

## CHAPTER XLV

### RHEUMATISM AND REMINISCENCES

When Grandfather left DePere, he received a compliment which seems worth recording. As soon as he left West DePere, the University of Wisconsin served notice on the West DePere Board of Education that if they wished their school continued on the University's list of accredited schools (schools from which students were admitted to the University without examination), it would be necessary for them to employ an additional assistant in the high school. The Board protested, saying that the University had recently inspected their high school and had sent them a fine report of conditions - why the sudden change of attitude? To which the University replied that they had been satisfied with one assistant because they knew Parlin would do the work of two persons and now that he had resigned, an additional assistant would be required. The school acquired an additional high school teacher.

Grandfather's mother had broken up housekeeping in Brodhead and had moved to DePere to live with him. As soon as the school year was completed, Grandfather and his mother moved to Wausau. At this point, your great-great Aunt Cyrene, of whom Grandfather wrote in Part I, offered to give Grandfather money to take a law training. It was Grandfather's one real chance to work out his boyhood ambition. Grandfather hesitated to take the money from Aunt Cyrene. He need not have hesitated, for Grandfather's father had set Aunt Cyrene up in business and Aunt Cyrene would have liked to repay that kindness by starting your grandfather in his life work.

Some years later Grandfather regretted that he had not taken the training. However, as he approaches sixty, Grandfather has ceased to regret the decision. Could he have gone to Harvard Law School and then gone to New York City, as did his sons, nothing could have pleased him more, for Grandfather always felt that his talents as well as his inclinations led him toward the law.

But if in that day he had accepted Aunt Cyrene's offer, he would probably have attended Wisconsin Law School and settled down in some small Wisconsin town, whereas he did succeed in working out a broad and satisfying career, founding the new industry of Commercial Research, traveling every state in the Union, working in every one of the hundred largest American cities, making trips abroad and meeting many leaders in American industry. Today he is satisfied that the decision was for the best.

Upon reaching Wausau, Grandfather did one excellent thing for himself. When invited to play cards, he replied that he was a Methodist and did not play cards. Both of these statements were correct - Grandfather had joined the Methodist Church and he had learned that too much time was likely to be wasted playing cards and, going to a new town, he decided to conserve that time for other things. This decision gave Grandfather lots of time for work and for reading and for play. This book, no doubt, comes out of time which, were it not for that decision, would have been spent at playing bridge instead of thinking of his grandchildren.

Soon after reaching Wausau, Grandfather was prostrated with an attack of rheumatism and when school opened in the Fall, he was all crippled up. For several weeks he went to and from school in a carriage

and most of the time was in great pain with some joint bandaged heavily. By Thanksgiving, however, the spell had worn off, and Grandfather had a fine time for the rest of the year.

The school had changed materially in the three years Grandfather had been in DePere. Those who were Freshmen when he taught them before had graduated. Only one pupil who had lost a year on account of illness was in school who had been there when Grandfather first came to Wausau. The school now had several assistants and was already started on the course of development which made it later recognized as one of the foremost high schools in the state.

Returning to the painful subject of rheumatism - please pardon the over-literalness of the adjective - Grandfather had throughout his working days recurrent attacks of inflammatory rheumatism, than which few if any afflictions are more painful or more depressing. These attacks would come unexpectedly, frequently at most inopportune times, usually as the result of exposure to cold.

Rheumatism was Grandfather's most serious handicaps; the other handicaps he overcame, but rheumatism worsted him again and again. In spite of these attacks, Grandfather succeeded in working out a fairly satisfactory career for himself, but the threat of these attacks made it impossible for him to aspire to major executive responsibility.

His first attack came the first year he taught at DePere. On his way to Brodhead for Christmas, he passed through Madison and was persuaded to remain over night to attend a reception at the President's house. Grandfather had checked his baggage home, but no matter - he could sleep

for one night in his underclothes. When the President's reception was over, it was raining and Grandfather got wet getting to the room of the boy who had invited him to spend the night with him. The boy's fire was out and kindling wood and coal could not be had without rousing the owner of the house, who had retired. No matter, Grandfather thought, he could stand anything and he slept in a cold room in damp underwear. This caused his first attack.

Thereafter, whenever he was subject to exposure, he had a recurrence of the trouble. For example, Grandfather bought a small boat, but little larger than a canoe, with outriggered oarlocks and spoon cars and spent much time on the river rowing. One day, as recorded in a preceding chapter, his boat capsized in the swift current before the mill grates. It was already late in the Fall and rheumatism siezed a patient.

There was one humorous incident to this siege. Grandfather lived with Mr. and Mrs. Wight, rather elderly people. Mrs. Wight was a fine cook and set a wonderful table. She also was a strong Methodist and delighted especially to entertain several of the boys when Lawrence College Glee Club made its annual visit to DePere.

It was just when these boys came to Mrs. Wight's that Grandfather was sick. He had been given some specially powerful medicine with special cautions to take it sparingly. Next morning the medicine bottle was empty, although the night before it had been three-quarters full. It developed that one of the boys had a cold and Mr. Wight by mistake had given the boy Grandfather's rheumatism cure. The boy had taken it all and next morning reported himself cured and feeling fine.

