Chapter 1

Listen, Boys and Girls

When I was a boy in knee pants, and very much given to reading, my father and mother bought for my brothers and sisters and me four little books of stories, called Sabbath Readings. They had been gathered together and published by a woman whom we knew as Ellen White. Some of those stories have stayed in my memory and helped me over hard places for many years. I don't know who wrote all those stories, but I do know that Mrs. White thought they were good for boys and girls, and so do I.

Elder and Mrs. White had some boys of their own. They had no girls, though at times they took other girls and boys to live in their home and these were like their own children. It was for all these that Mrs. White first gathered the stories. Then she thought about the boys and girls in the families all over the land and in the churches who would also be happy to read such stories. That is how she came to have them printed in books.

Well, here are some stories that Mrs. White gathered. She put them in scrapbooks more stories than could go into the printed books. The stories in the printed books came out of the scrapbooks, but there were some scrapbooks left over. One of her boys, Willie, whom your fathers knew as W. C. White, kept these scrapbooks until he was an old man; then he gave them to Elder Lloyd, who thought it would be a good plan to publish some of them. So did the Pacific Press, and here they are in this book.

Now imagine you were Elder and Mrs. White's little boy or girl ninety years ago, or imagine that you were in my family seventy years ago, and we shall go sailing together on the seas of story land.

Stories, you know, fit the time in which they were written. These stories are different from stories of the time in which we live. You'd hardly know yourself if you should suddenly be

taken back to a hundred years ago. Certainly any boys and girls who lived then, if they had been picked up and taken into our times, would have wondered what world they were in.

For one thing, they talked differently; at least in books they talked differently. Oh, they used words you know, though you know some words they didn't know, because new things have come into being, and new names with them. But they tried to be very proper-no short cuts like "'twould" and "we'll" and "can't;" they said, "it would" and "we will" and "cannot." They dressed differently, a bit, though not so differently as the Bible folks dressed long ago. Every age is strange to every other. If you had seen me in the copper-toed shoes I was so proud of (couldn't wear 'em out, you know!), or if you had seen my sisters with their red knitted wool stockings and their balloon sleeves-well, anyway, it doesn't do to laugh at anyone, because we look as queer to them as they do to us. We're all poor mortals!

Life was different in some ways from what it is now. For instance, there were no automobiles then. If you wanted to go anywhere, you walked or rode horseback or traveled in a buggy or a wagon. The roads were all dirt roads outside the big cities, and even in them many streets were not paved. Oh, what clouds of dust in dry weather, or mud puddles in wet weather! People used to wear "dusters," long, thin linen coats, buttoned up to the chin; and when they reached their journey's end, they would shake off all the dust they could, and then scrub up. In rainy weather they rode, if they could, in closed carriages or covered wagons; but sometimes they had to get out and help the horses pull the wagon out of the mudholes.

There were some other ways to travel, to be sure. There were the railway trains, with short wooden cars that had wooden seats. They were quite new in our country then. People thought they were wonderful, and they really were. They kept on improving until now they are luxury cars. Then there were boats on the rivers, lakes, and seas. There had been steamboats twice as long a time as there had been railway trains; so some of these boats had grown to be more comfortable than the cars,

and they were very good to travel on, if so be they went where you wanted to go.

Another kind of boat used a great deal was the canalboat. Canals, you know, are waterways like rivers which men dig between two greater bodies of water, and then turn the water in. They made long, narrow, shallow boats for these canals. To make a canalboat go, they hitched a team of mules or horses to it, and drove the team along the bank, or towpath, to draw the boat. Some of these boats carried freight; some of them, called "line boats," carried both passengers and light freight; and the best, called "packets," carried only people. The most famous of these waterways was the Erie Canal, between the Hudson River and Lake Erie. Before they had railroads, the Erie Canal carried most of the freight and the passengers from East to West and West to East.

The automobile is only one of the things they did not have then which make a different kind of world. For instance, there was no electricity, either for lighting houses or for driving machines. At night, people made light by fires in their fireplaces, or by wax or tallow candles, or by oil lamps. These oil lamps burned whale oil, though about that time they did begin to use kerosene. And didn't they think kerosene, or coal oil, lamps were fine! They were, too. You could see by them many times better than by candle or by firelight. But nothing like electric lights. Sometimes in our house now, if the electric current goes off, we get out a kerosene lamp, and how we squint to try to read by it!

Airplanes? Why, people were so far from having airplanes that they joked about the idea of men flying. We had a poem when I was a boy that poked fun at "D'rius Green and his flyin' machine." It told of a boy named Darius who secretly made a flying machine up in the loft of the shed, and when all the folks had gone to town for a Fourth-of-July celebration, he tried it out. He tied its wings to his arms, jumped off, and tried to flap the wings; but he came tumbling down, broke the machine all to pieces, and bruised himself up. And he-

Stanched his sorrowful nose with his cuff.
"Wal, I like flyin' well enough,"
He said, "but the' ain't sich a thunderin' sight
O' fun in't when ye come to light!"

We thought men never would fly until they became like the angels. Now, of course, nearly everyone flies sometimes, and we think no more of it than we used to think of going to town once a month. You can fly from New York to San Francisco in half a day, where men used to take more than a week to go by the fastest train, and before that they took three or four months to go by ox team.

