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GRANDMOTHER'S WAY AND OURS
by Mrs. E. M. Whiting

It depended a little upon where your grandmother happened to be a hundred years ago just what her ways were. The grandmother along the Atlantic coast had considerable luxury and a full social life of its sort. She had no college opportunities for the most part, though Mount Holyoke and Miss Willard's school in New York were already in the making a hundred years ago. The further west one came the fewer the trimmings of life. Out west furniture and clothing were much more primitive.

First, then, what was a grandmother's house? Candles, whale-oil lamps, and a good deal later, kerosene lamps, and later still, gas lamps. Only when she was very old, did grandmother know the brilliant ease of electricity. Grandmother burned wood or charcoal, and not till she was middle aged did she have coal. Fireplaces furnished a drafty heat and were used for cooking; but Franklin's fertile invention brought her stoves at last and her granddaughter uses the fireplace today as an aid to romance and sociability and beauty, but the furnace furnishes the heat.

Kitchen utensils were of iron, copper, and pewter. Aluminum is hardly a generation old and granite ware a little older. Her procelain had to be brought from midland England, the continent, or the Orient, for we had almost no potteries here. Indeed, the English potters tried to make sure that our attempts should fail by sending spies who caused accidents in the molding rooms and in the kilns, till our potters grew discouraged.

Grandmother wore many more clothes than we do now and they were heavier, for the houses were not as warm; many of the churches had no heat except that which individuals brought in little warming pans or boxes. Grandmother prided herself on her petticoats, their number and their starchiness. For her to show her ankles was considered immodest and she rejoiced in stays and corsets and wasplike waists and little feet. Occasionally the neighborhood developed that terrible creature that was called a tomboy, but her granddaughter would hardly have recognized her as such. Gymnasiums, athletics, basket-ball, tennis were quite out of the question with such a modest weight of clothes. A game of croquet was considered very active and interesting. Yes, grandmother might play an occasional game of tennis if she did it decorously, running about with one hand holding up her dress to save herself from tripping.

Some grandmothers played cards but other grandmothers frowned upon them and there were more of them that thought it very wicked than there are now. Grandmother liked to go to singing school, to spelling bees, to basket socials. She traveled by stage, by carriage, by sleigh, and, in some localities, by canal and ox cart. The church and Sunday school picnic each summer was an event to which all looked forward and for which grandmother and all the other women baked up a tremendous amount of food. The whole community left their work and went off in carriages to a grove by some stream where they could spend the day in wading and fishing and playing games.

Grandmother had no public library. Unless she lived in a large city, she saw only the plays that traveling troops of actors exhibited. "East Lynn", "Ten Nights in a Bar Room", "Uncle Tom's Cabin" were standbys for these itinerant actors. Grand-
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mother, as she grew older, went to Lyceum entertainments, in the "Opera House" over Smith's grocery. If she was very ambitious, she joined a Chautauqua circle in order to improve her mind. Grandmother grew up with the early railroads and watched the telegraph and then the telephone develop.

Grandmother's family doctor read medicine in an older doctor's office. He knew little about surgery, or anesthesia. He employed a strong-nerved neighbor woman to help him when he had to saw off a leg and his knowledge and use of sterilizers and antiseptics was very limited. Probably nowhere else is the contrast between grandmother's day and ours so marked as in the practice of medicine. It is scarcely a generation since the earliest appendicitis operations were performed. Dakin's solution and advanced methods of sterilizing incisions and wounds were pushed to their present development during the World War.

Grandmother liked to watch a balloon ascension. Her daughter's daughter crosses the continent in less than a day in an aeroplane. Grandmother shivered at the speed of a train moving at 25 miles an hour. Her granddaughter has only one desire, to move faster on the earth or in the air. Grandmother's house was usually, except out on the frontier, much larger than her granddaughter's. For grandmother was supposed to care for all the aunts and uncles and her grandparents and her husband's when they grew old. Today houses are not planned for permanent guests. Granddaughter is too busy with civic and club and social affairs to have time for these gentle services that may often have been a burden, but which enriched life and gave children beautiful memories of the western sun upon a dear white head, and a voice that connected their lives with the past. Grandmother's house had very primitive, if any, plumbing; the pumps were outdoors, the basement was still a real cellar with a dirt floor. Carpets that had to be stretched and tacked every inch around the room covered grandmother's floors, for she did not know much about the unhygienic dust that flew and settled day after day the whole winter through. Grandmother knew only the broom and she mitigated its evils by sprinkling damp cornmeal over the ingrain or brussels carpet. She had no electric washer, toaster, or flat iron. Her refrigerator was the damp cellar of the spring house.

A Swiss music box did the duty of phonograph and radio and its few tunes were played so often that everyone in the neighborhood knew them by heart and loved them. Her periodicals were few. Godey's Ladies' Book gave her household and dress-making hints, with a dash of literature and art thrown in.

Grandmother prided herself on her carding, spinning, and weaving. She had inherited patterns for her blue and brown coverlids that we envy today. She made remarkable quilts that have not yet lost their allure and that her granddaughter displays with pride, but seldom attempts to imitate. Grandmother cured her own meats and canned and preserved and pickled all the summer long to surpass her neighbors in the length of her lines of pots and jars. She dried quantities of fruits and vegetables.

