

"MEMORIES"

BY MINNIE FRISBY FORMERLY OF WORMS ASH AGED 65.

I have been bedridden now nearly 5 years and although crippled with Arthritis and limbs and arms practically useless, my mind is very active, and by musing and living in the happy past, I am able to forget much of the very painful present.

My earliest memories are those when we lived in the house with the sides to the road, next to where Eades have lived for so many years, I am speaking of Worms Ash; I do not know if I was born there or at Brimstone, where my parents lived before, in a tall sandstone house up a steep pitch about halfway down Brimstone, however, I remember we had a nail shop at Worms Ash, and my Father and Mother both made nails there; then one day that I remember quite well, was the day my brother Harry, who is two years older than I, getting his pinafore all ablaze in the nailshop; he used to wear round pinafores like smocks.

I forget to say there are two houses, and we had the use of the two; well that would be when I was about 3 years old.

My Birthday is in July. Another incident I remember when we lived there was Mr. Devenport shooting our tabby cat in the middle of the road, she had been at his pigeons. I had better tell you Devenports were our next neighbours, then lived where Eades afterwards lived for so many years; there was a little girl named Fanny with whom I used to play; and I remember how there used to be a piece of rock that protruded into the road from our house where we used to play, and jump off, as in one place it would be about a yard high; also I knew there used to be a lot of jealousy between my Father and Mr. Devenport as each thought their child the best.

I know my Father used to idolize and spoil me, and I remember how he used to stand me between his knees and sing to me, with one hand on his knee and his feet beating time; he would sing the Negro Spirituals, and all the old songs such as :- "Oh, Susanna, oh don't you cry for me", and the one - "Oh, my darling Nellie Gray, they have taken her away", and also, "I have no wife to bother my life, as the world I go travelling through, and never sit down with a tear or a frown, but paddle my own canoe", yes, he was always singing.

My next vivid impression was the very severe winter when I was 3, as it was that winter that Samuel Parkes died, and I remember someone catching hold of my hand and leading me down the road to see the funeral start; and the snow was all over the tops of the hedges; then I remember seeing the big black Hearse come round the corner by Brittles, (the name of the gentleman that lived at Worms Ash Farm) and the horses with the big black plumes waving up and down; then, the men in top hats stamping about the road, and smacking their arms around themselves to keep themselves warm; also I remember seeing them bring the coffin out; well, we were next tenants there, and we went to live there when I was 3; I am now speaking of the house where my brother Ernie now lives, and has bought; the one at the top of the orchard, next to where Webleys lived so many years; but it was Brittles in those days.

Well my next impressions were my early school days. I think I had better say here that I was one of a family of ten, and the 7th child, or rather the 8th, as I have been told my Mother lost her first baby about a month old; nevertheless she reared ten; but I must say it was very rare we were all home together, as there was 5 years difference between the 5 eldest and the 5 youngest, my eldest sister being nearly 20 years older than I: the five eldest didn't get

much schooling, Polly and Will only going to a Dames School - Mrs. Healeys, who kept a shop at the top of Brimstone, the first house on the right; well, I remember the forms that used to be in that little shop; and the rows of lovely old jugs that used to hang across the wall all shiny, silver and brown. The next of my sisters Ann and Lizzie went to the National School for a time, but they had to pay in those days. About now Mud Hall School was being built; I remember the first Governess there, used to live with Brittles named Miss Gethin; also the teachers Lizzie Parkes and Miss Webley; but Lizzie Parkes died just before her Father. When my brother Harry and myself started school at Mud Hall, Mr. Brown was the first Schoolmaster. I well remember Mr. Jeffs coming, newly married, to be Schoolmaster.

One of the things which upset me was that I used to wear white drawers 2 or 3 inches below my frock, and they were very straight and plain with one or two deep tucks in, and the boys called my briches (some people called drawers, britches) were coming down; Oh, the shame, and they was'nt. Well do I remember the next new ones I had, they were made put into a band, and shorter only reaching just below the knees; Oh, the anticipation of wearing them; I was to have them new on for Christmas: I remember following my Mother downstairs that dark early Xmas morning, and she was cleaning the grate, which she always did before she lit the fire; and all at once there was the sound of childrens voices outside singing the Carol, "As I sat on the Sunny Bank, on Christmas day in the morning", it was some of my cousins who lived in the village, the Jones'. Oh what Christmasses those were; there would be pig killing, and taking out of fry to our neighbours then making boney pies, and lovely spare ribs, and griskins, and Mother used to make a lot of white pigs puddings and hang them all across the ceiling; afterwards there would be bacon and ham curing; also making home made lard and rosemary, with scratchings after; yes, plenty to eat, I can tell you; and drink too, for we always had plenty of cider - hogheads of it, as we made our own hoemade wine; and a barrel of beer in for the haymaking and harvest.

Mother always used to have the big bake oven on for Xmas, to bake the boney pies, and Xmas pudding; she used to bake in a big yellow dish, a round one which we had for years. Then the family would all try to get home for Xmas; not many presents, but those we did have we appreciated. I remember someone giving me a pretty muslin pinafore, with blue ribbon on it, was'nt I proud of it.

I don't think I have described our house, I must do it; it was one of those long ones; there was the kitchen in the middle; and facing it from the front, on the left of the kitchen - the little parlour, which we had to go through to bed; then the next place that we went into from the back of the house - we called it "The Top Place" and used it for anything, kept Rabbits and other things in there; then on the right of the Kitchen a large Brewhouse; and next the Stable, with tallit over it, which you entered from the back; then the cowhouse; next, a big Barn and coalhouse; the barn comes to the top of the Orchard and coalhouse, close to the road.

I think I must tell you about that Orchard next; well there is a stile by the barn, and a footpath running down the side of our "frent piece" that we called it then; well the orchard belong to Mr. Brittle and was in the front of his house; and I remember there was a big Walnut tree in the hedge, ahlfway over the road and halfway over the orchard nearly in front of Mr. Brittles house; well when there had been a wind, my Father would call us in the morning to pick the Walnuts up in the road, but we had'nt used to be satisfied with the road, but used to push through the hedge to pick the apples up,

tho' we had plenty of our own: well do I remember once Mr. Brittle running us, and he came straight to our house as he said, I was one as he knew by my red jacket: I remember I used to wear a short red flannel jacket; wasn't I frightened, as we all used to say he was mad; he had notices put up on the trees with "Tresspasser will be prosecuted", and "Man traps and spring guns set on these premises"; yes, and I believe that he used to set mantraps, as I know one came into our possession some time after and Father put it up in one of the trees at the Spout, which I must tell you about. Well I should like to say, I remember Mr. Brittel as a tall gentleman, and always dressed as a gentleman; I don't think he did any work, and he is now laid to rest in a vault in Finstall Churchyard.

Well to go back to our house; we had 4 fields; 3 side by side in front, and one at the back; apple and plum trees all round, also some big greengage trees and a row of damson trees, right across the top of the three; so you see we had plenty of fruit: the front one was a meadow; 2 cultivated about half with raspberries and currants and gooseberries. The third piece was grass, and the lads used to play football there; my Mother used to say ours was a regular playground, as all the youngsters in the village used to seem to gather there; however my Father never used to mind, he was fond of children and always jovial. Oh I hav'nt told you about the top piece; well that one reached nearly to Alfreds Well, "Olford Well" in those days, we children used to say "Over Swell"; in that field we used to have part wheat and strawberries, and peas, also potatoes; and my Father used to do all the work with the exception of Mothers help and we children. I should like to tell you that we rented the place by lease, 10 years at a time, when it was up, had it renewed: it was owned then by Mr. James Vale who lived with his brothers at Fockbury Farm, well do I remember them, James and John two old bachelors, with a housekeeper Mrs. Sherwood; Mother used to send me there for milk, along with other children; and I remember how Mr. James V. was always trying to beg my milk can, which I remember was a brown shiny one, different to the other children's, and he would say he would give me a little lamb for it, and I thought he meant it.

Now I think I must take you to the Spout, which my Father had taken before we left the old house. Suppose we go down our three pieces, then across the bottom of another one (which is now used for allotments) to the parting of the ways to the left of the Mill piece, that is to Fockbury Mill; to the right would bring you to the top of Alfreds Well again; but, to take the style in front of you - ah that is the Spout meadow lying all secluded and lovely; well towards the other end of the meadow you will find the watercress beds; oh the memories of those watercress beds.

When my Father took to the Spout it was very rough and boggy towards the other end, with numbers of tussocks about, but he made it into a lovely place; the other side of the beds planted Primroses and Snowdrops and other flowers, and numerous small fruit trees, including pear trees, and cleared the beds out and made them much larger. Oh I must tell you there were about a dozen springs at various places; we called them "Boiling Springs" as the water was always boiling up, and we used to love to go down there and play; also at the other end of the meadow was a long low wall from our side separating our meadow from the other side, where there were some cart sheds, with waggons and the bike belonging to the farm. There was a very nice old house called the Spout House, where one of the men that worked at Fockbury Farm always lived; a big farmyard there to, and, by the gate to the Spout House is a narrow humpty dumpty road that leads to Fockbury Farm, and a path straight on would take you to

Park Gate. Well, to go back to our meadow, - how we used to like to run across that low wall, sometimes to fall into the yard below, which was quite a deep drop, as our meadow where we got on was much higher then: I remember at the other side was a large hollow tree where the owls used to get; and a lot of nut nushes to; oh I must tell you the water from the watercress beds narrows into a stream at that end for the water used to supply Fockbury Farm: yes, those watercress beds soon became very famous, and people would come from miles around to buy the cress.

TODAY IS THE 10th. FEB. 1943.

It is more than twelve months ago since I wrote the previous pages, and I am still in bed, another year older, now 66, but much worse than I was 12 months ago; can't hold the pen very well, but I have just been reading what I wrote before and feel I should like to record some more memories.

Well, have been reading in last Sat. Messenger, the death of Mrs. Henry Colley aged 69; I really thought she was a bit older, as that is not much older than me: Yes, I remember Harry Colley (junr) getting married. I should like to write a little bit about the Colley family; they used to live in the house at the very bottom of Brimstone; Henry Colley senior was left a widower with 7 children as I recollect, and 3 or 4 used to go to school the same time as me; there was a girl Sarah in the same standard; how I remember Sarah, she was short and stiff, and a little bit bow legged, but how she could jump; the path from the school to the road used to slope with a sandstone wall each side, and got higher and higher untill, at the gate I should think it would be about 1½ yards or 2 yards high, and about the same width from side to side, and I remember no one could jump like Sarah, she would clear the steepest bit so easy, how I used to envy her. Well now about where they lived; it was a lovely secluded place at the bottom of Brimstone, on one side was what we called "The Walks" (that is like a little wood, and a path leading through to the Valley near Tuppenny Cake, such a pretty walk) and going the other way towards Dodford was first a meadow, which we called Coppy Leasows: then another very pretty wood (called Jones' wood, as Mr. T. Jones had authority to oversee it) with a path through the stream, and in Blue Bell time was a perfect sight: we used sometimes to play in the Coppy, and we also used to like to find pig-nuts in the wood; we used to take a table fork and dig them up; they had a top like a carrot with a little nut in the earth; we used to eat them with salt; and we used to like to eat the green sorrel that grew in the coppy leasow: well passing through the wood (that was called Jones' wood as Thomas Jones lived for many years in the house at the bottom, by the spring that is at the bottom of Alfreds Well; supposed to take its name from the fact that King Alfred watered his horse there. There was also another wood higher up the road, which was filled up. (The property in Alfreds Well and Jones' wood in those days belonged to Sir Rotten who lived in London, but Thomas Jones had the overseeing of the cottages and the wood; Fockbury farm and Brittles also belong to Sir John Rotton, in those days. I well remember when he used to come from London, he used to drive through the village in a brougham, and always wore a grey suit and a grey top hat, and we used to run out, and our parents would tell us to curtsy to them, as he usually had a lady with him, and they used to throw sixpennies and silver to us.) I should like to say the stream used to run right through the Walks and under a bridge on the road by Colleys and through Jones' wood, (Thomas Jones was also the road surveyor as also was his son Tom after him) and oh, the tales that Sarah used to tell about the bridge by their house; used to say there was an old woman hiding there, and how she was frightened to go out at night, and she used to frighten all of us as we believed her.

Talking about frights, Mother used to tell us how frightened she used to be when we lived in the house halfway down Brimstone; it was that tall sandstone house that lies at the top of that steep bank; she said when she used to go out at night she could hear what sounded like terrible moaning, and they used to say it was a man who was found drowned in the brook at the bottom of Niblets Hill (Miles was his name and he had been to Dodford Inn), said he was haunting the place; however, they found out that it was'nt him, but was another neighbour

who lived a bit lower down Brimstone, whose name was Jack Ashfield; in fact there were two brothers and they were very religious, and twas said he used to go to the botton of his garden to say his prayers; and used to make a pitteful wailing, and this is what they said he prayed:- "God Bless me and my wife, our Jack named Zakariah and his wife, we four and no more, God Bless we four".

Talking about Ghosts and Haunted Houses, my Father had used to like to tell us stories of how he used to say Cockshut Lane was haunted, and said he could hear chains rattling all the other side of the hedge as he was coming back from his club which used to be at The New Inn at Tuppy Cake; used to tell us the tale about Spring Heel Jack too, who was supposed to leap from the house tops, and was much talked about at the same time as the Jack the Ripper crimes were committed in London. He would say Fockbury Mill also was haunted, and tell us the oven door would keep flinging open, (and say an umbrella used to walk up and down those steps which are a bit higher up the road), still, I do know that nobody would live at Fockbury Mill for years and years.

