

CHAPTER I

WE ARE MARRIED

Volume I stopped at the very provoking point of just when Grandfather and Grandmother were about to be married. Well, dearies, to resume right where we left off, the event took place all right, and I know you will now be able to breathe more freely, for as was suggested in Volume I, what a fix you would have been in, if like Jean Ramsay in Volume I, Grandmother had got hysterics and said "I can't, I can't," and broken up the party. You would not have had either of us for grandparents, and would you not have been out of luck?

Say, I wish I could tell you how pretty Grandmother looked, but that is beyond Grandfather and he just is not going to try. Her hair was dark and her face youthful. She stood erect and graceful and her eyes sparkled with humor and energy. But, say, Grandfather has to give it up - you know how dear Grandmother is - well she was just the same then - only young like Aunt Grace. Some day when you pause a minute to admire Aunt Grace, just say to yourself - that is just the way Grandmother looked when she was married.

We were married quietly at the home of Grandmother's father and all seemed to us lovely and wonderful except that Grandmother's half brother-in-law, Fred, bribed the parlor car porter to pin a big ribbon "Just Married" on our seats and some well-meaning idiots showered us with rice.

For our honeymoon trip we took a boat from Milwaukee to Duluth. Having shaken off the rice, we were able to pose as old married folks and help poke fun at a newly married couple, Joe and Belle. Belle had never been out of Chicago. She had a trunk full of dresses in the hold and every day Joe had to go down to the hold and bring up several on his arm for Belle to

select from, whereat the passengers laughed - Grandfather and Grandmother probably laughing loudest of all.

At Duluth we invited Joe and Belle to take a carriage ride with us. "What is that?" asked Joe. "I haven't an idea," says Belle. "That," says Joe, "is a goose." "A goose! A goose!" says Belle, "My, does a goose look like that? I do declare. Oh, Joe," she says, "are those really truly raspberries growing on that bush? Cut me some of the bushes that I may show Mother how raspberries grow." All of which Joe did, and Belle started for Chicago with an armful of raspberry bushes. Just look at the thorns of a raspberry bush some day and think of Belle taking an armful of raspberry bushes to her mother.

On the way to Duluth one of the sudden squalls for which Lake Superior is noted hit us and the boat did almost everything except turn a somersault. The dining room tables broke loose and sounded as if they would batter the boat to pieces. When the captain got the boat into harbor, a sailor shoveled the dishes overboard with a scoop shovel and the purser bought a new set.

All the passengers were seasick, except Grandmother and Grandfather. You see, a friend had told us that if we put a piece of writing paper over our stomachs we would not get seasick. So, you see, we each put a sheet of writing paper right over our stomachs and we knew we would not be seasick, and we were not.

Ten years later, as Grandfather and Grandmother returned from Naples, they met Grandfather's boyhood doctor - Dr. Nuzum - and his wife. Now it happened that Dr. Nuzum and his wife got seasick and stayed seasick. One day Grandfather said: "Doctor, I know how presumptuous it is for me to

offer you a prescription, but I hate to see you seasick when it is so unnecessary. If you would only wear a sheet of writing paper over your stomach you would never get seasick. My wife and I always wear writing paper over our stomachs and we never get seasick."

Grandfather can still see the wan and sickly smile of Dr. Nuzum's sea-green countenance as he weakly whispered: "Yes, that is a perfect prescription whenever it is applied to people who are not susceptible of being seasick." Just to prove the doctor wrong, we left the writing paper off, but could not coax ourselves into being seasick.

"But, doctor," said Grandfather, "there must be some good prescription for seasickness." "There is," said Dr. Nuzum, "and I shall never be without it again." "What is that?" eagerly asked Grandfather. "To get on land," said the doctor, "and to stay there." Many years later Grandfather met the doctor. He was an old man, but he had never again tried to cross the ocean.

Well, getting back to Wausau, we rented a small house and started housekeeping with Grandfather's mother and all her furniture and Grandmother's grandmother and all her furniture. So don't you see how abundantly supplied we were with furniture.

The next summer, what do you suppose happened? Grandfather is so excited he can hardly tell you about it - it was a baby boy! Just too cute for words! Grandfather can't begin to tell you about him - is going to leave that all to Grandmother - but, oh, boy, was not Grandfather proud and happy! And Grandmother suggested that we name the baby Charles after Grandfather. Oh, my, what a thrill! and Charles the boy was called. Can you think of Charles as a little red baby cooing in his cradle with no more important problem in mind than how to get his big toe into his mouth? No, I

know you can't imagine it, but Grandmother can, and Grandfather promised to let her write about the babies and not, with bungling words, mar so angelic a vision.

