

highly strung youngster in Webster City, Iowa, during the first decade and a half of the 20th century.

Here, on the one hand, is the pastoral of life in a small town where wolves had recently howled; picnics, parades, first love, the turning of the seasons and the dawning of ambition give this narrative a breath of Springtime.

On the other hand, small town bigotry, narrow cultural horizons, the constant embarrassment of extreme poverty, the maiming taunts of other children who knew MacKinlay's father was in jail, have left their scars upon the sensitive author.

This is a brave recital of a mother who brought up her son and daughter by doing any ill-paid menial job she was offered. One year working diligently she earned less than \$200. It was a red-letter day when she finally rose to \$9 a week clerking in a store. And the world was as rosy as it was to Browning's Pippa when Effie Kantor at last became a reporter on the local paper.

To this great-hearted mother, and to the town he so loved and hated, to veterans of the War Between the States pouring their stories into his ears, and to a few understanding friends Kantor traces his spiritual origins. Webster City, Iowa, wrought better than it knew in producing this American writer.

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### FIRST BOXCAR BUILT IN IOWA

Richard Edmund Smith came to Keokuk, Iowa, in 1855 and later became assistant superintendent of the Des Moines Valley railroad, occupying that position for sixteen years. He constructed the first freight car ever built in the state, the work being done under a spreading tree, as that was before any shops were constructed or available.—*Biographical Review of Lee County*; pp. 216-18.

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