To go back again to my school days; another thing that impressed me about Sarah Colley was some of the games she played; we used to play the game called "Jackie five stones", Sarah could seem to beat anyone; she could catch the stones on the back of her hand, and do the other - "One a-beds and two a-beds" so easy, and then the "Jack me nimble, Jack me quick, Jack jumped over the candlestick"; yes Sarah was a sport.

Another thing I must mention how Mr. Jeffs our schoolmaster was very fond of children, and how sometimes he would say he wished he could have some beds for us and keep us there all night; I remember him once trying to find out who had the longest tongue, as we used to like to chatter so, and he would put a pencil or pen under our tongue, and tell us to put our tongue out, to find out who had the logest. Happy days those.

Now a little bit more about the Spout. I remember once we had been playing down there and climbing up in the nut bushes, and my hat fell off, and a bit later when I went to pick it up I thought there was a frog in it; how I did run about that meadow and scream, I was always terrified of frogs; my Mother and all at home heard me and came running down to see what was the matter; I may say there was a lot of frogs about there, and also there used to grow a nice few mushrooms when they were in season. Another exciting time I remember was - once a number of us children had been at play there, and were just going home, and at the bottom of the piece we had to pass, was a wasps nest, and I remember one of the lads went and put his foot in it; the wasps all swarmed out and was'nt we stung, and was'nt there some screaming; my Mother and Father run, and I remember how my Mother striped me in the field, to get the wasps out of my clothes.

Another thing I should like to say about the Spout is, my Father made a little hut and he tarred it all over and it was black; inside there was an old couch, and stove, and scales, and weights for weighing the cress; and when I was a bit older, I remember how me and our Harry printed all round the sides, from top to bottom, with white paint, the notice "Man traps and spring guns set on these premises"; how the people who used to come to buy the cress used to laugh at the notice, as you can guess what a lovely printing it was; however we had got a man trap, and my Father hung it up in a tall tree there, out of harms way of us children, for in case

you dont know what one is like, I wull descrobe it: it is like a hugh rat-trap, a steel one about $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. or more across, with great teeth, and a strong iron bar to set in a length of strong chain hanging to it; it would break a mans leg if he was caught in it; as for the spring guns, I dont think I ever saw one of those.

I will tell you what my Father used to do; he used to lead his shot gun and leave the trigger cocked and put it in the hovel behind the door, then fasten a piece of strong black thread to the trigger, and close the door with the thread through the keyhole and across the path where anyone was expected to go to get the watercress, as we used to get a lot stolen at night; sometimes in the dead of night we should hear that gun go off, and there would be such a getting up and off to the Spout, but, the theives had generally gone; sometimes the Police would be there watching: I remember they came one night while the Police were there, but they didn't catch them, but the tháives left socks and a womans skirt sewn up at the bettop behind them; but I guess the Police had had too much homemade wine that they could'nt run, as my Father had always used to put 2. or 3 bottles down there; yes, we used to get £s. worth stolen.

People used to come for miles to buy our cress and there are those living today who remember: I remember the last time I was speaking to old Caleb Robinson at Aston Fields, he asked me if I could remember him bringing the donkey and cart to the Spout to buy the cress; they used to hawk it to Kidderminster and Redditch and all over the place; sometimes there were scores of people waiting for it, and me and Harry would be weighing it, and about 3 or 4 cutting it as fast as they could; yes, we were handling a bit of money. Should you like to know how they used to gather it? well, my Father used to buy those big parrafin barrels and saw off the ends about a foot deep, then burn the parrafin off; then each one cutting the cress would have 2 tubs, and keep moving them about in the watercress beds, and keep stepping out of one into the other. Well I think I have told you pretty well about the Spout, so will go back home a bit.

As I have said before Father did most of the work except for the family halping; I used to like to see him mowing the grass, and to hear him sharpening the scythe with the whote sharpening stone; once I remember him shouting so excited, and what do you think it was - a mouse ran up his trouser leg and all round and down the other. Then there was the cutting of the wheat, which was done by the hook and syckle in those days; and me, Mother and some of the others would follow on and tie the wheat in sheaves, and stand it up in mows, which there is a little bit of art in doing let me tell you - if it is not propped right the wind will soon have it down; I used to be able to tie wheat myself. Then there was the leasing, or gleaning, as they call it now; yes we youngsters had to do that; then it was all stored in the barn: I dont think I have described that barn, well, I should like to; it was rather large about twice the size of this room, and kind of petitioned off about $1\frac{1}{2}$ yds. deep from the floor; and the bay of the barn where the wheat was stored used to go down lower than the barn floor; and nearly at the top between the two floors was a thick beam, and we used to have a thick rope over it which made a good swing, the lads used to perform all kinds of gymnastic tricks on that beam. On the floor was a big winnowing machine; yes I should like to say thís floor was laid with those bluey quarries, and it was a slippy as glass, that is the floor where the wheat was thrashed; yes I should like to tell you my Grandfather Quiney used to come and thrash the wheat, used to do it with a flail, or frail as we children used to call it,.

I must tell you a bit about my Grandfather; wee, he was very bent with Rheumatism and had a job to get about, and he used to wear a smock; he was a merry old soul and loved us kids, and we used to like to get him to sing to us; Oh, and I must tell you that Brooke's were living next to us now, just up the road, and of course they were always playing at our place; there was Moke as we all call him (his name is Moses he is about 2 years older than me; then Nancy (or Annie) about a month younger than me; well when my Grandfather used to come thrashing he would always bring a packet of Cocoa, and make it in a basin, and he used to like to soak his bread in it, well many's the time when his back has been turned, we would drink all his cocoa, but he never used to mind, or make any fuss about it or we should have copped out; no, all he seemed to do was sing about it; and such quaint ditties, I should like to quote one or two, - this is what he would sing about Moke: - Mokie Pokey, Winkie Wham, Mokie likes his Taters done, a mealy one, a waxy one, the King of the Calico Islands; and "See kidney taters how they flew, like shots and balls at Waterloo, like shots and balls at Waterloo, to wait upon Freddie the tailor. Now Freddie was a nice young man, his head was like a warming pan, and every night he had a plan to go and visit Miss. Judy Gann; now Judy Gann run home to roost, and bumped her head against a post, and then the fool gave up the ghost, to wait on Teddy the tailor. How we used to laugh. Then he would sing about Nancy, and this is it "How sweet is the morn and loud blows the horn, and through the fields we'll go - o, for all me fancy dwells on Nancy, and I'll sing Talli - Ho - o", and then we would laugh again, and perhaps he would sing "Old King Cole" and I have never heard anyone sing it like he did. Another trick we would like to play on him was to hide his stick and see him howling about looking for it. (Ah happy memories Grandad) He was a sweet old nature. (Never lost his temper).

I should like to tell you how Grandad thrashed the wheat, in case you dont know; well he would undo several sheaves and lay them even with the ears of corn by the door, then take his flail and keep swinging it round and beating all the corn out of the ears; shall I tell you what the Flail is like (or Frail), well on one stick was like a broom-stick, and another piece, about half as long attached to it by a piece of leather the short piece was shaped almost like a rolling pin, and as smooth as glass. After the thrashing would come the winnowing; how we would like to run through the chaff which would come flying out of the barn door; then my Father would take it to the mill to be ground. (yes, I remember going with him to Townsend Mill)

Mother used to make our own bread, would bake once a week; there would be the heating of the big bake oven, always heated with wood; in case you dont know, you had to be careful what kind of wood too, or it would tast the bread; raspberry canes was a very favourite kind to use. Then there would be a clean mop, one kept for the purpose, to mop the oven out with; and always before the bread was put in, we should have some dripping cakes baked and we would have them hot for tea; I used to like those; but let me tell you how we used to get tired of home baked bread, and what a treat it would be to have a bakers loaf, we used to like the plain round bach-cakes.

I want to tell you a bit more about my Grandfather; at one time he lodged at Snake Lake with an old gentleman named Mr. Morgan; we called him old Morgan (named Jimmy Morgan); well he was pretty wealthy and owned property, I think he had those house built that the backs come to the road at Snakes Lake, I mean the road that goes from there to Bourneath. Well he used to wear a frock coat and top hat, and twas said he was a miser. altho I well remember him bringing us a bucketful of pears, and he brought them in the pig bucket; well my Grandfather lodged with him. Sometimes of a Sunday afternoon if we had not gone to Sunday School, we would say, "Lets go to see Grandfather": I

remember we could hardly get inside for rubbish and could'nt see the floor, it was all dirt, and there used to be 2 or 3 benches on which we had to sit down; then old Morgan would read the Bible to us and pray, we had to kneel down (Oh what a dry lesson) but still he was very religious.

Talking about Snake Lake another incident that I well remember was one Sunday morning the little pit that we called Snake Lake was all frozen over and a lot of lads and girls were sliding on it; it was also very deep then, and when some of the lads were in the middle some of the lads started jumping, the ice began to crack and soon there was a big hole; I remember seeing one lad with only his head and arms out of the water, and struggling to get out, with the ice keep breaking under his arms, however he did manage to get out. (Old Morgan was also a cobbler and mended shoes).

TODAY IS SUNDAY FEBRUARY 14th . 1943, AND ST. VALENTINES DAY.

I heard an old song on the wireless this morning, how well I remember that song coming out, it was when I was a girl and it was called "Sweetheart May, you will grow old some day", and went on to say "All my life I'll be your Valentine, and I'll wait for you, then we shall see what you will say when I ask you to marry me".

Yes we had our sweethearts in those days, and nearly all the lads would have some musical instrument such as Melodions and Concertinas and mouth organs, and that is the way they called their sweethearts out. I myself always knew who was playing "Wait till the clouds roll by Jenny", and that lovely old song "Erin on the Rhyne", which I have not heard sung for than more than 50 years until a little while ago; I heard it played in a Medley by a dance band on the German wireless it sounded lovely; I must quote a verse of it,

"O, Love dear Love be true, This heart is only thine, When the war is O'er, We'll part no more, At Erin on the Rhyne".

Yes I used to love those old songs, and we had our Valentines too, the favourites used to get very nice one's, but anyone we owed a grudge against, oh you should have seen those, the ugliest things you ever saw, and sometimes about a foot long; but they were not really vulgar, like some of the picture postcards you get today; I remember getting a very beautiful one, I was a very little girl then (one of my earliest memories) it was like a beautiful angel with silver wings and fret work, and pulled out, it was sent to me from New Zealand by a Mrs. Wooley, that my sister Poddy used to live with; and I always remember it was "With love for Maggie", as she and a few others call me Maggie then; that Valentine was kept for years with a lot of other photographs and treasures in a box, and were only allowed to look at them sometimes of a Sunday evening, the same as the old family Bible; we had to be very good to be allowed to look at the pictures, as our big family Bible had a lot of pictures in it.

My Mother and Father were pretty religious in those days, also my father was a big believer in "Spiritualism", (There were several prominent people believers in Spiritualism those early days amongst them a Schoolmaster and Local Preacher, and well do I remember us all sitting around the little round table which I have now and singing, "Shall we gather at the river, where bright Angels feet have trod", and we would all have our hands placed on the table.

Yes we would all have to go to Chapel and Sunday School to as my parents were among some of the first member. I know how I would like to sit by the window and watch for my Father to come round for afternoon services which he often attended; yes and how dry and monotonous those services generally were, and how we would wish we could go out in the Sunshine at play; and I think what made the Chapel seem more dull was in those days there used to be what they called the Strawberry Wakes (Wakes Sunday was always the first 3 Sundays in July) and there would be hundreds of people who would drive out from Birmingham; I know the firded belonging to the Dodford Inn would be full of vehicles of all kinds, brakes and traps, and broughams (of course they were all considered wicked sinners by the Chapel folk). I remember once with others playing away from Sunday school, and we were playing at the bottom of Niblets Hill, when the preacher came from the top, all of us but Naney Brooks run and hid in the bushes, but Nancy stopped and told the preacher we had been playing away: I remember how he came and looked for us and kept saying, "Where are they - where are they"; but he did'nt find us and afterwards whenever we saw him we would say, "Here's old - where are they - coming."

II.

Another early memory was , there used to be a service and prayer meeting at John Jones' who lived in a house about halfway down the fore-draught at Worms Ash, how well I remember going to those Sunday evening services and I was very young. In the summer time they would put all the chairs and seats under a very big cherry tree down the garden, and was'nt there some singing and praying and Amens. Yes I can vividly remember the old hymns now, such as:-

"What can wash away my stain?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus".

and,

"Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe".

and,

"There is a fountain filled with blood".

Oh what memories.

Yes another very vivid memory was, we used to go out sometimes and slide in the winter when there had been snow, and I remember one winters night hearing some young fellows coming over the hill piece, (we would call the fields - pieces) and they were singing, and I always remember the words,

"You'll see the great white throne,
And stand before it all alone
Waiting for the Kings command
When the stars begin to peep.

and then the Chorus.

My Lord My Lord, What a morning - morning,
My Lord My Lord, What a morning when the stars begin to peep."

Yes it sounded very weird to me then, they were three young men that used to come from Sidemoor, and they would sing to attract my sister and two of her companions out. (Simple tunes but they made a deep impression on me then).

I should like to say Worms Ash has always been Jones' village since I remember. There was old Tom and young Tom, and young Toms son Tom; and John Jones and Walter Jones, and Fred Jones and Joe Jones (that is my Father) all dead and gone; that is an older generation to the Jones's that live there now; yes and Uncle Will Jones; several different familys then, but they are practically all joined up and connected now.