At breakfast that morning the table was bountifully supplied with all that could please the appetites of vigorous youths. Grace had just been said when crash! bang! a stovepipe which ran overhead the full length of the table fell, covering everything with soot. It appeared to the hungry youths a catastrophe of first magnitude, but Mrs. Wright with her usual efficiency soon had the table cleared and another breakfast for husky singers prepared.

But, to get back to Wausau, Grandfather in the summer before his year as assistant principal began decided to take baths at Mt. Clemens, Michigan. The story was that in drilling a well, a man struck some water which was so strong of salt that he thought he could evaporate it and produce salt commercially. He built a vat and produced salt all right, but there were so many other minerals that the salt was not salable. The vat was abandoned and, so the story goes, an old horse turned out in the pasture to die used to stand alongside this vat and let the water drip on him and ere long the horse picked up his ears and pranced around like a colt.

A doctor, so the story goes, seeing what the water did to the horse, thought he could try it on a patient who, like the old horse, seemed worn out. Soon the patient was frisking about as with renewed youth. Having devised this pleasant myth, bath houses were established and cure for rheumatism was advertised. The water is so salt that you have to hold down to keep yourself at the bottom of the tub and there is so much sulphur in the water that silver money in use around the bath house becomes black. According to tradition, the patient must take one

bath a day, followed by a rub, for exactly twenty-one days, neither more nor less. Meanwhile, the patient lives at one of the numerous hotels attached to one of the several bath houses.

When Grandfather was there, a hotel man and his wife had separated and each ran a hotel. Grandfather elected to stay with the man. This was a mistake. In like circumstances again, he will entrust himself to feminine management. If the three weeks Grandfather stayed in Mt. Clemens was a fair sample of life at that hotel, the proprietor must have had an interesting career.

To introduce the dramatis personae of my story - two maidens arrived with many clothes and with coquettish ways and allowed it to leak out that their father was very wealthy. An inventor came, leaving his inventions at home and with no visible means of support. An undertaker arrived from Pittsburgh - no longer young, but still quite gay. Then a young lady arrived with her parents. The young lady was troubled with insomnia and, alas, had not closed her eyes in sleep for many nights. The parents were greatly troubled and the young lady was certain she was on the brink of nervous prostration.

Now we are ready for the story. Well, you see, the inventor began to pay attention to one of the "wealthy" girls and their courtship went on at a galloping pace. The undertaker went off on a spree one night, had his money and his diamond stick pin stolen, came back and had a fit of delirium tremens. But wildest excitement of all - the young lady who never closed her eyes in sleep had all her jewelry stolen out of the room in which she lay sleepless without ever knowing anything about it until next morning.

The young lady's father was much peeved at the loss of the jewelry and hired a local detective. Now the detective had been hired to suspect somebody and to demonstrate efficiency, arrested the inventor. No evidence was produced, but someone had to be suspected - why not the inventor. This in turn peeved the inventor.

By the time Grandfather left, the inventor was out of jail, the undertaker was reported to be sobering up, the "wealthy" young ladies were going to another city, and there was hope for improvement in the young lady with insomnia - and the undertaker's money and the young lady's jewelry - well, the undertaker got some more money from home and the young lady would rather sleep than have jewelry anyway - so let's forget it.

The most severe attack of hrcumatism Grandfather had was about sixteen years later. The managers of The Curtis Publishing Company had a business gathering at a hotel in Lakewood, New Jersey. There was nothing unusual about the food or conditions. Immediately following the meeting, out of ten persons there, eight came down with tonsilitis and five of the ten followed it up with inflammatory rheumatism. Three had previously had rheumatism and these three had a hard time.

Mr. Patterson, of the New York office, nearly died. He did not get back to work for about a year, and it is likely that heart failure which caused his death in the early fifties may date back to that attack. Grandfather had the next most severe case. He was in bed for several weeks and did not return to his office for about six months and did not really feel well for about two years. Mr. Smith, of the Boston office,

was out for several months. Mr. Barrows, of the Philadelphia office, would get back for a few days and then have to quit work again off and on all winter. Mrs. Boyd, who had accompanied Mr. Boyd to the meeting, also was laid up for most of the winter.

When Grandfather could travel, he and Grandmother went to Porto Rico to take baths at Coamo Springs. Ponce de Leon had crossed the Atlantic in search of the fountain of eternal youth, which tradition said was somewhere in the new world. He did not find the fountain, but somewhat later, Spaniards found hot sulphur springs near Coamo and builded a palatial bath house. At the time of Grandfather's visit, the grandeur was somewhat passe, yet one could sense the splendor of earlier days - the baths were very pleasant and probably beneficial.

It was the first trip Grandfather and Grandmother had taken into the tropics. All was new and strange and delightful - century plants blooming on the hillside, pineapple freshly picked, tobacco growing under mosquito netting, the wonderful mountain views as one drove across the island - eternal summer at a time when Boston was in the grip of winter - all this and much else thrilled them.