Grandmother's menus differed radically from her granddaughter's for cold storage cars had not then been invented and her own opportunities for refrigeration were limited. She had two sets of menus each year. The one for winter that lasted from October to May and consisted of meat and potato, dried beans, cabbage (early) and sour kraut; later, squash and pumpkins, some roots like carrots and turnips; apples as long as they could be kept in the cellar, and very occasionally grapes and oranges. During these months, except for cabbage and sour kraut, the diet was entirely lacking in green vegetable vitamins. The result was that toward spring a sort of scurvy was prevalent which was called "Spring Sickness"; sometimes with children, "Growing pains". It was doctored by the famous brands of Sarsaparilla and the

equally famous mixture of sulphur, molasses and cream of tartar. The constant presence of lettuce and other fresh vegetables on the market all winter has made these sicknesses and their remedies a legend to her descendants.

Windows and sun parlors have come to their own in the modern home and screens, which were a luxury in grandmother's day, are on every window and door. But the average grounds around the house have also shrunk with the house and with the shrinkage has gone the playgrounds of the children, the hammock and swing trees, the arbors where miniature tea parties were given and lover's vows were heard, and to which grandmother often retired with her mending basket.

Grandmother differed from her granddaughter in her attitude toward gainful employment. The world for grandmother was divided rigidly between women who had to go out to work and those who did not. And if grandmother belonged to the latter class, she would rather starve than enter the former. She married for a home and a "meat ticket" and she sometimes endured agonies to keep them. Her granddaughter has none of her inhibitions about jobs and dependencies upon men. A great fight has been waged and won for her. She has her own latchkey, she may do a hundred things without her virtue being challenged. She is safe in the ways of trade, of labor, as her grandmother could not have been. And, grandmother, marching the streets with Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt, won this freedom for her descendants which she never enjoyed herself.

Grandmother had little or no standing before the law. It was decidedly a man's world, in which male might made right. She had no property rights in some parts of the country; even so recently as 25 years ago Minnesota laws allowed the father to give away his children regardless of the wishes of the mother.

We, who are sometimes careless of our civic rights, who do not trouble to study the political situations, who stay away from the polls through lack of interest, who even laugh at the Women's Suffrage Movement as a "funny, cracked set of women, with bees in their bonnets", should be compelled to realize the dependency of women upon the whims of men, the danger of their womanhood's sanctities that anyone who left the shelter of her home and went into stores, or offices, or on the state, ran in the days of our grandmothers. They should have placed before them vividly the long, nerve-breaking hours of women in factories and homes. They should go with little children to the factories and into the fields before dawn and watch the very life of the soul starved out of their faces by the drudgery of their labor. Then they will know what grandmother felt when she and her children won scant wages through endless hours of work. They will know why grandmother joined the ranks of the "new women"; why she fought for the vote, for a voice in the making of laws and executing them. Grandmother's ways were not as complacent as her daughter's daughter's, but that was because she was fighting for their chance to be free and happy, self-directing, self-respecting women.

Grandmother's life moved much slower than ours and was much more isolated, for dirt roads connected and separated her from her neighbor, and she had no rubbers. She had no alarm clock to get her up in the morning - she had no typewriter to speed her correspondence - she had no daily paper. But she thought that life was complex then, even as her granddaughter finds life complex now. But it is almost certain that grandmother was much more mistress of her own world than is her descendent. Her life was ordered almost exactly as the lives of a hundred generations of women
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before her were ordered. She had her problems and perplexities; but they were the inherited perplexities of her race and old women's wisdom was available for most of them. Her world had changed little in methods and manufacture, distribution, transportation, communication from those which the Egyptians and the Romans knew.

The Monroe Doctrine was signed by candle light and blotted with sand. Then, suddenly, about the time of the Civil War, the machine age swept in. Sewing machines, factory made clothes, factory canned goods, factory cured meats, great chains of bakeries, buying from flour mills, knitting mills for underwear and stockings and mitts, machine woven bedlinen and blankets, spreads and table linen, with an army of super-salesmen and mail order catalogues to market them, closed in on her and took away her age-old occupations almost in a breath. The new age filled her house with distractions, victrolas, telephones, radios, connected her up with a world of which she had never dreamed in her youth. Her grandchildren hopped into cars and were a hundred miles away to a dance, to the theatre, to new work. Aeroplanes followed cars and her life was, as it were, strewn over a continent. No more leisure for intimacies of neighbor friendships, no more evenings at home around the center table with its cheerful red tablecloth.

Grandmother thought by evolution, the race would gradually reach perfection, and she could gaze complacently upon her children's weaknesses, feeling sure that gradually the generations would eliminate them. She talked of direction and the goal of human progress. But her granddaughter sometimes has a feeling that the new age is manufacturing engines which may, in foolish hands, spray gasoline on the fire. Sometimes she feels as though she and her children were on the brink of such a world cataclysm that will make the World War seem tame. Poison gas! Death rays! Will the race use them for race suicide? Grandmother's granddaughter begins to see, with Edith Cavell, "This would I say, standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough, I must have no hatred or bitterness to anyone." Yes, grandmother was an admirable American, but her granddaughter must be a world citizen; must see clearly before it is too late, that class prejudice, religious prejudice, race prejudice, must be swept from her soul if the world is to be saved. She must realize that just because her environment has become so cluttered, she must possess a soul that treasures only the essentials. Just because the world rushes by at a continually increasing speed, she must know silence and rest. The Old Book, which her grandmother treasured, must come to her with new meaning when it says, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

Yes, with world vision and world sympathy, and a self-possession that only the eternal things can touch, grandmother's granddaughter may enter into a new land of promise.