But before I leave my school days there are one or two things I want to tell you about; I think I have said how most of the lads and girls to were musical and used to play simple imstruments such as the concertina; melodion and mouth organs; I remember we used to have a four sided mouth organ; my brother Will brought it from Birmingham, where he was working now; he also brought my Father a Concertina, which he learnt to play very well; and also taught me, so that at one time I could play it almost as well as anyone and the melodien; my brother Will was quite an expert with the concertina; I will always remember at my sisters wedding, he went up in the attic at the Cattle Market Tavern, and played the bells, they sounded lovely and caused quite a sensation; (by the way my sister Rose went to keep the Cattle Market Tavern when she was married) yes, and the Jews Harp (we used to hold the Jews Harp between our teeth) was also very popular among the lads and girls, but the only tune I can ever remember being played on it was:)

"Drive the nail aright boys,

Hit it on the head,

Strike with all your might boys

While the iron is red.
 When you've work to do boys
 Do it with a will,
 He who reaches the top boys
 First must climb the hill"

Yes I am like as if I can see old Moke playing it now, all on the same note.

Ah, and the games we used to have, I should think there was no place like ours for playing, I (eekie), and then there was tip-cat, and marbles, and kite flying, and making of kites; I think I could make a kite now; and another favourite passtime was cracking a whip; I have heard the lads crack it like a revolver going off, just like they do at a circus; there is a bit of an art in it, I'll tell you how it is done; you hold the whip and twirl the lash or whip cord, as you call it, you twirl it in a little curl and then give a quick short smack of the whip.

Now me mentioning the Circus reminds me of another exciting event in our lives; sometimes there would be a Circus or Wild Beast show come to Bromsgrove; all the country people would try to go to Bromsgrove to see that thrill. I remember my Father used to bring the horse and cart to the school to take us, we usually had half day holiday, and oh the sensation of seeing the procession go round the town, there would be crowds of people lining the streets. There used to be little skubold ponys and gilded vans, then the chariots with men in dress almost like Britannia, and oh a very high gilded and elaborate throne drawn by a lot of ponies, and on it would sit the Queen of the Circus in most elaborate robes dressed; and bands playing and dins of all kinds; ah, what a sight, then there was Jennings Theatre, that used to come at a certain time of the year, and they would erect a wooden building in the Crown Close, where the Plaza is situated now. How well do I remember going to see the plays:- East Lynne and The Murder of Maria Martin in the Red Barn, also another very pretty play called "My Sweetheart", how seriously I used to take it all in; but, Oh the difference in the comfort of the seating today to what it was then; the seating accomodation was very much the same in the theatre as in the circus; just plain boards one above the other, except for the ninepenny and shilling seats (that was top price) they might have a bit of carpet on them; and of course there was the fair on the 24th June where all the country people would go again, and they were very much bigger fairs than they have today; and how the lads would like to get us in the swing-boats and nearly take us over the top; there would be such screaming abd being sick after: used to have no end of fun too with the water squibs, sometimes we used to be half drowned with them; but all that kind of sport has been stopped for many a year now.

At Whitsun tide there would be the Club Walks; the members of my Fathers Club at the New Inn would walk and carry their banner to a field in which there would be a large tent where there would be beer drinking and tea; and in the field various stalls with oranges; sweets and nuts, and various other things; then races and sports for the youngsters.

The Foresters also had their Club Walks, they would march to Hewell Park; my brothers Will and Harry were in the Forester, I should say Will was one of the earliest member. I and amny others would go to see them walk; all the members wore green sashes; and there would be a big waggon all decorated up like a forest, and Robin Hood would be prancing about on a beautiful horse; I remember seeing him on a grey one, and his three cornered hat, and green-like frock coat, and white breeches; it used to be a very pretty procession. When I got older

I used to go to Hewell to for there was always a band and plenty of dancing, which I used to love, outside especially, the set Quadrilles, and Lancers, but that is another story.

I have said about the fair and Whitsun, now I feel I should like to say something about Easter. We usually had some new clothes for Easter if we were going to have any at all that summer, as let me tell you we did not get new every summer; what we had we had to take care of, and keep Sunday clothes for Sunday, and generally had to take our best clothes off when back from Chapel and Sunday school, but we had always got best and day clothes; then there would always be hot cross buns on Good Friday; I remember an old gentleman always came round with a big basket full, selling them; what a treat they were from our home-made.

I also remember Jimmy Brown, Jimmy Ba Baa, as he was called; he used to bring us coffee and windmills for a few rags and bones; he used to bring a donkey and cart.

Ah. Sunny days of childhood
 Beautiful ye seem,
 Fair as springtime flowers,
 Bright as Summers beam.
 Days of Joy oe'r flowing,
 Care's nor sadness knowing,
 Must ye pass away.

I mustn't forget to say that too, we had Sunday School Treats, (tea in the field in summer, always took our own tots and cakes) in the summer; usually had a field lent to us; then there would be sports such as racing and games of all sorts. The Xmas time, there would be a huge Xmas tree in Chapel, with presents on for all and a tea party; I well remember once we had a Magic Lantern; how I can see it now, the white sheet and then the hymns:-

"Let us gather up the sunbeams
 Lying all around our path".

and afterwards,

We are but little children weak,
 Not born in any high estate"

also, "Tell me the old, old, story", they - I mean the words of the hymns were all flashed on the white sheet, and we all stood up and sang them. (What a memory).

Then we would sometimes have a service of song, which was usually some pathetic story read by some prominent person, and we children would sing the solo's and hymns in between. I remember one such called "Driven from Home", and a Mr. Carter from Catshill took the reading.

The lady who played the Harmonium at that time was Annie Phillips (Miss) she was a sister to Mrs. Dolphin Senr.; how she used to sing and teach us too.

Mr. Thomas Parkes was the first Superintendent I remember, I should say he was the first one to be Superintendent, as I was very young. When I went to Sunday School first, and used to learn to read out of picture books, I well remember Mr. Parkes saying to me, I should soon be able to go into the higher class and learn to read the testament.

A Mr. Nowel followed Mr. Parkes as Superintendent, afterwards Mr. Dolphin Senr. (that is Joe Dolphins- Senr. nows - Father) Yes, I know all their ancestors.

Well I don't think I will say very much more about my early memories, altho I could, but I will pass on a few years.

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Well I said I did not think I would write much more about my early impressions, but you must forgive me if I keep going back; I find there are one or two more that I cannot leave unsaid; one is the early memory of our first pony; she was a black one and we called her Poll, and my Father used to take her to what he called "The Black Country", to fetch a load of coal, and breezies or gledes as we used to call them; they were very fine coal and used for the fires in the nail shops. Old Poll was also in great demand for pulling the little Hearse (being black), I well remember seeing her drawing that little Hearse, which was only used by the very poor people, and for workhouse inmates; I am like as if I can see her pulling it now, with the coffin inside, and about half a dozen old men walking behind it in workhouse uniform, and wearing round hats like curates; not like the elaborate top hats on the men, and the many plumes on the horses with the big hearse; the little one was a very plain one, and used to be kept at the Cemetery Lodge; yes old Poll did her bit.

Oh, by the way, I mentioned nails agin didn't I? should you like to know how they were made? - I have watched many a time when I was young; there was always what we called the nail shops, one attached to nearly all the cottages in those days then; in the shop would be the block, and huge bellows at one end with anvil to it, and under the pipe of the bellows was a little bit of a hollow where the fire was made; and they used to use the gledes then; probably in the shop there would be several bundles of iron, I should think about a score in each bundle, and I should say the bundles were about the length of this bed, (as remember I am writing this in bed) the irons would be about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and square; oh, and I forgot to say - just inside the shop was what we called the Oliver; - well, whoever was making the nails would get two of the pieces of iron always two at a time, then out the ends in the little fire, (how we youngsters would like to blow- blow those bellows) on the block, and blow the bellows by pulling the anvil up and down with one hand, and holding the irons in the fire with the other hand; when the ends were red hot they were taken out and put on the block and hammered and tapered at the ends very quickly, then the ends would be put in the dies which were on the Oliver, and you would put your foot on a sloping board, which was fastened to something on the Oliver, - was fastened to the board between the board and the Oliver by what was like a piece of leather lace, and when you pressed your foot on the board it would bring down some big hammers on the top of the dies, and would flatten the top of the irons and cut them off, then when you releases your foot the hammer would go in place again, and the nails would drop into a hollow below; of course they had to be sorted and faulty ones picked out; then they were picked up and put into tiny bags about a foot square and tied at the tops, and taken to the arehouse to be sold; then they would bring their irons back, - you could often see the men carrying their iron back from Bromsgrrove, it would be tied in bundles, they would carry several bundles across their shoulders, they were pretty heavy.

There also used to be a glass-blower in the village, he lived in that tall house halway down Alfreds Well, the place on the right going down, and stands high up from the road; you went up some steep steps, and there were the workshops. Yes I remember seeing the men with long tubes in their mouths and lamp glasses blowing out of the other end; they used also to make other beautiful cut glasses and Vases there, at one time we had lots of them: the proprietors name was Peter Harrop, and he lived in the tall house with his Mother, who was rather an old lady; they employed several workmen. Yes I remember Peter Harrop dying, and I was'nt very old then; but I know there was what they called a good funeral. In those days there would always be quite a do at a funeral; plenty of eating and drinking; ham and beef and beer; and usually cigars and tobacco.

Well I'll tell you, I remember some of the men who had been to the funeral going home, and they went down the orchard by our house (which had a footpath down the side) they were singing, and this is what they were singing:- "Cheer boys cheer, your Mothers bought a mangle, cheer boys cheer, and fill it up with clothes". Yes, I generally used to know what they were singing; but mangles were only coming into use then, and of course they used to make a song about everything.

After Peter Harrop died the business was transferred to Bourneath and carried on by Will Stevens.

But just a word or two about old lady Harrop; she left the tall house in Alfreds Well and came to live in one at the top, that one that opens right into the road; I don't quite know what she had done to us children but I know we all seemed to owe her a grudge, and when we used to go by her house on our way to school, if we could knock on her door or tease her in any way, we used to like to do it; and we should just have copped out if our Mother's had know; the poor old lady died of Cancer, - the first that I ever remember of Cancers, she had one on the side of her nose, you could see it getting worse and worse.

Now I must tell you a little about a family named Evans, who next came to live at the Glass house, as we always called it; they were a family of lads, and were always around our house playing; Frank the second eldest was a little bit older than me, and could'nt he play the Melodion; yes I always knew when Frank was about, I think he was my first sweetheart; ah, many a stroll I used to take with Frank; I expect he would remember and laugh about it now, but it did'nt last long. but the Evans had a cousin named Mabel, her Mother married a man named Joe Hancocks who also lived down Alfreds Well; he was a widower with a pretty well grown up family; well as you may guess the Evans family always used to make a fuss of their cousin Mabel, and she too could play the Melodion and sing, she had a lovely contralto voice; at Xmas she would take her Melodion and go Carol singing, and would'nt she get some money; sometimes she would sing some Carols at the Dodfrod Inn, and they would whip round for her, and she would'nt half get some money; she was a pretty country girl too, had long black curls. Well my brother Harry used to get about with her when he could, and the rows that she got into; my Mother and Mabels Mother did all they could to part them, as neither of them was very old; but I think I have said that Harry was 2 years older than I - and we were always good chums -, well all the interference made no difference to their courship, and in due course they married. Yes healthy bonny Mabel as she was then, died when she was quite a young woman, and left my brother with a family of 5 children; however as time went on he married again, and has 2 grown up daughters by his second marriage.

I am afraid I am running on with my story more than I intended, as there are a few earlier incidents that I want to relate. When I was about eleven, I remember our Father buying our first cow; yes dear old Father he was always going to sales and buying something, and always saying he was going to buy me a piano whenever there was one at a sale; always promising me the good things in this life as I have said before, I think I was the apple of his eye, and could never do anything wrong. Ah, I often think of him and wonder if I shall meet him soon, "When we shall know as we are known".

But I want to tell you about old Betty as we called our cow; she was rather old and my Father only gave £5. for her, however she used to give lovely milk, the cream on it would be so thick and yellow; but, there was noone at first who could milk her but my Grandmother Quiney who was staying with us then; well what with having the milk and making butter, she was found to be so profitable -(I mean the cow) that next year

my Father bought another: oh, and (by the way) we kept Betty about three years during which time she had 2 calves, the first one of which we sold for more than we gave for the Mother cow; well it was decided that cows were a very paying proposition, and we soon had 5 or 6: then of course we wanted more meadow land, and my Father had the offer of ten acres of grass, which were two fields, about halfway along Perryfields Lane (Father used to let footballers play in the field) the one came up to the land, and the other reached Broad Street Sidemoor; yes, then we had to take the cows backwards and forwards, either me or Harry; sometimes we would carry the milk buckets on the Yoke, and milk the cows at Perryfields; oh, I forgot to say that both me and Harry could milk now; we had to learn, as in case you don't know there's a bit of an art in milking a cow, and I would defy anyone to go and milk one straight off, unless they had milked before. I must tell you about my cat, - whenever she saw me pick the three legged stool up and put my bonnet on, she would follow me and sit about a yard from me when I was milking, and I would squib the milk into her mouth, and she would lap, lap, lap, and catch it until she had had enough.

I always remember one winters morning, infact it was candlemas day, snow was on the ground when I was sent to fetch the cows home from Perryfields; there was a little calf running about and I went back home and told them: what a way my Mother was in, she said "Oh that cow will be dead", (but it was'nt), get the barrow and some sacks, - they thought they were going to wheel the calf home; however they soon found he was too lively, and what a job we had to catch him; he raced all about the field; there was rather a deep pit in the middle between the two fields, and Mother kept on shouting, "Oh, he'll be in the pit", however he was caught at last, and then walked home with the cow; and I should like to tell you the cow and the calf did very well and seemed hardier and better than some that we had had which had been given every attention.

Well it was when I used to take the cow to and fro, that I first saw your Father, they, that is the Frisby's had just come to live at Perryfields and had the brickyard there, which was about two fields away from ours, and I would often meet him but never spoke.

