

Die Frau Pastor

The Life of a Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor's Wife in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

by Lenore Salvaneschi

Could the exhortations of the author of *Proverbs* and the talents of Gilbert and Sullivan have been combined, what a delightfully wicked parody might have been made about the "very modern model of a Lutheran preacher's wife" in the setting of a Missouri Synod Lutheran parsonage in the first half of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, such a production could never have played in the communities where these paragons of virtue existed, for the realities of life in a parsonage were too serious to be laughed at.

Such thoughts came to mind recently during the visit of a former student who had the courage and the advantage of being a far different, but no less admirable, *Frau Pastor* in the second half of the twentieth century. As Doris Bruch Strieter, the Midwest Director of Amnesty International-USA, and I lingered over our breakfast coffee, marveling at the contrast between her role and that of my mother's, I realized that even though I had spent a fair number of my own years as surrogate mistress of a parsonage, I had never fully assessed the almost complete abnegation of self that such a position must have demanded of the pastor's wife.

Reading the diary which my mother and father kept jointly during the first year of their marriage, one is struck at once by her first entry, June 26, 1917, "The long looked for day

arrived, a day I shall never forget. It was my wedding day. I was married at about 4:30 to the Rev. G. Rickels at the home of my sister Emma Meyer." Father's entry was every bit as Victorian, but more eloquent and emotional: "Now I saw my girl upon her wedding day. She was lovely in my sight, beautiful, sweet, fresh . . . I felt the responsibility fully as Gusta reached me her hand. Gladly my heart formed a firm resolution to stand by the girl who was surrendering all to me. I loved her beauty, 'tis true, but more still did I love her heart and ways. I was happy in gaining such a lovely and good woman."

The two statements reveal a commitment which continued throughout their life together, but the words also reveal the respective characteristics of that commitment. Mother looked up to "the Rev. G. Rickels." She never seemed to feel quite natural calling him John, the name used by the rest of his family in place of the burdensome Gerdjanssen by which he had been christened. As soon as her children were born, "the Rev." and "John" became "Papa," and remained so comfortably for the rest of her life. While Father retained the name "Gusta" or "Gusti" in referring to her in the diaries, she soon became "Mamma" in the home. Throughout the years he never changed his opinion of her as a "lovely and good woman"; as illness and periods of depression altered her beauty and her spirit, he continued, almost obsessively, to cherish and to



protect her.

That the *Frau Pastor* should look up to her husband as "the Rev. G. Rickels" was for Mother not a matter of pride in her position. Some pastors' wives may have considered it necessary to refer to their husbands as "the Pastor" or "*Der Herr Pastor*," for in the tightly knit and parochial German Lutheran communities of the time the pastor was looked up to as the head of the community. [This honored position did not necessarily preclude his serving not only as pastor, but in some places also as parochial schoolteacher and even as janitor for church and school too poor or parsimonious to pay for separate positions.] Mother's deference was more likely based on the fact that she had been a parishioner of my father's during the days of his first marriage and the early death of his first wife. She had known and respected the first *Frau Pastor*, and she felt keenly the responsibility not only of succeeding her, but also of becoming a stepmother to the one little daughter, Ruth. Also, she had already lived in this parsonage during one year of her girlhood, as she prepared for confirmation under her future husband's predecessor and helped that pastor's wife with her household duties. Mother knew the workings of a parsonage, but to enter the same house as mistress of the place and wife of the pastor must have presented a variety of uncertainties and anxieties.

Augusta Amalia Anna Schnell, born of pioneer German immigrant farmers near Rockwell City, Iowa, on February 2, 1886, was married to the Reverend G. Rickels of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Rockwell City, Iowa, June 26, 1917. She served as Die Frau Pastor in this parish and in that of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Atkins, Iowa, until her husband's death in 1948. Thereafter, until her death in 1958, she lived with her son, Robert Rickels, who was at that time a parochial schoolteacher in St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Melrose Park, Illinois.

The standards set for the pastor's wife in a small Iowa community, whether in Rockwell City or in Atkins, were high. Like Caesar's wife, the *Frau Pastor* had to be above suspicion, of upright character, a *lady*, dignified but gracious, and friendly to all. For Mother the friendliness came easily, for she genuinely liked all the parishioners, no matter what their character. While she might deplore certain misbehavior, it was beyond her to "hate" any person for his faults; she was more likely to "feel sorry" for the miscreant. On one occasion my father, exasperated by her attitude, exclaimed, "Why don't you feel sorry for me too! I have to deal with these faults!" To this she replied, "But I do, Papa, I do." The reprimand was not repeated.

