



"She was standing beside a gaslight globe, and every time she nodded, the cock's feather caught fire, flared up, and went out again. I watched.

SUBURBIA THE DAY BEFORE

The suburb where I was born and spent my childhood is today a wilderness of towering apartments. At the beginning of the century it was a leafy Victorian town with big houses surrounded by lawns and wonderful back yards with fruit trees, grape arbors, and shadowy places where the grass grew high. I do not remember many large gardens. It was before the days of garden clubs, and people seemed content with rose-bushes hardy enough to flourish without much care and a flower bed or two. Pests, such as Japanese beetles, were unknown, and the chestnut blight had not yet attacked those magnificent trees. The shade trees were mostly big elms and maples, and those near the curb were protected by wire cages so that the tradesmen's horses would not nibble off the bark.

All the stores delivered purchases, so there was a constant procession of horse-drawn wagons stopping before the house—in the early morning before we were up, the milkman; in the middle of the morning, the iceman, proverbial beau of the servants in the kitchen; then the butcher, the grocer, the fish man, the vegetable man, and the fruit man. While they carried their packages to the back door, they anchored their horses with a heavy iron frustum on a long strap attached to the horse's bit. Then there were, of course, the strays, such as the ragman's cart with a line of cowbells strung between two sticks that jangled his coming. He also gave vent to a melancholy cry, which became the inspiration of a popular song:

*Any rags, any bones, any bottles today?
It's the same old song in the same old way.*

In summer there was the hokey-pokey man, hokey-pokey being a villainous-colored ice cream that sold for a penny. I was never allowed to have any, for I was supposed to be delicate. Perhaps I was, for I had rheumatic fever one winter and asthma the next, but I regarded the many restrictions set on me as a needless tyranny.

Horse-Drawn House Calls

The finest steeds belonged to the livery stable. They pulled the hired victorias in which the ladies rode from house to house of a fine afternoon to pay calls or just "drop a card" on a friend. Few families kept their own carriages. The community seems to have been largely composed of people who had lost money and