

GREAT GRANDFATHER PARLIN AND FAMILY



Gustavus Steward Parlin  
1839-1880  
Great Grandfather



Harriet Burnham  
Before her Marriage



Mrs. Harriet Burnham Parlin  
1839-1920  
Great Grandmother



Clymena Steward Parlin  
1865-1884  
Great Aunt



Clymena - Ago  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years



Charles Coolidge Parlin  
1872-  
Grandfather

## CHAPTER IX

### GREAT GRANDFATHER PARLIN

One of the saddest events of Grandfather's boyhood was the death of his father when Grandfather was eight years old. Your great grandfather Parlin was one of the most generous and kind-hearted of men. He died suddenly from some intestinal trouble which the doctors of that small town could not understand. Your great grandfather was so loved by all the people in the country round about that he had one of the largest funerals the town had ever known and many wept, for they had lost indeed a good friend.

Your great grandfather was buried with full Masonic rites. I cannot tell you just what it means to be a Mason, but your father and your grandfather and your great grandfather were all Masons before you, and I hope all our grandsons may some day deserve to become Masons. Probably no one will ever invite you to join a Masonic lodge, but when you are past twenty-one years of age and are confident you are well regarded by your fellow-men, you may approach some Mason on the subject and he will be glad to tell you how you may become a Mason.

Grandfather while living in Wausau, recalling that his father was a Mason, joined Forest Lodge No. 130, F. & A. M. and went through all the chairs and served a term as Worshipful Master. Grandfather cannot write about this interesting part of his life, but if you are ever made a Mason, it may amuse you to remember that on one gala occasion during Grandfather's administration as Worshipful Master, when a leading Hebrew was initiated and all his Jewish friends who were Masons were present,

the absent-minded organist played "Onward Christian Soldier." Grandfather also was Excellent High Priest of the Wausau chapter. He is a life member of both these lodges and is also a member of St. Omar Commandery (Wausau), Germantown Council (Germantown), Philadelphus Consistory (Philadelphia) and Aleppo Temple (Boston).

But I started to tell you a little about your great grandfather Parlin. His older brother, Frank Parlin, had gone from the ancestral home at Skowhegan, Maine, to Wisconsin and had become a leading dry goods merchant in Monroe, Wisconsin. He persuaded your great grandfather, Gustavus Steward Parlin, to come out to Wisconsin and start a produce business in the nearby village of Brodhead. This was a mistake. Your great grandfather should have been a lawyer, for people used to talk years after his death of his skill in argument and his ability in discussing topics of interest.

However, he did start a produce business for which probably he had little liking and small aptitude. The business consisted largely of buying butter, eggs and poultry from farmers and shipping to the Chicago market and also in doing some retail business selling to the people of the village. There were no refrigerator cars, so losses in shipment frequently occurred.

Just before Thanksgiving and again just before Christmas your great grandfather's shop was a busy place, piled high with turkeys. Many were delivered alive and there was a room where several people were busy preparing them for the market. Eggs before being shipped were "candled" - i.e., were held one by one before a bright light which

enabled one to judge whether they were fresh. There were no cold storage warehouses and eggs which were to be carried over from fall to winter were "pickled" in large vats of salty water.

This, as you see, was a very useful work, but not very pleasant and, at any rate, not best suited to one with the talent of your great grandfather who, as noted above, should have been a lawyer. It may be added parenthetically that his son, your grandfather, at one time had an ambition to enter the law, but was prevented by circumstances from doing so and that the family ambition to practice law was finally attained by his sons, Charles and George.

Before I leave the subject of your great grandfather, I must tell you an amusing incident which occurred when he first came to Wisconsin. He hired a horse and buggy to take his young wife, your great grandmother, for a ride into the country. They had gotten only a little ways out of town when your great grandmother, who was very alert-minded, noticed that the horse was at one corner of the buggy instead of straight in front. Your great grandfather could not discover what was the matter and drove carefully back, expecting almost any minute that the horse and buggy would part company. When he explained to the livery stable keeper what had happened, the livery stable man laughed uproariously. You see at that time in Wisconsin there were no paved roads and the two horse teams wore ruts so deep in the road that it was necessary, if you drove only one horse, to hitch him to the corner of the buggy so that the horse could walk in one rut while the buggy wheels fitted into the two ruts in the road. At the present time Wisconsin has fine cement high-

ways, but all of these have come since the invention of the automobile.

Another feature of this drive was also entertaining. Your great grandmother saw several fields which, as she saw them, were all grown up to rank weeds. On her return she said to one of her neighbors: "How regrettable it is that so many of the farms are covered with such terrible rank weeds." After your great grandmother, who always could describe anything she had seen most vividly, gave a word picture of these "terrible weeds, nearly as high as a man's head, with big broad leaves and rank, unpleasant odor," the neighbor laughed heartily. "That," said the neighbor, "is one of our most valuable crops - tobacco." However, perhaps your great grandmother was not altogether wrong.