Not that this *Frau Pastor* was without her own faults. Promptness in "dressing up" for church or any other occasion was one virtue she never learned. Since Father held to the opposite rule of always being ahead of time, the conflicting philosophies sometimes made for tension. Even during the last years of her life, my brother and I still had to locate stray hairpins, fasten a necklace, or place a hat properly on her head at the last minute as she prepared to go out. More serious than this tardiness was her genuine guilelessness. There were occasions when her innocent remarks might better have been left unsaid. More clever and ambitious pastors' wives were not unknown in the Synod; even in the circle of the church, political machinations did occur. Fortunately the merits of Brother Rickels stood on their own, and Father considered himself lucky to have a wife who did not gossip. The importance of that fact can be judged by a statement of a member of the congregation at Atkins who during a particularly unpleasant situation occasioned to a great extent by malevolent gossip remarked, "If everybody were like Mrs. Rickels, there wouldn't be any trouble in this congregation."

Such a statement was probably the highest



A radiant Mrs. G. Rickels on her honeymoon at Scotch Grove, Iowa, in June 1917. (courtesy the author)

accolade my mother ever received, and then she probably didn't feel worthy of it. Actually, she didn't have much chance to get into trouble. Although she loved to sing, Father thought it best that she not join the choir. Although she longed to teach Sunday School, Father thought she should not do so. Although she was proposed for office in the Ladies Aid

Society and in its German equivalent, the *Frauenverein*, Father felt she should not hold any office. All these prohibitions raised the question of why Father was so restrictive. His answer was that he had seen too many pastors' wives cause trouble for their husbands, but given Mother's very submissive and gentle ways, the answer did not seem quite satisfac-

tory. In keeping with her restrictions, Mother never learned to drive a car. I am certain she did vote in at least one national election, but I doubt whether she ever signed a check while Father was alive. Certainly she never bought a piece of household furniture or even a dress or coat without his consent.