I left School when I was twelve years old, after reaching 6th. standard, which was highest in those days, after which we could leave; yes I remember I was monitress fro a time, and used to receive 1/- a week in 12 pennies; oh I must say we had to pay a school fee of tuppence per week; and I would very much have liked to stay at school and become a teacher: there were two girl monitresses, myself and Lizzie Powell; she also lived at Worms Ash, and we were very great friends; she was a sister of the Powell brothers, who lived at Woodrow, and are now market gardeners; but no, I must leave school as my parents said they wanted me to do some work, school was'nt work. (Lizzies parents allowed her to become a teacher).

For about two years I remained at home helping, and there was milking and butter making; then weighing of watercress, and tying of bunches of cress into hundreds of bunches, as by this time Mother was attending Birmingham Market and also taking stuff to Redditch on Saturdays. Then in winter there would be two or three litters of Pigs killed as Pork's, for which she would get orders for week by week; and chickens to be dressed, and eggs to be gathered up, and poultry attended to, and housework and cooking; and my people would always come in at regular times for meals and laways to a cooked dinner; plenty to do I can tell you, as Mother spent most of the time outside and going to market.

Of course we had parted with the pony old black Poll now, and had a bigger one: Ah, we had lots of changes, some of all sorts - broken

winded ones and kickers; one we had, if you just touched him with the whip, up his legs would go and the footboard on the cart would go flying; another I remember was a grey one, I think he must have been a hunter, for if the hounds were anywhere about and he heard the horn off he would go, over hedges; gates or anything: then there was Billy the dog; the fuss we made of him, and he of us; he would come flying upstairs in the morning and on to the beds, and lick first one and then the other; well, as I have said I had about two years of this and was getting a very big girl and strong; Harry and Moke Brookes had left school about 2 years before me and Moke had gone to work for Frisby's at the brickyard, as they employed several men and youths from round about; and Moke would always be saying to me, "I'm going to bring you a chap, I'm going to bring Johnny to see you", and he did, and he was a Johnny; he used to sit on the style by our house, then, as now, to shy and awkward to speak to anybody, but always very well dressed, as the Frisbys were somebody in those days and highly respected; but Johnny didn't make much impression on me then, as I liked somebody livelier such as Frank who could play the Melodion (Wait till the clouds roll by Jenny). Well I began to get dissatisfied at home, and thought I should like a change.

At about that time there came some new people at Fockbury Farm, it was a newly married couple from Devonshire named Mr. and Mrs. Tapp; well the farm was all altered and turned back to front; round the back where I used to go for milk with my little brown can, was built another wing, with dining room and drawing room, and a very large hall as big as this bedroom; also bedrooms over; yes, all altered and as I have said turned back to front, with a drive round to the front door, and tennis lawns and kitchen garden in front; Mr. Tapp was supposed to be very wealthy and what was called - a gentleman farmer; they brought a young man called Willie with them, who used to live in; and a friend of mine named Alice Haines, a little bit older than me, went to live there as housemaid; Alice was with them for some time and she was going to leave, and thought the place would just suit me, well, I went unknown to Mother and got the place, and she let me go: I was only there about 7 months but I must say I learnt more in that time than I might have learnt in years at some places.

Mrs. Tapp was a real lady and said she would train me to be housemaid and she did; she taught me the proper way to turn a room out, and to make beds, and to lay table, and wait at table, and also the proper way to answer the door and announce visitors. She used to give a lot of parties; tennis parties and late dinners; some of the best people of Bromsgrove would come; and what lovely dresses she wore, she would change her dress about 5 times a day; a very plain one in the morning when she would help me with the beds, then a different one for walking out; another for dinner or lunch, and a tea-gown or tea-jacket for afternoon tea; then evening dress for dinner: I used to love to see her in some of them, one tea gown I always remember, it was pale blue and had a long train attached by a narrow pleat from the neck and gradually widened and trailed about a yard behind her; I used to love to see her go across that hall from the dining room to the drawing room, as there was a long hall beside the square one by the front door: that square hall was furnished like a room, with old chairs and Grandfather clock and oak chests: Yes, and the living there - I have never been in such a place to live; always sheep hung up and pheasants; and chickens; also the butcher would call and leave beef, but they never had the same joint taken in the room twice; and always plenty of Devonshire cream; yes and made our own butter there, but in a different way to home; shall I tell you how it was done, as Mrs. Tapp also asked me if I would do the dairy work, and she taught me to make butter; well the Devonshire way was: - first to bring the tins of milk and put them on the kitchen range with the thermometer in, and let the milk get to a certain heat; then when

the milk was cold, the cream (called Devonshire or Clotted Cream) would roll off about an inch thick; then to make the butter I would put it in the butter tub and keep working my hand flat gently, and gently round and round, - the butter would soon begin to form, then I should make it up into little round pats. Yes, Mr. and Mrs. Tapp would attend the hunt too and sometimes the huntsmen would be all outside taking drinks; I used to like to see Mrs. Tapp in her riding habit perched on her horse, side saddle, not like the vulgar ones in the breeches of today. Then they used to drive tandem, we had never seen anyone drive in that way before; would have a high dog cart, (theirs was a brown yellow), and two lovely bays or cobs, and usually the groom perched up behind; always drove to Bromsgrove Church on Sunday mornings.

I have said she used to give a lot of dinner parties (late dinner of course) then there would be music and singing in the drawing room, as both Mr. and Mrs. Tapp were very good singers, and Mrs. Tapp often sang at high class concerts: Mr. Tapp had a baritone voice, and I always remember songs he sang, as it was the first time I had ever heard them; one was "Widdicombe Fair", then one that commenced with "Darkie's like to sing this song down decole plantation", and also one "The place where the old horse died", which I only remember hearing sung once since. Then Mrs. Tapp would sing "Loves Old Sweet Sing", yes, I used to love to listen, as I always did like singing. I think I have said what a place it was for living; would usually have a 5 course dinner and the desert. I grew very big and strong while I was there and every body thought I was older than I was, and I began to get refind to as Mrs. Tapp always like me to be smart and dressed in my black by 12 o'clock to wait at table. I really never saw her cross but about once, and then it was because she had given me a lovely dress length (black of course) for a Xmas present, and my Mother had let someone make it old fashioned; Mrs. Tapp said they had spoilt it. I also remember her making me a lovely afternoon apron; she worked hours at it in the drawing room, scalloped all the edges; yes, she liked me to be smart.

It was while I was at Tapps that the news came of the Duke of Clarence, yes I always remember the gloom caused, as of course he was heir to the throne, and had not long been engaged to Princess May, who afterwards married King George, the brother, and became Queen Mary. (Duke died abroad).

I was only there for 7 months but I learnt more than I should have done in years at some places; the reason I left was my sisters husband died and she was left with a business and baby one month old and I was taken away to go and live with her.

Before I finish with Fockbury Farm there are one or two other things I would like to say. I think I have told you that the water came from the Spout; well sometimes in the winter my Father would stank it, to keep the frost from the cress, and of course when he did that there would be no water at the farm, then Mr. Tapp would come and undo it, then there would be a wrdy war, and I remember my Father saying, "He told me to go to H---, and I told him to go to))))", who did he think cared for him", however they were always good friends, and when Mr. Tapp had got his hay up, he would send his wagon and horses and men, and get ours up.

And then Willie, I must tell you a bit about him: Willie Blackford was his name, but they always called him Willie, he was proper Devonshire, and talked with a quaint accent, always said "Qu#y", well he caused quite a sensation in our village, for they had never seen anyone manage a team of horses like him; I know my Father and others would go to the hedge and watch him ploughing (singing and whistling).

Well, Willie was courting Alice Haines and eventually they got married; I was bridesmaid, and I want to tell you how we walked in pairs to Catshill Church, as it was only the wealthy that had carriages in those days. Well, the incident I want to mention was when we went into the vestry to sign our names, Old Kidd (that is, the Rev. James Kidd) who was Vicar for many years, kissed Alice and then he congratulated her, afterwards he kissed me (my people didn't believe that Old Kidd kissed me, but it was true) and said, Minny, he hoped it would be my turn next, and I cheekily said, I hoped it would to; then he turned to Willie Healy (that was Alices Uncle) and said "Is this the young man?" and I said, "Oh no". Ah, poor Alice she too died young and is resting in Dodford Church yard, not far from Mabel and Mother.

Well I have said I had to leave Fockbury Farm, and quite a different life commenced for me now; I have said my sister was in a business house, The Cattle Market Tavern, but it was a very good class house as she had previously been at the Golden Cross Hotel for 7 years as waitress, and knew how to conduct a place; but it was a different life for me, and I was soon getting to know all the business people of the town, as she was doing a good business and coining money. Well Rose, that was my sisters name, made much of me, as I was quite a smart girl now, and she wanted me to learn all I could; she sent me to music lessons, and bought me a piano for a present, which was sent home and stood in the little parlour.

There were two pianos at the Cattle Market, one in the smoke room and another in the sitting room upstairs, (which used to be a bagetelle room); well it wasn't long before someone entered my life and I knew I had fallen; he was some years older than myself and a school teacher. It had been all off with Frank for some time now, but now there seemed a new atmosphere entering my life; for a time it wasn't much but looks and attentions, then I would be asked to meet him out for a walk; for some time I refused but knew all the time I wanted to go; however my sister got aware of it and of course did not approve, and I was soon to know that the course of true love never runs smooth; well I think my sisters opposition only made me want to meet him more, and I am afraid I began to act very secretful, for when I went to have my music lessons which should have been twice a week, I would only go once and the other time go for a walk; well, this romance lasted on and off for a number of years, more often off than on. I must tell you about one evening when I went for my stolen walk; we were going across the path through the field from Sideslow, where it leads to All Saints Church, well we had just got over the stile in the next path to All Saints, when I stepped aside, as I thought to be next to the hedge, however I stepped in the Brook (the brook used to run beside the footpath by the hedge and was quite deep in places) and got my feet soaking; well I am afraid that cooled our courage for that time, as I had to go straight back and change.

My sister now had been a widow for about 2 years, and there were several who you could tell would like to be proprietor there, as I think I have said before, she was coining money. Well eventually she fell; he was a policeman, a fine smart fellow, supposed to have been the finest fellow in the force at that time: well, she got married again; then it was said it didn't require all of us to manage the business, and I was asked if I would like to do something else, either shop assistant, or dressmaking or something, and still make my home there; well I decided I would learn dressmaking (oh by the way) my sister had taken to another girl now who had just left her Father with 5 children; he was a customer of my sisters, and my sister was training her to be very useful, I'm afraid I shan't be able to tell you very much about her here, but she proprietress of the Coach and Horses Hotel at the present time, Mrs. Gillman; well she made her home with my sister for a number of years.

Well I went to dressmaking, was one of Mrs. Rawlings early apprentices; I must tell you that Mrs. Rawlings was supposed to be The most First Class Dressmaker in Bromsgrove then; I was with them when Mr. was manager for Freeman Hardy and Willis', and also when they removed and started the Drapers business, - which Morris's have now; there was about a dozen of us girls in the workroom and it was all very high class work. Well I served my apprenticeship there in the meantime, sometimes being with my sister and at other times at home; but I must say my sister always wanted me to be there; and altho' I say it I know I was always very popular, and made numerous friends; also had a few admirers, some of which would bring me flowers and fruit, and other presents. I always dressed well, and knew how to dress, whay with being with Mrs. Tapp, and Mrs. Rawlings; I can assure you we girls knew what to wear, and my sister would usually pay for my clothes, and provide me with pocket money, and she liked to see me looking nice. Oh, another thing I must mention, if you won't think me vain; I had very long and thick hair which everybody seemed to admire in those days, I was often told I could challenge the town; it is very long now, as you know, more than a yard long. Well I had used to have a good time. Sammy, my sisters husband, soon began to make things buzz, and not having worked for the money, did'nt know how to spend it; started speculating in horses and going to race meetings, also buying horses and driving about; he also used to like to take me with him, and amnys the country drive I've had with him, with the high steppers and dog cart.

I also had started attending dancing classes, there was at that time an invitation class held at the Institute; well most of us Rawlings girls went, and what enjoyable times we had; then there would be the Cinderellas and occasional ball; I shall never forget my first ball, as we all used to thry to look nicest to be called "Belle", we always wore white or cream for our first, and I know my dress looked very nice (altho' I say it) all cream with yards of chiffon, and Lillies of the Valley, which one swain had sent me; then I had a lovely spray from somewhere else, (at this time it was one of the off times) there was a Volunteers Ball, and the Volunteers were all in iniform; I remember how, my secret choice who was now a sergeant in the Volunteers, he did not dance, neither did he send me flowers, but I remember him passing through the dance hall with a critical eye and saying to my sister afterwards, "Yes, I decided Min was Belle".

My sisyer had now become reconciled to my affair and did'nt interfere any more, also He and Sammy were very big friens and they started going about a lot together; soon there began to be rows and upsets over Sammy spending, and things started going the wrong way however, enough about that now.

Well during these few years of gaity and pleasure, there was always in the background of my mind an inclining to religion, and I always attended a place of worship; as I have told you I went to learn Music, and very soon I was able to play anything at first sight, - that was another thing my sister was proud of, and she would often try to get me to play for friends; however I would never play for customers as I considered that was lwoering to my dignity; the only time I would play was on a Sunday evening, then I would play hymn tunes; ah, those Sunday evenings, they soon got very popular, and that little smoke room would be full of friends all singing hymns.