No telephones; though they did have the telegraph, just then invented. But radio! Why, to think of men talking through the air, thousands of miles, was even more foolish than to think of men flying! No phonographs, either, nor moving pictures. There were newspapers, and some magazines, and books-all the books you could read or pay for. Here and there was a free library, but only here and there. If you went to the city, you could actually see streetcars, drawn by mules; but who would want, when he had two good feet, to pay a nickel to ride, except maybe only once to see what it felt like?

If you lived on a farm in those days you worked; I'll tell you, you worked. Well, work is good for everyone, and it made sturdy boys and girls, who grew up into worth-while men and women. There were delights for the country boy and girl that hardly anyone nowadays knows or takes time to sample: same good old sun rising every morning on a dewy world, raindrops sparkling like diamonds, or snow blanket promising snowball fights and coasting and sleighing; swimming hole in the bend of the creek under the elm trees-beat your tiled swimming pool all hollow; mayflowers, violets, strawberries in the spring, rattlesnake watermelons in the summer, spicy apples in the fall-snow, Northern Spy, Baldwin, sheepnose; pumpkins! jack-o'-lanterns, pumpkin pies, cranberry sauce, and so on, Thanksgiving!

The country boy was born, so to speak, with a hoe in his hand, and the country girl with a milk pail and a wooden spoon. No milking machine then, nor cream separator, no tractor with a gang plow, no reaper or mowing machine. Father hitched old Charley to the cultivator, and Jack and Dan followed with hoes, to keep the weeds down. Mother skimmed the milk, down in the springhouse, and Sarah Ann pumped that old churn handle until the butter came. Harvest time, men went out into the field with scythes and cradles, and reaped the wheat; girls, maybe mother, came behind and bound the sheaves; father and boys threshed it out on the barn floor with flails, winnowed it in the wind, stored it in the granary alongside the corncrib to be filled to the eaves with husked yellow corn. Oh, it would take a book to tell you all we did on the farm. Very few machines to do our work. Of course there was the gristmill up the creek, with its great water wheel, where we ground our wheat and corn. At home there was the cider press-m-m-m-good sweet cider, popcorn, blueberries and milk and graham bread!

Well, that was the world that Elder and Mrs. White lived in, a hundred years ago and some less. He was born in 1821, and she was born in 1827. They were married in 1846, which is only a little more than a century back. Then they lived and worked on for the years that followed, through the many changes that came in people's lives and in all the world. Elder White died in 1881, but Mrs. White lived until 1915, a very old lady. Still, you could not remember that far back, for it is now thirty-five years ago, and I know you are not that old.

God gave them a great work to do. They were young people when they began to tell the world of Jesus' soon coming and the Sabbath and all the truths that go with them. Elder White was a great preacher and writer and publisher. He loved the children and the young people. He started *The Youth's Instructor*, and the Review and Herald Publishing Association where it is printed. He founded the Pacific Press, where *Our Little Friend* and this book are published for the children.

Ellen White was by his side as long as he lived. She taught temperance and healthful living, she taught fathers and mothers how to train their children, she worked and prayed for people little and great, and rejoiced when they took Jesus for their Saviour. She wrote many books. She always worked hard and faithfully and beautifully and nobly, to the day of her death. She loved the Bible, and she loved nature, the handbook of God. One time I was with her out in her garden. She was eighty-five years old then; but she loved to walk in the midst of her flowers and shrubs and trees, and talk with God. We came to a beautiful bed of pansies, those flowers that almost seem to have human faces. Mrs. White knelt down by them, that dear old lady, and as she fingered their blossoms, she murmured: "The smiles of God! the smiles of God!"

Elder and Mrs. White traveled all over the United States, preaching and teaching. In the early days that travel was not easy. They had little money, and they traveled as cheaply as they could. Sometimes they drove with horse and buggy, or two horses and a carriage. Sometimes they traveled by canalboat, sometimes by steamboat, sometimes on the train. Often they were sleepless, often in peril; but God delivered them out of all dangers and gave them strength to keep on with their work. After Elder White died, Mrs. White not only worked in America, but crossed the seas to Europe and to Australia, where she lived for many years. But always she was writing, writing, teaching, teaching, lifting up the old people and the young people and the children.

The family loved to sing together. They had beautiful voices, and they knew by heart the grand old hymns and the sweet simple songs of home and childhood. The boys, as they grew older, learned to play the organ, they couldn't afford a piano, and the music of their voices and instrument made the morning and evening worship times, and all the day, happy.

So she loved them and cared for them. She sewed their clothes, and she cooked their food, and she nursed them when they were sick, and she taught them their manners, and she told them stories, and she prayed with them, and she lifted them up

toward manhood. The scrapbooks that she made were one of the many ways that she planned to help them become good men. I imagine those books were popular in their home. When mother had to go away and be gone long, and the house was lonesome, even with the good help and cheer that Clarissa and Frances and Mary gave, I think the boys must often have taken the scrapbooks, with the good stories in them, and said, as they read together:

"This is mother's book!"

So the stories in the scrapbooks helped them, as they helped me, and as I am sure they are going to help you. God bless you, boys and girls!

ARTHUR W. SPALDING.