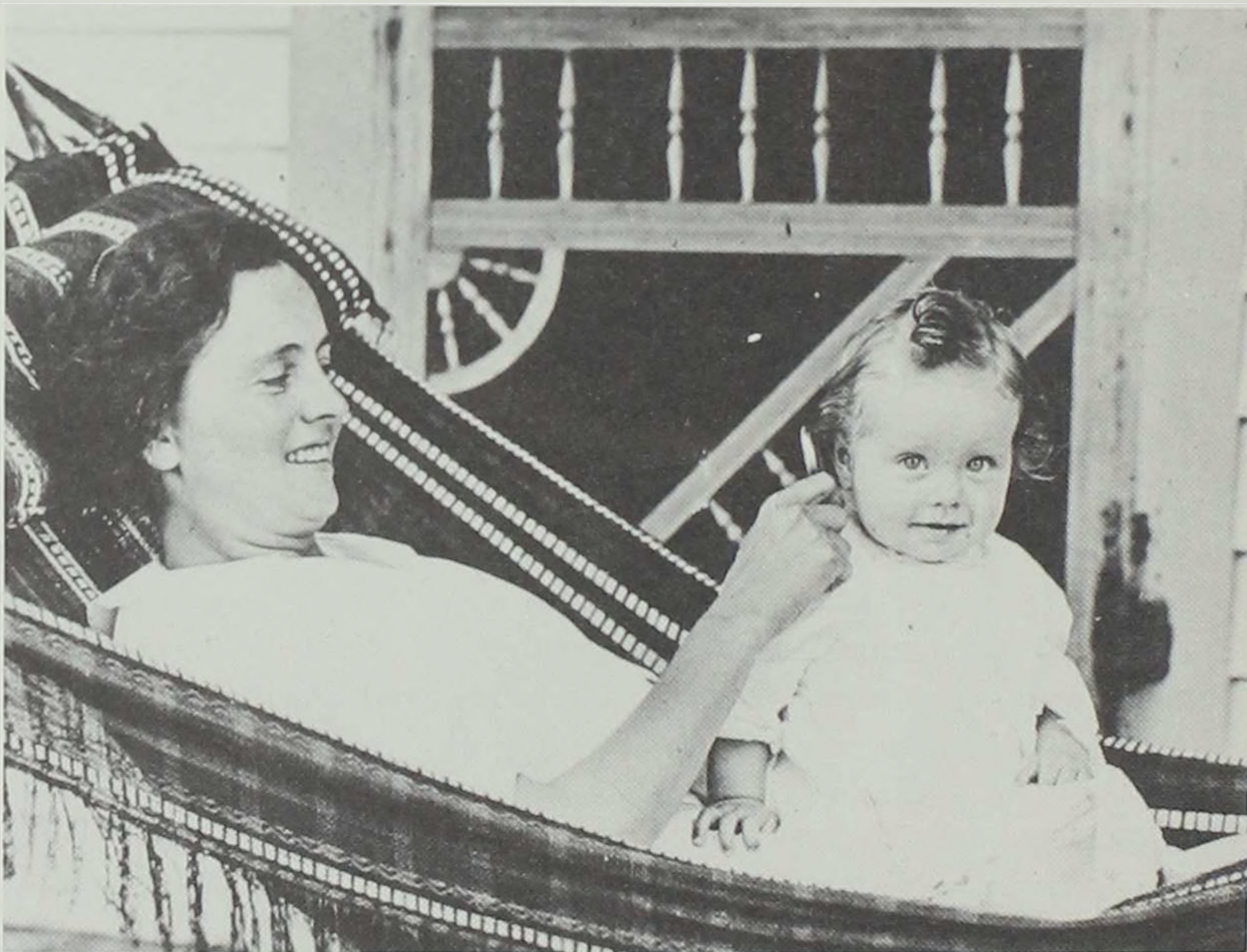
Among the qualities most admired in a *Frau Pastor* were the abilities to be a good housekeeper and to “make do,” the latter an absolute necessity during the agricultural depression of the 1930s. A fair amount has already been written in these pages about my mother’s concern over the semiannual housecleaning and the annual preparation for Mission Festival [see “Mission Festival,” May/June 1983



One of the earliest photographs of Mrs. G. Rickels, taken by the Rev. G. Rickels in 1917. (courtesy the author)

Palimpsest]. The anxiety over being a “decent” housewife — the adjective having nothing to do with the morals of the housewife, but everything to do with the amount of dust and disorder in her household — and the concern over hospitality were certainly concomitant parts of my mother’s life.

Routine was the order of the week — and year. There was a proper day *and time* for the household tasks. On Sunday evening after supper, the fire was already laid in the laundry stove in the basement, the washboiler was filled, the soap shavings — our “detergent” — were soaking in a little crock, the clothes were sorted into the proper heaps, and the pails of rinse water were carried in from the pump. To this day I cannot understand why it was a matter of such pride for my mother *and father* to get up at five on Monday mornings to have the wash out earlier, whiter, and brighter than any other in the neighborhood. Even on the coldest winter days, when the clothespins had to be heated in the oven, the washing was hung outside on the metal lines [see “Fuel,” November/December 1985 *Palimpsest*]. Tuesday had to be ironing day, and I should like to have a record of the many white shirts which were first starched and “sprinkled,” then ironed for my father. It was only after we moved to the Atkins parsonage and advanced to electricity in 1921 that my father recorded that “the girls,” my mother and sister Ruth, used an electric iron for the first time. Wednesdays and Saturdays were baking days and part of any nostalgia I still have for childhood stems from the remembrance of the perfect loaves of bread, both white and dark, which Mother baked. The dough was always prepared in a large kettle and kneaded the night before. By morning it had risen so that it could be punched down again and then placed in the rows of tins to rise in time for the firing-up of the kitchen range. Cakes and cookies, muffins and corn bread were baked in between times during the week, and Saturday’s baking always included two pies



A quiet moment shared by Mrs. G. Rickels and Lenore in early July 1919. (courtesy the author)

for the weekend besides the usual bread and coffee cake or cinnamon rolls. Friday was “upstairs cleaning day.” Saturday the downstairs got its polishing and scrubbing, not a mere mopping but a down-on-the-hands-and-knees scrubbing of floors.