Well, to resume, next year we moved into another small house. This house was heated with a wood stove - an "airtight" stove it was called - made of sheet iron standing half as high as a man, looking much like a big black milk can with a tight fitting cover on top. The fuel consisted of chunks of dry maple wood, and to replenish the fire, one removed the cover, dropped a big chunk into the stove and replaced the cover.

Grandfather reserved one extra large chunk for a cold night. One evening, as Grandfather returned from town, the wooden walks crackled under his feet. There was a zip to the air and a tingle to his nose that warned Grandfather the cold night was at hand and, dearies, in Northern Wisconsin a cold night may mean - and this night did - 40° below zero!

Well, Grandfather put the big chunk into the airtight stove. It nearly well filled the stove. What if it should not burn? It might be better to place some small wood about it. The fire fixed for the night, Grandfather and Grandmother were soon asleep in the adjoining bedroom, when, bang! like a cannon! Even Grandfather woke up. What in the world was that? The room was full of smoke - Grandfather rushed into the living room and what do you suppose had happened? Why, the cover had blown off the airtight stove. The bottom of the stove was white from the heat, and the white shaded up through varying shades of red to black at the top. Fire and smoke were leaping out of the top. Grandfather clapped the top on and soon, bang, it went again! and hot! Oh, dear me, it was so suffocating we had to open the door.

What could we do? The cover would not stay on, the stove looked as though it might melt. Should we pour on water? That might create steam and

maybe cause a worse explosion. It might be safer to shovel in snow. Can you imagine Grandfather clad in - well no matter what he was clad in - with the front door wide open, running out where it was 40° below zero, getting shovelful of snow and dumping them into the top of the stove? No, dearies, the passersby did not stop to laugh at Grandfather and inquire what he was doing. When it is 40° below zero, you just keep stepping right along.

Well, was that not funny? Can you imagine a city where everyone burned wood - even the schools were all heated with wood - the school board having a huge wood yard where many cords of wood were bought green in winter and piled up to dry all summer for use the following winter. In the school houses, however, were furnaces which were quite an improvement on airtight stoves.

Now it happened that the city built a new high school and Grandfather bought a lot across from it, and Grandmother and Grandfather planned to build a house, and the architect of the school house drew some elevations for them, and Grandfather got a builder to bid on building the house - and could you imagine it - his price was \$40,000! The plans were carefully put away - Grandfather has never seen them since.

One day Grandfather passed by an old time mansion built by Mr. McCrossen, a lumber man, and enlarged for his invalid wife. Mr. Yawkey, another wealthy lumberman, had bought the place and was looking gloomily at the house. "What is the trouble," Mr. Yawkey asked Grandfather. "Trouble enough," said Mr. Yawkey, "I planned to move this house off the lot this week and have a contractor to begin on a new house next Monday. Now I find the house is too large to go through the streets." "I think," said Grandfather, "you could cut the house in two parts and fit them together without serious damage." "Parlin, if you will agree to have the house off this lot

before Monday, you may have it for \$800." "Agreed," said Grandfather.

On normal occasions everybody in town is the schoolman's boss, but in an emergency, everyone in town is the school principal's servant. Before Monday the house was off the lot and headed for Grandfather's lot. The two pieces fitted together without mishap, and soon Grandmother and Grandfather had a home all of their own! This time with a wood furnace instead of stoves. Was not that exciting? Well, I tell you it was! But that was not all the excitement - say that was only part of it! More happened right away!

It was another boy! Oh, say, Grandfather and Grandmother had two boys!! The second one could not also be called Charles, so he was George. Why George? Oh, such a lovely baby had to have a fine, strong name - what name would be better than George? No, Grandfather had not yet learned to call all the train porters George - he thought only of George Washington, and his uncle George, one of the kindest of men, and of his own father's initials - G. S. - Gustavus Steward. Steward was all right - Gustavus quite impossible. George Steward it shall be.

But again if he doesn't hold on to himself tight, Grandfather will be trying to write what a wonderful baby this second one was. Oh, Grandfather is just going to stop this chapter, for if he doesn't look out, he will be trying next to tell you about the girl babies - say, they are beyond Grandfather. When it came to the babies Grandfather always just left it to Grandmother, and again he acknowledges his utter inability to do the subject justice and will leave it to Grandmother.