

Of all the happy spots  
left on my childhood memory  
one of the brightest is  
that of gathering walnuts,  
whether or not my  
father was the author of  
the delightful custom. I  
do not know but as  
often as the walnut  
gathering came around  
we had one real holiday.  
It is a bright after-  
noon in Oct. The air  
is cool & crisp. The first  
frost has painted the hills  
woodlands in yellow  
& gold & red. The barns  
are full to bursting with  
the last load of harvest.

The cellar too is fragrant <sup>with</sup>  
 the newly picked apples  
 Only yesterday the last load  
 of big round ruddy pumpkins  
 were stored in the shed

We hear the rumbling  
 of wheels and a jolly  
 voice calls "Come  
 children we're going  
 to gather ~~walnuts~~  
 No second invitation <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~  
 needed for this was an  
 annual occurrence of  
 the greatest importance  
 to us, and that dear  
 jolly Father was just  
 wise enough to make  
 it a more wonderful  
 event by keeping it

a secret all his own  
 until the moment when  
~~he had~~ the <sup>red</sup> jam wagon  
 with its prancing sleds  
 stood at the door. Bell-mill,  
 helters skelters, hurrying skurry we  
 pile into the wagon, one two  
 three, four, five six - yes  
 almost a dozen until it  
 would seem that <sup>could be no</sup>  
 room for the ~~rest~~ <sup>gathered Sweetmeats</sup>. But no one  
 must be left behind for this  
 is our gala holiday.

Down the long shady lane  
 & thru the pasture fields  
 the wagon, umbrellas waving  
 while we sing & shout just  
 to hear the echo thru the hills  
 The ~~long~~ whip cracks in the air

and away the happy steeds  
 go along by the babbling  
 brook where on some summer  
 days we cooled our feet in  
 that self same brook. We  
 wonder sometimes why  
 it never stops & how  
 it can flow on day  
 after day & year after year  
 even. The cows grazing  
 on the hillside look up  
 as we pass & wonder why  
 we have come for them  
 so early.

The sheep have hardly time  
 to quit us but with a mouthful  
 of grass they bleat  
 & cows fly past & echo  
 their call - cow as they

Stare at us & wonder what  
is the occasion for such  
movement.

And now we come  
to the great peas ladia  
with ~~the brown trays, puts.~~  
Last night's  
wind has already covered  
the ground & while strong  
arms rattle down the  
remaining ones the  
~~we~~ engage in picking  
them up in baskets until  
the old farm wagon almost  
groans with its load  
of winter treasures.

It is no matter to  
us that our hands are brown  
already with the stain from  
the green ~~trays~~ <sup>hills</sup> & we

Think of the long winter evenings  
 when I've sat by the big  
 fireplace cracking nuts  
 and eating apples; while we  
 vainly try to count the sparks  
 as they ascend the great chimney  
 and wish we had so many  
 dollars

As we wind our way home  
 thru the pasture fields up  
 the long shady lane we  
 watch the golden sunset  
 and wonder if Heaven  
 is not <sup>somewhat</sup> just beyond <sup>with its</sup>  
~~some where~~ <sup>striking</sup> ~~in the distance~~  
 But <sup>that we do not know it</sup> heaven <sup>is</sup> already in  
 our hearts for what can  
 compare to the happy carefree  
 life of a <sup>little</sup> ~~child~~ childhood.