Woe to the household in those few weeks when the routine was delayed or unavoidably altered, or in those spring and autumn months when the *real* housecleaning had to be prolonged because of illness or bad weather. So much of this work was futile. In summer the cars speeding to town on Saturday night quickly covered the pristine cleanliness with a coating of greyish dust before we even went to sleep, and in the winter the smoke from the furnace begrimed the curtains and windows. But *never* did one deviate from what was thought to be the God-ordained order.

To keep the house looking not only decent but also presentable for any parishioners who might stop by at any time of day or night — telephones were not used to announce visits except in the worst of emergencies and pastors

were on house call twenty-four hours a day — the Atkins *Frau Pastor* spent much time sewing curtains, crocheting edges on them to make them more dainty, and embroidering huge “fancy” bedspreads, table and dresser covers. Tearing carpet strips from old rags and crocheting and braiding rugs were all part of making-do. Some of these last-named activities took place in the evening while we sat around the kitchen stove for warmth, while Father read aloud from his favorite nineteenth-century poets or novelists. Crocheting, embroidering, and making quilt blocks were continual “leisure” activities of my mother and sister; in the summer these might take place outdoors, but in an angle of the house shielded from passers-by who might see that the preacher’s folks were not working!

To brighten up her home in winter, Mother always had a supply of houseplants which she had grown from “slips” of coleus and geranium plants near the front porch in the summer. Her joy was great when a cherished Christmas cactus actually bloomed properly at Christmas time. My own efforts at keeping these plants

alive during Mother's many illnesses were prompted mainly by the fear of one particular member of the congregation who would test the soil with her fingers to see whether the plants were properly watered, one of the criteria in her judgment of me as a potentially good housewife. Flowers from a florist were an unheard of luxury in our home, except on February 2 of each year when my father always tried to brave the almost impassable roads to Cedar Rapids to get six carnations for my mother's birthday. Even as she appreciated the love which prompted this gift, I think her puritanical conscience felt this was an extravagance she could have done without.

One of the greatest problems in keeping the parsonage presentable was the constant fear of asking the congregational trustees for repairs

(let alone improvements) in the house. Before our family had moved into the Atkins parsonage, the structure had been renovated and electricity installed. But these improvements could not hide the poor construction of the house. Mother longed for nice hardwood floors; ours were made of wide painted boards which were covered with linoleum borders disguised to look like wood and by other patterned linoleum "rugs." She never got the longed for floors, but when a repairman broke through the ceiling of the kitchen, and when the oil-cloth-covered ceiling of the bathroom fell several feet, the need for further work was obvious. To have a room papered or painted required hours of discussion on the part of both the pastor and his wife before the former felt that he might ask the trustees for such a conces-



Bundled against the weather in late January 1919, Mrs. G. Rickels washes clothes with Lenore at the Rockwell City parsonage. (courtesy the author)

sion at the next quarterly business meeting of the congregation. Frequently, the painting and papering were done by our family; my sister was an expert at varnishing floors; and one year my brother and I simply surprised our parents, while they were away at the anniversary of another church, by painting the unspeakable linoleum of the kitchen floor and "stipling" it to cheer up the premises.

In "Harvest Time" [November/December 1984 *Palimpsest*] I have described the year-round work of providing food for the family. This effort was only part of the normal activity of any Iowa country woman during the span of my mother's life, but it was particularly intensified during the time of the Depression. Since there was little or no salary for my father, our family was dependent for fruits and vegetables on what the garden and orchard could supply. The generosity of some of the farmers helped to supply meat. Since the first days of their marriage, my parents had raised chickens. In fact, the diaries record even such mundane facts as

the setting of hens, the cleaning out of the chicken house, and the ever-fluctuating price of eggs. But the work of keeping this food supply preserved and available rested mainly upon the women of the household. In Atkins, Mother at least had an enameled cookstove in the winter and a two-burner kerosene stove in summer, but in Rockwell City the monster in the kitchen was still of the black iron variety which required blacking with stove polish, and Father's dairy tells how Mother would get up at five to blacken the stove before starting the day's regular work.

