who didn't show much promise of being a "go-getter."

We were warned to not annoy Mr. K. at meals--he had "dyspepia." (Today it would be called "ulcers," I am sure.) Mrs. K. hovered over him solicitously while Agnes and I made ourselves as inconspicuous as possible, although managing to enjoy the good food that the mother always provided.

When the meal was over Mr. K. went back to the Store. Clerks put in long hours of an evening as well as a full day.