I was getting a bit older now and had finished learning dressmaking and was working on my own; as time went on I began to get a little tired of the life of gaity, as we were having late evenings and supper parties, and singing, especially about Xmas time, and I began to feel I wanted a change, and to go back to my old life; so, I decided to go home and

take in dressmaking; during all this time I must tell you, however, that every now and then I would get a message from Johnny, and this is how it came about; you see every time I went home from Bromsgrove, I would have to pass Frisbys at Perryfields, and I was very friendly with a sister and cousin of J's, and he was always sending messages by this cousin; I would often meet him, but never spoke, only felt amused; of course he knew all about me and my other love affairs; and I remember once meeting him near the Spout, and I was with the favoured one, and I started laughing; I was asked what I was laughing at, but did not enlighten him only by saying, I always felt like laughing when I met that fellow; however the Frisbys' left Perryfields and started a Brickworks at Tardibigge; still, the messages would be brought me by Emily, and I would say "You tell him to wait for me", (never thinking). But when I went home the last time, of course I attended Chapel again and being able to play was asked to play the Harmonion for the services, which I did, and threw myself wholeheartedly into the work of Sunday School and practices of Harvest Thanksgiving, and Anniversaries, and really became very good, and decided to leave the gay life behind.

I was Baptised and received into membership (at New Road) when I was 21. then I broke with my old love and decided that Johnny would be a better match, as his people were very religious and highly respected, and he was an only son, the prospects looked good. So, at last I hitched up to Johnny and he would come up to Worms Ash about 3 times a week, also go to Chapel with me and help with the services, as then he used to play the violin very well, and had been playing with others at the Sidemoor Chapel; he was also secretary of the band. Well, we were courting about 12 months and then engaged, and the next year married; was married in 1900. I think I shall have to draw my story to a close as I am nearing the end of my copy book.

I have a great many more memories I should like to relate but think I will leave them until I start another book; so until that time,
May God Be With You.

M.F.

Where is now that merry party,
I remember long ago,
Laughing around the Christmas fire,
Brightened by its ruddy glow.
Or in Summers balmy evenings,
In the fields among the hay
They have all dispersed and wandered
Far Away - Far away.

Some have gone to lands far distant,
And with strangers made their home;
Some upon the world of waters,
All their lives are forced to roam.
Some have gone from us for ever,
Longer here they might not stay,
They have reached a fairer region
Far Away - Far Away.

There are still some few remaining,
Who remind us of the past,
But they change as all things change,
Nothing in this world can last.
Years roll by and pass forever,
What is coming who can say,
Ere it closes many may be
Far Away - Far Away.

BOOK II.

MORE MEMORIES. 7th. APRIL 1943.

I did not think when I finished my last book that there would be another link in the chain of happy memories snapped so soon; I am referring to the passing of M. Brookes who went home on the 26th March.

Yes how time flies and changes come and go, but nothing can wipe out old memories and old friendships, at least, not in my case. There was a paragraph in the Bromsgrove Messenger, about Moke and his travels abroad; also referred to the time when he left school and started work at the brick works, which of course was Frisbys; but not many knew him so well as I did and of course Johnny, and the tricks he used to get up to, one of which was stealing his Mothers Pork; as I have said in my last book they used to have a lot of pork pigs killed during the season, and of course Moke could'nt resist the temptation of taking a good piece and roasting it on a shovel in the fire holes; he would also roast potatoes and sometimes cook other vegetables too, I have often heard him and Johnny laugh about it. I remember telling Aunt Sarah about it once and she said, "Yes, I often wondered where my pieces of pork went to". As I have said in my last book, we always had plenty to eat; I have known Aunt Sarah to say when she has seen me cooking potatoes, "Is that all the Murphys your going to do", and I should have that three legged pot full; you know the one I mean that belonged to my Mother; some folks call them cauldrons; yes, Brookes' always cooked in the evening for when Uncle Jack came home, and they would cook the potatoes in a large oval pot, which would hold about a bucketful; we would have a cooked midday meal and would'nt there be a fuss if there was'nt enough potatoes done, as my Father would put a dish full down for the dog; and the meat we used to get; Mother would bring a leg of mutton from Birmingham, not lamb like we get today - about 1lb., and on Sunday it would be roasted in front of the fire on a spit; it used to be lovely and tender; also she would bring pork chops which we would have for Friday dinner; then Tuesday from Bromsgrove we would always have a good fill of fish; could get about a dozen fresh herrings for 3d. - good big ones to; sometimes Mackerel, for 6d. should get 3 or 4 big ones; Mother used to usually boil those and have parsley sauce, which we used to like. Brookes to used to live well, and if nothing else always plenty of home cured bacon; ham and eggs; also milk; oh, and speaking of eggs I know how I myself often cracked one and put some salt and pepper and vinegar on, and swallowed it raw like an oyster; another thing I used to do was have plenty of cream; I liked to make myself a cup of cocoa, and fill it up with about half cream; and also pick myself some raspberries and strawberries and have plenty of cream on them; people used to say what a big strong girl I was, and I don't much wonder when I think of it today, and of what I used to have; I know my children have never been able to live like it; and you can say what you like about the old days and living; we also seemed to take life quiter; I have seen my Father and Mother walk leisurely to the pig sty and lean over and scratch the pigs, and give them some coal to crunch; and seemed to be discussing the pigs and being in no hurry about anything, not like folk today - no time for anything.

Aunt Sarah to would always be coming down for a bit of a gossip, perhaps bring a bit of sewing, and how she used to laugh and joke, usually about my old man - or Dad; and she would laugh untill the tears rolled down her face; yes she to took life easy although there was always a house full of youngsters; she would boast about having 20, named and un-named, but she made no trouble of it, and Uncle Jack thought the world of her; he used to go to work and would help do anything at home at night; they also had a very big piece of ground belonging to the house, and also one or two allotments which Aunt and

the youngsters used to work.

The men did not get very big wages but living expenses were different to what they are today, for instance - rents, - for about 2/6 or 3/- you would get a good house and garden, and could always keep a pig; and most people cured their own bacon: then coal was about a third the price it is today, and no need to buy firewood; also milk $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per quart, that is what we sold it at when it had been skimmed.

Uncle Jack used also to have a lot of bees, and there would always be plenty of honey, which I used to have my share of. Our School master Mr. Jelfs was also interested in bees and used to have some; he would often be at Brookes' especially when they would be taking the honey from them.

Oh, and I mentioned eggs didn't I, well I remember how the lads used to blow birds eggs into the middle of their hands and suck them, nearly everybody would have specimens of all kinds hung across the world; I wonder what would be said about it these days, (I mean birds eggs). Another way of adding to the weekly income was by selling stuff out of the garden and allotments; I know Aunt Sarah would go to Bromsgrove about twice a week with a big basket full of bunches of flowers and kidney beans, she would have private customers for them; then the caglers used to call round for the raspberries and strawberries and other things: then of course there was the young chickens and eggs to be sold; and we would often have boiled fowl for dinner, and plenty of rabbits, and I know my Father would occasionally shoot Hare; I have also known him come hurrying into the house and say "Where's my Gun?" - some wild ducks down at the Spout, and he would go and have a crack at them; another thing there used to be, - the starlings sometimes settled in droves in the meadow in front of the house and he would have a go at them, perhaps shoot a score, and we would feather them, and Mother would make a pie; then she would take the tips of the wings to Redditch where there was quite a demand for them by the fish hook people.

I don't know why I'm telling you these things, only to show the difference in our opportunities and what some people have today.

At any rate my Mother was married at 17 and reared a family of ten, and also provided for old age; she lived to be 84, and all her children followed her to her grave, and she left between 50 and 60 descendants.

Aunt Sarah was married at 18 and I remember her telling me the last talk I had with her that she was worth about £400, and she owned two very nice houses. Well, those are some of the bad old days of about 60 years ago.

Now there is another thing I should like to tell you about Moke and my Grandfather; Uncle Jack made him a truck to pick manure in, as in those days they could always get as much as they needed off the roads; well, Mokey and Grandad would go off together, and I think I have told you about my Grandad, he was very bent with rheumatism, and he would get in the truck, and let Moke give him a ride down hills; and I've seen Moke start to run with him, and my Grandad shouting - "Mokey Stop-stop-stop- you'll have me out", how we used to laugh about it. Yes, LAUGH, we would laugh more in those days than they do now.

20th. MAY 1943.

Several weeks since I wrote my last lines, it is now 6 years I have been bedridden.

Well in my last chapter I was speaking again of my Grandfather Quiney, was'nt I? well I should like to tell you a bit more about him. He would be one of the oldest inhabitants of Dodford, (called Dadford in old days), and lived in that first road that is back of the Dodford Inn; lived in a tall house about halfway down the road; I remember going there as a child; they had some lovely strawberry beds, and I think I told you in my other book about the strawberry wakes and the crowds that would drive out from Birmingham. Well Grandfather lived at Dodford before Fergus O'Conner laid out the Dodford estate and built bungalows. My own Father remembered Fergus O'Conner coming; he would say that he and Jim Hurley of Bourneath (who was an old friend of my Fathers) how they went to Parl Gate and saw horses and wagons loaded with spades and barrows, come, as they came on a Sunday: I think my Father was a youth at the time, at any rate it was before he was married: and Aunt Sarah, she would speak of the Gypsies that used to camp about Dodford and how they used to play together; she also remembered the first wooden Church built; and Mother told me when they opened the beautiful Church they have now, (the one Mr. Wingfield had built) she and Aunt Sarah went to the ceremony with others, and someone heard her say she remembered the other one being opened; and Mother said someone told the Bishop, and gentlemen, and Mother said "They fetched our Sal up to the front telling the gentlemen all she knew, but I kept my mouth shut", Mother said she did'nt want to go she preferred to be in the background.

I very well remember the new Church being built, and the Vicarage, (that is the present Church) it was built (I mean given) by Mr. Wingfield who was Curate at Bromsgrove old Church at the time when the Rev. Vine Hall was Vicar. Mr. Wingfield (Whinfield) used to go to take the service at Dodford every Sunday, and was extremely popular among the Dodford people and children; I remember him well, - not very handsome, but very wealthy, and rather a big man, but not so big as Vine Hall who was very stout. Well, Mr. Wingfield was very taken up with Dodford, and he gave them a new Church, and himself was appointed first Vicar; there is also a nice Vicarage which he also had built, and there is also a burial ground attached; Mr. Wingfield himself is buried there; he did'nt live to enjoy the living many years; a lot of my old friends too are buried there among them Mabel, whose grave is No 17; also Mother and Alice and Nellie Jelps.

Well enough about the Church, I must now tell you something about the Chapel. When the first little wooden Church was built, the dissenters were having their meetings in the club room at the Dodford Inn (so I have been told by my ancestors) and it was decided they must have a Chapel, and I have been told that my Aunt Sarah and Aunt Jessie were among those who went collecting money to build the Chapel, and my Mother and Father were among the first members; Mother also was baptised by the Rev. McDonald who was the first preacher there; it was called the Baptist Chapel.

Yes Rev. McDonald was only minister for the Bromsgrove Baptists: Aunt Emma (that is my Fathers sister) used to keep house for him; he used to live at Church Fields in one of my Uncles houses; I have been told that my Uncle Jim had the first two houses built at Church Fields, and that he lived in one and Rev. McDonald in the other, at any rate I knew my Aunt Emma and the Webleys were among the earliest members of the Baptists at Bromsgrove to; that is the New road Baptists; of course

there was the old Baptists in Worcester St. before, (that is where the picture house is now), I remember services being held there to.

Well a bit more about my Granfather Quiney; at least that was the name he was always known by, and the name his family was brought up in; but I must tell you there was a bit of a mystery about his name; he always called himself William Quiten Quiney, and used to tell us that if he had his rights Shettery Hall at Stratford-on-aven was his; always said it was left to him by his Godfather, but that he was done out of it when he was a child - someone sold the deeds; however I do know there was some mystery about his name, for I had occasion to get my Mothers baptism certificate, and I was surprised to find she was baptised as child of William and Anne Quinton, and no mention of Quiney, the name he always went in; so that I can only presume he took his Godfathers name, and that Quiney was the name of him who he would say left him Shettery Hall. Yes he would talk a lot about Stratford-on-aven- and surroundings and Anne Hathaways place. I have been told that Grandfathers Father ran away when Grandfather was very young and that the old gentleman at Shettery Hall was his Godfather.

Well I don't think Dodford itself has changed all that much at least that is what I am told, except that old faces are changed new, and these who have visited it within the last year or two have been surprised that such a beautiful secluded place could be found so near to the motor roads in these times: but there is just one other place I should like to take you (in imagination).

Suppose you are going from Alfreds Well, halfway down the hill opposite to the glass house, there stood up on the bank a very pretty cottage, and there used to be an old gentleman live alone there named Mr. Lambert; and when we used to go by to Sunday School, we would say "Let's go and ask old Lambert for a drink of water;" (just as if we wanted it so near to home and the spring at the bottom of the hill); well, he would always give us some and talk to us and I vividly remember a very large picture that hung on the wall just inside his house, it was of a beautiful young lady and a horse, and she was holding the bridle with one hand and the other holding a large leghorn hat, and just holding her habit up a little; she had lovely long fair hair, and we would like to look at that picture, and old Lambert would say "That was my wife", and he told us the picture was a Gainsborough.

Now let me take you a little walk; suppose we go from the bottom of Alfreds Well towards Dodford, we leave Jones' wood on the right, and the spring on the left, and a stream running along side the road, with a tall embankment wild with trees and shrubs, till we get to the bottom of Niblets Hill, then, instead of us going up the hill, let us take the pathway at the bottom of the steep field that leads to the Dodford Inn; the path is in a valley where there used to be mowing grass and moonaisies, and quakers galore, which we used to like to gather; how we would try to see who could hold the quakers still: in nearly everybodys house there would be bunches of quakers in vases, as of course they were everlasting flowers and did'nt drop.

