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LEAVES ENGLAND FOR AMERICA

JUST PICTURE" an English dining room of the year 1849. Around the breakfast table is gathered a family group. At the head and foot of the table sit Mr. Craig and his wife Mary, host and hostess. At their sides are seated members of Fleming Hewitt Revell's family—the father, Emma Manning his wife, and his three oldest daughters, Anna aged eight, Emma six, Sarah four.

Emma Manning, Mary Craig's sister, has named her fourth daughter "Mary," and this youngest child is only two years old.

When we first see this group it is noticeable that Emma Manning seems unable to eat any food; and finally, with a despairing look at her sister, she leaves the room and goes upstairs.

The host looks at his wife opposite him and asks, "What is the matter with Emma? Is she ill?"

Without stopping to answer her husband, Mary Craig also leaves the dining room; and the last we see of the little gathering of relatives around the breakfast table is when the child Emma leaves her chair, goes around to her father's place, climbs into his lap, and throwing her arms around his neck says, "It's about the baby." [This act was typical of her whole life, and one of the many things which made the little girl her father's favorite. Years later a young brother wrote, "We all knew Sister Emma was our father's favorite. We never questioned it, and never once did it make trouble among us, as we took it for granted."]

From the dining room we are taken to an upstairs bedroom, where we see Emma Manning kneeling beside the crib of her baby, still asleep. Her sister stands beside her trying to quiet her sobs and answer the repeated refrain, "Oh, I cannot leave her behind! It will kill me to go away and leave her!"

Mary Craig is heard saying, "But Emma, the voyage will be long and tiresome. Taking three children to a new and strange land is all that your frail health will permit. You must consider yourself and your unborn baby, too.* Mary is better off here until you are well settled in your American home. Then she can go to you, dear."

[Emma Moody wrote in her memoirs, "Knowing everything was uncertain in a new land, and as Grandma Revell was in wretched health, it was thought best to leave the youngest, fourth daughter, in England with an aunt. Little Mary was in good health and had the best of care, but the separation nearly killed my grandmother. Never, as long as she lived, did she ever get over it. Aunt Matie, as we later called the little girl left behind, made several visits to this country, but this was not her home, and Grandma could not get over that."]

Soon we see a four-wheeler drawing up in front of the Craig's London house, the front door thrown open, and the leave-taking of the Revells. Family and baggage stowed away in the vehicle, they move off in an early morning mist as their host and hostess on their door step wave farewell.

Next, out of the clearing of that morning's fog, we see the cobbled streets, the taverns, the wooden wharves, and the forest of masts surrounding the pier from which

* Born December 11, 1849.

the Revell family is to sail. The four-wheeler reappears, the young father and mother (39 and 33, respectively) gather their children and their belongings on the dock, and soon make their way up the gang-plank of the ship that is to carry them overseas to a new land and a new life.

Drawing closer to the deck, we find Sarah, Emma, and Anna clustered about their mother, who sits among their tin trunks and carry-alls. The father, "probably of Huguenot descent and therefore a godly man," while he attends to the last details of his family's new adventure, tries to comfort himself with the thought that this move is really for the best and that it must be God's will. He is a ship-builder who, because of business reverses and a serious fall from the scaffolding of his own shipyard, which impaired his health, is taking his family to Chicago to make a new start in that so-called "wild west prairie land and new frontier of the Indians."

There they are, the five of them, really emigrés to a new and distant country, which could be reached only by weeks of travel on sailing boats, without benefit of steam or wireless.

The father, with his business attended to, stands beside his wife and their household goods, and says, "Everything is here, I think, Emma."

And she replies, "Everything but Mary."

The father turns away and walks to the edge of the boat, which is beginning to pull away from English shores.

The mother looks back and sees with mental eyes a child sleeping in a crib. That is England to her now. The father, raising his head, glances back to the England of 1849, which he is leaving forever; and in our imagination we see the following scenes. There is the

image of the unmistakable Queen Victoria, aged thirty, surrounded by the first of her nine children. Perhaps she is showing them a family album, while nearby their father, Prince Albert, is playing German music on his beloved piano. If we look down the street in front of "The Cheshire Cheese," we see two young men approaching the tavern. Both are in their thirties, about the age of Fleming Revell. As they meet they exchange greetings something like this.

"Why, Dickens, you here?" and, "I say, Ruskin, this is a piece of luck!"

While we have been looking back, lost in adult imagination, the small girl Emma has crossed the deck to the bow of the boat, which is now heading toward the open sea. A look of wonder is in her eyes, as though she is curious about what she will find across the ocean, what the boys and girls will be like in the country called "The United States." Her curiosity goes unanswered, but we know that in her new home she has two contemporaries, William McKinley and Robert Todd Lincoln, both six years old like herself. We know that there is a twelve-year-old boy called Samuel Clemens who lives in a Missouri town called Hannibal.

It is in the year 1849 that a scene like this takes place in the Clemens household:

It is Saturday, and the boy has gone out in the woodshed to look over his fishing rods. Spring is here, and the fisherman intends to be ready for his first trip upstream into the country.

Suddenly a man's voice is heard calling, "Samuel, come here!"

Impatiently the boy answers, "What for?"

Coming to the woodshed door, Mr. Clemens says,

"Put away your fishing rods! Today you start as a printer's apprentice. Come with me, young man. You're old enough to go to work now. And no nonsense about being a pilot on the Mississippi. You're going to be a printer."

