

GOVERNESSES

We now began a long string of governesses, ^{supplemented with} ~~with~~ a smattering of music teachers, French and drawing teachers between. →

→ There was a dear old music teacher, Mr. Fernandez, who looked like someone out of Dickens. He gave my brothers violin lessons and sometimes went to sleep during the lesson. In spite of the frequent naps, and ^{the} relaxed atmosphere, my brother Wilfred began to produce really good sounds and would have done well if he had not broken his arm and not been able to hold the violin correctly again.

The teacher who followed Fraulein was also a German lady: Madame Selbach. She came in the mornings. A couple of our little friends joined the classes and we had our lessons around the dining-room table. In contrast with Fraulein, this lady was the most disorganised soul I ever knew. She brought her son, Booby, to the classes and he gave her more trouble than all the rest of us put together. She would chase him around the table to spank him. This was not conducive to much learning but it was entertaining. In fact, I can't remember learning anything with Madame Selbach except to wonder how that little devil Booby could be so dreadful to her. Though these things were not discussed before us, it is not hard to see why these classes broke up.

I think it was about this time that the American School was started here, and our little friends went there, but Mother, not wishing us to forget our German, looked for another German teacher, and found a very good one: Miss Lind. She taught us German, English and mathematics, while her friend, a Swiss lady, Miss Zwicky, gave us music, French and drawing. Miss Zwicky was kind and gentle and was always being told by Miss Lind that she was not half strict enough with us.

Things went along quite happily now, and at last Mother had some ^{new} ~~peace~~ peace. Her peace of mind was not to last long, though.

These two ladies lived together and were great animal lovers. They would take wounded or dying dogs and cats off the street to cure or put out of their misery, and there were plenty of ^{them} ~~such~~ in the City in those days. One day on the way home they found a suffering dog and carried it home. There was no hope for the poor animal and it was decided to shoot it. In getting the pistol ready, Miss Lind accidentally shot her friend, who ^{lived} lived long enough to tell the police that it was an accident. Father was brought home from the mill, and, with the German Consul, spent most of the night in the prison trying to help the poor woman. Her innocence was eventually established but for the time being she was a wreck, and though she came back some years later to teach my youngest brothers, in the meantime Mother was again on the warpath for a teacher.

She found a Miss Trevina who had come out as governess to an English family here. She contributed largely to the support of an invalid father and several young brothers in England. This poor woman ended as a charity case here and people said she had been improvident. The wonder to me is that she kept going at all. She was never cut out for a teacher of children, and soon left to take an adult class.

Now came a pretty young English woman, Miss Plummer, whom we all liked. She had a very happy way with us. I think she must have been engaged before she left England, as she left at the end of the year to get married. She was a born teacher and it is to her and Father that I owe any knowledge of mathematics. Poor Father spent many hours straightening out a lot of muddles in my head. We were all sorry to lose Miss Plummer.

The next was Miss Collins, who came on a year's contract from England. She was a languid, genteel lady whose family had "come over with William the Conqueror." As several of our English teachers had also come over with him, my small brother Bobs asked Dad

why William the Conqueror had brought so many governesses over. Dad agreed that it was thoughtless of him, but as he had also brought our family over to England it was better to think nothing of it. Miss Collins helped me with my music but otherwise did not leave much impression on us.

Miss Gill, the last of the English contingent, came next. My mathematics went to the dogs, but the literature which my parents had nursed along so carefully blossomed ~~along~~ all kinds of interesting and wonderful paths. I will always remember Miss Gill for this. I loved, also, the walks she took us on to gather wild flowers and bring them home to draw and paint. She, too, stayed only for the year and then went home to get married.

Last but not least, came a pretty young German woman: Miss Mundt - another believer in cold baths and early morning walks. We lived in our own house by this time - a big house with a lovely garden opposite where the Hotel Geneve is now, ^{in the then new Colonia Juarez.} ~~in those days it was the last house~~ ^{the almost country side} and Father had to put in his own street light and side-walk. Beyond the house stretched fields, all the way to Chapultepec.

After the cold bath, at 6 A.M., we would cut across the fields to the Paseo de la Reforma ^{and on} up to the entrance to Chapultepec Park. There was a good deal more in this routine than at first met the eye, because during these walks we would meet a German gentleman out riding. He would dismount and he and the governess would walk ahead. Madys and Wilfred would follow behind, and I would bring up the rear, pulling Bobs along. He was too big for me to carry, and delayed the whole procession by picking up stones, watching beetles and ants, and so on.

A friend of Father's, who also rode in the mornings, was very amused by all this and told Father about it. Dad followed us at a distance one morning and was also impressed, but he took Bobs off

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the walk, feeling it was too much for both him and me; ^{4.} ~~and~~ ^{but} the
rest of us continued to meet the cavalier. I don't think either
he or Miss Mundt knew we were there ^{from} the time when we met him in
Chapultepec to ^{up to} Calle Genova, where he took ^{usually} his leave.