Now let me take you up the wooden steps of Jacobs ladder, as some of us would call them; in about the 2nd. field from the pub (in the valley) to the left, we cross a plank bridge over the stream and go up the steps, on to the forest, as we called it; I might say when you get to the top of the steps you will want a rest, - be out of breath I expect, as I should say there would be more than 50 steps, altho' I don't remember counting them: now for across the front, and the view; on the right Dodford and its Bungalows; and down below the valley where we have just come from; if we could continue our walk straight on, we should come out at Crewfields; if we took a path about halfway to the left, it would

bring us out near Feckbury Farm: but we won't continue either way, let us run down the steep bank again, which has many curves, where we can rest if we want to, and into the valley again; then let us walk on again until we come to a path on the right, a steep uphill path; as we are going up this way we used to be able to view a very much widening of the stream, with a boat on it; (I wonder if it is there now) used to belong to Liseters, that's the name of the people who lived then in a nice house in the road, which will soon be cress. Well when we have climbed the steep grass slope, and into the road, which by the way is a continuation of the road in which my Grandfather Quiney lived; we will cross the road and go into a steep grass field, and down again, then over the stile and into the Dingle; yes this used to be a quaint place, a narrow strip of wild embankment, with narrow pathway across the top and wild flowers; blue violets, and blackberry bushes, and this would lead us out by the old wooden Church. Yes, and speaking about wild flowers, one could always pick plenty of cowslips and primroses in the meadow, and exslips te. Well, now we are out by the little wooden Church, you can take which road you like; straight on will take you to the Top Row Dodford, and the Ran Dan Woods; if you take the road on the right, that will be Middle Row Dodford, and that will take you round by the Baptist Chapel, and round to the Top of Niblets Hill again; and if you take the road on your left, it will take you round by the Priory, and the New Church and Vicarage and round Little Dodford, and to Mud Hall School.

The chief means of livelihood in the old days was Strawberry growing every bungalow would have its acres of ground (it was clay ground), and everyone would grow Strawberries; yes, and in strawberry picking time there would be hundreds of outsiders come help with the picking, as they would be paid good money, beside having a good satisfaction of strawberries, of course there was plenty of other fruit too. I remember some places there were rows and rows of greengages and apple trees. Well the Dodford people seemed to make enough money in the summer to be able to live comfortable all the winter. Another thing some of the women worked at in those days was glass making: I have heard my Mother say how she and some of them would walk to Worcester for work to do at home.

Then there was Seatons the Bonnet makers; used to make lovely print curtain bennets; yes my old friend and bridesmaid was a beautiful bennet maker, and dressmaker too; oh, and by the way, Aunt Sarah too was put to learn dressmaking.

There used also to be brickmaking; there was one old brickyard next to the Chapel, and another one next to the play ground at Mud Hall School, hand making of course; we could see the men working from the playground.

"Oh Barney dear, in happy dreams
 I live once more the dear old days,
 By flowery dells and sunkissed streams
 Sweet recollection fondly strays.
 I see each well remembered face,
 And hear their voices glad refrain,
 As memory it's steps retrace,
 Oh Barney take me home again.

I could keep on and not tire of talking about Dodford.

But I don't hardly seemed to have mentioned my Grandfather Jones; well truth is I don't remember so much about him, except that he was a slim medium sized man, used to always wear a smock, (beautifully honeycombed and smocked across the yolk) and a top hat, and died at

the age of 94: and Granmother too was a dainty old lady, and I remember the little satin aprons she used to wear, with flowers and forget-me-nots worked on them; in family there were four brothers and two sisters, and there were numerous descendents scattered all over the place, especially about Bromsgrove: two sisters married two brothers (Webleys), one had quite a large family, but Aunt Emma had no children; I was very fond of my Aunt Emma, at one time she lived with us; she was left a widow, really before I remember, but I do remember hearing my parents talk about them fetching her little pig as heriot (that is, for the Lord of the Manor), which when anyone died in those days, if they had any property, something had to go for the Lord of the Manor.

Another thing I must not forget to mention, is about my Mother: she was in great demand as a Midwife, and there must be hundreds who owe their safe delivery into the world to her; how I remember there would be a knock at the door, often in the dead of night; sometimes for her to go three or four miles, perhaps to the far end of Dodford; often it was pitch dark; the lantern was always ready, and perhaps the man would wait for her; and I believe her fee was 2/6. , yes, that was different to what it is today isn't it? but people didn't run to the Doctor with every little thing in those days; in fact my Mother would often say, she never spent but about 10/- on us for Doctors, in her life; but I can tell you what she did believe in, and that's herb tea; how we disliked it, but there it would be in the spring and autumn, made with all sorts of herbs, a big jug full; and we would have to drink about 3 parts of a teacupful; however it seemed to keep us fit; sometimes it was Epsom salts and Senna; also Brimstone and Treacle; then there was a mixture of Linseed and Licourish and Anniseed etc. for colds.

But we have all made some good old ones, I myself being the invalid of the family, as I think I have said before only Will my eldest brother and Nell have passed on. Polly who is now 84, is hale and hearty, and still goes to Whist Drives; and Rose who is 80. still goes out to work 4 hours a day, and the others are all pretty well.

MONDAY 28th, JUNE 1943.

Last Thursday was Bromsgrove Fair Day, and the weather was fine and nice and warm, it has also been fine and warm each day since. Yes Bromsgrove Fair, how that takes my memory back; I am told this was a big fair of attractions of Pat Collins thrills, but how different in many ways to what it was 50 years ago. The Fair ground was in the same place then as now, and for some years precious; Old Mrs. Hayes would take the Fair ground and would only let those bring amusements that she liked to, of course she owned numerous roundabouts and shows and coconut shies. The first time Pat Collins came, she refused to let him enter the fair with his amusements and I remember how he took the recreation ground that was then called the Crown Close, and he brought his Gondoliers, those big ones that used to rock as they went round; well, he planted them in the Crown Close, and well do I remember the sensation they caused; there were search lights playing all the time over the Fair-ground and town; and he drew all the people from the fair, and I think Mrs. Hayes made a bad deal; the following year Pat was first in the field to take the fair ground and has been so ever since. I remember him too, coming into my sisters, he was a young man then.

Mrs. Hayes too, was a customer of my sisters; yes, I remember how she used to like Brandy, and I remember her personality perfectly; she was very brown and dark like a gypsy: I once visited her in her caravan at her invitation; how beautiful it was inside, the brass and polish, but then, she was very wealthy.

I must not forget the beautiful organ that Pat Collins had with the Gondoliers, the music it played was grand, and I always remember one tune especially that it played, a tune that was very popular about that time; "The Maidens Prayer", how beautiful and weird it sounded those lovely summer evenings of more than 50 years ago.

Well before we leave Bromsgrove Fair there are one or two other things I should like to mention, different to what it is today; it used to be a wonderful big horse fair, and the crowds of outsiders that would come: I remember one Welsh man that used to come every year to my sisters; he would bring droves of Welsh ponies, and the streets would be full of horses and horse dealers; then there was the cheap Jacks and fruit barrows with strawberries and cherries and pineapples and other fruit: it was a very busy day too for the caterers. I think I have told you my sister had the Cattle Market Tavern, - what a busy day it was there; she would have about twenty extra waiters; and the money that was handled! used to expect Fair Day to pay the years rent; then after closing time we would all go and have an hour at the Fair the proprietors used to keep the attractions on an hour extra for our benefit; and the fun we had.

Then there would often be a Circus and Jennings Theatre; I wonder how many can remember the wooden erections that Jennings used to put up in the Crown Close, this side of the Drill Hall, that is the building that is used as a picture house now called the Plaza, but it was built for a Drill Hall; I remember it being built, and knew the first two drill sergeants very well; the first Sergeant Wilson with his Irish wife, and afterwards Sergeant Pragnel and their two children who used to live in the house adjoining. but to go back to Jennings Theatre, (Jennings Theatre was called Alexandra Theatre); there was old Mr. and Mrs. Jennings, and Freddie and Viola, who were both very fine, and rather fat people; and I should say between 30 and 40 years of age when I knew them first; and I should say Mr. and Mrs. Jennings between 50 and 60. Then there was a party of Actresses and Actors,

and I must not forget Freddie Hammen the Bill sticker who came to Bromsgrove with them, well, they would bring their own long bills of the weeks plays for us to shew in our windows; and would also give us two or three free tickets, and I should actually go once or twice a week; how different to the plays of today; we would have hard seats, just one or two rows in front, the ninepennies and shillings, with a bit of stair carpet on them and grass under the feet; the back seats would go round in circles like at the Circuses and be very hard and bare; but the plays - oh, the thrills we had - "East Lynne" and the "Murder of Maria Martin", and "My Sweetheart", and others.

Another event which I well remember was Georgie Bowers donkey; George Bowers was a big burly man and proprietor of the Coach and Horses Hotel, and he would take his famous donkey on the stage and get someone to try to ride him, and the fun there would be as none could ride him; and I knew sometimes he would bring him into the Cattle Market Tavern right up to the bar and give him a drink; yes, would cause some fun: there were other simple amusements I have seen in that bar, one was - lifting anyone on a shovel; I have seen my sisters husband (I mean her second husband, who by the way was named Davies, called Sammy) lift anyone on a shovel; there used to be a short very stout man, whose name also was Davies (Charley) but no relation to Sammy, he lived up in the Coffee House yard and (his wife sold lovely tripe, one evening in the week) he would often be in the Cattle Market Tavern bar, I have seen Sammy lift him up on a shovel. Perhaps I'd better describe Sammy - he was a fine big fellow over 6 ft. often said to be the finest fellow in Bromsgrove at that time, he would walk leisurly across the bar and lift up his foot and undo the latch of another room as unconcerned as you like; ah, simple amusements but still we had our fun 50 and 60 yrs ago.

August 9th. 1943.

Since writing my last I have had another birthday being 67 on July 1(th - 43. Yes, I think I was telling how I remember the first Drill Hall being built, (that is the Plaza that is new), well there was a serious fire there on July 31st, and did a considerable amount of damage; the Messenger says it was built in 1889, however I know that I was a young girl then and it was while I was living with my sister.

I remember the various theatrical companies that used to come and the plays, also Dysons Gypsy Choir, and Christie Minstrals. I remember in particular one play called the "Lady Slavey" and I think I have a song new that was first sung in that play, called - "In Friendships Name", - a beautiful song, I remember the words perfectly today; ah, and talking about old songs; I was asked some time ago if I could remember the song about the Golden Wedding; someone was trying to get it but was told it was out of print; however, I said I could remember most of the words, and tune, and would write them down, which I did; I think I will write them here, perhaps someone will sing it when I am gone, it's called:-

50 Years Ago.

This morning at breakfast I said to my wife,
 But one Golden Wedding we have in this life,
 We'll go to the Church with our cheeks all aglow
 As we used to those two score and ten years ago
 So it is, so it is, said my dear old wife Jane,
 Lets have our old wedding day over again
 And go to the Church with our cheeks all aglow
 As we used to those two score and ten years ago.

Chorus.

Oh for the Golden visions
 Oh for the crimson glow,
 Oh for the Golden day dreams,
 Fifty long years ago.
 Oh for the fairy voices
 And the songs they used to sing,
 Telling of Heavenly joys my boys
 Found in a Golden ring.

2nd. verse.

The service was ended, we march through the door,
 And into the buttercup meadow once more,
 I plucked Jane a bunch and she asked for a pin,
 Which I gave and she fastened them under her chin.
 The Church bells were ringing the birds singing sweet,
 And friend with their voices and music to greet,
 And gay were the footsteps that tripped to and fro,
 In days that are two score and ten years ago.

Chorus.

Ah, old songs how I recall them; I'm sure we sang more in the old days than we do today.

Not many of the music hall hits that we missed and other sentimental ones, too many that we never hear now, such as "Silver Threads Among the Gold", and others, many that are out of print which I well remember. My Father too, how he used to sing; they used to have a Club Night at the Cattle Market Tavern (Sick and Dividend) and Father was one of it's members; the evening was chiefly spent in song singing and drinking

beer, and playing cards; yes, Father also liked a game of cards. Then there was the bidding for their draw, do you know how they did it? well there would be a tallow candle placed on the table with a pin through the wick, and it would be lighted, then the bidding would start, and when the pin dropped the last bidder would have the money.

I think I have said before that the Club room was upstairs, on the first floor at the Cattle Market Tavern, there was also a Bagetelle room; yes, I remember how the Revers Football used to hold their meetings in that room, more than 50 years ago; before they went to the Ree Buck Inn, and well do I remember some of the first team and officials; there was Tom Abel and Den Fisher; Charley Halfpenny; Walt Delver and George Wright, and Crump Wallace and others.

Yes George Wright - we called him "Brandy", he had a brother Harry, I must tell you a bit about him, he was a very fair slim young man and in the Volunteers, but he had a very elaborate ginger mistress, and we called him (George) Mr. Hurrah (he was older than Brandy): well I should like to tell you that I walked out with him for a while, although I always say it was only to take his dog out; he was a very jolly chap and if ever I was going for a walk, and met any of my friends he would say "Come along", and sometimes he would have a whole string of us. I remember once we were going over "Break Back and Graften, and there came on a violent thunder storm, and every time there came a heavy clap he would say "Here here, well done our Father", how frightened we girls were: another time he found a hedgehog, and tied that up in his handkerchief: ah, a jolly chap but been dead many years now.

"Dear old Pals, Jolly old Pals,
Clinging together in all kinds of weather,
Jolly old Pals Merry old Pals,
Give me the friendship of dear old Pals.