The curator of the New York Botanical Gardens and his wife came to Coamo Springs, gathering plant specimens, and Grandmother spent considerable time helping to care for these plants and taking short excursions with them.

Grandfather had tried all kinds of medicine and had lost faith in them. He had taken much salicylate of soda, which nearly ruined his stomach. Then one day he read in a medical journal of an experiment at



Johns Hopkins medical college where patients suffering with inflammatory rheumatism were given various treatments - some one kind of medicine, some another, and some no medicine at all. All got well in about the same time, the only difference observable was that those who had taken salicylate of soda appeared more subject to relapse.

Grandfather had tried scrums of different kinds and believed in them. He came to rely much on osteopathy which he found definitely helpful after acute inflammation had subsided. He had been reading about the application of surgery and thought of trying it. One day chance left him sitting beside a world-famous surgeon on a clubhouse porch. "Surgeon," said Grandfather, "I have been entertained to read that they are using surgery to cure rheumatism. Can you cure rheumatism that way?" "Surely, if you cut out the right thing." "What is the right thing?" "Ah, there is the rub," said the surgeon. "The boys say it works like this. They report to the surgeon - 'We have a man to be operated upon for rheumatism. All right, says the surgeon, get him ready and we will take out his appendix. But, say the boys, the man has not money enough to take out his appendix. Well, then, says the surgeon, get him ready and we will take out his tonsils.' Now we had one poor fellow and we operated four times. We cut away all he could spare anywhere and when he died, post mortem showed that the seat of infection was in his stomach.

Grandfather decided to remain whole. That was probably a wrong decision - a tonsil operation several years later greatly improved the situation and Grandfather now believes that if in the early days when he had frequent attacks of quinsy and if rheumatism medical science had

advanced to the point of recommending that he have his tonsils removed, he would have been spared much pain and loss of time.

Grandfather's last attack was shortly before Mr. Boyd decided to retire from the position of Advertising Director. In fact, Grandfather was in Europe trying to recover his health when Mr. Boyd resigned and a new advertising director was chosen. For several months after his return from this trip abroad Grandfather's health appeared precarious. However, an operation to cure a bladder trouble, followed by a few weeks in Florida, put him in excellent shape, and he approaches sixty feeling fine and enjoying work and amusing himself on the side by writing this book for his grandchildren.

But let's find something more pleasant to talk about. Well, one of the very pleasant features of teaching was the long summer vacation. It was, however, something of a problem, for we needed recreation and besides, one needed to piece out a teacher's salary by earning extra money. At a later time, Grandfather worked into a grand vacation job, taking parties to Europe and lecturing in the European Art Galleries. That was both recreative and remunerative, also educational and full of inspiration, but Grandfather must not anticipate some chapters in Volume II.

In the holidays, up to the point Volume I carries us, Grandfather put in some time at study, completing all courses required for Master of Arts degree and having his thesis accepted. Under the rules he needed to put in some weeks "in residence" in Madison, reading in the library or taking what course he wished, as too large a percentage of his work was "in absentia". Grandfather never put in those residence weeks at Madison

and hence never received the Master's degree.

Most of the summers in this earlier period were put in at teacher institute work - conducting institutes for rural teachers. An institute usually lasted for two weeks in charge of two conductors. Institutes were scheduled over a period of several weeks, so that the same conductor could have several institutes in one season. These institutes were very pleasant and friendships between conductors frequently developed.

I will tell you just one funny story about one of the conductors with whom Grandfather worked one summer and then he really must call this Volume I completed. As Grandfather and this other conductor at the close of the day's work started for a ride on the lake, the conductor said:

"Where is the boat?" Grandfather replied: "Over near the red barn."

"Which is the red one?" he asked. Grandfather laughingly said: "Are you color blind?" To which the conductor replied: "That barn you say is red looks the same color to me as the grass which you would probably say is green," and then he proceeded to tell this funny tale. "I never knew I

"I never knew I was color blind," he said, "until I was about fourteen. I supposed colors looked the same to everyone as they did to me. One day my father who was a wagon maker said to me, 'Son, you are getting old enough to be helpful.' 'All right, father,' I said, 'what can I do?' 'You paint this wagon,' said my father, pointing to one which had only a priming coat, 'like this one', pointing to another which had received its final coat. My father brought two pails of paint and a brush in each. The two pails of paint looked the same to me and I supposed my father gave me the two pails just as a matter of my convenience in painting.

So I painted part of the time from one pail and part of time from the other. When I had completed the job and proudly called my father to inspect my workmanship, I thought my father had gone crazy. He just had a fit. He said one pail of paint was red and the other was green and that I had ruined the wagon. I don't understand yet just what my father got so excited about, but I did learn that he seemed to see a difference in two pails of paint that so far as I could see were as nearly alike as two peas."

Now do you not think that was a funny story and do you not think that wagon must have been a "scream" when he got through painting it red and green? Well, Grandfather is tired of writing, let's have a good laugh at that wagon and call it a day.