Another way of making-do, not only during the Depression but during almost the whole of Mother's married life, was the constant sewing of clothing for her family. With the exception of my father's clothes, most of the clothing of the other members of the family was sewn at home. Mother had been trained by a professional seamstress, and her meticulous skill in sewing was appreciated by everyone



Mrs. G. Rickels and Lenore feeding the chickens in June 1921 at the parsonage in Atkins. (courtesy the author)



"Leisure time" in August 1924: (clockwise from left) Mrs. G. Rickels, Grandmother Gesche Rickels, Ruth, Robert, and Lenore Rickels. (courtesy the author)

except the two younger children who had to suffer from made-over, and once again made-over, suits and dresses. A little trimming here and a few bows there, and hats could be suitable again for Easter. Shoes could be dyed with shoe polish, and even curtains could be made new with an infusion of coffee.

It is sad to think that the fear of "Dare we do this?" or "What will people say?" was always present with the *Frau Pastor*. Although she kept us neat and as beautifully dressed as she knew how, her own clothing was very circumspect and understated. Father often expressed the gallant wish to "see my girls well-dressed," but Mother always hesitated to wear a new dress, and after she had sewn one for herself was more likely to wait months or even a year

before she would appear in it. Thus she could honestly reply to any comments, "Oh, I've had this for a long time already." It still embarrasses me to remember a serious Sunday afternoon discussion between my mother and the wife of the parochial schoolteacher over whether they dared to wear *white* Sunday shoes in summer. In time they decided they might do so, if enough other women in the congregation wore them first.

As I read the diaries, I marvel at the lack of privacy in the life of a pastor and of his family in a time when a separate study, let alone office, in the church building was hardly thought of. From the very first days of her marriage, Mother could expect to have visitors

in the house, on congregational business or just to visit. And they stayed for dinner, and for supper, and if they were visiting relatives or were preachers passing through with their families, they might stay for the night and sometimes for several nights. As my father described one such invasion, "All the beds and floors are full." I kept wondering where the bedding came from, for this was before the days of sleeping bags, and I never knew our household to have an excess of linens and blankets.

After we moved to Atkins there may have been fewer relatives and preachers' families moving through, although there were two "plaguey" families we soon learned to put up with: one couple that always arrived at dinner-time and never *planned* to stay, and another very large family of children so boisterous that even my grandmother threw up her hands in disbelief. But Mother and my sister knew how to cope: they always managed to stir up another cake quickly while the rest of us found some way of hiding the more breakable pieces of furniture. An invasion which I think all of us disliked occurred when a wedding took place at the church next to the parsonage. Strange as it may seem now, for years the parsonage was the place where the wedding party dressed for the ceremony. Not only was the weekly schedule of cleaning upset, for extra attention had to be paid to see that all of the house was thoroughly dusted and in order, but our family was temporarily displaced since there was really no room in the parsonage that the wedding party did not take over.

Among the important duties of the *Frau Pastor* were her appearance at all church services, of course, and accompanying her husband to all baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and sometimes funeral observances in the homes of the parishioners. I think my mother rather enjoyed these occasions even though the women were usually relegated to the rock-



Robert Rickels models a suit made-over from one of his father's in January 1927. (courtesy the author)

ers in the bedrooms while the men occupied the parlor. For the pastor's wife who dared have no real network of women friends, for fear of offending some at the expense of others, and whose only real neighbor was perforce the wife of the parochial schoolteacher, these invitations gave her a chance to compare notes about mutual domestic activities and to have a few discreet laughs at the follies of life. Moreover, my mother genuinely enjoyed the food prepared for these gatherings. She usually ex-

claimed over the amount of good butter and rich cream which the farm wives used in their cooking and relished the food which was prepared in such abundance. Her one embarrassment on these occasions probably came from having a maverick daughter who inevitably got a sick headache at these "bid-outs" and who much preferred a sandwich of her mother's bread at home to all the trappings of these glorious feasts. Since Father was an abstemious eater, he too preferred to eat at home, but



The Rev. G. Rickels' birthday carnations for his wife in February 1931. (courtesy the author)

derived a vicarious, albeit amused enjoyment from Mother's pleasure.

At this point any feminist readers must begin to wonder whether this woman had no time of her own, no pleasures of her own, perhaps no life of her own? Respectively, the honest answers would have to be "Very little," "Very few," and "Hardly." Perhaps these answers may shed some light on the last quarter of my mother's life, much of which was spent as a partial invalid because of heart disease. Had she been more of a free spirit, had she not been so devoted to her duty, to doing what was "right," she might have been spared anxieties which aggravated her suffering.