Oh I mentioned Break Back, didn't I, what a land mark that used to be; I remember in the olden days for any special event there would be a high bonfire lit on Break Back Hill, and a torch light procession from the town at night: I remember going there at the Relief of Mafeking and the Queens Diamond Jubilee; the first Jubilee was when I was about 11 years old - I was in Birminham for that one, staying with my sister Ann, she took me to Aston Hall and that was the first time I saw electric lights; they were brought out there specially for the Queens Jubilee; and I remember all the pretty bulbs around the Hall and the sensation they seemed to cause for the crowds of people watching the beautiful colours.

Yes, we had our celebrations in those days, and what times at Christmas what with the decorations and the Holly and Mistletoe, and the Christmas parties; always plenty of good stuff - sometimes makes my mouth water; and always seemed to be plenty of singing, sometimes we would form a party and go Carol singing to our friends, on New Years Eve perhaps go to a Night Watch Service.

"I wandered today oer the hills Maggie, to watch the scenes below,
The crags and the creaking old mill Maggie, as we used to long ago,
The green grove has gone from the hill Maggie
Where first the daisy sprang,
And the creaking old Mill it is still Maggie
Since you and I were young;
For now, we are aged and grey Maggie
The trials of life are nearly done,
Let us think of the days that are gone Maggie
When you and I were young".

II.

I think I must tell you a little more of my life when I was dressmaking I was 17 or 18 then. Well there was about a dozen girls in the workroom but one I want to specially mention; she was Mrs. Rawling's sister; I should say she was about 19 or 20 when she was there, but what a caution; the tricks she got up to, of course she was in charge of the workroom when Mrs. R. was out, and I can tell you there wasn't much work done for Mrs. R. then. Sometimes there was sewing for herself and perhaps a dress or two for her friends, she would make us pin it under our pinafore and when Mrs. R. was out of the way we would be sewing for her; if Mrs. R. appeared suddenly, we would put our pinafore down and be doing her work. Mrs. R. would often go to Birmingham on Thursdays to the warehouse, then we should have a real good Beane, perhaps go into the Drawing room and have a dance. I remember once it was decided we would have a real good bust up; one was to get a Duck, and another Peas, and another Sweets, and each one something; but I know we got disturbed that day by Mrs. R. coming home earlier than usual, but Babs (that was what she was called by her sister) had some excuse; another thing she was very fond of roast Pork (stuffed); often when I have been out with her in the evening (we used to chum about together) we would go to a certain cook shop and buy some roast Pork, then go in the little parlour at my sisters and have a bottle of stout, wouldn't she and myself enjoy it. Another thing, she was a beautiful dancer and a terrible flirt; was never short of a young man; but one morning when we went to work Babs did not turn up in the workroom, and she had gone without wishing any of us goodbye, and I never heard anything of her from then till a year or two ago - nearly 50 years, when I learned she married my daughter-in-law's (Win) Grandfather as his second wife; strange isn't it? how I would like to see her, - she came from Bath, and Babs is Wins Mother's Stepmother.

Mr. Rawlings also came from Bath to Bromsgrove and there was no place like Bath to hear him talk.

Yes, just a word or two about him; we girls always called him "Daddy", and a proper "Molly" he was in the house, used to do all the house work except for a little help; Mrs. R. had too much business, she would keep us girls often till 9 o'clock at night if there was work to be finished; 8 o'clock we were supposed to leave; sometimes we have had the Inspectors call, but always seemed to come at the wrong time.

Yes, and Daddy, I remember how annoyed he used to get when the fair came, our workroom used to overlook the fair ground, and I know when the music used to start our feet would begin to tap and there wouldn't be much sewing done then, he was always saying what a nuisance the music was, and I believe he made complaints about it, at any rate they won't let music be played for weeks at a time now.

DECEMBER 15th. 1943.

A month or two has passed since I wrote the precious lines, since which times changes come and go.

Last week, Dec. 8th the death of Pat Collins was announced, at the age of 83; yes, how time flies, it seems but yesterday that he came to Bromsgrove with his lovely Gondoliers, and a young man, and yet it is more than 50 years ago.

Soon we shall have another Xmas here: if we could gaze into the future I guess many of us will be crossed ever by another Xmas. I did not think last Xmas that it was possible for me to be here for another, yet, still here I am, and who knows, only God, and in Him will I trust, and leave the rest. I am afraid it will be a very poor Xmas for a good many. More than 4 years of war and a great shortage of every thing, also everything a terrible price. How different from the Merry Xmas's I remember more than 50 years ago; then we had plenty of everything - and the parties: what jolly times those were. How fresh in my memory still, the great boughs of Mistletoes and Holly, and the Carol singing.

There also seemed to be more skating in the olden days; I remember how we used to go skating on the Mill Pool at Charford, and also the Meers, as it was called at Fockbury Mill; then there was Grafton where we usually had to pay something to go in, and the money going to some charitable organisation.

APRIL 3rd. 1944.

Seen we shall have another Easter here and here I am still in bed nearly 7 years, how time flies. And as I still keep looking back I think of the changes and alterations everywhere, even in this place Finstall, where I have lived for 42 years, there has been great changes.

I remember when we came to live here first there was quite a sensation if a Motor Car went through the village; and now what with Motor Cars, and Airplanes, and Electric Light and the Radio: I often wonder what my Father would think of it all if he were here, as of course he had departed before any of these things came into being.

Even Bicycles were far from common 50 years ago especially ladies: I well remember learning to ride one when I was about 15, and I don't suppose there was more than half a dozen ladies in Bremsgreve who rode a Bicycle at that time: it was about that time that bloomers were beginning to be worn; how I remember the scandal it seemed to be to some of the old folks, for instance :- I had an old "Uncle who was very religious and a local preacher, how disgusted he was at females riding bykes, as some would wear rather short skirts over bloomers, and he would say "And they were showing their ankles"; I wonder what he would say today with girls showing bare legs and knees, also the greater part of them in men's attire to.

Yes, fashions have changed: I should like to mention some of the changes in my time. When I was very young I had to wear long frocks, with long white drawers about 2 inches below long frocks with deep tucks round the bottom. Later on came the style of very full skirts with a deep scarf around the hips and of course the old ladies wore very long full skirts with sometimes two or three rows of tiny frills around the hem, (crinolines had just gone out of fashion), then came the bustles and tiny bonnets, afterwards umbrella skirts with leg of mutton sleeves, and hats like flower pots; very small waists were the fashion then. (My sister Rose was a 21 inch waist for years, I know I was 23 inches, for years after I was married). Then dresses began to skimp again; there was the Hebble skirts, with tiny teque hats; then came the Harum skirts, and bell bottom sleeves; afterwards came very large hats almost as large as parasols; then blouses and skirts commenced being fashionable, and have been worn more or less ever since.

Now today I think the less they were the more some seem to like it, what with bare legs and bare arms, and open necks and chest, - I don't know what our Grandmothers would say; also the more some can wear men's clothing the better they seem to like it, with their long trousers and shorts.

21st AUGUST 1944.

A rather dull day today after about three weeks of glorious weather and very warm.

In my last writings I was talking about fashion was'nt I, well, the last few weeks has seen another reduction of garments, children, and some adults to have been going about with hardly anything on, some children, quite big ones, with only little bathing knickers, nothing at all on their bodies arms and legs; and of course hats have been out of fashion for some time for all classes, also sleeves; bare legs and bare arms has been the fashion among the women and some men. Yes how different to some of the beautiful styles in sleeves that I used to work on; there was the plain coat sleeve; then the bishop and puff sleeves and leg of mutton; and beel bottom, then back again to the tight sleeves with diamonds in tiny tucks worked on them; Now, no sleeves at all and hardly any dress, just a frill below the waist and far above the knees, - what a change.

"Change and decay in all around I see".

16th. OCTOBER 1944

Yes October the 16th today, 44 years since I was married, how time flies, it doesn't seem that time, but Oh the changes and new faces instead of the old, for I have seen a few in this village (that is Finstall) have lived here now 42 years. I was counting the other night those who I remembered and have passed away since we have lived here, and counted between 90 and 100.

The place too has changed, instead of viewing the embankment from the station to Finstall, now it is all bungalows and new houses; up this road too (that is Finstall Hill) most of the houses have been built since we came here; also the Village Hall and Post Office; the Village Hall in 1904 and the Post Office about the following years. I went to the Opening ceremony of the Village Hall, and quite a do, it was given to the Village by Miss Albright, altho' Mr. Willie gave the land.

I may say we are also Miss. Albrights tenants and have been for 40 years or more, when we came here most of the property in Finstall belonged to the Albrights, but it is different now.

AUGUST 11th 1947.

It is nearly three years since I wrote in my book last time, I am now 71 and still bedridden. I didn't think I should be writing again, but the last twelve months has been so eventful that I feel that I should like to write some of the happenings down.

Well I think I will begin about the Winter, which I think will be long remembered.

To begin with everybody has been short of coal; it has of course been rationed as also has food, on account of the terrible war we went through, which was ended just over two years ago. But to go back to last winter; well I think it was the worst in living memory of everyone, it certainly was in mine.

The first Snow came January 6th, more the 24th. and 25th, and very bad 28th; coldest day I reckon so far 29th. February 1st, Austins threatening to close on account of coal shortage, and electricity. Feb. 2nd. a terrible day, snow blizzards; Feb. 3rd. again terrible day more snow and blizzard. - Still Father has gone to work. Feb. 4th and Austins closed for the want of fuel, only maintenance staff in. Feb 5th. very bad. Feb. 6th. thousand out of work. Feb. 7th. still very bad, Austins gave 48hrs. notice to all employees. 8th. terrible day, bitterly cold winds. 9th. still very bad. 10th. still bad, Father went to work but came back, found all employees out. 11th. and 12th. weather still very bad. 13th. several villages were isolated and airoplanes were dropping food; one village in particular that was without food, and practically starving; airoplanes neither could reach it, one crashed and 8 men lost their lives. 14th. Austins gave all notice of closing. all roads were blocked, weather still continued bad. 17th. and 18th. and 22nd. heaby snow worse than ever. 23rd. snow and frost at night. 24th roads very bad, severe frosts at night. 25th. bitterly cold and frost, and another very heavy snowfall at night. Conditions appalling in the North. 28th. more snow, nasty cold day. March 1st. brighter but severe frost continueing until the 5th. then a terrible blizzard and snow drifts, still nowing and blizzards night and day; all roads blocked and traffic at a standstill; one train to London 24 hrs. on journey; wireless announced 300 roads blocked; I never knew anything like it; roads impassable; towns and villages isolated; ponys on Dartmoor mad with hunger; Pilots trying to drop food by airoplane to many places; what a time; nothing like it in living memory. Weather continueing very bad and still more snow and sleet and blizzards untill about 16th March, then a terrible gale did a lot of damage; then came the rain - rain and floods - floods and rain; everywhere terrible; damage in the Fens; farms and homesteads washed away; miles and miles under water; thousands homeless; distress funds opened everywhere;. Father was home from work a month.

Well That was a Winter that will Not be forgotten in a hurry.

March 21st. snow gone after terrible floods.

All winter sowings of Wheat and other food stuffs washed away; hundreds of farms ruined; Oh and I forgot to say in some instances the only way to get milk through the snow was by tractor.

Well, these were only some of the troubles of the last winter, but there has been many many more; a great scarcity of food stuffs and everything rationed. Doleful stories everywhere of what next winter will be like.

However, we are now nearing Harvest and have been having grand weather lately, and the crops are wonderful, plenty of apples and plums and other fruits, considering we had such a terrible time the beginning of the year; how thankful we all should be; God has been very good.

Yes, we shall soon be having Thanksgiving services.

How my memory goes back to the services we had 50 and 60 years ago, in our little Chapel at Dodford, and where I used to play the Harmonion.

When I was a child I remember how my Father and neighbours would each try to save the finest vegetables and fruit for Harvest Thanksgiving: I can see my Father now in the barn trimming the sheaf of wheat, and pulling all the short ears and scraggy ends out. Father always sent the Sheaf of Wheat.

Then there would be the finest Apples and fruits; I can see that little round table in front of the pulpit, with a large beautifully baked loaf in the centre, and surrounded by lovely fruit and vegetables; and higher in the ceiling small trusses of hay hanging.

Also around the Pulpit would be hanging some lovely bunches of grapes. I remember my sweetheart of that time, would hunt the town over for the finest bunch of grapes for our thanksgiving; and how the place and the windows would be filled with fruit and flowers and vegetables. Like the children of old,

"We would carry to His Temple Gates, the choicest of our store".

Then the Hymns, how hearty we would sing; I used to love Harvest Thanksgiving.

On the Monday evening after the service there would be a sale of the produce; how we would try to outbid the other for different fruit and things; the money of course going to the funds of the Chapel. For let me tell you here, they never went around with a plate there in those days (only at Special services) then we would have good collections.

But, let me tell you what I used to do: my Harmonion was usually near the door, except at special services, when there would be two or three rows of the best singers, children and others in front; but what I was going to say is - when the Harmonion was near the door, as soon as the service was ended, I used to drop my tuppence in the Offertory box which was fastened on the door, and it used to give a good chink, which seemed to remind others, and there was always a nice little regular weekly offering.

Ah, about that Harmonion, - let me tell you about another humiliating experience; - I'll never forget the first time I tried to play it. I'll tell you here I was considered to play the Piano fairly well, and at that time they were depending on anyone voluntary to play the Harmonion for the services; at one of the meetings my Father said I would play, and without asking me; well the first time I remember it was at the Rev. J. Ford's service.

I could play hymns quite well on the piano, but oh, when I tried to get a sound out of the Harmonion it was awful; of course I had never done any peddling, and the row - it comes to me now - and how flustered I was; and of course it was sure to be when the Rev. J. Ford was there; he was our Minister then, and would come to take the services once a month, other times we would have local preachers.