Another scene in 1849 takes us to Concord, Massachusetts; and we pause in a little brown house in an alcove in the hills, the Alcott home. A girl of seventeen is sitting at an upstairs window writing at a little hinged, circular board table between two of the windows in her front bedroom. She is scribbling in a lined notebook.

From below is heard the cry of, "Louisa, Louisa, come down!" The young authoress shuts her scrap book and leaves her room; and the last we see of the Alcotts is when Louisa is descending the dining room stairs to the room where her sisters are preparing to stage another one of their plays.

Lastly our mental camera picks out a barren-looking little red school house on the west side of one of the few roads in a town called Northfield, in Massachusetts. Behind the tiny building one can see a great frozen winding river that stretches northward toward a range of rolling hills that form a scalloped sky line.

A bell rings, the school door flies open, and out tumble "a mess of boys." One is tall and dark and swift of foot and wearing neither shoes nor stockings. His name is Dwight Lyman Ryther Moody (the Ryther being used because it was the name of a neighbor who was supposed to give his namesake a lamb. When this custom was ignored by the neighbor, "Ryther" was dropped).

The boys call to Dwight to "come sledding," for the last snow of winter is piled high around the little school house. Dwight tells them he will join them after he has sawed and stacked some wood for his mother.

Leaving his playmates, the thirteen-year-old boy crosses the road, Northfield's Main Street, climbs Moody Hill which rises eastward, and enters his mother's yard. After sawing some wood he carries it into the house and stacks it behind the kitchen stove. Then he sits down on the floor, "to dig the snow and ice out of the cracks in his feet." [Shoes were reserved for the Sabbath, which extended from 6 p. m. Saturday to 6 p. m. Sunday.]

Betsy Holton, Dwight's mother, enters the kitchen, and says, looking at the wood and then at the boy, "You're a good son, Dwight. Whatever would I have done without you children when your father died."

[Betsy Holton and her husband, Edwin Moody, were both descended from pure English stock, as well as being descendants of the Pilgrims. The couple had been married in 1828; and though the brick-maker and mason had started from nothing, still by his skill and industry he had been able to provide for the immediate support of his family. After twelve years together, with seven children born, Edwin died leaving a young widow with a mortgaged home, some debts, and an unborn child, which turned out to be a twin boy and girl. But in spite of every bitter act of fate, this young woman, "born when Napoleon was fighting his greatest battles," kept her family together and lived to be almost ninety-one years old.

In D. L. Moody's eyes his mother was an amazing woman not only because of what she did for her own children, but also because of what she did for outsiders. She had the reputation of never turning a tramp away from their door and used to take a vote among her meagerly fed children as to what they were willing to share with the man who had come to their door.

Her son used to say, "There was another remarkable thing about mother. If she loved one child more than another, no one ever found out. Isaiah, he was her first boy; she could not get along without Isaiah. And Cornelia, she was her first girl. She could not get along without Cornelia, for she had to take care of the twins. And George, she couldn't live without George. What could she ever have done without George? He stayed right by her through thick and thin. She couldn't live without George. And Edwin, he bore the name of her husband. And Dwight, I don't know what she thought of him. And Luther, he was the dearest of all because he had to go away to live. He was always homesick to get back to mother. And Warren, he was the youngest when father died; it seemed as though he was dearer than all the rest. And Sam and Lizzie, the twins, they were the light of her great sorrow."]

Returning to the kitchen scene, we hear Betsy Holton say to her son, "Run along now, Dwight; you have done your share, but be back for supper by five."

The boy goes out the kitchen door, gets a pung from the back yard, and starts coasting down the hill in front of their home.

Two or three hours later we see the widow at a kitchen table surrounded by her nine children. Milk, bread, and apple sauce are their meal.

After supper is over, one of the children begs, "Mother, read to us!"

And she replies, "As soon as the dishes are out of the way and the floor swept and Dwight puts some of his wood on the fire for us."

Soon the family is gathered around the glowing stove; and an inquisitive youngster asks, "What can you read

to us? The only books we have in the house are up there."

As the child is talking he looks up at a shelf on which three books have been placed. They are "The Holy Bible," "The Book of Devotions," and "The Catechism."

The mother answers, "Oh, I have something you will enjoy! Fetch me a little book you will find by my bedside, Dwight. I always keep a book from the Sunday school library on hand to read to you children." [She did not add that she often could not sleep and read to herself late at night. Nor did she tell anyone that for many years from that day she cried herself to sleep every night of the year following her husband's death.]

The evening reading over, we see all the younger children being tucked away into bed to save on the light and heat at night, with the advice for the next morning "to stay in bed until school time, to keep warm."

* * *

At that time, one hundred years ago, neither the six-year-old child on a boat crossing the Atlantic nor the widow in the house on a New England hill could, by the most extreme stretch of the imagination, have guessed what the future held in store for them.

Destiny did not intimate to the widow, as she blew out the lamp in her farm house, that some day thousands of dollars would be spent on its interior and exterior because her boy Dwight had once lived there. She did not dream that her husband's old tool shed "out back" would one day become a memorial and shrine for all the precious belongings of the bare-footed thirteen-year-old Yankee child, as well as a depository for paintings and photographs and souvenirs, Currier and Ives Prints,

Rogers and Staffordshire models, and a thousand interesting Moodyana.

If Destiny had a hand in moving the small girl Emma Revell from London to Chicago, so that nine years later she would meet a young man named Dwight Moody, there was nothing about her life thus far to suggest that one day she would be drawn into the limelight as the wife of "the most conspicuous man of his generation."