Yet she was a "jolly" person when she was well, and had a great capacity for fun which was seldom evident after she assumed the duties of a *Frau Pastor*. As a young girl she had had friends with whom she could be silly and "cut up," and for one winter's season she and a sister had stayed on a ranch in Dakota owned by a bachelor brother who later was lost in action in World War I. While on this ranch, the girls had high old times with the friendly neighbors and Mother was able to indulge her love of horses and to ride bareback over the hills. Perhaps her ability to come up with the perfect folk saying for almost any occasion, though usually in the privacy of our own home, was one way of expressing her sense of fun, even though to us children many of these sayings had a didactic and unwelcome purpose at the moment. Some were actually macabre. Her reply when chided for being tardy, "I'll be there in the shake of a dead lamb's tail," was sometimes too graphic for a child's sensibility, and when she said she was running around "like a chicken with its head cut off," we felt sick, for we had seen too many spring friers flapping about with their heads chopped off in preparation for the plucking for the Sunday dinner. Her sharpest exclamation of surprise, "Now wouldn't that frost the cherries on your grandmother's bon-



The Rev. and Mrs. G. Rickels vacationing in the Maquoketa timber in July 1922. (courtesy the author)

net!" was harmless enough, but to be told chirpingly, when everything seemed wrong, "Cheer up, the worst is yet to come!" seemed at least as insulting as illogical. "Red and yellow, catch a fellow," was enough to make one laugh, particularly since we were warned never to wear these two colors together, and the "Make a rhyme, see your beau before nine," conveyed some optimism. In moments of depression she would shake her head dolefully and intone, "Nothing here can always last," but in a spark of roguishness she could quip, "I'm a poet, and don't know it." Her giggle was infectious, and though I'm sure she was never aware of it, she was attractive to men, who treated her with courtly though reserved respect.

There was never a time when Mother did not

like to read, but by the end of the day's work she was too sleepy to share Father's enthusiasm for Shakespeare. In Atkins she became a devotee of Professor Sam Sloan's lectures on "The English Novel" over radio station WSUI-Iowa City, and of Ruth Galvin's half-hour reading of popular novels over station WOI-Ames. Listening to these, she could keep on with her work and not feel guilty. The only time she might find for a little reading on her own was on a Sunday afternoon when she didn't have to make calls with her husband. Then her reading matter consisted of church periodicals such as *The Lutheran Witness* and *The Walther League Messenger*, over which she also fell asleep. Frequently the free time of Sunday afternoon was devoted to playing with us children or to target shooting with a .22-caliber

rifle Father had bought for her. The whole family took part in that activity, and it was amazing to see our mild little mother become the best shot of us all, even to the extent of picking pigeons off the roof of the church. She drew the line at "real" hunting however, and so



"Frequently the free time of Sunday afternoon was devoted to . . . target shooting with a .22-caliber rifle Father had bought for her." Here Mrs. G. Rickels shows the first rifle to Ruth in 1917. (courtesy the author)

far as I can remember never shot a rabbit nor a squirrel, the only kind of game available in our county.

The greatest times of laughter which I remember from my childhood occurred when the teacher's and the preacher's families got together to play games. Our four elders actually played cards at the dining-room table — nothing so sophisticated as bridge nor the customary "biddin' euchre" of the community, but something I think they called "pedro." No bets were ever made, no money was ever won, the only refreshments were prized red winesap apples, but the two couples laughed uproariously over their fun. While these games were going on, we children played all sorts of "tricks" in the kitchen, thoroughly upsetting that usually neat place to the point where Mother's enjoyment of the evening was lessened by the necessity of helping us put things to rights again. Yet I rarely remember her scolding us for the damage.

Throughout the years, Mother longed for a real family vacation "at some lake in Minnesota or Wisconsin, Papa," an idea which my father scorned. Vacations for him were a day in the Maquoketa timber in spring and fall, and three times in the forty-nine years of his ministry a longer vacation in the same timber, twice in a tent (into which Mother immediately sewed a canvas floor for fear of rattlesnakes) and once in a roughhewn cabin which became the mecca for Father's relatives and friends from his youth in Scotch Grove and Monticello, Iowa. Mother had no choice but to go along on these vacations and while Father gloried in roughing it, I feel quite certain she was relieved when she was home again in more civilized surroundings. Other trips were few and far between. There were the annual preachers' picnics of the circuit which Mother enjoyed, but Father complained about because he couldn't eat Mother's cooking, and there was one fateful attempt to meet a preacher friend and his family at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines. The families



"It was amazing to see our mild little mother become the best shot of us all . . ." Mrs. G. Rickels target shooting in October 1929. (courtesy the author)

never did connect in the crowd, and we came home a disgruntled and unhappy group with Father claiming he had been "poisoned" by the food eaten at one of the fair booths.