Well, after that experience I would have the keys and go and practise on Sunday mornings, and myself and Miss. Emily Baker would play in turns. Yes, Emily (afterwards Mrs. C. Webley) and I were always great friends, she also was my bridesmaid; she too has passed over during the last twelve months. I would like to tell you of my memory of another one who was announced over the wireless about a fortnight ago as having passed away at the age of 87. It was Gypsy Smith the Evangelist.

I will relate here; it was when I was quite a young woman to, and a Sunday School teacher.

I remember there was two or three unruly boys who used to come to Chapel, whose delight seemed to be to do everything to upset others, especially when Mr. Dolphin was not there; myself and Emily and no authority at all over them, and ~~we~~ we decided they ought to be turned out: however Mr. D. got to hear about it - didn't he give us a talking to, what he said was:- "These are just the ones we want, for they that are whole have no need for a physician, but they that are sick"; and "He came not to call the righteous, but the sinners for repentance".

There are one or two other worthy characters that I should like to mention here. There was Mrs. Eades and her two daughters Annie and Kate: very regular attendants: Annie was also a Sunday School teacher for many years: but what I was going to say was they usually brought their umbrellas with them, rolled up tight like a walking stick; they would usually sit behind these boys, and first they would prod one and then another, with their umbrellas; then perhaps one boy would put his hand in his pocket for something, and out would come a handful of Marbles, and roll all over the place. I remember once a pack of toy playing cards was scattered all over the place, which seemed to shock every one; cards - which my Mother called Devils Playthings - in Chapel.

Well I could see all these happenings from my place by the door, which I am afraid would often keep me amused as much as anyone, for I knew the sermons were very boring and drawn out sometimes, and I was generally glad when the parson would dry up.

I would like to mention here that there is a Tablet to Annie Eades, also George Dolphin placed in Dédford Chapel. (Kate married my brother, - his second wife).

There is just one other person I would like to mention, dear Old Lady Durose; she lived in that sweet little cottage just above the Chapel, by Warbig Lane: what a dear old soul she was, she would often take me to have tea with her on a Sunday, as she said - to get me there in the evenings to keep me from other attractions. Ah she dropped off very sudden, she was found dead in her garden. Myself with a party of others attended her funeral at Smethwick.

I must not forget to mention our Local Preachers. We would have our month once a month, other Sundays it would be local preachers, most of them would come from Aston Fields; yes and in those days they would walk, for there were no motor cars and buses then, and it's sure to be between 4 and 5 miles; and they would get to afternoon service for 3 o'clock. Yes, I wonder if they would do it today. Many were quite elderly men, among them John Juggins; Messrs Escot; Lacy and Mr. Hewitt (who was one of the favourites) also Mr. H.S. Whitfield of Whitfields clothing factory; and Mr. Goods and others.

I must not forget to mention Frank Lacy, he was about my own age; I remember his first attempts at preaching, he was quite a boy; his Father would bring him and let him read the lessons and sometimes offer up a prayer; in after years he was on the plan, and a great worker for the Baptists until he left Bromsgrove, which is many years ago. I wonder if he is still living. The older generation have of course passed on.

Oh, and I had almost forgotten to mention that I remember the Rev. Mr. Comfort; he was the Minister before the Rev. J. Ford and left to go to New Zealand. Also our faithful Treasurer Mrs. William Bennie.

Another thing about Mr. Delphin I would like to say; he had a very good Tenor voice, and many of the Hymns that he used to choose do I remember very well today; a great favourite was:-

"Jesu Saviour Pilot me,
Over Lifes Tempestious sea.
Unknown waves before me roll
Hiding rock and treacherous sheal,
Chart and compass be to me,
Jesus Saviour Pilot me".

Perhaps you will think my late writings do not agree with former memories, but let me explain here;- I was at home until I was about 14, then I went to Mrs. Tapp of Feckbury Farm for a while; then I went to my sisters and made my home with her on and off for the next five years, during which time I went to learn dressmaking and had quite a gay time during that period; but always in the back of my mind there was an inkling of religion.

I remember when I was at my sisters, I would play the piano for hymn singing on Sunday evenings, and sometimes that little smoke room would be filled with people, and didn't they just sing.

Then at about 19 I went home again and worked at my dressmaking, and took up Sunday School work until I was married.

I would like to take you back to some of the early treats we used to have. How excited we would get, and the curling of hair, and perhaps a new frock, especially for Christmas parties, one of which stands very vividly in my mind today, - it was a Christmas Party.

There was at the top end of the Chapel, a hugh Christmas Tree, loaded with presents of Gifts and Books; then of course there was the tea party, not like the tea parties of today: there would be the long tea tables spread with the white clothes; then each child would be given a large bun, about the size of a pudding plate; oh those buns - what a job we had to get through them. For tea, the children would have Coffee; we had to take our own mugs which we would take tied around our necks. There would be the big coffee Urns at each end of the table; we were waited upon by our Sunday School Teachers and grown ups, who would afterwards sit down to their tea of beautiful bread and butter and cakes. Then after tea would come the games and perhaps a Magic Lantern. I remember one such with the big white sheet in front, and oh, the thrill of the pictures. Then there was flashed on, the good old Sankeys hymns, one was:-

"Let us gather up the Sunbeams,
Lying all around our path.
Let us keep the Wheat and Roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff.
Let us find our sweetest comfort
In the blessings of today,
With a patient hand removing
All the briars from our way.
Then scatter seeds of kindness
For our reaping bye and bye".

also,

"We are but little children weak, not born in any high estate".

and then,

"Tell me the old old story",

In which all would join, and oh the singing, methinks I hear it now.
Afterwards the unloading of the Christmas Tree.
It does'nt seem so long ago, yet it is between 60 and 70 years since.

Yes, Happy days, Happy memories.

Have I had my cares since? my answer is Yes; my cares and my
sorrows; but they shall remain in the unwritten pages of my book.

"Backward turn backward oh time of your flight,
Make me a child again, just for tonight."

18th. AUGUST. 1947.

I am afraid I shall not be able to write many more of my memories; there is much that I can recall that I would like to say, but I know I am getting more helpless and my fingers more stiff with my affliction every day.

However I can still think of the past, and if I cannot see the flowers growing, and the beauties of the outside world; I can hear the birds whistling, and the children laughing and singing at their play, and I often call down Gods Blessing upon them, and may they be happy while they are young, for childhood and youth will only to swiftly pass away.

And as I look forward to soon be leaving, and meeting again many old friends and loved ones who have gone before, - I thank God for all His Goodness, and the blessings I have received; and tho' I have had my nights of sorrow and pain, I would not have had it otherwise, or I might have grown too attached to this world.

"There shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes".

"Oh Barney dear I'd give the world,
To live once more the dear old days;
Where life was peace and joy imparted
Sweet recollection fondly strays.

Oh Barney dear, why did we roam
To seek a fortune in the west,
When love and peace in that old home
Were better far than all the rest;
For what is wealth, and fame,
And all, when life is dark
With care and pain.
The past is far beyond recall,
Oh Barney, take me home again."

I'll take you home again Kathleen,
Across the ocean far and wide,
To where your heart has ever been
Since first you were my bonney bride.
The Roses all have left your cheeks,
I've watched them fade away and die;
Your voice is sad whenever you speak,
And tears be-dim your loving eye.
Oh I will take you home again Kathleen
To where your heart will know no pain;
And when the fields are fresh and green,
I'll take you to your home again.

To that dear home across the sea,
My Kathleen shall again return;
And when your old friends welcome thee,
Your loving heart will cease to yearn;
Where laughs the little silvery stream
Besides your Fathers humble cot, and
Brightest rays of sunshine gleam,
There all your grief will be forgot.
Oh I will take you back Kathleen,
To where your heart will know no pain.
And when the fields are fresh and green,
I will take you to your home again.

JULY 19th. 1949.

I did not think I should write anymore of my memoirs, but today is my birthday; I am 73 today, still in bed and crippled with arthritis, practically helpless.

Next year is my Golden Wedding if I live till then. Yes 50 years and oh what changes I have seen, even in this village where I have spent most of my married life, since 1902. How this village has altered in that time. When we came I doubt if there were more than fifty houses within half a mile radius; now, houses everywhere; hundreds of them I remember the Village Hall being built and Post Office; and all the new houses up this hill, and in the surrounding roads of the Finstall Village; and also the Bungalows right to the Station.

Yes and about the Village Hall; I myself with just about half a dozen left in the village, including my husband, was at the opening ceremony.

Well do I remember the many who have passed on.

Mr. William Albright gave the land for the Hall; and Miss Albright the bricks and building; there were several of the inhabitants helped with the furnishing; including a piano from Mr. J.B. Brookes; Clock from M.G. James; also crockery ware and chairs; forms and etc. from Miss Sayers; Mr. Bishop; Miss Elliot and others. Mr. Sayers also provided an organ for the Non-conformists services. The inhabitants of the Village were invited to become members and pay a small subscription for the upkeep of the Hall.

During the many years the Hall has been used for many purposes including Friends Meeting and Adult School; Nonconformist and Church services.

Miss Albright was a member of the society of Friends and many are the times she has fetched me in the car to take me to different places; Barnt Green and Bournville and different places for the Friends Meetings.

The Nonconformists services were very popular at one time in the Village Hall; Mr. Sayers would play the Organ and my husband the Fiddle. We also had a very good choir: my husband was also the Treasurer of the Adult School. I also was in the Choir and helped all I could until home responsibilities prevented me. I also played the organ for Miss Albright Adult School.

I don't know if I have ever mentioned it, but my husband and myself did a lot of playing, and Sunday School work, before we were married. My husband used to play one of the violins at the services at Ebenezer Methodist Chapel Sidemoor, and attend Sunday School there; and, by the way, you will find his initials on one of the bricks which he laid in the side of that Sunday School.

I myself used to play the Harmonium at the Dodford Baptist Chapel, and should like to say here that my initials should be on the twentieth century roll at Spurgeons Tabernacle London, for which I sent 10/-, although when I received the receipt, it was for Mrs. M. Jones - instead of MISS. My husband used also to play in the Sidemoor Band.

I have in my possession one of the Golden Hymn books which was compiled by Miss Albright, and used for the services held in the Village Hall; also a card which she gave me nearly 50 years ago, inviting me to the Friends Meetings, which I attended frequently.

I have to, a copy of the Finstall National Anthem, also composed by Miss Albright; and a program used at the opening ceremony at the Village Hall.

I would also like to say that the first ceremony at the Village Hall was the double wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Cond, and Mr. and Mrs. George James Junr. That was before the formal opening.

NOVEMBER 1949.

There has recently been an inquiry in the Bromsgrove Messenger about glass making at Alfreds Well, in answer to which I have sent a reply; I have also posted a cutting out of the Messenger in which Mr. Kimberley replies - which is wrong. For instance - the birning which he says it was wood; well I remember William Robinsen drawing the coke; my Father also at that time sold Gledes.

Again Wm. Stevens was next to make glass at Fairfield, and a family named Evans followed at Alfreds Well. I knew the Stevens very well,

I also remember my Mother speaking of Mr. Helyoak (who, by the way, kept a Boys Preparatory School at Stoney Hill) who was a frequent visitor to Alfreds Well. The Mr. Wm. Jones mentioned could be my Grandfather. Mr. Harrop was a very great friend of my Grandmother Quineys.

DECEMBER 28th 1951.

I never thought that I should be here till now to again write in my book of memories. Yet still, I am, and my Golden Wedding reached, and gone more than twelve months ago; and more old friends gone, among them two of my sisters aged 91 and 89. God Bless Their Memory's.

Well I had my party, just my own family at my Golden Wedding. I was determined that they should have a day to remember if I was spared; and I am sure my Grandchildren will not forget it. But how it brought back memories to me of my girlhood, when I was healthy and happy and in my lovely home at Wellington Road, where we lived when we were first married, and what a home I had; believe it or not, my home was practically furnished by my friends presents.

I can remember everything in detail even now; my beautiful front room, with Organ; Carpet; White skin rug; Brass fender; Fire irons; Red Bredade easy chairs; Plush Couch; Folding chairs and gate-legged table, and small tables.

And my Sitting room, - my round table which I now have; Piano; Leather suite and my Big rocking chair; Dinner service; Curlery; Clocks; Silver dishes and spoons, and endless other small presents. The same in my two bedrooms, including feather bed; Toilet ware, and a lovely white quilt. And my second bedroom - everything out of my husbands bedroom at home. In fact he never gave me 5/- for furnishing all was given to us.

But alas too good to be true, we soon began to fall on hard times no trade; no building being done, and my family arriving; first one went (builder) bankrupt, and owed us money; then another and still another; till it broke my husbands pluck and he gave up the brickworks; if you went with him now he would pickt to house and say "These houses ought to be mine the bricks are not paid for".

Well we had to leave my first very happy home and find one less expensive; I was very sorry to leave Wellington Road; it took me a long time to take to Finstall; however we have been living here now 50 years. The road has been very rough and rugged sometimes; have had my ups and downs; Sorrows and Joys; but God is good, and some way after the dark days there always seems to come the bright, and we have much to be thankful for - I try to.

"Leave it all with Jesus, for He knows
How to steal the bitters from lifes woes,
How to gild the teardrop with His smile,
Make the desert garden bloom awhile,
When my weakness leaneth on His might,
All seems right, All seems right."

LINES OF COMFORT.

The things you will need on lifes journey, right to the uttermost end.
Are good humour and plenty of ceurage, and your word on which folk can depend.
Truthfulness tempered with kindness, for truth can be painful to hear,
And a smile that comes from the depth of your heart, because it is real
and sincere.

The things you will need on lifes journey, are hope, and unfailing belief
That will not chnage when occasions alter, but keep steadfast through
triumph and grief;
Laughter, and patience and wisdom, and pity for those in distress,
Then may God's blessing rest on you, and give you great Happiness.

Jean Morten.