

CHAPTER XXX

GRANDFATHER CONDUCTS THE FAMILY ABROAD

By Charles

As Grandfather has told you, when we lived in Wausau he used to take groups of people to Europe every summer. He often said it would be so much fun if some day he could take his family on such a trip. At last the time came when he was able to do this. It was the summer of 1925. George had had a trip to Europe the summer before and was just getting started in the law in New York, so he did not go. But the rest of the family - Grandfather, Grandmother, Grace, Ruth, Miriam and Charles all sailed on the S. S. America on June 20th, 1925.

This was before Ruth was married, but we will tell you a secret. Howard was at the pier to see the boat sail and when we went to our state-rooms, Ruth had two big bouquets of flowers, one from Howard and one from another beau. Grandfather said these chapters could be written with or without pointing out morals. If there is a moral to this paragraph, it must be for the boys; if you are very fond of a young lady who is sailing for Europe you had better send a bouquet of flowers to the boat and also go to the pier to see her off.

It was a jolly trip. We swam in the pool, walked the deck, danced and enjoyed the deck games and sports. And every day Grandfather would have a talk with us about the history or art books which we had all been reading the preceding winter in preparation for our trip.

Paris

Grandfather, Grandmother and Miriam had been in Europe before, but for Charles, Ruth and Grace it was all a new and thrilling experience. Every

morning we would go to the art galleries or to places of historic interest, in the afternoon we would ride in the parks or go shopping and in the evening we went to the theater or opera. To the Louvre with its vast storehouse of treasures and to Notre Dame we returned many times during our stay. Perhaps the most interesting shopping trip was our trip to Mme. Appert's, 39 Rue St. Honore, where the girls had some Paris dresses made. This was the place where Miriam had all her trousseau, including her wedding dress, made the year before.

The Alhambra

To tell all about our trip through Spain would fill this entire book, but there must be room for at least a paragraph about the part which we all agreed was the best - that is, our trip to the Alhambra. We took the sleeper from Madrid to Seville, went by train from Seville to Cordova and there engaged an automobile and chauffeur and drove to Granada, arriving just in time for a late dinner.

The moon was to be full that night and, according to Grandfather's plans, we were to see the Alhambra thus in all its beauty. But, alas! the Alhambra was closed for the night and the guards would not be back to open it until morning. Grandfather was determined that we should not be disappointed and eventually located the official in charge and explained that we had come a great distance and had arranged our trip specifically so as to be there to see the Alhambra by moonlight, and that he was willing to pay for special service. In the end it was arranged that the Alhambra should be opened and the fountains turned on specially for us. It was glorious!

The next morning we went again and saw all of the places more in detail, but that experience of our little party and Spanish speaking guide wandering about through the corridors and courts of that romantic and

exquisitely beautiful old palace by moonlight is something none of us will ever forget. In Charles' library you can see framed an enlarged photograph which was taken the following morning, showing Grace and our guide in the "Court of the Lions".

Toledo

But all in Spain was not so serene. We decided on our last day in Madrid to hire a car and chauffeur for the day and drive to Toledo which, according to historians, resembles in appearance a mediaeval city more nearly than any other city on the continent. The car which came to the hotel looked rather old and the tires worn, but we decided to go.

After seeing Toledo and agreeing that if it was mediaeval we were glad that we were living now and not in the Middle Ages, we started back. About thirty miles from Madrid, however, a tire blew out and the chauffeur seemed unable to fix it. Grandfather and Charles tried to help, but aside from getting very dirty and greasy there were no results. Our time to catch our train from Madrid to Barcelona was getting short. Grandfather tried to talk to the chauffeur about another car, a telephone, a telegraph station. No use, he could not understand a word.

We were in a little village and a group of the villagers had gathered to watch our struggles with the tire. Grandfather then explained to them that we must catch our train in Madrid. We would like to rent another car to take us there, or we would like to telephone to Madrid for another car, or telegraph. Grandfather acted it all out with his hands (although he was still dirty and greasy from the tire) so that they would understand. From their faces, however, it was evident that they did not comprehend, but they discussed it among themselves in Spanish. Suddenly their faces brightened up and they sent a small boy scampering off to one of the nearby houses. We were happy

because we thought he had gone to get a man with another car. But in a moment he returned with a basin of warm water and soap. They thought Grandfather wanted to wash his hands!

To miss our train in Madrid would throw us off our entire schedule and we were very discouraged. Just then a Spanish gentleman came down the road driving a Ford two-door sedan toward Madrid. Grandfather stopped him and pointing toward the city, asked, "Madrid?" and when the man nodded his head, we all jumped into the car. He seemed quite startled and even more so when we showed him by pointing at our watches what time we had to be in Madrid, but he smiled with true Spanish hospitality and took us flying over the thirty miles of rough roads and got us there for our train. None of us can remember exactly how we all got into that Ford for that wild and bumpy ride. It is Charles' recollection that Grandfather and Grandmother got into the back seat and that he sat in front with the Spanish gentleman and held on his lap Miriam, Grace and Ruth.