Of the very intimate aspects and emotions of a woman's life, my mother revealed little. In these matters the *Frau Pastor* was extremely reticent. I know that previous to my own birth, Father had told the doctor that his wife was with child. There were no prenatal visits to the doctor by my mother, and the only advice she might have received would have come from a married sister and from my paternal grandmother, who often stayed with us, and with whom she had a close and loving

relationship. There is one cryptic entry in Mother's handwriting in the diary which says that on a certain communion Sunday "I sit back for the first time." Since the date suggests that she was perhaps halfway through her pregnancy, this may mean that it was the custom of pregnant women to seek the relative obscurity of the back pews of the church. Whether it means that from then until after the child was born the mother no longer received communion, I have no way of knowing. Mother never spoke of the episode. So far as I know the only time Mother saw the doctor was at the time of delivery at home, when an entry in Father's diary stated that this was accomplished with the help of chloroform and forceps and that the

doctor's fee was \$10.

During her second pregnancy, when my wish for a brother was granted, I suspect a similar procedure was followed with the doctor being informed that a child was on its way. This time the doctor and neighboring teacher's wife arrived together, and I was unceremoniously ejected from my parents' bedroom where I was recovering from an attack of measles. Within a few hours the neighbor had come upstairs to ask whether I wanted to see my brother, and by schooltime of that morning some of the parochial schoolchildren were at our door to congratulate our parents. When some years later the teacher's wife had her sixth child, my mother reciprocated by helping the mother and bathing the newborn infant. Not one word had been said in the hearing of us children about the approaching event, and even before my own marriage my mother found herself un-

able to speak of the "facts of life." There was no question that she loved her children dearly; there are many photographs which attest to that fact, as do my father's diaries, and Mother did once say that the happiest time of her life was when we children were small and the family was all together.

As one looks back upon the life of this very hardworking and unassuming woman it is sad to remember that she spent the last twenty years of her life in comparative dependence upon the members of her family. Frequent attacks of the heart disease which had resulted from the rheumatic fever she had experienced in her youth took their toll and engendered several attacks of depression. Above all, this *Frau Pastor* was pained that she could not do her duty as before, and wondered whether God were punishing her for things she had not accomplished. Father's care for her became more and more protective, and the cheerfulness in the family more restrained.

It is even more poignant to recall that after Father's death, in spite of increasing frailties, Mother regained some of her earlier lightheartedness and revealed a spirit of independence which she had not shown before. Living with my brother in a suburb of Chicago, she actually got to see stage performances such as *Oklahoma*, to hear concerts in Orchestra Hall, and to have a vacation at a lake in Wisconsin. She enjoyed new friendships in the parish in which my brother taught, and carried on a very busy and unhampered correspondence with old friends in the parish where she had been the *Frau Pastor*. For the first time in her life she had a real gas stove, and even looked forward each year, without any sense of guilt, to the Mother's Day corsage which she confidently knew my brother would provide. One of her greatest pleasures came from feeling financially "independent." From her widow's pension of \$60 a month she could contribute a little to her church, pay for a part of her medicines,



The last photograph of Mrs. G. Rickels, c. 1956.
(courtesy the author)

and with the rest "adopt" a child in Jerusalem to whom she sent money until her death.

As my brother and I fought our way through a vicious December snowstorm to our mother's funeral in Iowa, the circumstances of her birth came vividly to mind. She had told us that while her father was searching for the midwife's house through a blinding snowstorm,

her mother had given birth, alone, in the tiny windswept house on the prairie. For Augusta Amalia Anna the coming and the going were consistent, and on December 4, 1958, the grave of the prairie child who had become the *Frau Pastor* was covered with the same blanket of snow which lay over the grave of "the Rev. G. Rickels" beside her. □