

But this chapter of trials at last came to an end. Upon reaching Vermontville after about 5 weeks travel, we were kindly entertained by Deacon and Mrs. Church (who, with other "settlers" had preceded us) while our own cabin was being prepared. Help was hard to get and progress of building very slow. The picture of our first "at home" in the new house is clear in my memory to day. My mother, worn out by the dreadful journey and uneasy in the consciousness that the limited accommodations of our hosts was being sorely taxed by the presence of our family, was longing to begin again private home life and often asked when the house would be ready to move in.—At last one day, on learning that the log wall was rolled in place, the split-plank floor half laid and the roof of split "shakes" half on, she appeared at the "hole in the wall" which was to serve as a door and gaily announced that she was ready and determined to begin housekeeping then and there. Deaf to the anxious remonstrances of my father, she managed unpacking some household goods then on the ground, and building a fire against the green logs which formed the walls she began to *prepare dinner*, Mrs. Church having supplied something "to start with." Preparations were, of course, restricted, but beguiling, and dinner was soon formally announced. In very truth, ours was a jovial family party while we ate this our first home meal off the edge of the newly laid plank floor instead of a table, our feet standing below on the virgin ground. This, I believe, was my mother's first happy hour after leaving Vermont and thus began our pioneer home life. Hardships were inevitable and for the most part were bravely endured in courageous hope. But alas, there came times of sore discouragement and dire homesickness when my mother, though her brave spirit resisted, gave visible signs of grief and I, child like, would wonder and be dismayed, for to me pioneer life was most jolly, except when I could have nothing to eat but potato and salt and no shoes to wear but leather-soled socks. Mention of shoes reminds me of my happy anticipations, one winter later on, of a pair of real shoes for which my feet were duly measured by a quondam shoemaker who lived on a farm, a few miles away. The season passed and still another, and when the shoes came I was not the Cinderella that the shoes called for, I had outgrown them and I well remember the hurricane of childish wrath which filled my little heart when I found that I must continue to tread my way in mother-made, "leather stocking" shoes.

That first winter in the Colony was to every one of the settlers, a period of more or less suffering. In our own case, lateness of arrival had prevented the raising of anything for food, and the horrible condition of the roads resulting from an "open" winter rendered passage to and from Bellevue, the nearest (13 miles) point of any purchase, next to impossible. Sturdy ox-teams drawing heavy lumber wagons, the only available means of transportation, attempted some excursions across the country through the solid forest, consuming at least one day going, and another returning, sometimes being obliged to "camp out" over night, one, or both, ways. At times, starvation threatened. In fact, the noble span of

horses which had brought us safely through the memorable journey, found no pampered reward for their service. One died by actual starvation, under his diet solely of "browse," the other was sold for eight bushels of wheat, hoping thus to help ourselves over the danger line.

But why dwell on these darksome experiences. With all its hard conditions, the colonial life had its sunny side in the light of which came something of lively enjoyment. It had also a funny side which furnished many vivid and amusing memories.

I need not detail the successive activities of my father in his particular relation to the settlement as its projector and promoter, for they are fully narrated in Mr. Barber's history of "Vermontville Colony," [in Vol. 28 of the Michigan Pioneer Collections. It is the story of a bold project, of resolute struggle against heavy odds, of patient and hopeful waiting through slow progress. Though unique in several features—its inception and early handling—it furnished the story of a beginning more promising than that of many now flourishing towns and magnificent cities.

Though the tree which my father planted in great hope and faith did not in its early growth and fruitage meet his devoted expectations he gladly recognized even small results, and so long as he lived he believed in a successful future for the Colony. I know he always thought of it as the child of his righteous ambition and watched with loving interest for reports of its growth and prosperity.

I never knew but vaguely—and am content not to know—what were the incidents which latterly befell to disturb the cordial relations between the leader and his followers. He rarely alluded to any annoying experiences and was willing to "forgive and forget" even what seemed to him personal injustice, and though he sorrowed under his consciousness of having been wronged, he never spoke of it in bitterness. It was not quite the same with my mother. Though gentle, she had not the passive temper of my father, and her feelings once hurt, healed slowly. A deeply appreciative and sympathetic letter on the death of my father (1860) from the church which he organized was received by her with very tender emotion. "And, about three years later, only a day or two after her burial there came to her address an invitation to the quarter-centennial celebration of the organization of the church. The tenor of the paper was most courteous and respectful, and conveyed words of affectionate remembrance of her for her own sake and as the wife of its organizer and first pastor. I am sure it would have been balm to a wounded heart.

After the first five years (1837-42) which covered our residence in Vermontville, we stopped about a year in Howell. This was only a cipher in our experience. The status of the town, at that time, made it undesirable as an abiding place and gave little promise of success for a minister. So, when, in the course of months, an opening at Northville was presented it was readily accepted. The village was past the pioneer stage and quite attractive, and the community of excellent repute. A new Presbyterian church of the "new school" variety had recently been formed (an "old school"