(N.B. by Editor - Justifiable allowance must be made for Charles' recollection on this point.)

At the end of thirty miles in which the Ford went so fast it hit only the tops of the ruts, Charles doubtless was quite uncertain how many ladies had attempted to ride on his lap. But the editor is of the opinion that not more than two ladies actually did bounce up and down on his knees.)

One other funny thing which happened to us in Spain needs be recorded. In order that we might all be assured of comfortable rooms, Grandfather had written ahead to hotels in all the cities where we were scheduled to spend a night and had made reservations. Calvin Coolidge at that time was President of the United States and Grandfather thought it might do no harm to sign his full name, Charles Coolidge Parlin, to the letters he wrote

AUTOMOBILE TRIP THROUGH
**GREAT
 BRITAIN**
 1925



0 50 100 150 200

to the hotels. In Spain it seems that when a man has three names, the middle name is his real name (i.e. his father's name) and the third name is his mother's name, which is added as a compliment to his mother, but is not used in oral salutation, so at least we were told. At any rate, whatever the explanation, from the time we entered Spain until we took the sleeper from Barcelona for France, we were the Coolidges, and no amount of explaining ever convinced anyone to the contrary.

The Cathedral Towns

To tell all we saw and did would be to write a Baedeker. Barcelona, Nimes, Genoa, Venice, Naples, Rome, Florence, Sorrento, Capri, Geneva, Interlaken, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Amsterdam, Antwerp and London were all made tremendously interesting by reason of Grandfather's skillful guiding. We could wish nothing finer for you grandchildren than that when you get to studying art and history Grandfather should organize a trip to Europe for you just as he did for us.

When we got to London we were joined by Mr. & Mrs. Boyd and by Dr. Thomas, our pastor at Germantown. We rented a big bus that looked like one of our "rubber-neck wagons" and the entire party started on a tour of the cathedral towns, also taking in Cambridge, Epworth, the home of John Wesley, Kenilworth, Rugby, Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon, and ending up at Oxford.

Each of the cathedrals is different, but all are interesting and beautiful. Perhaps York, where we saw a Sunday morning service, was the most impressive; Ely, which we saw in the later afternoon with the glow of the setting sun coming through the marvelous windows, the most beautiful; and Lincoln, with its funny imps and carvings, the most interesting.

At Oxford was the only time that we did not fall in with

Grandfather's plans. This was to be our last evening together. The next day Mr. & Mrs. Boyd, Charles and Miriam sailed for home on the Majestic, while the others went up into Scotland, where Grandfather had a funny experience. In Edinburgh Grandfather went into a washroom and paid 6 cents for a towel and soap. Having washed his hands, Grandfather started to leave, when the attendant said: "You did not wash your face." Grandfather, somewhat startled, said, "No! does my face look as though it needed to be washed?" "No," replied the Scotch attendant, "your face does not look as though it needed to be washed, but you might as well wash it - it will not cost you any more."

But to return to Oxford, not only was this our last night together in Europe, this also was Grandfather's and Grandmother's twenty-eighth wedding anniversary. Charles telephoned ahead long-distance to the hotel where we were to stop for that night and had a big cake specially baked and frosted for the occasion and all the members of the party had purchased gifts for Grandfather and Grandmother and had written poetry to go with them.

The surprise was a complete success. When, at the conclusion of our meal, the English waiter came proudly through the dining room to our table bearing the large cake with candles lighted and with "Charlie and Daisy" spelled out on the top in fancy frosting, Grandfather and Grandmother were quite taken back. As a matter of fact, Grandfather, not even suspecting our plans, had been talking all through the meal about the things we ought to see in Oxford that evening because it would be our last chance, but when he saw the cake he put away his guide books and we just had a party for the rest of the evening. Most of the poetry which was composed for the occasion has been lost, but Grandmother records in her diary that the lines which accompanied the gifts from Charles and Miriam were as follows:

To Mother!

"To be in Oxford is enough,
To cause a celebration,
But there are many other things,
To prompt this animation.

For instance here's our pastor,
Who emulates Dick Turpin*
Well might we kill the fatted calf,
And with lengthy poem fete him.

And then for Charles and Miriam,
This ends ten months of bliss,
Who now in this far land,
Their dear apartment miss.

But what is ten to twenty-eight,
Yes - not months but years,
Twenty-eight years of wedded life,
Through all the smiles and tears.

Yes, Mother dear, it is for you,
We planned this little party,
And with this gift there goes to you
Our congratulations hearty."

To Father!

"Now listen, dear friends, for this is not all
Tonight that we would remember
For on this last night with our traveling mates
We would our adieus tender.

To our guide who through Europe
Has shown us around
We acknowledge indebtedness
For new interests found.

The Alhambra and Paris
And Venice and Rome,
Berlin and Dresden
Sights not found at home.

Guide books and time tables,
He took time to peruse
That whatever we wished
Could be brought into view.
Our appreciation to voice
For our joys not a few
This small gift was
Was purchased for you."

*Footnote. We had stopped at Dick Turpin's inn a few days before and all had been joking Dr. Thomas about so close an association with the famous bandit.