

## INTRODUCTION

They called it the secretary, the tall, blonde-oak bookcase and rolltop desk which stood in the corner of our living room. From the bottom shelf I took down my father's "Great Bible" and opened it for the first time. I had every reason to be outside playing in the summer sunshine, but the fascination was spellbinding. I read on and on. With all due respect, it was not the text of the good book itself that attracted me but the treasure-house of odds and ends folded or tucked in between its many pages. Here were family records, notes from Father's sermons, news clippings, scraps from magazines and tracts, parts of letters and notes, some diary recordings, and a faded, pressed flower or fern here and there.

Needless to say, the extra-canonical content of the family Bible reflected much of the character and personality of Father who had long been its custodian. In the years that followed, until I finally inherited it myself after his death, it was almost an obsession for me to return to it time and again to find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures.

It was exciting the way the neglected moments and even some secrets of the past were opened up to me in no particular order of occurrence. The adventures and romance of my own ancestors and hometown people, as preserved in these tidbits, like the enchanting song of the Lorelei, enticed me on from one item to the next, revealing to me a whole new world waiting to be rediscovered. That memorable experience is still vivid, and from that time on I made it a practice to inquire more and more from my father whenever there was an occasion for us to be alone.

For more than fifty years he kept physically fit by walking briskly back and forth to work and to other appointments. He stood erect and in fine posture as he walked. Until in his late seventies, when age bent him slightly he maintained his weight at one hundred, sixty pounds to match his five feet-eleven inches proportionately. He sometimes carried an umbrella but never a cane. Without dressing expensively or pretentiously, but always neatly and impeccably, his black derby hat and black great coat, which he wore on Sunday and special occasions, marked him as a familiar figure on the streets of Brigham City for sometime after such things were no longer the "in" style.

I was a young man before I could keep pace with him, and as a child, whenever I held his hand and accompanied him, it was necessary to move along at a half-running trot to stay beside him. Sometimes he would pause for a few minutes and say, "would you like to catch a breath?" Or he would pick me up and carry me, maintaining his usual pace, thinking it undignified to dawdle as he called it.

If the distance to our destination was long enough, he usually had a story to tell along the way. It was easy to get him to reminisce about the early days with a simple question such as, "Do you remember when you were a little boy?" Or, after I had grown older with a more sophisticated air, "Did you have a girl friend when you were my age?"

He had a favorite way of beginning the out-loud reminiscing. After a short thoughtful pause he would usually say, "Sometime back I remember," and then continue on with a most delightful account of some particular event or experience, giving me a glimpse through one of the thousand windows of his rich past, stretching from the most recent years to the reaches of his early childhood.